

Are Art Films Interesting? Examining the Relationship between Review Quality, Source Credibility, and Usefulness of Information on Watching Intention

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ABSTRACT

Objective – This paper investigates review quality, source credibility, and information usefulness as antecedents of intention to watch indie films.

Methodology – Data were collected from respondents in Jakarta. Structural equation modeling were employed to test the proposed model.

Findings – Only movie review quality significantly affected their watching intention.

Novelty – This study extends our understanding of this relationship by highlighting the important roles of movie review quality, source credibility, and information usefulness as antecedents of watching intention.

Keywords: *indie films, review quality, source credibility, information usefulness, watching intention*

JEL Classification: M00, D01, D90

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I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of indie film is a film created outside the main label and is not made for commercial purposes, so it appears to be free from censorship department and consumer demands (Permana et al., 2018). Because of this, indie films tend to have more daring and bolder themes, such as sexuality, murder, and religion among other controversial topics (Fuentes et al. 2015). Poulaki (2014) asserted that the productions of that kind of cinematic trend have frequently been referred to as “complex narratives,” a concept borrowed from literary or art criticism and narratology. Despite the rather unsettling and sometimes even disturbing themes explored by indie films, a number of people are interested in those non-mainstream material, as opposed to Hollywood films (Szabo, 2010).

It is a common fact that film-watching is a hobby shared by many people; whether it is a Hollywood production or any other kind of films produced outside big budget studios. And in the case of indie films, viewers for independent films don't just like them; they relate and identify with them (Berliner, 2017). Consumers may also be swayed by word-of-mouth (Cheung et al., 2008). However, the exponential growth of technology has brought conventional word-of-mouth into the online world, changing the way consumers make their decisions (Erkan, 2018). Social media networks have played a significant role in their success.

Anyone can now write a film review, rate it, comment on it, or share their thoughts about it on the Internet (Ahmed et al., 2015). Even though people have easier access to watch indie films and have been giving more attention to it, indie films are still not discussed that much (Perren, 2004).

There are relatively few published studies about indie films, even though the subject matter has been discussed since the “post-classical” Hollywood films of the 1970s (Poulaki, 2014; Szabo, 2010). A bolder trend of experimenting with the narrative form arose from the peripheries of mainstream production in the mid-1990s, and the films of this cinematic trend were often discussed as “complex narratives” (Poulaki, 2014). The indie films itself has become a sort of a brand to differentiate themselves from the mass market, and also to target ‘niche’ audiences (Holmlund & Wyatt, 2004). The low budgets of independent cinema determine the constraints on cinematic form and these constraints push filmmakers to create non-traditional methods of storytelling that still hold audiences’ attention (MacLaird, 2013). As from the reason that is already stated, even though indie films have a cult-like following, the subject material is rarely studied just like the indie films themselves only targeted and marketed to a limited number of audience.

The limited screening for various indie films poses a problem for indie films to grow, and the industry itself may not be so open for new filmmakers to enter the market, which in turn leads to a less mainstream content (Szabo, 2010). Furthermore, the term “indie films” are also sometimes called “cult cinema,” and is known to cover uncharted subjects like pornography, psychological trauma, and also emotional dysfunction; something that is considered to be a heavy subject (Molloy, 2013). In this study, the researcher aims to understand people’s intention to watch films (particularly indie films) from factors such as the quality of a film review, the credibility of a source, and also the usefulness of information.

The objective of the study are three-folds: (1) to determine if the quality of a film review influences people’s intention to watch indie films, (2) to determine if the credibility of a reviewer influences people’s intention to watch indie films, and (3) to determine if the usefulness of information conveyed by the film review influences people’s intention to watch indie films. To recognize why a person took an interest on watching indie films, and using film reviews as a basis for consideration, is vital for this study (Halim, 2020). This study presents the findings of an analysis on the intention to watch indie films, and to compare each category that makes up this study in the literature review. The research questions of the study are: (1) Does film review quality influences people’s intention to watch indie films? (2) Does the source credibility influence people’s intention to watch indie films? (3) Does the usefulness of information influence people’s intent to watch indie films?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Film Review

Film review, or commonly identified as film review, is described by Li (2010) to be featured keywords that were identified by using a dependency grammar graph. For as long as visual art and the written word have existed side-by-side, art criticism has existed in one form or another (Battaglia, 2010). In addition, Battaglia (2010) further add that art criticism had cemented its position in both the writing and art communities by the time film and cinema started to rise. Film, on the other hand, was not yet considered a viable art form. Besides the technical side, reviewers also have clear feelings about films, and even better, along with the review, they typically have ratings (Koh et al., 2010).

