# Reading Between the Likes: The Influence of BookTok on Reading Culture

by

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# Abstract

This study examines BookTok, the online community of recreational readers on popular app TikTok. The research focuses on the impact of BookTok on reading culture, as seen in the example of Colleen Hoover's commercial success with her 2016 novel It Ends With Us. The theories upon which this study is based are diffusion of innovations theory, platformization theory, uses and gratifications theory, and participatory culture theory. To investigate how BookTok has impacted the reading experience and engagement of users, this study incorporates evidence from two thematic content analyses, one focusing on videos from the For You page of TikTok and the other focusing on videos under the hashtag #itendswithus. The findings show that BookTok creates a digital space where like-minded readers can interact and react to books. The BookTok community engages with books by: (a) analysing and interpreting them, (b) expressing their themes creatively, (c) discussing and criticising their film or TV adaptions, (d) evaluating them, and (e) organising and documenting them. Moreover, most videos on a reader's For You Page fall under the response/evaluation theme of book engagement, which shows that readers are highly likely to find their next read by simply scrolling on TikTok and coming across book recommendations. Finally, it is observed that romance is the most popular literary genre on TikTok. This research is useful for a range of stakeholders in the publishing industry, including publishers, authors, and readers.

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# Introduction

The publishing industry has undergone significant changes in recent years, with the proliferation of digital technologies and the rise of social media platforms playing a key role in this transformation (Pressman, 2020). One social media community that has gained significant attention in this context is TikTok's BookTok community, which allows readers to interact with each other and authors to directly connect with their readers and bypass traditional publishing channels (Flood, 2021). The purpose of this research proposal is to investigate how BookTok has impacted reading culture.

In my earlier academic work, I explored whether BookTok can be defined as a community, and focused on determining its uses and gratifications (Rozaki, 2022). The findings of my research indicated that authors, publishing houses, and bookstores are becoming increasingly active on the TikTok platform and BookTok, as a community, empowers their success. Thus, BookTok can be described as a consumption community, which is a group of consumers who are interested in a specific consumption activity and/or ideology (Kozinets, 1999, p. 4) which, in the case of BookTok, is reading. In my previous research study, I also concluded that the publishing industry should consider including and prioritising TikTok in their communication strategies. As a follow-up to my bachelor's thesis, I would like to expand on the existing research and shift the focus from the community as a whole to the reader as an individual, while still maintaining the context of TikTok. My research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between recreational reading and TikTok, and how this relationship has evolved. To examine this relationship, I will focus on the commercial success of Colleen Hoover's 2016 novel *It Ends With Us.* By analysing how readers have engaged with the novel on TikTok, I will gain a deeper

understanding of the ways that TikTok influences the consumption of literature. This research will provide insight into how readers discover and select books and how they engage with and discuss literature online. By conducting a comprehensive analysis of the current digital landscape, I also aim to gain insight into the potential ramifications of this digital transformation. Thus, this study's contents hold significant relevance for scholars and practitioners alike.

## Books in the 21st century

Books have been an integral part of modern culture for over five hundred years and have served as a cornerstone of education and academic life (Thompson, 2005, p. 1). As Thompson notes, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a small group of large multinational corporations hold significant power in the publishing industry and have consolidated many formerly independent imprints under their corporate control. These conglomerates operate on a global scale and have a significant impact on the way information is produced and disseminated (ibid., p. 2). Thompson also mentions four main factors that are affecting and will keep affecting the publishing industry: (1) the growing concentration of resources, (2) the changing structure of markets and channels to market, (3) the globalization of markets and publishing firms, and (4) the impact of new technologies (ibid., p. 8-10).

