



**THE CULTURAL INFLUENCE OF ASIAN CULT FILMS: ASIAN YOUNG
GENERATION'S FASCINATION CHANGED FROM THE MAINSTREAM TO THE
MARGINS**

LIN, BINGXIU

A RESEARCH PROJECT
SUBMITTED IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE BACHELOR OF COMMUNICATIONS (HONS) BROADCASTING
FACULTY OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

Dec. 2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who has supported and contributed to the successful completion of this project.

First and foremost, I am deeply thankful to my project supervisor, Kor Eng Choon, for her invaluable guidance, patience, and continuous support throughout this journey.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to all the participants who generously took the time to answer the questionnaires. Your cooperation and responses provided the foundation for this study, and I am truly grateful for your willingness to contribute. I am thankful to my peers, friends, and family for their encouragement and support. Their motivation kept me focused on completing this work.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the resources and tools made available through various platforms, including online sources, which have been vital in shaping and completing this thesis. Their expertise and insights have been instrumental in helping me complete this research effectively.

This project is a reflection of collective effort, and I am truly grateful to everyone who has played a role in its completion.

LIN, BINGXIU

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the cultural impact of Asian cult films on the younger generation in Asia and explore the shift in preferences of young people from mainstream films to marginal Asian cult films. Through quantitative research methods, this study will use an online questionnaire to collect primary data. The questionnaire was created through Google Form and distributed to various social media platforms and other countries in Asia to collect data from young people in Asia. The collected data will be analyzed using chart. The purpose of this study is to identify the appeal, attention and engagement of mainstream and Asian cult films on young people, explore why these types of films have this trend, what attracts young people, and whether they recognize this type of film. In addition, it will also be studied whether Asian cult films have an impact on young people's preferences, culture, etc. By conducting a questionnaire survey on young people aged 15 to 30 in Asia, the research results are expected to show the reasons for the shift in the preferences of young people in Asia and the impact of this type of film on young people in Asia.

Keywords: Cult Film, Young Generation, Culture Impact, Asia

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I . ABSTRACT	3
II. DECLARATION	4
III. TABLE OF CONTENTS	5
IV. LIST OF TABLES	7
V. CHAPTERS	
CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH OVERVIEW	
1.1 Research background	9
1.2 Problem statement	12
1.3 Research Objectives	14
1.4 Research Questions	15
1.5 Significance of the study	16
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1 Defining Cult Films and Their Characteristics	18
2.2 Youth Culture and Media Consumption in Asia	21
2.3 The Cultural Impact of Asian Cult Films	24
2.4 Factors Contributing to the Shift from Mainstream to Cult Films	27
2.5 Uses and Gratifications Theory & Social Identity Theory	30
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	
3.1. Research Approach (Quantitative Research)	33

	6
3.2. Sampling Design	34
3.3. Questionnaire Design	35
CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	
4.1. Section A: Demographic Analysis	37
4.2. Section B: Film Watching Habits Analysis	40
4.3. Section C: Awareness and Interest in Cult Films Analysis	42
4.4. Section D: Perception of Cultural Impact Analysis	46
4.5. Section E: Reasons for Fascination Change Analysis	49
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	
5.1. Discussion	57
5.2. Research Limitations	60
5.3. Conclusion	62
VI. REFERENCES	64
Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire	69
Appendix B: Grading and Comment Sheet	78

LIST OF TABLES

Tables	
1. Table A1: Gender	37
2. Table A2: Age	37
3. Table A3: Race	38
4. Table A4: Current Status	38
5. Table B1: Frequency of Watching Movies	40
6. Table B2: Preferred Platforms for Watching Movies	40
7. Table B3: Types of Movies Watched	41
8. Table C1: Awareness of Cult Films	42
9. Table C2: How Participants Became Aware of Cult Films	42
10. Table C3: Familiar in Cult Films	43
11. Table C4: Interest in Cult Films	44
12. Table C5: Opinions on Asian Cult Films	45
13. Table D1: Influence of Cult Films on Attitudes	46
14. Table D2: Influence of Cult Films on Daily Behavior	47
15. Table D3: Popularity of Cult Films in Social Circles	47
16. Table E1: Reasons for Choosing Cult Films Over Mainstream	49
Films	
17. Table E2: Narrative Style of Cult Films	50

18. Table E3: Visual Style of Cult Films	50
19. Table E4: Interest in Cult Films Due to Their Niche	51
20. Table E5: Popularity of Asian Cult Films	52
21. Table E6: Recommendation of Asian Cult Films	53
22. Table E7: Need for Mainstream Recognition	53
23. Table E8: Contribution to Cultural Identity	54
24. Table E9: Positive Influence on Young Generations	55
25. Table E10: Negative Impact on Society	56

CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

1.1 Research background

Asian cult films have experienced a significant surge in popularity among young generation in Asia and around the world. What is unique about Asian cult films compared to mainstream film production is that they tend not to be market-driven or even disdainful of mainstream reviews. Such films usually feature unique shooting techniques, bizarre themes, eccentric styles, strong personal opinions, and controversial nature. They go beyond what Hollywood allows and belong to a rebellious subculture outside of mainstream cinema. This kind of low-cost, bad-tasting niche movie is often loved by niche groups on special occasions such as "midnight shows" (Li, 2020/2020).

Often deviating from mainstream film conventions, these films offer a fresh perspective that resonates with a younger generation seeking more diversity, authenticity, freedom to pursue self-worth, and content that is unique to the point of breaking boundaries. Therefore, the movie-watching preferences of contemporary young people have changed to a certain extent. In particular, Asian young people have attracted a large number of fans from the subculture, vintage and millennium that have resurrected in recent years. They also choose movies from the mainstream. Films turned to niche works with unique styles and themes.

It's worth noting, however, that not all cult films are low-budget, crude productions. A very small number of cult films have been accepted by the public due to factors such as

excellent production and profound thoughts, and have become classics in film history. For example, Star Wars began as a successful cult film and later became a globally recognized science fiction epic.

Asian cult films often contain elements of horror, fantasy, violence, erotica, queer or dark humor, paired with a unique, sometimes crude, visual style that reflects the cultural context they represent. This trend encourages young generations to view these films not just as entertainment, but as a means of self-expression, connection, and identity.

Asian cult films possess many subversive cultural narratives on the defying and redefining of traditional values and culture in general. It is not only a cultural mash-up of the director's own investigations with people's identities, more speaks to the generation in English-speaking markets, showcasing the global influence of cult films.

The unique outlook on unconventional cultural narratives that is portrayed in these movies in a way shapes the values and actions of young people. Cult movies tend to attract young generation's audiences with alternative identities and sense of belonging because of unique methods of storytelling and different forms of visual representation. Such movies for numerous enthusiasts serve to fill vacancy of what can often be a very formulaic storytelling of mass media movies, allowing for sensitive topics that are often ignored or are the subject of censorship to be explored. For example, The strong visual identity and depth of subject matter of Japanese and Korean cult films have found their place in the Asian and global markets emphasizing the cultural elements embedded in them. And the internet enhances this bond as the younger generation can join online communities and fan pages of cult films (Li, 2020/2020). These popular digital spaces

develop a sense of commonality and belonging among fans of cult films and further expand the effect and beyond the screen of such films from just literally watching them to determining some aspects of lifestyle, language, fashion, and social behavior.

With this phenomenon in mind, culturally it is pertinent to the young generation in Asia as a whole to study the effects Asian cult film has on Asian society and the impetus behind the increasing number of people who prefer cult films over mainstream cinema. These films are thus the impetus in this study, we aim to interrogate how these films shape cultural norms and behaviors and the drivers of a trend that the young generation are communally going after niche cult films.

Also with this research being thought of Asian cult films which are outside orthodox narratives, aesthetics and cultural expressions will catch the generation looking for media that both represents their existence/value. Implications of the study are significant in relation to a more globalized world, where young people are exposed to wide spectrum of cultural expressions and seek media resonate and reflective of their identity. Understanding these motivations helps to know the parts Asian cult films play in the formation and reinforcement of cultural identity for young Asian generation.

1.2 Problem statement

As cult films are spreading among young generation, they are gradually transforming the conventional values and affecting the personal, as well as social, identities of the younger generations throughout Asia. They are choosing to move away from mainstream films in favor of niche, culturally resonant works. The specific ways in which these Asian cult films influence youth culture and contribute to this shift in preferences have not been discussed in existing research. Cult films often deal with issues that deviate from social norms or depict marginal characters that deviate from social norms, which are increasingly attractive to young people in Asia. Contemporary young people find themselves, see themselves, and find people in these niche cultures.

People are increasingly pursuing these marginal cultures, but there is limited understanding of the specific cultural impact of Asian cult films on young generation. How these films shape and influence the cultural perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of young Asians has not been fully explored. In addition, the factors that drive the shift from mainstream to marginal films remain unclear. Do young generation find a deeper sense of identity or community in the cult film fan base? What specific elements of Asian cult films resonate with young generation? Is it their distinct visual style or unconventional narrative techniques that draw viewers in? Or do these films offer a form of cultural representation often missing from mainstream films?

These issues are the subject of considerable debate, yet the influence of this trend on youth culture, particularly on their values, social interactions, and expressions of identity,

is sometimes overlooked. This study try to seeks fill this gap by exploring the cultural impact of Asian cult films. It will figure out the determinants of the shift in viewing preferences in trends among Asian young generation. The more researchers understand these factors, the closer access researchers can get to the emerging cultural terrain and how young Asians are creating their identities through film consumption.

1.3 Research Objective

1. To analyze the cultural impact of Asian cult films on the Asian young generation

The objective of this research is to discover how Asian cult films influenced the culture perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of youth in Asia. To examining what the core appeal elements of these cult films is for the young generation and find out how this influences into their lives, fashion, a language and socialization.

2. To investigate the shift in the Asian young generation's preferences from mainstream films to marginal Asian cult films

The objective here is to analyze the reasons for the increased interest of the young generation in niche Asian cult movies over mainstream movies. The research attempts to describe what elements lead to this polarization from off-beat telling to striking visual style and representation of culture or identity, religion, and community in general of cult film fandom to discuss.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How do Asian cult films impact the cultural perceptions and attitudes like in the daily lives, fashion choices, language, and social behaviors of young generation in Asia?

2. What factors contribute to Asian young generation preference for marginal Asian cult films over mainstream films?

1.5 Significance of the study

The researchers said that through this study, they hope to understand the growing influence of Asian cult films on young generation across Asia and the broader cultural impact of this shift in media preferences. From a cultural perspective, the researchers want to gain a deeper understanding of the formation of young people's identity and social identity in today's rapidly evolving cultural environment by studying how cult films shape the cultural perceptions, behaviors, and social interactions of Asian youth. As cult films enter the public eye and even become more popular, these films are becoming a key influencer for young people to express themselves, find communities, and cope with the complexity of modern cultural identities.