A review is something that is personal and perhaps considered; this evaluation may be styled “opinion,” but it is not opinion in the sense that it is a well-thought-out stance on a topic, as might be the case with the weightier arguments used in editorials and columns (Wyatt & Badger, 1990). Critics’ effect on artistic goods such as films, television shows, music, books, and high-tech products has been studied in a number

of previous studies; and in the entertainment industry, critics and the reviews they provide are especially significant (Tsao, 2014). Movie or film reviews can affect moviegoers' viewing decisions in the weeks leading up to the release of a film, as well as predict whether they will enjoy it (Eliashberg & Shugan, 1997). According to Yi et al. (2013), when reviews are unable to affect box office sales and only appear after a film's opening weekend, they have only a prediction effect.

Review Quality

Information quality has been explored as a predictor of customer purchase intentions in high-involvement scenarios in previous research on e-WOM and film reviews (Park, Lee, & Han, 2007). Information quality was defined in this study as the persuasive power of an e-WOM communication, and consumers always seek to process any supplied information in order to determine whether or not a message is true (Yusuf, Hussin, & Busalim, 2018). When these customers believe that an argument is valid, they believe that the information is beneficial (Sussman & Siegal, 2003).

The quality of internet reviews varies substantially due to the wide range of reviewers' backgrounds and language skills (Liu et al., 2008). Liu et al. (2008) further added that several reviews are easy to read and thus more helpful, whilst others are either long but contain few phrases detailing the author's viewpoint, or short yet contain offensive remarks. Since people have nearly unrestricted freedom of expression and posting of ideas, opinions, and experiences on the Internet, the quality of some online information may be affected and compromised (Yeap et al., 2014). As a result, it is critical that message recipients be able to distinguish between reliable information and less reliable information (Vedder & Wachbroit, 2003).

The majority of currently conducted research have given little thought to review quality. Studies from a number of nations, including the US, Taiwan, and South Korea, have looked into the types of reviews that are most helpful to consumers. For instance, Kim et al. (2013) found that American consumers place less value on reviews than Taiwanese moviegoers do when choosing a film (Tsao, 2014). These variations can be attributed to the nation's uncertainty-avoidance (UA) inclinations, which varied for each study. According to the hypothesis put forth by Hofstede (2001), nations can be graded based on their UA inclinations. The country has a higher UA tendency the higher the score. The reasons for the disparate findings are clear when taking into account that Taiwan has a UA score of 69 while America has a score of 46. Due to the low UA nature of reviews, American customers do not care whether they are favorable or negative. The only frequency that works for American moviegoers is reviews (Kim et al., 2013). According to Godes and Mayzlin (2004), American moviegoers might pick a film that is frequently discussed in the media. Based on their medium-high UA nature, consumers in Taiwan appear to prefer investigating potential risks before making a purchase. Potential moviegoers in Taiwan might stay away from a film if it has bad reviews that they cannot ignore.

Source Credibility

The concept of credibility is a simple concept to grasp, as the study of credibility is as old as the study of rhetoric itself, and its simplicity is obscured by its intuitive consistency (Eisend, 2006). Source credibility refers to the understanding of the credibility of a message by a receiver. It is characterized as the degree to which information recipients consider an information source to be reliable, competent, and trustworthy (Rahim et al., 2016). The credibility of the message source is a high-order construct consisting of three sub-dimensions: trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness (Wu & Wang, 2011). Trustworthiness refers to the degree of trust and acceptance receivers have towards the sender of the message. Expertise refers to a specialist information the sender has about the object.

Attractiveness corresponds to when recipients are attracted to acquire goods or services by the sender. According to Cheung et al. (2008), if the user trusts the comments that are written with a high degree of integrity, he/she would then have a higher understanding of the usefulness of the comments (high degree of competence and trustworthiness). The persuasiveness and effect of e-WOM communications on the receiver can be influenced by the characteristics of the information source (Ismagilova et al., 2020). Whenever a personality has high source credibility, consumers would have a positive outlook and understanding of the advertising and brand. Since the sender of e-WOM is a “credible” person, the source reputation of e-WOM would have a similar impact on brand perception (Wu & Wang, 2011). Source credibility, according to López & Sicilia (2014) on information sources, influences communication effectiveness. As a result, source credibility has been seen as a critical factor in persuasion (Pornpitakpan, 2004).

Usefulness of Information

Perceived usefulness is also defined as the user’s opinion that technology may improve efficiency; perceived ease of use, on the other hand, is defined as the user’s belief that technology is simple to use and requires little effort (Eneizan et al., 2020). The experiences of the utility of views will predict intentions to follow that idea (Cheung et al., 2008). In regard to how information usefulness can have an effect is, if people rely on some basic information-related signals to evaluate the data, without any deep thinking about the material, it could influence their judgment and decision (Luo et al., 2018).