To begin with, Thompson (2005) argues that mergers and acquisitions in publishing have led to increased power and resources for large corporations. This process has been particularly notable in trade, educational, and professional publishing but less so in academic or scholarly publishing. Thompson also notes the changing structure of markets and channels to market in the publishing industry, and places focus on the rise of powerful retail chains like *Barnes & Noble* and *Borders* in the U.S., and *WHSmith* and *Waterstone's/Dillons* in the UK. Additionally, the

emergence and success of online retailers like Amazon.com has opened new channels to the market but has also introduced new uncertainties, such as the financial precariousness of online retailers. Thompson also notes that the growth of publishing conglomerates, the rise of retail chains, and the emergence of online retailers have all contributed to the increasing globalisation of the book industry. This process is interconnected with the rise of English as the international language, which I believe has expanded the market for books and increased access to them for people around the world. Finally, Thompson comments on the impact that the digital revolution has had on the publishing industry, allowing for greater efficiency and a transformation of information management systems. However, as Thompson notes, the impact of digitisation goes beyond mere efficiency gains, as publishing assets now consist of digital content, not just physical books. As a result, publishers have realised that their key asset is the content and copyrights associated with it and have experimented with ways to disseminate this content in formats other than printed books, such as e-books. As a final note, referring to the changes that the publishing industry is undergoing, Thompson writes: "this is a story in which some lessons are clear while others remain clouded in uncertainty, and we are still a long way from knowing how the plot will unravel in the end" (p. 10). Thompson's book was published over 17 years ago, and as a master's student in New Media and Digital Culture, I am motivated to continue Thompson's research and explore how advancements in new media have impacted an equally important stakeholder of the publishing industry, which is the readers. Given the rapid pace of technological innovation, it is imperative to examine how digital platforms are altering the discovery and consumption of books.

#### Social Media and TikTok

Social media platforms have been prevalent since the early 2000s, with popular names, such as MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter, quickly becoming popular after their launch (Kaplan & Heinlein, 2010, p. 61). These platforms are defined as "a group of internet-based applications that enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (ibid., p. 62). User-generated content, or UGC, refers to media created by the public rather than professionals and can be accessed via the internet (Daugherty et al, 2008, p. 1). Bahiyar and Wang (2020) note that UGC transforms internet users into "self-publishing consumers" (p. 2). As of July 2022, 4.7 billion people use social media (Statista, 2022), and this number is expected to increase to 5.4 billion by 2025 (Dixon, 2022). However, one social medium has been the centre of attention in recent years. Its rapid rise as the most popular app for teens and young adults (Aslam, 2020) and the privacy concerns surrounding its use (Maheshwari & Holpuch, 2023) have propelled TikTok to the forefront of the previously mentioned major social media companies.

Musical.ly, the forerunner to TikTok, was an application released a decade ago that allowed users to create short looping videos. Users could choose songs and record lip-synching or dance routines ranging from 15 seconds to one minute. ByteDance, a Chinese media company that anticipated Musical.ly's expanding rivalry, built Douyin, a similar lip-synching video creation software, and subsequently released TikTok for markets outside of China in 2016 (Anderson, 2020, p. 7). Musical.ly was eventually purchased by ByteDance in 2017 and was incorporated with TikTok in 2018 (ibid.), and TikTok immediately reached and surpassed Musical.ly's success (Kennedy, 2020, p. 1). In the year 2022, TikTok was primarily used by members of Generation Z—which includes people born between 1997 and 2012 (Dimock, 2019) —, and almost half of

TikTok's global audience is made up of teens and young adults aged 16-24 years old (Aslam, 2020). The popularity of video creation, as well as the increase in the number of videos watched by users, which has doubled since 2018 (Hayes, 2022, para. 27), may explain the rise of TikTok. Cervi (2021) notes that approximately 71% of Gen Z teens and young adults use their smartphones to watch videos.

With its rise as the most downloaded and growing app, TikTok has received significant attention from the academic community. Thus far, research has focused on dance culture (Jerasa & Boffone, 2021; Cervi, 2021a; Johnson, 2021; Kennedy, 2020), influencers (Abidin, 2020; Ting, 2021), education and learning (Adnan et al, 2021; Hayes et al, 2020; Khlaif & Salha, 2021; Nam, 2020; Fiallos et al, 2021), branding (Laboriel, 2021), healthcare (Arias, 2021; Basch et al, 2020; Basch et al, 2021; Chen & Otrovsky, 2020; Das & Drolet, 2021; Southerton, 2021; Bruno, 2020), ethics (Busurkina, 2021; Scalvini, 2020), consumerism (Cantawee et al, 2021), politics (Cervi, 2021b; Chen et al, 2021; Gray, 2021), and activism (Hautea et al, 2021; Subramanian, 2021).