In this study, the researchers attempted to explore the factors that lead young people to turn away from mainstream films and turn to marginalized niche films. Understanding this shift is valuable for the film and media industries seeking to more effectively attract young generation. By identifying elements such as non-traditional narratives, unique visual aesthetics, and cultural representations as key attractions, this study provides some insights from a cultural perspective, which is hoped to provide reference for other content creation strategies that need to be studied in the future to attract the interests and values of young generation.

The researchers hope that through this study, people's understanding of how media consumption affects Asian youth culture, including how cult films influence fashion, language, and social behavior. By focusing on a specific, under explored genre, this study highlights the role of alternative media in shaping cultural attitudes and fostering

communities, as well as the role of media as a powerful tool for identity formation and cultural expression. It also explores a growing trend that reflects broader cultural changes in Asian societies. Researchers hope that this study helps to contribute to cultural studies and media studies as well as sociology meanwhile giving a worthwhile reflection of how marginalized films like cult films influence the wider cultural identity representation and belonging.

Through the appeal of cult films to a young generation, this research offers key insights for both filmmakers and marketers, as well as media platforms about changing audience likes motivations. This is very important for informing what type of content should be produced that speaks to today's generation. For cultural scholars, this research increases researchers' understanding of youth culture and media, it can indicate the factors that lead to young people's cult films and related cognitive and behavioral shifts.

And then the social importance of this study comes through in investigating how cult films provide not only places for marginalized forms of expression but also create communities in which young people can 'belong,' reinforcing values, experiences, and identities that exist outside of mainstream culture. Such observations could be advantageous for educators, mental health professionals, and community leaders to guide them in learning today's youth complex and more uniquely surf them for engagement.

In brief, this research contributes not only enriches our understanding of media consumption among young Asians but also offers a fresh perspective on Asia's evolving cultural identities profound the rapid process of globalization.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Defining Cult Films and Their Characteristics

Cult films have long captivated dedicated fan communities distinguished by repeated viewings, ritualistic behaviors, and a sense of shared identity (Kinkade & Katovich, 1992, pp. 191–209). Such movies often break conventional cinematic norms and contain non-mainstream narratives, sympathetic deviance, and the challenges of authority that deeply resonate with generations who seek alternative narratives outside the mainstream (Kinkade & Katovich, 1992, pp. 191–209). A “cult film” is nevertheless a blurry term, with scholars debating around elements of production, exhibition, narrative form, and viewer engagement (Sconce & Jancovich, 2003). At the core of cult cinema is its distinct aesthetic and resistance to traditional storytelling—qualities that set it apart from mainstream media. For example, cult films frequently represent disability as a “freakish” spectacle as freak show material that draws on fraught history and manipulates the viewer's relationship toward these images (Church, 2011). Through their conscious foregrounding of the taboo, these movies generate new sites in which artists can touch upon societal norms and subvert cultural values (Joe et al., 2008).

Despite the genre's inherent resistance to mainstream culture, the digital age has brought cult films closer to general generation, challenging their traditional status as underground or obscure phenomena (Joe et al., 2008). This shift, driven by streaming platforms and digital accessibility, blurs the lines between mainstream and cult media (Sconce & Jancovich, 2003). While some view the mainstreaming of cult films as a loss

of subcultural distinction, others see this trend as an opportunity for the genre to expand its influence. Cult films and television shows continue to address societal taboos, providing minority perspectives that promote critical thinking and foster social change (Swarnakar, 2024; Pearson, 2014). They invite active participation from fans who contribute to “alternative economies” by producing and exchanging fan-created artifacts like artwork and merchandise (Carter, 2018). As cult media becomes more accessible, a "mainstreaming" discourse has emerged among scholar-fans who express nostalgia for the genre's early, harder-to-access forms, seeing them as a way to resist rapid societal changes (Hills, 2014). While cult films may have limited initial financial returns, their enduring impact and influence on the cultural landscape are undeniable (Swarnakar, 2024).

In Asia, cult films have gained substantial traction among younger generation, shaping cultural perceptions and challenging the dominance of mainstream media. Asian cult cinema is distinct, often incorporating supernatural themes, social critique, and historical allegory that resonate deeply with regional generation. For example, horror and folklore elements in Southeast Asian cult films tap into cultural heritage and shared anxieties, fostering a cultural dialogue that appeals to young viewers seeking both relatability and provocation. This shift from mainstream to cult cinema reflects a broader desire for authenticity, creativity, and a willingness to question traditional values. Through daring storytelling and distinct visual stylings, the Asian cult film is the scaffolding for finding alternative identities, subverting norms and community for some younger generation audiences who do not belong anywhere.

Asian cult cinema affects more than entertainment, it informs a whole array of youth culture—attire and even language as well as behavior. Through aesthetic choices, epic lines, or symbolic motifs these films enter the “self-expression” of youth and become part of a nascent cultural lexicon. This fascination allows young people to critique, experiment with, and affirm their identities in ways less constrained by mainstream expectations. Issues in Japanese cult films, for example, revolve around alienation and societal friction which are of particular interest to the young viewers grappling with these kinds of problems, just as themes in Korean cult films addressing social inequality speak directly to youth with these real-world challenges.

The increasing commercial visibility of Asian cult films challenges their past status as niche or subcultural. Social media and streaming platforms have made these once-hidden films accessible to a wider generation hopefully prompting contemporary critical engagement around how cult cinema can still be marked by its difference when located within a mainstream aesthetic. Asian cult films, therefore reflecting both resistance to the mainstream and an expression for young people through such a communal identity offer an outlet for representation as well as self-expression.

Lastly, the pull of Asian cult cinema also reflects a cultural shift: the young generation not just consumers but active pickers will select where media is right for them and then use it as guidance and interpretation or navigation on their journey through life. Thus Asian cult films still hang in what you might call a precarious but effective equilibrium between rebellion and Reich and popularity, individual identity, and community-building.

2.2 Youth Culture and Media Consumption in Asia

Youth culture and media consumption in Asia showcase a dynamic interaction between global influences and local values. Young people in the region are actively reshaping their identities through media, participating in both global consumer trends and local forms of social activism (Rodrigues & Smail, 2008). This media engagement is evident in the widespread popularity of East Asian pop culture (Kim, 2008), as well as the cross-border appeal of TV dramas. Asian youth subcultures reflect an intricate blend of global trends and cultural traditions, seen in the adaptation of styles and themes such as Rastafarian, punk, and Bollywood influences in countries like Indonesia and India (Beazley & Chakraborty, 2008). The Asian media landscape is thus continuously shaped by globalization, regional cultural flows, and local adaptations, creating a space where young people negotiate evolving identities.

The rapid evolution of youth culture and media in Asia is further fueled by digital technologies and shifting social dynamics. In East Asia, young generation have developed new ways of engaging with subcultures like manga and anime, prioritizing character over narrative and fostering online communication within fandoms. With the rise of on-demand streaming services, binge-watching has become a common practice among teens, creating new patterns of engagement with visual media (Martin, 2015). Additionally, social media platforms have taken on a crucial role in promoting civic participation and political awareness, especially among youth in countries like Indonesia and Pakistan, who increasingly use these platforms to advocate for social change. These trends are emblematic of the global nature of youth culture, with Central, Southern, and Eastern

Asia hosting the largest youth populations globally . The evolving youth culture across Asia presents both challenges and opportunities for social cohesion, political engagement, and cultural expression.

The impact of East Asian pop culture on regional identity and cultural exchange has been especially large in the last 20 years or so. The "soft power" cultural influence through this has gone beyond language and borders in East Asia, fostering both globalizing and regionalizing tendencies (Wee, 2016). Nevertheless even in pop culture national interests may restrict the space for media transcending borders between Asias which means regional integration is ongoing, and local tastes and traditions continue to hold strong.

In recent years, the popularity of Asian cult films among the young generation has brought a new dimension to the media landscape. Unlike mainstream films, which tend to emphasize universally accessible narratives and commercial appeal, Asian cult films provide distinctive cultural commentary, frequently incorporating supernatural elements, societal critique, or historical allegory. This authenticity and raw creativity resonate with young viewers who increasingly seek media that reflects their own cultural experiences and personal values. The shift from mainstream cinema to cult films represents a growing desire for media that offers not just entertainment but also avenues for self-exploration and community-building. Through unconventional storytelling and bold visual aesthetics, Asian cult films allow young viewers to question societal norms and explore alternative identities, appealing to those who feel alienated by mainstream media's standard narratives.

The influence of Asian cult films is the use of young people and cult films are a self-reflexive critique, a place to experiment with thresholds and the limits of where a person can enter according to their identity in search for a subculture that would both justify and validate the lifestyle they swiftly defined. The commodification of Asian cult films through the provisions of digital and social media amplifies their perceived marginal or subcultural status. In light of these more widespread having-broadcast-by platforms, the cult film certainly did enjoy wider visibility, which is good for it but also to some extent threatens its reinforcement as an underground shows stock shelf. Cult films in the young generation almost feel mainstream now, so how do they maintain their uniqueness and everything that made them different from the masses for things to be “cool”? Cult films appeal to Asian youth in a way that mainstream media does not, with the cultural identity, personal beliefs, and, distaste for generic yet banal storytelling. The fascination move into cult cinema also indicates a larger cultural change for all youth in Asia as the next generation of this continent not only consumes media but turns it into theirs, using it as a platform to give and express identity.

2.3 The Cultural Impact of Asian Cult Films

The cultural impact of Asian cult films has been profound, especially as they gain traction in Western markets. Martin (2015) highlights the role of strategic marketing, particularly through Metro Tartan's "Asia Extreme" brand, which was pivotal in establishing East Asian cult cinema in the UK. This brand promoted films such as Japanese horror and South Korean thrillers that broke traditional cinematic norms, often provoking intense audience reactions and introducing Western viewers to new storytelling modes. Such targeted marketing strategies not only expanded the films' reach but also altered cultural perceptions, presenting East Asian cinema as an exotic and intense departure from Western norms.

The impact of Asian cult films also lies in their ability to foster dedicated fan communities and influence audience identities. Jancovich (2002) explores how cult film fans construct unique identities around their perceived divergence from mainstream cinema, deriving a sense of distinction from their engagement with these films. Similarly, Fai Leung (2009) delves into the transnational connections fostered by East Asian cinema, discussing how remakes, genre evolution, and cross-cultural influences have created a network of interwoven cinematic styles and themes. These transnational connections underscore how Asian cult films have not only gained international recognition but also shaped global media landscapes, influencing how generation around the world view non-Western narratives.

The influence of Asian cult media extends beyond film, permeating other areas of East Asian media culture. Chua and Iwabuchi (2008) examine the global appeal of

Korean TV dramas, which have helped establish a broader East Asian media presence worldwide. This popularity has allowed Asian media to challenge cultural stereotypes and introduce new forms of storytelling, creating a space where Asian cultural elements gain visibility and significance in global pop culture. The transnational flow of East Asian media, therefore, exemplifies how Asian cult films and television are not only expanding their fan bases but also reshaping cultural distinctions and contributing to global conversations on identity, belonging, and cultural hybridity.