The concept “information usefulness” may have many components that may exert varied effects on information readers’ cognition, and they imply that information’s argument strength and completeness are the two most essential sub-dimensions of information quality (Luo et al., 2013). These two sub-dimensions have differing consequences on information readers’ appraisal of the discussed target (Luo et al., 2013). It is challenging to come up with a single universal definition of “useful information.” On the other hand, there is no such thing as useful information that does not consider the user, his or her information needs, and the context in which the information will be used (Mazur & Nowakowski, 2017).

Intention to Watch Films

In regards to watching intention, Hou et al. (2019) suggested that people who have continuous intention to watch something, may be influenced by interactivity, social status display, and stimuli. On the other hand, according to Halim (2020), intention comes from within the individual’s own motivation in the form of a desire that draws the attention of that person. The impacts of subjective standards on other behavioral factors such as attitude and perceived behavior control, which have an impact on purchase intention, should be given special attention (Al-Swidi et al., 2014). Practically every action taken by a person is motivated by a desire to achieve a specific objective, and almost all search conducted on the Internet, whether on general search engines or more specialized (e.g., image and video) ones, is motivated by an intention to achieve a specific goal (Lagger et al., 2017).

Hypothesis Development

The majority of currently conducted research have given little thought to review quality. Studies from a number of nations, including the US, Taiwan, and South Korea, have looked into the types of reviews that are most helpful to consumers. For instance, Kim et al. (2013) found that American consumers place less value on reviews than Taiwanese moviegoers do when choosing a film (Tsao, 2014). Therefore, based on the discussion, the first hypothesis of the study is:

H1: Film review quality has a negative influence on watching intention.

Source credibility was a key determinant of behavioral intention (Zhang et al., 2014). Source credibility can have a positive influence on people to watch a film, as people are more convinced by someone who is well known and to be credible in giving out film reviews. Therefore, based on the discussion, the second hypothesis of the study is:

H2: Source credibility has a positive influence on watching intention.

Usefulness of information denotes the perception that individuals will have an individual understanding of whether these viewpoints could be helpful to help them make a better purchase decision (Cheung et al., 2008). Despite the implications that information usefulness can positively influence purchase or watching intention, the test that the researcher has run shows that the usefulness of a film review has a negative influence on watching intention. Therefore, based on the discussion, the third hypothesis of the study is:

H3: Usefulness of information has a negative influence on watching intention.

III. METHODOLOGY

The population of this study is taken from people that watched films in Jakarta. Of those population, a sample is gathered from people that watches indie film in particular, and people that read film review. The demography of the population and the sample consisted of both male and females, ranging from under the age of 18 up until above the age of 47. A total of 171 respondents is recorded, and of those 171 respondents, only 88 people have watched an indie film but only 65 respondents have read film reviews. When choosing the applicants that are eligible to be included in the study, two screening questions are applied to the study, which are, “Have you ever seen an indie movie (independent film)?” and “Have you seen/read a movie review in the past?”

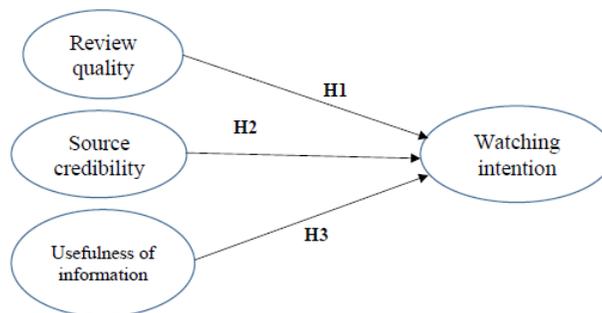


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of the Study

When constructing the questionnaire and how to spread the survey, the researcher uses Google Form as a way to contain the questions, and uses WhatsApp, Line, and Instagram direct messaging as a medium to distribute the survey. Additionally, the survey has a total of 17 items; 3 of which are screening questions, while 14 items uses the 5-point Likert Scale. The measurement scale is adapted from: Movie Review Quality (Tojib et al., 2008), Source Credibility (Rahim et al., 2016), Usefulness of Information (Cheung et al. 2008), and Watching Intention (Al-Swidi et al., 2014). The conceptual framework model can be seen in Figure 1.