#### BookTok

TikTok's user-generated nature enables the creation of communities that gather people who share the same interests, and who use the platform to exchange content that revolves around these interests (Abidin, 2020, p. 80). BookTok is a community on TikTok that has gained significant traction among young book lovers in recent years. The hashtag #booktok on TikTok, which counts almost one hundred billion views as of April 2023, is used to share book recommendations, discuss favourite characters and plots, and celebrate the joy of reading, through the creation of user-generated content. BookTok is seen by some as the saviour of reading (Murray, 2021, para. 10), considering that there has been a steep decline in reading habits among young people in the 21st

century (Merga, 2021, p. 2). Pressman (2020) suggests that people often view their books as a representation of themselves, which is why they may place a high value on the visual aesthetics of their library (p. 94). It is therefore no surprise that readers on TikTok share videos of their organised bookshelves including decorative elements and a variety of colourful books.

The rise of BookTok has coincided with a shift in the publishing industry, as traditional gatekeepers are being disrupted by the democratization of the internet and the proliferation of selfpublishing platforms (Hebert, 2022). As a result, the industry is undergoing a period of transformation and experimentation, with publishers and authors looking for new ways to reach and engage with readers. While BookTok is primarily a community of book enthusiasts, it has also become a powerful marketing tool for authors and publishers (Zarroli, 2021) and it has emerged as a considerable influence on the publishing industry and book sales (ibid.). On one of my recent visits to the bookstore, I noticed a couple of books that had a special sticker on their cover. Upon further inspection, I realised that the sticker wrote something like "as seen on BookTok" or "BookTok best-seller" (Figures 1 and 2). In general, the BookTok community is particularly interested in books that belong to the romance genre (Hariri-Kia, 2023, para. 2; Sanderson, 2023, para. 3). The #romancebooks hashtag on TikTok counts six billion views as of April 2023, and there is a big sub-community of romance readers that calls themselves "smuttok". This community is "dedicated to discovering, discussing, and celebrating erotic romance" (Hariri-Kia, 2023, para. 2).



Figure 2: BookTok marketing

On BookTok authors can create short videos or other types of content to showcase their work and engage with their readers, and many are already making use of the app's popularity. For example, John Green, the author of best-selling novel *The Fault in Our Stars*, has an active account on the app where he discusses his novels and shares fun facts about their creation (Reyes, 2023). Being active on TikTok helps authors to build a personal connection with readers, leading to increased book sales and visibility (Bennett et al, 2023, para. 19). Because BookTok users place a strong emphasis on community building, this allows authors to cultivate a loyal following of readers who are interested in their work. I believe that TikTok can be especially beneficial for emerging or self-published authors who may have limited access to traditional marketing channels for financial reasons, for instance. With its algorithmic recommendations based on users' reading habits and preferences TikTok can expose readers to new and diverse content and increase book sales and visibility for the authors (Merga, 2021, p. 6). For instance, in 2020, British publishing company

Bloomsbury experienced a 220% increase in profits, with CEO Nigel Newton attributing part of this success to the "absolute phenomenon" of BookTok (Wood, 2021, para. 10). Similarly, American market research company National Purchase Diary Panel (NPD, 2021a) reports that "the young adult fiction category has grown by 68% year-to-date through April 2021, compared to the previous year" (para. 1). These findings indicate the significant impact that the BookTok community on TikTok has had on the young adult fiction market. Moreover, Merga (2021, p. 4) argues that BookTok has helped make reading socially acceptable again, with the word "nerd" losing its derogatory connotation. All these changes in favour of reading have not remained unseen by TikTok. Recently, the app launched a feature in collaboration with major publishing house Penguin Random House that allows users to link books within their videos (TikTok, 2022) and, thus, the two companies are appropriating BookTok for profit. On the other hand, BookTok has received criticism for promoting a competitive mindset among users focused on reading as many books as possible, leading to a lack of critical engagement and a devaluation of literary works (Lee, 2022), while also perpetuating a lack of diversity (Sajor, 2023; McCall, 2022) in the books being promoted and an emphasis on aesthetics over the actual reading experience (Pierce, 2023; Wallace, 2023). As Pierce humorously notes, "with all of this effort being put into being seen as a reader, one wonders how any of them have the time to read" (para. 8).