Asian cult cinema's appeal also resonates strongly among younger generations in Asia. For example, Bollywood cult films have made substantial contributions to Indian society by tackling taboo topics, sparking dialogue on social issues, and often inspiring cultural movements (Swarnakar, 2024). The transnational reception of Bollywood as a form of cult cinema has given rise to "cult cosmopolitanism," a concept proposed by Smith (2016) that highlights the cosmopolitan embrace of cultural difference. This phenomenon has allowed Asian youth to engage with media that reflects their own social realities, providing a platform for alternative narratives that resonate more deeply than those found in mainstream media.

However, while Asian cult films are celebrated for their cultural specificity, they also encounter challenges in global markets. Wang et al. (2020) explore how cultural distance affects the performance of East Asian films in European box offices. They found that while content specificity, such as local cultural references, can hinder success due to unfamiliarity, aesthetic specificity, like visual style, can actually bridge cultural gaps, suggesting that distinct cinematic aesthetics might help Asian cult films appeal to

international generation despite cultural differences. This duality emphasizes that while Asian cult films thrive on their unique cultural attributes, their global impact depends on balancing specificity with cross-cultural accessibility.

Asian cult films have an outstanding cultural impact on youth culture because such movies offer the young generation different stories and views from the typical mainstream cinema. The emergent youth in Asia seems to be turning its attention to cult films as a form of self-expression, identity, and community. Such film aligns with the values and social critique of youth culture, in which they can play out their identities and legitimize social movements that moment mark the relationship between personal and public selves. Through involvement with these films, young people may challenge expectations from society, test out a different self-presentation, and construct new social norms through a mix of traditional and modern values. The capture of Asian youth culture by cult cinema then emerges as a major cultural re-orientation in which the margins rather than the center — become the terrain for normalizing media that are consonant with refiguring identities.

2.4 Factors Contributing to the Shift from Mainstream to Cult Films

The shift from mainstream to cult films among young generation is influenced by a variety of social, technological, and cultural factors. Technological advancements, such as streaming services and social media, have made cult films far more accessible than before, allowing generation across the globe to explore niche genres that were previously harder to find. While some argue that this accessibility diminishes the mystique and subcultural capital traditionally associated with cult cinema Hills, 2014, pp. 100–121; Edward R. Schmidtke M.A., 2010, pp. 111–112), it has also enabled cult films to challenge societal norms and promote alternative viewpoints, resonating deeply with young generation who seek media that reflect their diverse perspectives and rebellious spirit (Swarnakar, 2024). Cult films often depict unconventional or marginalized perspectives, including the representation of disability as a spectacle, which reflects underlying issues of stigmatization and complex viewer dynamics (Church, 2011). Such portrayals not only attract attention but provoke dialogue, allowing viewers to confront difficult topics that mainstream films may avoid.

The broader 'mainstreaming' discourse surrounding cult cinema reflects a resistance to the rapid cultural and technological shifts in modern media consumption, where fans seek continuity with past media experiences to maintain a sense of identity (Hills, 2014, pp. 100–121). Cult film fans, in particular, often cherish the exclusivity and unique aesthetics of cult cinema, building identities around their loyalty to these unconventional narratives and using these films as a platform to question mainstream values. Despite their lower financial returns, cult films have a lasting cultural influence, sparking social

movements and even shaping the careers of both filmmakers and actors by offering a more authentic and unfiltered view of society's fringes (Swarnakar, 2024). The evolving landscape of digital media has only broadened the appeal of cult cinema, encouraging young people to engage with films that provide alternative perspectives and challenge dominant narratives (Edward R. Schmidtke M.A., 2010, pp. 111–112).

This blurring boundary between cult and mainstream cinema is also evident in how certain mainstream productions incorporate cult aesthetics to broaden their appeal. For instance, *Fifty Shades of Grey* deliberately fosters multiple viewing modes to attract diverse female generation, exemplifying the commercial adaptation of cult elements for broader consumption (Och, 2019, pp. 213–229). Similarly, movements with radical themes often adapt their ideas to attract wider followings, demonstrating how cult elements can be strategically integrated to resonate with larger generation while retaining their subversive core (Rothut et al., 2024, pp. 49–59). Julia Ducournau's films are a striking example of this blend, merging themes of family ethics with cult aesthetics to create a novel visual language that challenges cinematic conventions (Wang, 2023). This hybridization highlights how cult and mainstream cinema continue to converge, with mainstream films increasingly adopting unconventional narratives and visual styles traditionally associated with cult cinema to offer fresh perspectives that captivate diverse viewers.

For young Asian generation, this cultural shift has been particularly impactful, reflecting a fascination with narratives that deviate from the mainstream and a growing desire to explore media that speak to their unique cultural identities. Asian cult films,

known for their distinctive regional elements, have provided an outlet for young viewers to examine themes of societal critique, historical allegory, and cultural tradition, allowing them to engage with narratives that feel both relevant and radical. The allure of Asian cult cinema lies in its authentic representation of local cultural issues often overlooked by commercial productions, offering young generation a form of self-expression that mainstream media rarely provides.

As Asian youth increasingly gravitate towards cult films, they find a sense of belonging and identity within communities built around these narratives. This shift away from mainstream media parallels broader trends in global youth culture, where individuals seek media that align with their values and lived experiences rather than conforming to commercial entertainment. Asian cult films, with their subversive storytelling and bold aesthetics, give young people an avenue to explore alternative identities, question societal norms, and connect with others who share similar views. This shift from the mainstream to the margins thus represents not only a preference for unique narratives but a deeper cultural phenomenon where young generation use cult cinema as a tool for self-discovery, collective identity, and social critique.

2.5 Uses and Gratifications Theory & Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT) offer valuable frameworks for understanding how individuals categorize themselves into social groups, shaping both their self-concept and inter group behavior (Trepte & Loy, 2017). These theories suggest that people tend to gravitate toward media that reinforces positive portrayals of their in-group, as this alignment with similar identities can strengthen self-perception and group cohesion. In the context of Asian cult films, young viewers may find a sense of belonging by identifying with the themes, characters, and cultural nuances that reflect their values and experiences, which mainstream media often overlooks. The choice of cult films, therefore, can be seen as a way for youth to reinforce social identities that differ from those represented in conventional cinema.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G) provides further insight into the appeal of Asian cult films, proposing that individuals actively choose media to satisfy specific psychological and social needs, such as escapism, information seeking, social interaction, and self-identity (Muhammad, 2018; Child & Haridakis, 2017). Harwood's study on age identification and television viewing found that young adults who watched shows featuring characters of similar age felt stronger identification with their age group (Harwood, 1999). This finding highlights how media selection can reinforce social identity and self-concept. For young Asian generation, the unique gratifications provided by cult films—such as the exploration of marginalized perspectives, rebellion against societal norms, and authentic cultural representation—fulfill their need for media that aligns with their evolving identities and offers a sense of community among like-minded

fans.

While Social Identity Theory focuses on group behavior and self-categorization, Identity Theory also offers a micro-level understanding of how individual self-concepts are influenced by social roles and group affiliations (Stets & Burke, 2000). Integrating SIT with Identity Theory creates a holistic view of self-concept, acknowledging both the broader societal influences and individual motivations in media consumption. This integrated perspective is particularly relevant when examining why young generation may prefer cult films over mainstream options. The unique appeal of cult films—often characterized by non-conformity, subversive themes, and representation of minority voices—allows viewers to express social identities that are unconventional or countercultural. This process of identity affirmation through cult cinema offers a channel for youth to differentiate themselves from mainstream society while finding belonging in a community that shares their values and outlook.

Recent developments in U&G research have identified multiple gratifications for social media use, such as information-seeking, social interaction, and personal identity development (Muhammad, 2018; Farooq, 2022). The theory's application extends to understanding racial and ethnic identity formation, where individuals use media to compare and integrate aspects of their culture into their self-concept (Behm-Morawitz, 2020). This aspect of U&G Theory aligns well with the role of Asian cult films, as these movies often depict culturally specific narratives that resonate with young viewers seeking representations of their heritage. Through media identification and social comparison, these films provide young generation with the tools to explore and express

cultural and ethnic aspects of their identity that are less accessible through mainstream films.

The jump from mainstream to cult cinema is not a mere taste separation from among the young Asian generation, but how they actively seek exposure to a form of media that speaks to who they are — and of their multiple identities being in a way much more complicated. Asian cult movies open a social and cultural space for young audiences to touch alternative values and serve as bind social glue within their fan communities. Consequently, these films are part of the developing youth identity in the region that complements and complicates current social norms by offering a shared belonging. This switch is more deeply considered through the U&G framework, capturing several individually tailored drivers to the appeal of cult cinema, including authenticity, culture, and self-expression which informs how youth harness media to negotiate both a personal and collective identity formation in a rapidly shifting social environment.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Approach (Quantitative Research)

This study will employ a quantitative research design to find out the changing nature of Asian youth cult film fandom and the transition from mainstream to more underseen cinema preferences. Quantitative research seeks to provide deeper explanations of the cultural and psychological processes that underpin media consumption habits. This approach focuses on understanding the underlying motivations, perceptions, and meanings that shape the way Asian youth engage with cult films. And to explore and discover how the films are read within identity, cultural expression, and cultural belonging as well as attempt an analysis based on the impact of these films on youth culture.

This study will obtain structured numerical data via quantitative research methods to empirically determine the cultural importance of Asian cult movies within societal norms, values, desires, and resistance felt among youth. Surveys will be used to measure the quantifiable, ultimately identifying drivers of this cultural pivot.

3.2. Sampling Design

People young adults aged 18-30 who are heavy users of Asian cult films will be the target population of this study. The age group chosen most likely engages subcultures and alternative media formats due to the demographic. This research is on the Urban Youth of Asia. The study participants will be selected by the use of social media, film forums, and fan communities to ensure access to individuals who are actively engaged in cult film cultures.

The study will utilize a purposive sampling technique to select participants with specific characteristics relevant to the research. According to (Nikolopoulou, 2023), purposive sampling is ideal for targeting individuals who have specific knowledge or experiences related to the phenomenon under investigation. In this case, the sample will include 70-80 participants who actively engage with Asian cult films, participate in related online communities, or express an interest in niche cinematic genres. This sample size is considered sufficient to gather diverse perspectives while ensuring that each participant has relevant experience with the subject matter.

3.3. Questionnaire Design

The present study is a quantitative research designed to investigate the cultural impact on young people's preference for mainstream to marginal film tastes in Asian cult films. The survey contains 4 sections (A to E) Equipping each chunk for answering a particular research issue and thus allowing through the closed questions to make use of different types of questions i.e. closed-ended or multiple choice questions to channel structured data.

Section A researcher is going to aid in segmenting the respondents by characteristics like gender, age, race, and current status to give some context for the diversity of the sample.