Table 1. Reliability and Validity Analysis

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	KMO	Anti-Image
Watching Intention	0.760	0.673	
WI1			0.870
WI2			0.713
WI3			0.868
Movie Review Quality	0.774	0.576	
MRQ1			0.880
MRQ2			0.802
MRQ3			0.639
MRQ4		0.692	
Source Credibility	0.742	0.534	
SC1			0.551
SC2			0.745
SC3			0.808
SC4		0.790	
Usefulness of Information	0.797	0.818	
UOI1			0.960
UOI2			0.845

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Validity and Reliability Tests

This research uses a number of analysis, namely the validity and reliability test analysis, where a questionnaire was distributed and completed by 40 respondents. The data was collected and processed by SmartPLS program and the results can be seen in Table 1. In the validity test, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test (to test the variances that are equal for all samples). If the KMO is < 0.500, then it is considered not valid, and if the KMO is > 0.500 then it is considered to be valid (Pangaribuan et al., 2020). All of the Cronbach's Alpha for the stated items are acceptable because 1.00 is excellent, whereas anything < 0.600 is unacceptable. The Cronbach's Alpha are all acceptable because the researcher takes out X3Q2 and still have 2 items (Movie Review Quality and Source Credibility) that are not valid for the outer loadings or Anti-Image (below 0.7).

Mean and Median Analysis, and R Square

Based of Table 2, the item WI1 has the highest mean at 4.308, which means that the respondents will likely have the intention to watch indie films in the near future. On the other hand, the item that has the lowest mean is SC4 at 3.508, which means that people do not fully have the confidence in trusting the people that made the reviews. The item that has the lowest minimal value is UoI3 at 1.000, while all of the items have maximal value at 5.000. The R-square is 0.167, which shows that 15.8% the regression has minimal correlation between the dependent variable, WI (Watching Intention), and the independent variables (MRQ, SC, and UoI).

Table 2. Mean and Median Analysis

	Mean	Median	Min.	Max.	Std. Dev.	Excess Kurtosis	Skewness
WI1	4.308	5.000	2.000	5.000	0.840	-0.004	-0.963
WI2	4.092	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.956	1.281	-1.054
WI3	4.046	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.935	0.329	-0.787
MRQ1	3.923	4.000	2.000	5.000	0.751	0.379	-0.541
MRQ2	3.738	4.000	2.000	5.000	0.790	-0.499	-0.064
MRQ3	3.800	4.000	2.000	5.000	0.826	-0.680	-0.107
MRQ4	3.800	4.000	2.000	5.000	0.826	-0.423	-0.275
SC1	3.923	4.000	2.000	5.000	0.790	-0.537	-0.242
SC2	3.723	4.000	2.000	5.000	0.775	-0.658	0.128
SC3	3.662	4.000	2.000	5.000	0.899	-0.702	-0.176
SC4	3.508	3.000	2.000	5.000	0.843	-0.550	0.054
UOI1	3.892	4.000	3.000	5.000	0.726	-1.085	0.171
UOI2	3.938	4.000	2.000	5.000	0.839	0.521	-0.841

Path Coefficients

The researcher ran a PLS algorithm in order to estimate the model’s path coefficient. Afterwards, the researcher performed a bootstrapping analysis, and need to use 500 subsamples and a 90% significance level. The researcher also used a 10% two-tailed significance level. From Table 3, we can see one hypothesis is significant with the *P* value for hypothesis 1 is 0.028 because the value is <10%. Perhaps if the researcher can get hold on more samples, the results will be different, especially hypothesis 2 at 0.438 which can be lowered to be significant.

Table 3. Structural Path Estimates

	Path Estimates (β)	Std. Dev.	<i>t</i>	<i>p-value</i>
H1: MRQ → WI	0.320	0.195	2.208	0.028
H2: SC → WI	0.020	0.205	0.777	0.438
H3: UOI → WI	0.628	0.203	1.276	0.203

V. CONCLUSION

The study aims to investigate on how film review quality, source credibility, and the usefulness of the information conveyed can influence someone to watch a film; particularly an indie film. The results showed that there is little evidence that suggest people would want to watch a film based on the quality of film review. The study’s findings imply that businesses should think about which components of reviews need

to be taken more seriously. This has significant implications for how review platforms are made and how current films are reviewed. Moviegoers may also give attention on longer reviews as they offer more information, but they might wish to keep the length of each review under control by determining the ideal review length.

This current study explicitly contributes to the understanding on how watching intention can be influenced by movie review quality, source credibility, and information usefulness. Furthermore, this research also found that source credibility does not have a positive influence on watching intention, which means that people are more likely to watch an indie film regardless trustable source of the information. Moreover, usefulness of information also does not have a positive influence on watching intention, suggesting that people do not really place an emphasis on the usefulness of the review.

This study itself have many limitations on how all the independent variables have little to no correlation on how it can affect watching intention, as there is only a handful of study that examines source credibility, movie review quality, and information usefulness on topics like film. Another limitation is that this study has a relatively small number of accepted samples at 40, making it difficult for the results to be generalized. Further studies are suggested to develop more theoretical findings on how these factors can positively influence behavioral intention. The researcher would like to recommend for future researchers to gather as many respondents and as many subjects as possible, in order to have more significant results for the research.

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