While it is evident that a significant number of scholars has focused upon TikTok, there are only a couple of studies among them that give emphasis on BookTok and are relevant to the current research study: Merga (2021) discusses the challenges and limitations of BookTok, such as the lack of diversity in BookTok content and the potential for misleading or biased recommendations and Wiederhold (2022) notes that BookTok has also changed the way that readers approach books, with readers being more willing to try new genres and books that they

may not have previously considered, while Martens et al (2022) also agree that many users have been introduced to new genres and authors through the platform. Overall, the literature reviewed here suggests that TikTok as a social medium and BookTok as a community are important for understanding the intersection of youth culture, reading, and social media. The research study on which this thesis will be built aspires to add to the existing bibliography by examining BookTok's impact in more depth and doing so through the fascinating example of Colleen Hoover's 2016 novel *It Ends With Us*.

# Case study

The rise of American author Colleen Hoover is a fascinating topic in the literary world. In 2022, six of Hoover's books were in U.S. best-sellers list: the best-selling book of the year was Hoover's 2016 novel *It Ends With Us* (Dellatto, 2022). *Verity* ranked at No. 2, *It Starts With Us* at No. 4, *Ugly Love* at No. 5, *Reminders Of Him* at No. 7 and *November 9* at No. 9. According to the *New York Times*, by the end of 2022, Hoover had sold 8.6 million copies of *It Ends With Us*, which were more than the Bible (Alter, 2022, para. 3).

What is even more fascinating is that *It Ends With Us* was not released in 2022. In fact, the book was originally published in 2016. Stewart (2021, para. 1) writes that the novel spent a brief period on the best-sellers list thanks to 21,000 copies sold in its first month. However, the sales immediately levelled down. Four years later, between 2020 - 2021, *It Ends With Us* experienced a resurgence in popularity, partly due to the influence of the BookTok community on TikTok (ibid., para. 2). Users on BookTok discovered the book and praised it to the point where sales finally reached an astounding 29,000 copies per week, and just in 2021, 308,000 copies were sold (ibid.). Videos using the hashtag #ItEndsWithUs have received a total of three billion views as of April

2023. According to Stewart (2021), "the rise in interest in *It Ends with Us* is one of the best examples of the impact of TikTok on book sales" (para. 4).

One factor that has clearly contributed to the success of *It Ends With Us* on BookTok is the strong recommendation and endorsement of the novel by influential TikTok users within the community (Alter, 2022, para. 8). Many BookTok users created content featuring the novel and shared their thoughts and opinions about it, which helped to generate interest and curiosity among other users (ibid.). The themes and content of the novel, including romance, family, and abuse, may have also resonated with many TikTok users, and contributed to its popularity on the platform; in particular, the theme of domestic abuse was highly relevant during the covid-19 lockdown (Seck, 2021). As the United Nations reports, cases of domestic abuse skyrocketed during the government-imposed quarantines, as couples were forced to spend weeks under the same roof (ibid., p. 6). Therefore, *It Ends With Us*, with its theme of domestic abuse, might have been a medium of relatability for women in toxic households.

#### Research Questions

This research project aims to examine the role of BookTok in the contemporary publishing landscape and assess its potential impact on reading culture. I will focus on user practices and, more specifically, on how users have engaged with the novel *It Ends With Us* on TikTok. Moreover, I will examine whether and how TikTok influences book discovery. To research the above, I address the following research questions:

RQ: How has the rise of BookTok impacted the reading experience and engagement of users, as reflected in the popularity and reception of Colleen Hoover's 2016 novel *It Ends With Us*?

SRQ(a): How do readers engage with books on TikTok, as seen in the example of Colleen Hoover's *It Ends With Us*?

SRQ(b): How do readers discover books on TikTok and what can be said about the books that are popular on the platform?

# Summary

On Chapter I, I present relevant theories that will help me answer the research questions. On Chapter II, I present the methods I will use to collect and analyse the data. Finally, on Chapter III, I present the findings of the research, which include insights into user engagement on BookTok and book discovery on BookTok, as well as a discussion of the implications of the research, and recommendations for further study.