Section B will look at more general film viewing of participants; frequency, common platforms, and normal genres watched. The purpose of this section is to identify media consumption patterns that are consonant with the study's regional case study subjects in Asian cult films.

Section C will explore participants' awareness of and interest in cult films, as well as their engagement with specific examples. This section aims to measure recognition and attraction to Asian cult films and their cultural relevance.

Section D try to focusing on participants' perceptions of how cult films influence their attitudes, daily behavior, and social circle. This section will helps researcher understand the cultural and social impact of these films.

Section E addresses why participants have shifted their interest from mainstream films to cult films, focusing on specific cultural and aesthetic factors that attract young

viewers to the genre. This section also includes questions about the niche appeal of cult films and their influence on the young generation.

This questionnaire uses a combination of choice questions and multiple-choice questions to collect data on participants' awareness, interest, and perceptions of Asian cult films. The structured nature of the questions ensures clarity and consistency in the responses.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Section A: Demographic Analysis

Gender
(73 条回复)

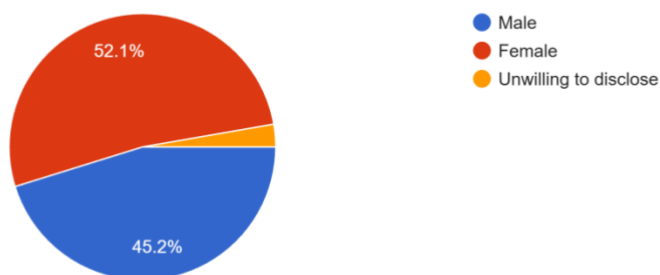


Table A1: Gender

The gender distribution of the 73 participants is shown in Table A1. Among them, 52.1% (38 participants) are female, accounting for the majority, while 45.2% (33 participants) are male. Additionally, a small group of participants 2.7% (2 participants) were unwilling to disclose their gender.

Age
(73 条回复)

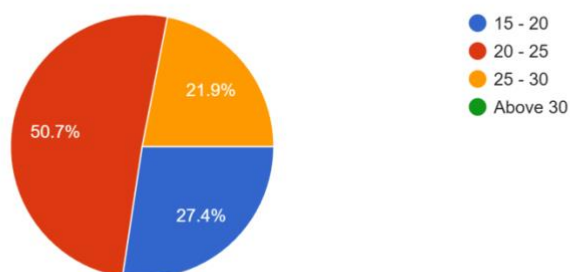


Table A2: Age

Table A2 illustrates the age distribution of participants. The majority of participants,

comprising 50.7% (37 participants), fall into the 20–25 years age group. Following this, 27.4% (20 participants) are in the 15–20 years category. The 25–30 years group represents 21.9% (16 participants), while no participants reported being over 30 years old in this survey.

Race
(73 条回复)

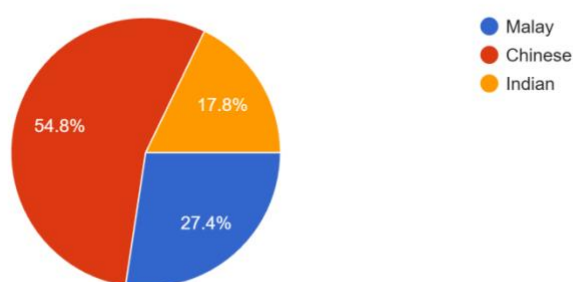


Table A3: Race

The racial distribution is displayed in Table A3. The Chinese group makes up the majority, accounting for 54.8% (40 participants) of the participants. The Malay group follows with 27.4% (20 participants), while the Indian community constitutes 17.8% (13 participants) of the respondents.

Current status
(73 条回复)

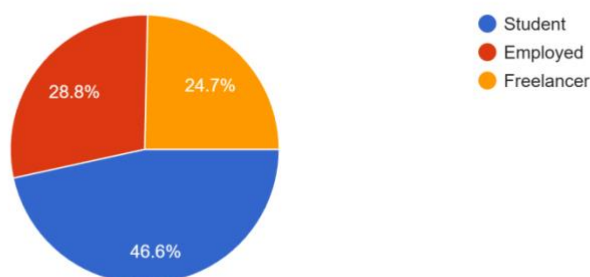


Table A4: Current Status

Table A4 shows the current status of participants. A significant proportion, 46.6% (34 participants) are students, making up the largest group. This is followed by 28.8% (21 participants) are employed. Additionally, 24.7% (18 participants) identify as freelancers.

4.2. Section B: Film Watching Habits Analysis

How often do you watch movies?
(73 条回复)

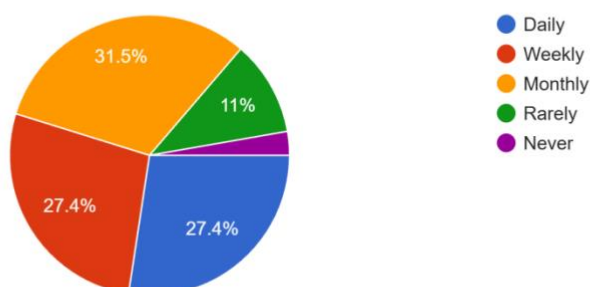


Table B1: Frequency of Watching Movies

The responses from 73 participants reveal that 31.5% (23 participants) watch movies monthly, while 27.4% (20 participants) watch them weekly and another 27.4% (20 participants) watch movies daily. Additionally, 11% (8 participants) watch movies rarely, and a small fraction, 2.7% (2 participants), reported that they never watch movies. Overall, a significant majority of participants watch movies at least monthly, with daily and weekly viewers together accounting for more than half of the responses.

Which platforms do you prefer for watching movies?
(73 条回复)

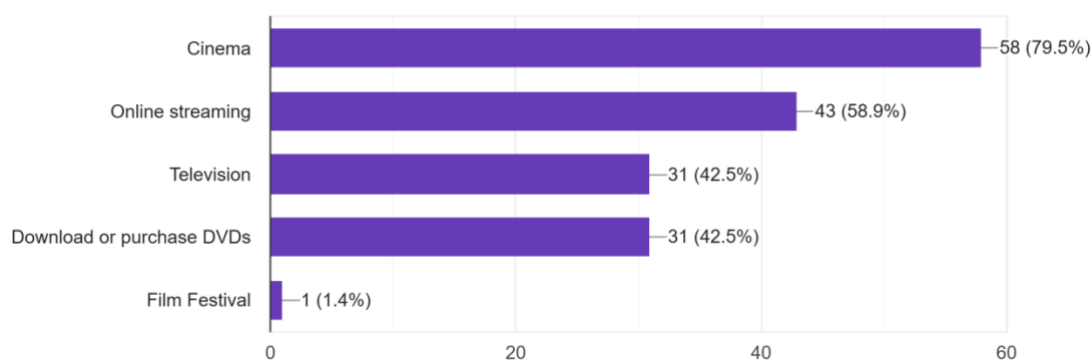


Table B2: Preferred Platforms for Watching Movies

The participants' preferred platforms for watching movies. The cinema emerged as the most popular choice, with 79.5% (58 participants) favoring it, followed by online streaming services at 58.9% (43 participants). Traditional mediums like television and DVDs remain relevant, with 42.5% (31 participants) still using them. In contrast, very few participants (1.4%, or 1 person) attend film festivals, indicating low engagement with this platform.

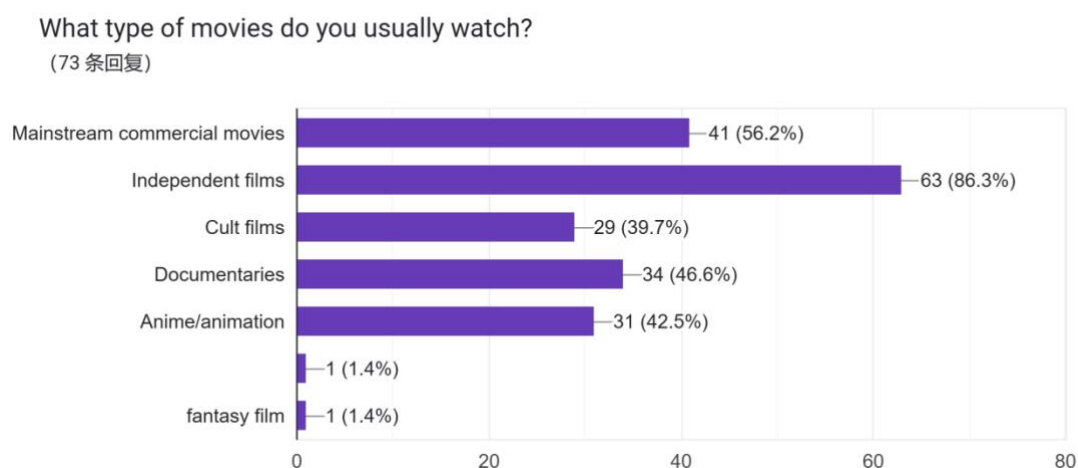


Table B3: Types of Movies Watched

Table B3 reveals participants' movie preferences across various categories. Independent films emerge as the most popular choice, with 86.3% (63 participants) favoring them. Mainstream films follow as the second most-watched category, with 56.2% (41 participants) showing interest, indicating that participants enjoy a mix of both indie and commercial films. Other genres, such as documentaries 46.6% (34 participants), anime/animation 42.5% (31 participants), and cult films 39.7% (29 participants), maintain moderate popularity. In contrast, fantasy films are the least preferred, with only 1.4% (1 participant) indicating interest in this category.

4.3. Section C: Awareness and Interest in Cult Films Analysis

Have you heard of "cult films"?

(73 条回复)

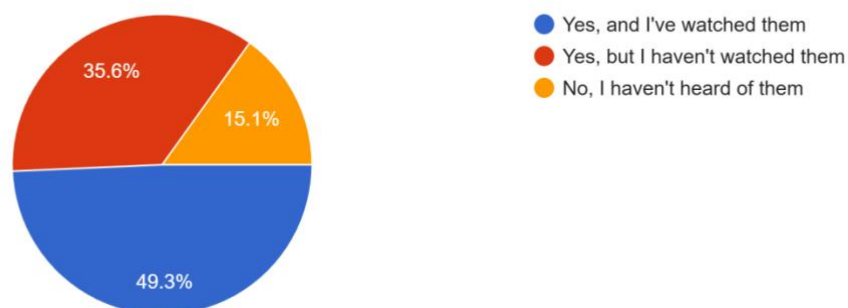


Table C1: Awareness of Cult Films

A majority of participants have at least heard of cult films, reflecting widespread awareness. Among them, 49.3% have both heard of and watched cult films, while 35.6% are aware of cult films but have not watched them. However, 15.1% of participants were unfamiliar with cult films.

How did you first become aware of cult films?

(73 条回复)

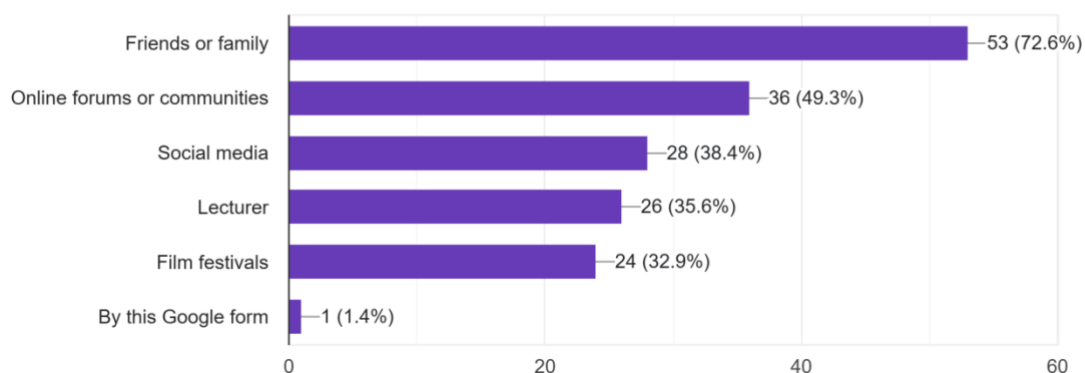


Table C2: How Participants Became Aware of Cult Films

The majority of participants became aware of cult films through friends or family,

with 72.6% (53 participants) citing this as their primary source. Other notable channels include online forums or communities, which accounted for 49.3% (36 participants), and social media at 38.4% (28 participants). Film festivals also contributed to awareness for 32.9% (24 participants), while lecturers were noted by 35.6% (26 participants) and also have 1.4% (1 participants) says know by this Google Form. So personal connections and online communities play a significant role in raising awareness of cult films.

Choose the film you have seen or heard from the list below.

(73 条回复)

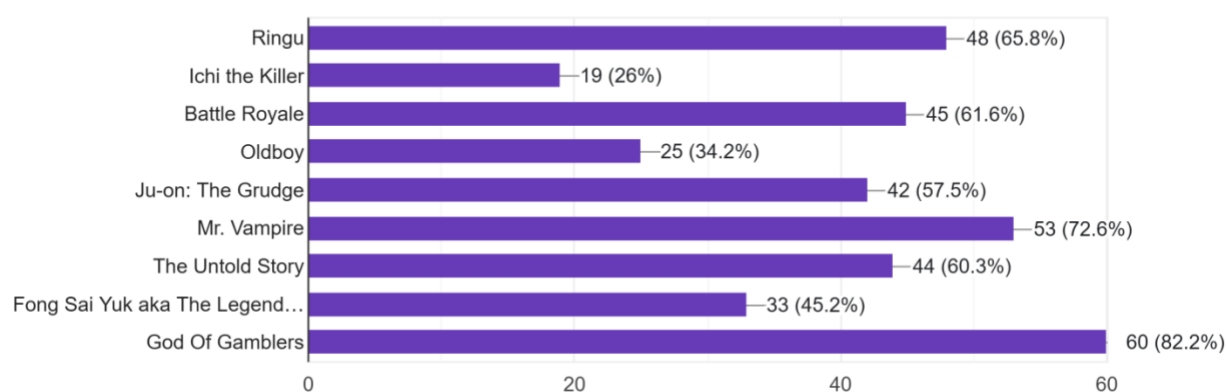


Table C3: Familiar in Cult Films

The data shows that *God of Gamblers* (Wong, 1989) is the most widely recognized cult film, with 82.2% (60 participants) indicating familiarity. It is closely followed by *Mr. Vampire* (Lau, 1985) at 72.6% (53 participants). Other notable titles include *Ringu* (Nakata, 1998) (65.8%, 48 participants), *Battle Royale* (Fukasaku, 2000) (61.6%, 45 participants), and *Ju-on: The Grudge* (Shimizu, 2002) (57.5%, 42 participants), demonstrating their strong popularity among cult film enthusiasts. *The Untold Story* (Yuen, 1993) is familiar to 60.3% (44 participants), while *Fong Sai Yuk* (Yuen, 1993)

(The Legend of Fong Sai Yuk) garnered recognition from 45.2% (33 participants). Meanwhile, *Oldboy* (Chan-wook, 2003) was known to 34.2% (25 participants), and *Ichi the Killer* (Miike, 2001) had the lowest familiarity at 26% (19 participants). Overall, *God of Gamblers* (Wong, 1989) and *Mr. Vampire* (Lau, 1985) stand out as the most widely recognized films, underscoring their iconic status within Asian cult classics.

How are you interested in any of the options you chose in the previous question?
(73 条回复)

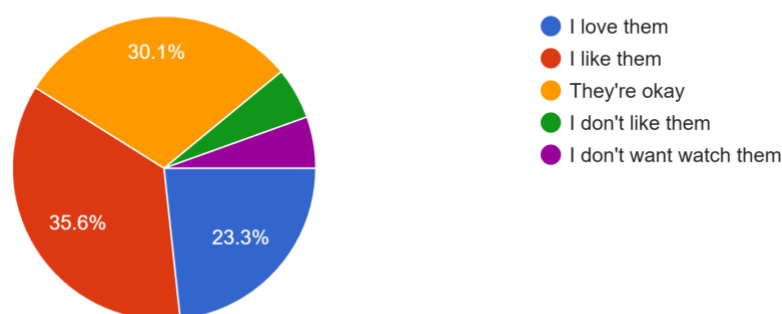


Table C4: Interest in Cult Films

Participants expressed varying levels of interest in cult films, with 23.3% (17 participants) stating they love them and 35.6% (26 participants) indicating they like them. A notable portion, 30.1% (22 participants), feel they are “okay,” while smaller groups either don’t like them 5.5% (4 participants) or don’t want to watch them 5.5% (4 participants). Overall, over half of the participants show a positive interest in cult films, either loving or liking them.

The films listed in question 10 are all Asian cult films. What do you think of them now?
(73 条回复)

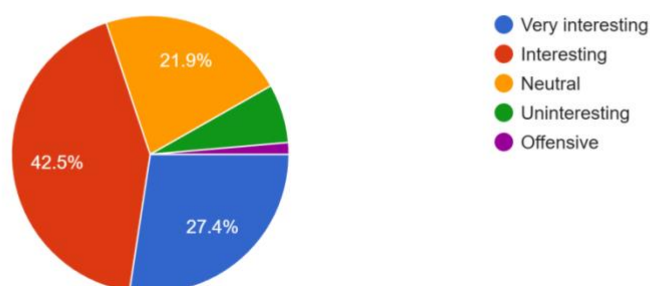


Table C5: Opinions on Asian Cult Films

The responses to the opinions on Asian cult films reveal that most participants have a positive reception towards them. Specifically, 27.4% (20 participants) find them "very interesting," and 42.5% (31 participants) find them "interesting." A smaller portion, 21.9% (16 participants), are neutral, while 6.8% (5 participants) find them "uninteresting," and 1.4% (1 participant) consider them "offensive." Overall, the majority of participants view Asian cult films as either "interesting" or "very interesting," indicating a strong favorable response.

4.4. Section D: Perception of Cultural Impact Analysis

Do you think those cult films influence your attitude?

(73 条回复)

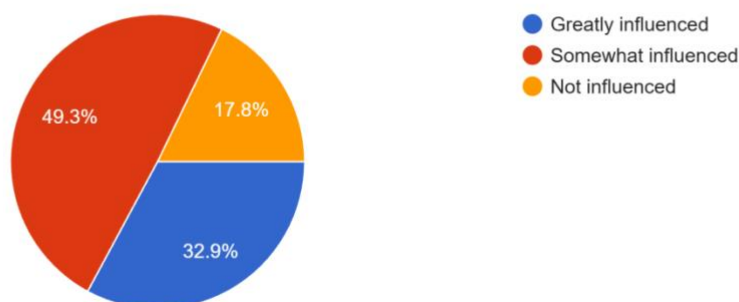


Table D1: Influence of Cult Films on Attitudes

Table D1 shows the influence of cult films on attitudes among participants. A significant portion, 32.9% (24 participants), reported being greatly influenced, indicating that such films resonate deeply with some viewers and potentially align with their personal beliefs or perspectives. Nearly half of the respondents, 49.3% (36 participants), indicated being somewhat influenced, suggesting a moderate impact that does not strongly alter their core beliefs. Meanwhile, 17.8% (13 participants) reported no influence, reflecting a level of indifference toward the themes or messages conveyed in cult films.

Do you think cult films will influence your daily behavior?

(73 条回复)

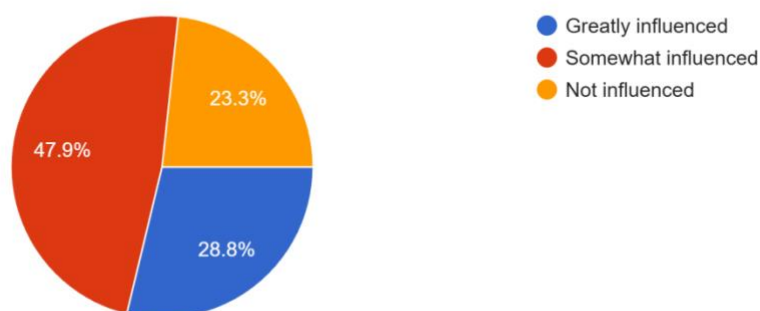


Table D2: Influence of Cult Films on Daily Behavior

28.8% (21 participants) feel that cult films significantly impact their daily actions, suggesting that these films may inspire certain behaviors or habits. Meanwhile, 47.9% (35 participants) report being somewhat influenced, indicating that the impact is present but less direct or tangible. There is a discrepancy between what people watch and how they live their lives, though, as 23.3% of respondents (17 participants) claim that cult movies have no influence on their everyday activities.

How popular are cult films in your social circle?

(73 条回复)

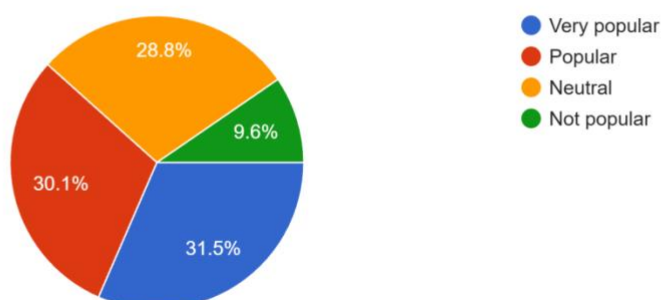


Table D3: Popularity of Cult Films in Social Circles

Table D3 highlights the popularity of cult films in people's social circles. Cult films are considered very popular by 31.5% (23 participants), reflecting a strong shared interest and influence among peers. Similarly, 30.1% (22 participants) find them generally well-liked, indicating a consistent presence in social discussions. Meanwhile, 28.8% (21 participants) remain neutral, suggesting that cult films, while present, are not a dominant topic of their social environment. Finally, 9.6% (7 participants) view them as not popular, demonstrating limited interest within specific groups.