# Chapter I: Theoretical Framework

The following theories are used to better understand the rise of BookTok as a community that highly impacts reading culture and book sales. The theoretical framework is divided into two sections: (a) theories that help understand the rise of BookTok, and (b) theories that focus more on the user experience on BookTok. In the first section, I utilize diffusion of innovations theory to understand the rise of BookTok as a source of literary recommendations. Then, I expand on BookTok by utilising platformization theory to connect it to a wider network of highly impactful digital platforms. Finally, I bring in media effects theory to highlight the impact of BookTok on today's market, but also on future markets. In the second section, I begin with uses and gratifications theory, which is a staple in understanding why and how users engage on social media platforms. This is followed by participatory culture theory, which helps understand how average people that interact on BookTok are influencing the book industry. Finally, I use cultivation theory to explain BookTok's hyperfocus on the romance genre.

#### The Rise of BookTok

#### Diffusion of innovations theory

The diffusion of innovations refers to the process by which new ideas, practices, or technologies spread through a society over time (Rogers, 1962, p. 76). Rogers suggests that the diffusion of an innovation is influenced by several factors, including the innovation's perceived relative advantage over existing alternatives, its compatibility with existing values and practices, and its complexity or ease of use. The rise of BookTok can be connected to Rogers' (1962) theory because users have found a new way to discover and engage with books. As an innovation, I believe that BookTok

offers a relative advantage over traditional book discovery methods, with its user-generated content providing more personalized and relatable recommendations. BookTok is also compatible with the interests and preferences of younger generations, who are more likely to use social media platforms. Finally, BookTok's accessibility through smartphones makes it an efficient choice for book discovery and engagement. Overall, the rise of BookTok exemplifies how new innovations can be diffused through social networks, and how factors such as relative advantage, compatibility, and ease of use can influence their adoption.

#### Platformization theory

According to Gillespie (2010), a platform is a technical and social infrastructure that mediates interactions between diverse groups of users. Platformization theory argues that digital platforms are becoming the dominant form of online interaction and communication, and that they are shaping the way we interact with each other and consume media (Helmond, 2015, p. 1). Similarly, the emergence of digital platforms has led to the platformization of the book industry. Platforms, such as Amazon and Goodreads, and TikTok and Instagram with their BookTok and #bookstagram communities, offer users a range of resources and opportunities for discovering and engaging with books. As Helmond (2015) argues, platforms are complex socio-technical systems that mediate social relations, and they are shaped by the values and interests of those who create and operate them (p. 3). In the case of TikTok and its BookTok community, the platform's features and design have played a significant role in shaping the ways in which users interact with books and reading culture (Merga, 2021, p. 6). For example, the short-form video format of TikTok and its algorithmic recommendations have created a unique space for book recommendations and reviews, allowing users to share their love for books in a creative and engaging way (ibid.). The

platform's emphasis on user-generated content has also given rise to a new form of book marketing, one that is based on peer-to-peer recommendations and social validation rather than traditional advertising and promotional campaigns (Biino, 2022). Moreover, Van Dijck (2018, p. 13) notes that platforms often act as gatekeepers, controlling access to content and shaping the distribution of attention and resources. Due to TikTok's algorithm, which personalizes its content based on each individual user's past scrolling behaviour (Zote, 2022), every week, certain books enjoy a push in fame. As such, BookTok has become a dominant form of book discovery and engagement. Indeed, according to industry experts, TikTok has been responsible for an unparalleled increase in book sales since mid-2020. In the United States, 825 million book copies were sold in 2021, the highest number since NPD BookScan started collecting data in 2004, and a 9% increase from the previous year (NPD, 2021b). But why is BookTok so successful in influencing reading culture? This phenomenon could be explained by media effects theory, which suggests that media messages can have an impact on individuals and society, influencing attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours (Mutz &, Martin, 2009, p. 50). Just like TV is successful in influencing the wants of kids (Bryant & Finklea, 2022), TikTok is impacting readers and influencing best-sellers lists worldwide.