4.5. Section E: Reasons for Fascination Change Analysis

Why do you choose cult films over mainstream films?

(73 条回复)

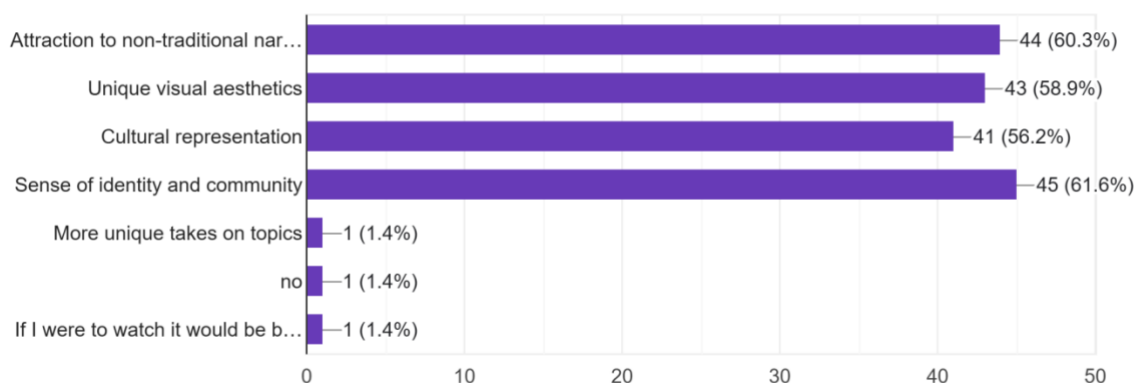


Table E1: Reasons for Choosing Cult Films Over Mainstream Films

The reasons for choosing cult films over mainstream films are primarily centered around personal connection and originality. The most common reason, cited by 61.6% (45 participants), is the sense of identity and community that cult films provide, allowing viewers to connect emotionally and feel a sense of belonging. Following closely, 60.3% (44 participants) are drawn to the non-traditional narratives that cult films offer, appreciating their originality and distinctive storytelling. Additionally, 58.9% (43 participants) are attracted to the unique visual aesthetics of cult films, valuing their artistic and unconventional style. Cultural representation also plays a significant role, with 56.2% (41 participants) appreciating the diverse perspectives presented in these films. Only a small fraction mentioned new things as their reasons for choosing cult films.

How do you find the narrative style of cult films?

(73 条回复)

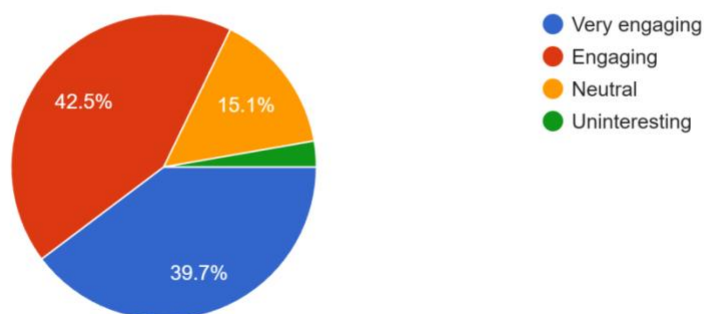


Table E2: Narrative Style of Cult Films

The narrative style of cult films is generally well-received by participants. A significant 42.5% (31 participants) find the storytelling "engaging," while 39.7% (29 participants) consider it "very engaging," indicating that a large portion of the respondents highly appreciate the narrative depth. A smaller group, 15.1% (11 participants), feels neutral toward the narrative style, and only 2.7% (2 participants) find it "uninteresting." This suggests that the majority of participants enjoy the storytelling in cult films, highlighting the overall appeal of their narrative style.

How do you find the visual style of cult films?

(73 条回复)

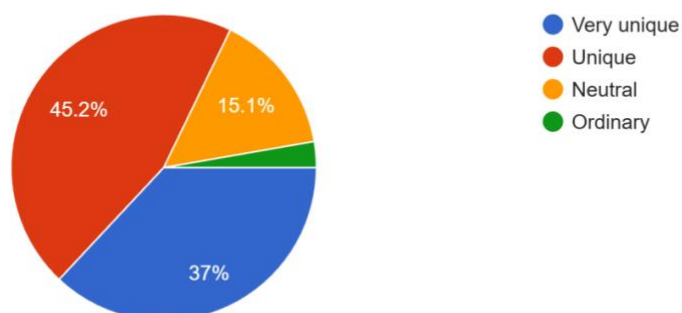


Table E3: Visual Style of Cult Films

The responses regarding the visual style of cult films highlight a general admiration for their artistic uniqueness. The majority of participants 45.2% (33 participants) consider the visuals of cult films to be "unique," while 37% (27 participants) strongly believe they are "very unique," reflecting a high level of appreciation for their creativity and distinctiveness. A smaller portion 15.1% (11 participants) expressed a neutral view, indicating a moderate level of appreciation. Only 2.7% (2 participants) found the visuals to be "ordinary," suggesting that the visual style of cult films is largely regarded as distinctive and impressive.

Are you interested in this type of film because it's niche?
(73 条回复)

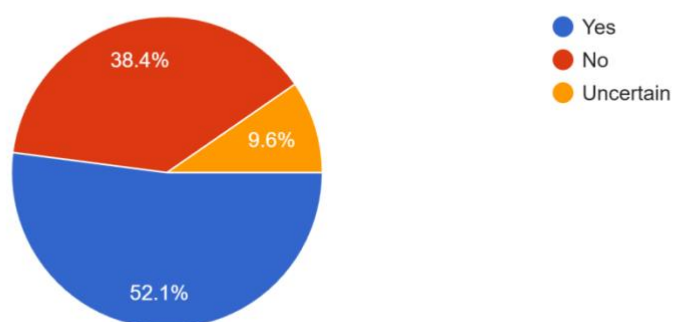


Table E4: Interest in Cult Films Due to Their Niche

The responses regarding interest in cult films due to their niche reveal that over half of the participants, 52.1% (38 participants) are drawn to cult films specifically because they belong to a niche category, offering a unique alternative to mainstream films. However, a significant portion 38.4% (28 participants) is not influenced by the niche

factor, suggesting their interest in cult films is based on other qualities. A smaller group 9.6% (7 participants) is uncertain about the role the niche appeal plays in their interest, indicating a more neutral stance.

Do you think many people like Asian cult films ?
(73 条回复)

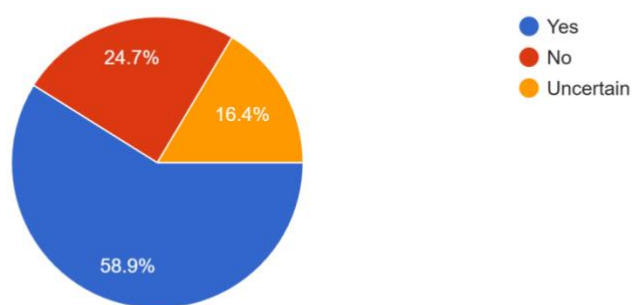


Table E5: Popularity of Asian Cult Films

The majority of respondents, 58.9% (43 participants), believe that many people enjoy Asian cult films, suggesting a positive perception of their appeal to a broader audience. However, 24.7% (18 participants) disagree, indicating that they do not think these films are widely liked. Meanwhile, 16.4% (12 participants) are uncertain about the popularity of Asian cult films, reflecting a neutral stance on the subject.

Would you recommend Asian cult films to your friends?

(73 条回复)

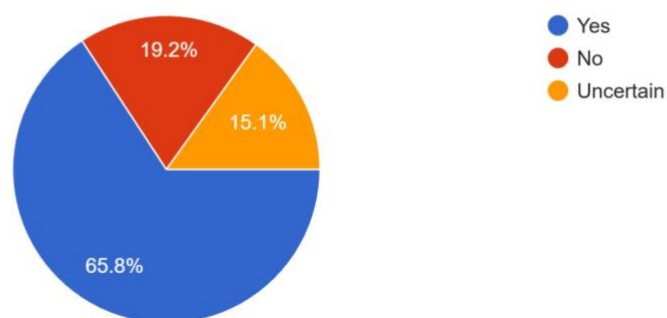


Table E6: Recommendation of Asian Cult Films

The majority of respondents, 65.8% (48 participants), indicated that they would recommend Asian cult films to their friends. In contrast, 19.2% (14 participants) stated they would not recommend them, while 15.1% (11 participants) were uncertain about making such a recommendation. This suggests a generally positive inclination towards recommending Asian cult films, with a smaller group expressing uncertainty or a negative stance.

Do you think cult films need more mainstream recognition?

(73 条回复)

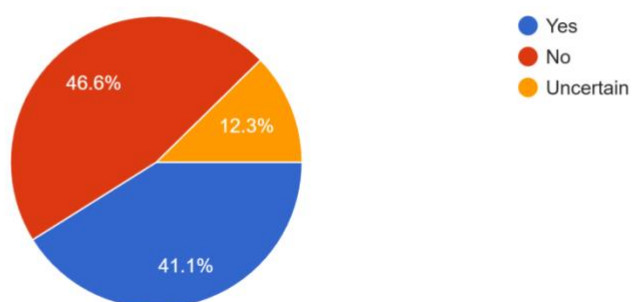


Table E7: Need for Mainstream Recognition

The data shows a more divided opinion among respondents regarding whether cult

films need more mainstream recognition. While 41.1% (30 participants) believed that cult films do require greater mainstream attention, a slightly larger percentage, 46.6% (34 participants), felt that they do not need such increased recognition. Additionally, 12.3% (9 participants) expressed uncertainty on this issue. This indicates that there is no overwhelming consensus on this topic. Rather, people hold a range of perspectives, with a small majority opposing the idea of cult films receiving more mainstream acknowledgment, while a sizable minority supports greater recognition for this film genre.

Do you think cult films contribute to cultural diversity?
(73 条回复)

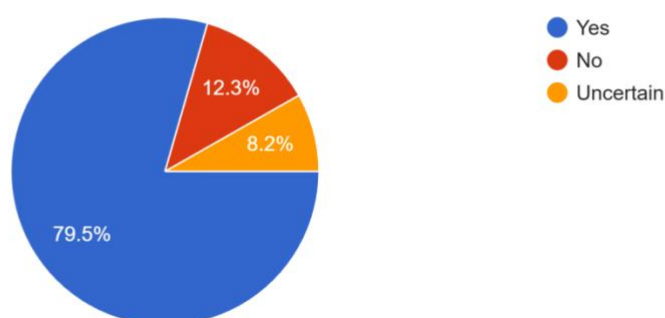


Table E8: Contribution to Cultural Identity

The survey results show that 79.5% (58 participants) believe cult films positively influence cultural diversity, recognizing their role in broadening perspectives and exposing audiences to unconventional art. In contrast, 12.3% (9 participants) disagreed, feeling cult films have a limited impact on mainstream cultural awareness. Additionally,

8.2% (6 participants) expressed uncertainty, possibly due to unfamiliarity with the genre's cultural impact or a belief that its influence is complex and multifaceted. These responses highlight varying levels of understanding and recognition of cult films' contribution to cultural diversity.

Do you think cult films have a positive influence on young generation?
(73 条回复)

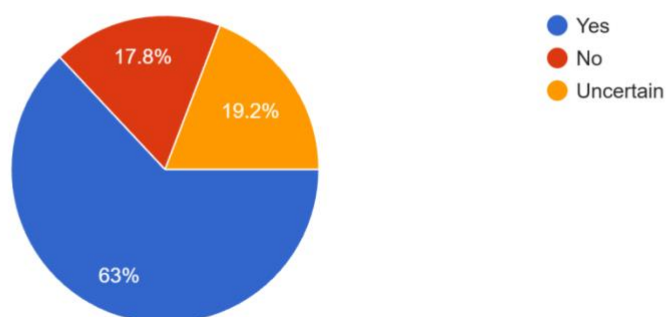


Table E9: Positive Influence on Young Generations

The data shows that 63% (46 participants) believe cult films positively influence young audiences, while 17.8% (13 participants) disagree, and 19.2% (14 participants) are uncertain. This indicates a generally favorable view of their impact, though a notable minority either disagree or are unsure about the effects on younger generations.

Do you think cult films have a negative impact on society?
(73 条回复)

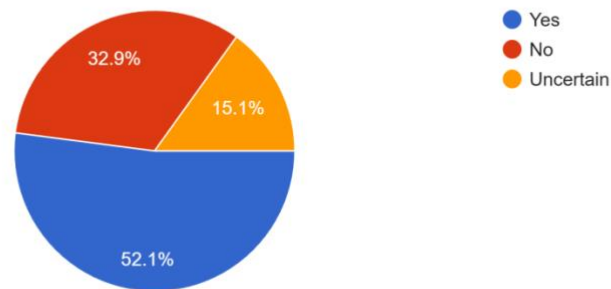


Table E10: Negative Impact on Society

The majority of respondents, 52.1% (38 participants) believe that cult films have a negative impact on society. In contrast, 32.9% (24 participants) disagreed, stating that cult films do not have a negative impact, while 15.1% (11 participants) were uncertain about their societal influence. This suggests that a significant portion of the participants perceive cult films as having a potentially harmful effect on society, although a notable percentage does not share this view.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Discussion

The findings of this study align closely with the research objectives, offering critical insights into the cultural impact of Asian cult films on the younger generation and the shift in their preferences from mainstream to niche films. The survey results reveal that over 61% of participants favor cult films for their unique narratives, visual aesthetics, and cultural representations, which strongly resonates with the objective of identifying the core appeal of these films. This finding parallels existing studies (e.g., (Swarnakar, 2024; Fai Leung, 2009), which argue that cult films engage viewers by challenging societal norms and providing alternative narratives often absent in mainstream cinema.

The study also highlights how Asian cult films influence the cultural perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of young people. For example, over 79% of respondents agreed that these films contribute to cultural diversity, emphasizing their role in broadening perspectives and promoting unconventional artistic expression. This aligns with past research, such as (Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008), which discusses the global appeal of Asian media and its capacity to challenge cultural stereotypes. Additionally, the significant influence of cult films on participants' fashion, language, and social interactions underpins their role as tools for identity formation, a theme widely recognized in media studies (Kim, 2008; Behm-Morawitz, 2020).

Furthermore, findings on the factors driving the shift from mainstream to cult

films—such as the sense of community, authenticity, and cultural representation—support the arguments of (Hills, 2014) and (Edward R. Schmidtke M.A., 2010), who identified similar motivations among cult film audiences globally. This study reaffirms the significance of these drivers, particularly in the Asian context, where cultural resonance plays a critical role in media consumption.

In repositioning the conventional consumption of media, there is a huge cultural impact that Asian cult movies have on the youth generation in wider society. Far from the commercial mainstream where typical purely marketable and universalized commercial terms Asian cult films toughen on marginalized perspectives and area spec region-specific themes with an edge among young ones. For example, depictions of social conflicts and morality questions in *Battle Royale* (Fukasaku, 2000) and *Oldboy* (Chan-wook, 2003) provoke viewers to think survival, justice-related thoughts for young people making the viewers realize the realities of the contemporary conflicts raw and most importantly, make them reflect. The linkage that forms, allows cult cinema to be a prism of alternative identities as well as create a bond with mainstream alienated viewers.

In terms of craftsmanship and style Asian cult films are one of a kind, using new experiments, big bold visuals, and possibly thematic breadth. Over 45% of survey participants appreciated the distinct visual identity of cult films, reinforcing their preference for media that deviates from outside their comfort zone of mainstream productions. This follows a wider shift of preferences in the media, but younger audiences tend to gravitate towards authenticity and individuality rather than disposable content. Cult films not only cult films' ability to incorporate local cultural symbols and

traditions—such as folklore in Japanese horror films or societal critiques in Korean thrillers but also the ability to add things and feel more relatable to young Asians who need that cultural representation in their preferred modes of consumption.

Social media and digital platforms also play a pivotal role in amplifying the cultural influence of cult films. With over 72% of participants indicating that they learned about cult films through friends or online communities, it is evident that the digital age has created a fertile ground for niche preference to thrive. These platforms not only enhance accessibility but also foster vibrant fan communities where young people can share their interpretations, create fan art, and engage in discussions that deepen their connection to the films. This digital engagement transforms cult films from mere entertainment into cultural phenomena that shape lifestyles, language, and social behaviors.

The research also shows that cult films are part of a wider demographic transition among young Asians from homogeneity to specificity. Cult films invite viewers to subvert the status quo, and broaden viewing through a different lens, empowering them to challenge conventional norms. This shift from mainstream to marginal media underscores a desire among the younger generation to engage with content that is more reflective of their complex identities and social realities. Asian cult cinema demands this entertainment, critical thinking, self-expression, and cultural dialogue, reinforcing their role at once making them today larger-than-life cultural gate-crashers.

5.2. Research Limitations

This study has some limitations that must be considered in future research even though it contributes useful insights. Social media-based online questionnaires distributed for this research may have led to selection bias, as readily active members in digital communities and also cinephiles of cult films are what this research depends on to respond. Which somewhat limits the applicability of these findings to larger populations.

Limitations of the research on quantitative research data collection hindered the richness of understanding of personal and cultural meanings participants derive from cult films. Adopting qualitative methods, for example, through in-depth interviews or focus groups may offer more textured and complex understandings of these dimensions.

The research was limited to Asia, making way for cross-cultural effects or reception discrepancies about Asian cult films overseas. Further exploring these interactions may provide a broader sense of their takeaway cultural impact internationally.

The relatively small sample size of 73 participants may not fully capture the diversity of perspectives within the target demographic. Expanding the sample size and including participants from rural areas could yield more representative results. And primarily focused on young adults aged 18-30, which excludes potential insights into how other age groups might perceive and engage with Asian cult films. Broader age-group analysis could uncover generational differences in media preferences.

Although digital platforms and social media were considered key sources of knowing this, the study itself did not dig deeper into platforms that may frame distribution, access, and fan communities to Asian cult films. In-depth consideration of

these transformed roles by the technologies in future studies.

5.3. Conclusion

This insightful study piece digs deep into the cultural influence of Asian cult films on the youth of Asia. Results point to a significant change in taste in cinema, where the new generation seems increasingly gravitating towards its fascination for stylized comingling products and gets into unconventional narratives, unabashed visual stylism, and sincere cultural representations of Asian cult films.

At the root of this phenomenon is the special draw of cult films, how they pile up as more than mere fun and not just another mask but reflective helpful tools of identity, and self-expression in building identity on the go in youth communities. Where mainstream productions do not that attract some young audiences in Asia, Asian cult films represent Soaps or Counterfeit papers the social problems, alternative identities, and alternative thinking.

The study shows how Asian cult films, being original; culturally specific, and socially subversive have a chance to manage to gain much bigger audiences than the existing preferred mainstream fare. This shifting dynamic highlights the transformational possibilities in Asian cult cinema, as it ceases to be an ideological fringe culture and becomes deeply rooted in what values matter most and the social realities that define the Generation's present.

Though the results are of tremendous value, the study has certain restrictions of which one is about its geographical concentration and quantitative methods. In the future, research can potentially delve deeper into the cross-cultural dynamics; apply qualitative interpretations, and investigate the digital platforms and their moderation towards en

cabalistic nature of cult films. Such multifaceted approaches could yield a more comprehensive grasp of the global and generational impact of Asian cult cinema.

Ultimately, this research emphasizes that Asian cult films are not merely a niche genre, but a dynamic cultural phenomenon that reflects and transforms the identities, aspirations, and worldviews of the younger generation. As the locus of fascination shifts from the mainstream to the margins, these unconventional cinematic experiences emerge as a powerful lens through which to understand the evolving values and social realities of Asia's youth in an increasingly globalized media landscape.

CHAPTER 6

REFERENCES

- Beazley, H., & Chakraborty, K. (2008). *Cool consumption: Rasta, punk and bollywood on the streets of yogyakarta, indonesia and kolkata, india*.
- Behm-Morawitz, E. (2020). Media use and the development of racial and ethnic identities. *The International Encyclopedia of Media Psychology*, 1–9.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119011071.iemp0083>
- Carter, O. (2018). *Making european cult cinema*. Amsterdam University Press. <https://doi.org/10.5117/9789089649935>
- Chan-wook, P. (Director). (2003, November 21). *Oldboy*. Show East.
- Child, J. T., & Haridakis, P. (2017). Uses and gratifications theory. In *Engaging Theories in Family Communication* (pp. 337–348). Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315204321-30>
- Chua, B., & Iwabuchi, K. (2008). *East asian pop culture: Analysing the korean wave*.
- Church, D. (2011). Freakery, cult films, and the problem of ambivalence. *Journal of Film and Video*, 63(1), 3–17. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jfv.2011.0003>
- Douban. (2017, April 19). *Cult Movie Chronicles: 50 Lectures on Subculture Movies*. Douban. <https://m.douban.com/time/column/37/>
- Edward R. Schmidtke M.A. (2010). Call Me Lucky: A Texan in Hollywood (review). *Film & History: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Film and Television Studies*, 40(1), 111–112. <https://doi.org/10.1353/flm.0.0153>

Fai Leung, W. (2009). East Asian cinemas: Exploring transnational connections on film. *Choice Reviews Online*, 46(05), 46-2558-46-2558. <https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.46-2558>

Farooq, U. (2022). Prevalence of the Uses and Gratifications Theory amongst the university student consumers of tobacco products in Pakistan. *Journal of Humanities, Social and Management Sciences (JHSMS)*, 3(1), 84-99. <https://doi.org/10.47264/idea.jhsms/3.1.7>

Fukasaku, Kinji (Director). (2000, December 16). *Battle Royale*. Toei Company.