# Engaging on BookTok

## Uses and gratifications theory

To understand how users engage on BookTok one could look at uses and gratifications theory (U&G), which was popularized by Katz and Foulkes in the 1940s. U&G explain "why users elect to choose certain media (i.e., uses) and what needs are met through their use of the media (i.e., gratifications)" (Vaterlaus & Winter, 2021, p. 2) According to Katz and Foulkes (1962, p. 388), media have the capacity to fulfil a variety of human needs, and they argue that consumers are not

passive in their media use, but instead, consumers actively choose the medium which will satisfy their needs. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the popularity of sites such as Facebook and MySpace has furtherly supported the notion that people turn to online interaction to fulfil their social needs (Shao, 2009, p. 12). In an impressive literature review Lawrence (2020) gathers the most common uses and gratifications of social media platforms according to available studies in academia: entertainment, information, self-expression, escapism, self-presentation, and social connection/interaction. According to this summary of uses and gratifications, people use social media to have fun, learn new things, express themselves, escape from everyday anxieties, and maintain a social image, while connecting with like-minded people. While there is not much research that specifically applies UGT to BookTok, there are theories that expand on TikTok specifically. For example, Li and Wang (2021) and Chen et al (2021) explore Chinese TikTok users' motivations for watching short videos during the COVID-19 quarantine and Kao et al (2020) explore the intentions behind TikTok usage.

However, it is important to note TikTok's role in the uses and gratifications of users. TikTok's powerful algorithm, whose purpose is to learn each user's interest, highly influences their experience on the app (Zote, 2022). More specifically, the algorithm is designed to learn from a user's interactions and behaviours on the app, such as which videos they watch, engage with, and share (ibid.). Based on this data, the algorithm recommends content that it thinks the user will enjoy and find engaging.

#### Participatory culture theory

Participatory culture theory can explain the content that users generate on BookTok. The theory refers to a culture where individuals are not simply consumers of media, but also actively

participate in the creation, circulation, and sharing of content (Jenkins et al, 2006, p. 8). In a participatory culture, people feel empowered to collaborate and share their ideas, and engage in a range of creative and social activities that extend beyond traditional forms of media consumption (ibid.). A relevant example of participatory culture in action is the success of author Alex Aster, whose book idea became viral in 2021 (La Jeunesse, 2022) and was eventually published by Abrams Books. The publishing industry is not accustomed to having a first print run as large as 200,000 copies for a novel, but Aster's book, *Lightlark*, achieved this when it was released (ibid.). Aster explains that BookTok was behind her whole writing process: from letting users vote for the book's cover, to asking their opinion on the premise of the story (ibid., para. 11). Another author that had a similar rise to fame thanks to BookTok is Chloe Gong. Gong used TikTok to connect with book lovers on a community level, which helped make her novel These Violent Delights a best-seller (Dawson, 2021). In another article about Gong's success, a marketing expert explains what has made BookTok so impactful on the publishing industry is that readers can circumvent traditional media and immediately connect with their favourite authors (Mahon-Heap, 2022, para. 4). However, it is important to note that one genre is extremely popular on BookTok: as I mentioned in the Introduction, people on BookTok are particularly fond of romance books and cultivation theory could help explain why this specific genre is so popular on the app. The theory suggests that media exposure can shape individuals' perceptions of reality over time (Gerbner et al, 1986, p. 19). In the context of BookTok, exposure to certain books or genres may influence users' reading preferences and habits. Indeed, as more romance books become popular, more people prefer the genre. The #smuttok community I mentioned in the Introduction could be a good example of a cultivated interest.

Chapter II: Method

Rationale

For this research study, I conducted a thematic content analysis. Thematic content analysis is a tool that researchers use to represent textual content by identifying common ideas (Anderson, 2014, p. 1). The reason I chose to perform a thematic content analysis is because it allows researchers to examine patterns and trends in data that may not be immediately apparent, and to draw conclusions based on empirical evidence rather than subjective impressions. To examine user engagement, I analysed videos under the hashtag #itendswithus on TikTok. Then, to examine book discovery, I conducted a scrolling session on TikTok's the For You page. My approach was inductive, meaning that I analysed data in a way that allows themes, patterns, and categories to emerge, rather than starting with a pre-existing theory or hypothesis (Azungah, 2018, p. 11). This approach involves several steps, including data familiarisation, coding, categorisation, and interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In the data familiarisation stage, the researcher gathers and becomes familiar with the data. In the coding stage, the researcher assigns codes to various parts of the data to identify and label patterns. A code is a word that captures the essence of a visual datum (Saldaña, 2009, p. 3). In the categorisation stage, the researcher groups similar codes together to form categories. Finally, in the interpretation stage, the researcher analyses the categories to develop a broader understanding of the phenomenon under study (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

#### Data Collection

To begin with, I needed to perform data familiarisation (Braun & Clarke, 2013). To do that, I had to go on TikTok and gather data. Since I have had a personal TikTok account for the past three years, I could not rely on it to conduct my research. That is because the algorithm knows my personal interests and I wanted to limit any bias. To do that, I created a new TikTok profile, and I called it @booktokmastersthesis.

#### User engagement

To examine how user's have engaged with the novel *It Ends With Us*, I analysed TikTok videos under the hashtag #itendswithus. To reflect a wide sample of data I decided that the sample would include one hundred videos. I determined my sample via purposive sampling, a technique most often employed in qualitative research studies. Purposive sampling is the deliberate selection of a sample (Etikan, 2016, p. 1), which intends to facilitate the goals of the research (Campbell et al, 2020, p. 1). The data collection period was limited to two years, between 2020 – 2022, when the book climbed the best-sellers lists and became a worldwide phenomenon. The data I collected for each video was the username, link, date, views, likes, and comments. I also made a note for each video to remember its content. For example: "user shows book and highlights chapter page while crying." All data was imported into an Excel spreadsheet, as seen in *Figure 3*.

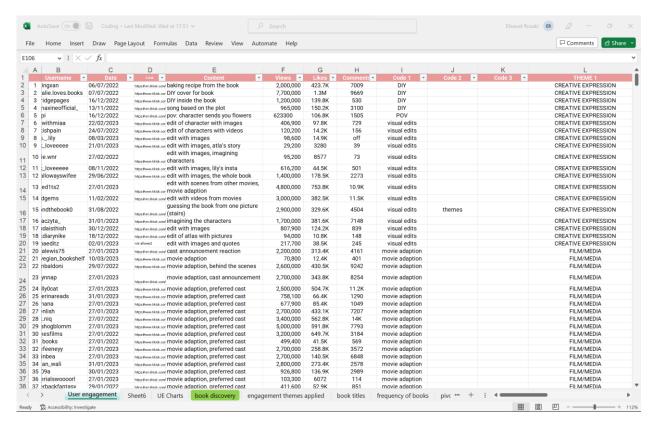


Figure 3: user engagement coding spreadsheet

#### **Book discovery**

Since TikTok's main function is scrolling on the For You Page, I did exactly that. A question I posed myself is for how long I would have to scroll to accurately capture my findings. I decided to orient myself along the typical user session on TikTok because it is the most appropriate way to represent that experience. In the second quarter of 2022, users worldwide spent 95 minutes per day on TikTok (Chan, 2022). Therefore, I conducted a 95-minute session of scrolling on the For You Page. During my scrolling session, I watched each video once and then moved on to the next. If a video was unrelated to my research objective, I skipped it. I did the scrolling session on March 23<sup>rd</sup> between 11.40-13.15. A screen recording of the whole session can be found in Appendix A. I

saved each video that was relevant to my sample and ended up with sixty-four videos in my folder. To facilitate the data analysis, I then utilized a tool to capture the posts I viewed during my scrolling session, Zeeschuimer. This tool is used as a browser extension on Firefox. The premise is simple: as one scrolls, Zeeschuimer gathers information about each TikTok video. By using the tool, I was able to save time and ensure that all my details were accurate. I, then, gathered the relevant videos in a spreadsheet, as seen in *Figure 4*. The data I included was username, link, date, views, likes, and comments. I also kept track of the books that were mentioned in each video, to discover potential patterns, and I noted how many times *It Ends With Us* was mentioned.