Harwood, J. (1999). Age identification, social identity gratifications, and television viewing. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 43(1), 123-136. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08838159909364479>

Hills, M. (2014). Cult cinema and the 'mainstreaming' discourse of technological change: Revisiting subcultural capital in liquid modernity. *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, 13(1), 100-121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17400309.2014.982928>

Jancovich, M. (2002). CULT FICTIONS: CULT MOVIES, SUBCULTURAL CAPITAL AND THE PRODUCTION OF CULTURAL DISTINCTIONS. *Cultural Studies*, 16(2), 306-322. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380110107607>

Joe, F., Briggs, B., Hoberman, J., Love, D., Peary, D., Sconce, J. A., Stanfield, P., & Briggs, J. B. (2008). Cult cinema: A critical symposium. *Cineaste*.

Kim, Y. (2008). *Media consumption and everyday life in Asia*. Routledge.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203892480>

Kinkade, P. T., & Katovich, M. A. (1992). Toward a Sociology of Cult Films: Reading Rocky Horror. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 33(2), 191–209.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-8525.1992.tb00371.x>

Lau, R. (Director). (1985, November 7). *Mr. Vampire*. Golden Harvest.

Li, W. S. (2020). *Cult Film: The history of a subculture*. China Film Press.

(2020)

Martin, D. (2015). *Extreme Asia*.

<https://doi.org/10.3366/edinburgh/9780748697458.001.0001>

Miike, T. (Director). (2001, December 22). *Ichi the Killer*. Media Blasters.

Muhammad, F. M. (2018). Instagram effects as social media toward adolescence and young adult users: Uses and gratification approach. *Proceedings of the International Conference of Communication Science Research (ICCSR 2018)*. <https://doi.org/10.2991/iccsr-18.2018.44>

Nakata, H. (Director). (1998, January 31). *Ringu*. Toho.

Nikolopoulou, K. (2023, October 7). *Kassiani Nikolopoulou, author at Scribbr*. Scribbr. <https://www.scribbr.com/author/kassianin/>

Och, D. (2019). The mainstream cult of fifty shades of grey: Hailing multiple women audiences. *Communication, Culture and Critique*, 12(2), 213–229.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/ccc/tcz017>

Pearson, R. (2014). *Kings of Infinite Space : Cult Television Characters and Narrative Possibilities*.

Rodrigues, U. M., & Smaill, B. (2008). *Youth, media and culture in the Asia Pacific Region*.

Rothut, S., Schulze, H., Rieger, D., & Naderer, B. (2024). Mainstreaming as a meta-process: A systematic review and conceptual model of factors contributing to the mainstreaming of radical and extremist positions. *Communication Theory*, 34(2), 49–59. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/qtae001>

Sconce, J. A., & Jancovich, M. (2003). *Esper, the renunciator: Defining Cult Movies: the Cultural Politics of Oppositional Taste*.

Shimizu, T. (Director). (2002, October 18). *Ju-on: The Grudge*. Lions Gate Films.

Smith, I. R. (2016). Theorising cult cosmopolitanism: The transnational reception of Bollywood as cult cinema. *Transnational Cinemas*, 8(1), 20–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20403526.2017.1258160>

Stets, J. E., & Burke, P. J. (2000). Identity theory and social identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 63(3), 224. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2695870>

Swarnakar, S. (2024). UNDERSTANDING BOLLYWOOD CULT FILMS: EXPLORING THEIR ROLE IN CHANGING CONVENTIONS AND IMPACTING NEW THOUGHTS IN INDIAN YOUTH, SOCIETY AND CULTURE. *ShodhKosh: Journal of Visual and Performing Arts*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i2.2024.943>

Trepte, S., & Loy, L. S. (2017). Social identity theory and self-categorization theory. *The International Encyclopedia of Media Effects*, 1–13.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118783764.wbieme0088>

Wang, X. (2023). The return of family ethics under the shell of cult movies: Analysis of the works directed by Julia Ducournau—“eat raw” and “titanium.”

Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Science, 7(7), 1284–1288.

<https://doi.org/10.26855/jhass.2023.07.007>

Wang, X., Pan, H. R., Zhu, N., & Cai, S. (2020). East Asian films in the European market: The roles of cultural distance and cultural specificity.

International Marketing Review, 38(4), 717–735.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/imr-01-2019-0045>

Wee, C. J. W.-L. (2016). East Asian pop culture and the trajectory of Asian consumption. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 17(2), 305–315.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/14649373.2016.1184428>

Wong, Jing (Director). (1989, December 14). *God of Gamblers*. Win's Movie Production & I/E Co. Ltd.

Yau, H. (Director). (1993, May 13). *The Untold Story*. Newport Entertainment Golden Sun Film Company Limited.

Yuen, C. Y. (Director). (1993, March 4). *Fong Sai-yuk*. Gala Film Distribution Ltd.

APPENDIX A**SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE****Section A: Demographic**

1. Gender: Male/ Female/ Others/ Unwilling to disclose
2. Age: 15-20/ 20-25/ 25-30/ Above 30
3. Race: Malay/ Chinese/ Indian/ Others
4. Current status: Student/ Employed/ Freelancer/ Other

Section B: Film Watching Habits

5. How often do you watch movies?
 - a. Daily
 - b. Weekly
 - c. Monthly
 - d. Rarely
 - e. Never

6. Which platforms do you prefer for watching movies?
 - a. Cinema
 - b. Online streaming

- c. Television
- d. Download or purchase DVDs

7. What type of movies do you usually watch?

- a. Mainstream commercial movies
- b. Independent films
- c. Cult films
- d. Documentaries
- e. Anime/animation
- f. Others (please specify)

Section C: Awareness and Interest in Cult Films

8. Have you heard of "cult films"?

- a. Yes, and I've watched them
- b. Yes, but I haven't watched them
- c. No, I haven't heard of them

9. How did you first become aware of cult films?

- a. Friends or family
- b. Online forums or communities
- c. Social media
- d. Lecturer
- e. Film festivals
- f. Other (please specify)

10. Choose the film you have seen or heard from the list below.

- a. Ringu
- b. Ichi the Killer
- c. Battle Royale
- d. Oldboy
- e. Ju-on: The Grudge
- f. Mr. Vampire
- g. The Untold Story
- h. Fong Sai Yuk aka The Legend Of Fong Sai Yuk
- i. God Of Gamblers

11. How are you interested in any of the options you chose in the previous question?

- a. I love them

- b. I like them
- c. They're okay
- d. I don't like them
- e. I don't want watch them

12. The films listed in question 10 are all Asian cult films. What do you think of them now?

- a. Very interesting
- b. Interesting
- c. Neutral
- d. Uninteresting
- e. Offensive

Section D: Perception of Cultural Impact

13. Do you think those cult films influence your attitude?

- a. Greatly influenced
- b. Somewhat influenced
- c. Not influenced

14. Do you think cult films will influence your daily behavior?

- a. Greatly influenced
- b. Somewhat influenced
- c. Not influenced

15. How popular are cult films in your social circle?

- a. Very popular
- b. Popular
- c. Neutral
- d. Not popular

Section E: Reasons for Fascination Change

16. Why do you choose cult films over mainstream films?

- a. Attraction to non-traditional narratives
- b. Unique visual aesthetics
- c. Cultural representation
- d. Sense of identity and community
- e. Other (please specify)

17. How do you find the narrative style of cult films?

- a. Very engaging
- b. Engaging
- c. Neutral
- d. Uninteresting

18. How do you find the visual style of cult films?

- a. Very unique
- b. Unique
- c. Neutral
- d. Ordinary

19. Are you interested in this type of film because it's niche?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Uncertain

20. Do you think many people like Asian cult films ?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Uncertain

21. Would you recommend Asian cult films to your friends?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Uncertain

22. Do you think cult films need more mainstream recognition?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Uncertain

23. Do you think cult films contribute to cultural diversity?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Uncertain

24. Do you think cult films have a positive influence on young generation?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Uncertain

25. Do you think cult films have a negative impact on society?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Uncertain

**APPENDIX B
GRADING AND COMMENT SHEET**

**Faculty of Creative Industries
Research Project Evaluation Form**

Supervisor / Reviewer: Kor Eng Choon

Student's Name: LIN,BINGXIU

Student ID: 21UJB00719

Programme: Bachelors of Communication (HONS) Broadcasting

Research Project Title: The Cultural Influence of Asian Cult Films: Asian Young Generation's Fascination Changed from the Mainstream to the Margins

Instruction:

Please score each descriptor based on the scale provided below:

(1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = average, 4 = good and 5 = very good)

Abstract (5%)	Score	Convert
1. Adequately describes the entire project		
2. States clearly the research problem		
3. Describe briefly and clearly the approach/methodology of the study		
4. Highlights the outcomes/significance of the study		
Sum		
Subtotal (sum / 4)		
Remark:		
Introduction (10%)	Score	Convert
1. Fitting introduction to the subject of the study		
2. Concepts/definitions well explained		
3. Scope of study well described		
4. Statement of the research problem/research questions		

Sum		
Subtotal (sum / 2)		
Remark:		
Literature Review (15%)	Score	Convert
1. Latest research/work done in the area of study		
2. Explication of theories used		
3. Constructive discussion on publications in relation to the topic of study		
Sum		
Subtotal (sum *1)		
Remark:		
Methodology (10%)	Score	Convert
1. Research method explained clearly(inclusive of clear explanation of sampling techniques used, where applicable only)		
2. Appropriate research design/framework/questionnaire		
Sum		
Subtotal (sum * 1)		
Remark:		
Findings & Analysis (20%)	Score	Convert

1. Data analysis is appropriate		
2. Data analysis is detailed		
3. Pertinent use of diagrams/tables/graphs, correlated with content/Analysis supported by evidence		
4. Clear interpretation, well explained		
Sum		
Subtotal (sum * 1)		
Remark:		
Discussion & Conclusion (15%)	Score	Convert
1. Appropriate; related to the objective of the study		
2. Shortcomings of the study & recommendations for future study		
3. Conclusion is apt, clear		
Sum		
Subtotal (sum * 1)		
Remark:		
Language & Organization (15%)	Score	Convert
1. Correct use of English and technical language		
2. APA format is followed		
3. Comprehensiveness of content and presentation		
Sum		
Subtotal (sum * 1)		
Remark:		

Presentation (10%)	Score	Convert
1. Ability to answer questions from the panel (4 Marks)		
2. Presentation delivery is clear (4 Marks)		
3. Body language (2 Marks)		
Subtotal (sum * 1)		
Remark:		
	TOTAL	/100%
Penalty: maximum 10 marks for late submission or poor attendance for consultation with supervisor		
	FINAL MARK	/100%

****Overall Comments:**

Signature: _____

Date: _____