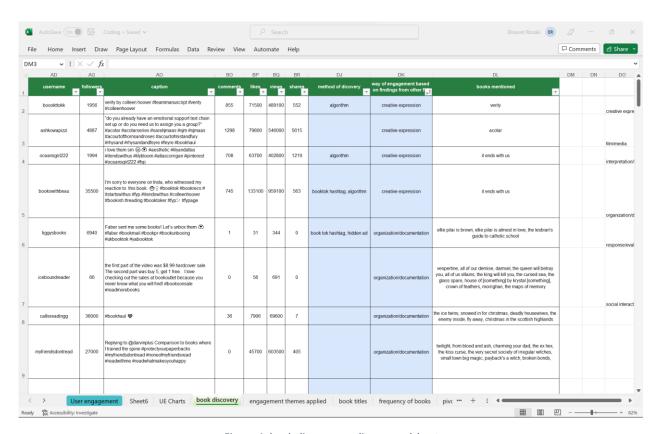


Figure 4: book discovery coding spreadsheet

# Chapter III: Analysis

To begin with, an important note I must make is that this research's findings cannot represent every TikTok user out there. TikTok's algorithm became biased from the moment I searched the hashtag #itendswithus, therefore, my user profile differs from other people's.

# Thematic content analysis

I conducted two thematic content analyses to see how users have engaged with Colleen Hoover's *It Ends With Us* and how they discover books on TikTok. Both analyses were based on data that I gathered in Excel spreadsheets, which can be found in *Appendices B* and *C*.

#### User engagement

The data I gathered from my sample was: username, date posted, link, content description, views, likes, and comments. I placed the data in a spreadsheet, assigning each category of data into a column, as seen in *Figure 3*. Then, I watched the videos again and assigned a code to each one of them that most accurately represented their content. For example, I assigned the code "do it yourself", or most referred to as "DIY," to a video that showed how to make a book cover from scratch. Some videos were assigned more than one code. For example, a video on which the user was reviewing the book included her intense emotional reaction, therefore I assigned both "emotional reaction" and "review" codes. The next step in the process is categorisation, which means that I needed to identify common themes that emerged from the codes I assigned to the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). To do this, I first organised all the relevant codes into specific categories, resulting in a total of six distinct groupings. For example, the codes "visual edit", "do it yourself",

and "point of view" were grouped under the theme of *creative expression* because they all focus on one's creativity. Once I had these categories established, I then brainstormed potential themes that could encapsulate each category.

#### **Codes**

After completing the coding process for all one hundred TikTok videos in my sample, I was able to assign each one with one or more descriptive codes that captured its key features and themes. Based on this analysis, there was a total of thirteen individual codes that could be used to describe the videos. These codes included movie adaptation (22 videos), community (2), visual edits (15), emotional reaction (18), annotation (14), criticism (6), themes (6), DIY (4), character analysis (5), personal library (10), POV (1), reviews (7), and recommendations (2). A summary of these codes and their frequencies can be found in *Table 1* and *Chart 1*.

Codes	Count of Videos
annotation	14
character analysis	5
community	2
criticism	6
DIY	4
emotional reaction	18
movie adaption	22
personal library	10
POV	1
recommendation	2
review	7
themes	6
visual edits	15

Table 1: frequency of videos per code

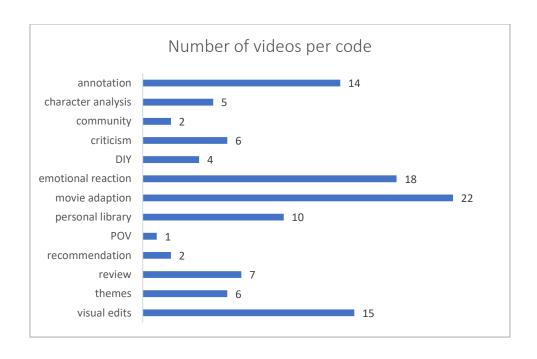


Chart 1: frequency of videos per code

# **Themes**

As I mentioned previously, after identifying the thirteen codes, I grouped them into relevant categories, which ended up being six in total. Then, I thought about a theme that would best describe each category and wrote a brief description for each one, as seen in *Table 2*.

Codes	Theme
character analysis, themes	These codes fall under <b>literary analysis and interpretation</b> , as they involve examining the characters, themes, and point of view in a piece of literature.
DIY, visual edits, POV	These codes fall under <b>creative expression</b> , as they involve creating something (such as a craft or visual artwork) using one's own skills and materials.
movie adaption	This code falls under <b>film and media</b> , as it involves adapting a book or other work of literature into a movie.
community	This code falls under <b>social interaction</b> , as it involves engaging with others who share a common interest or passion.

reviews, recommendations, criticism, emotional reaction	These codes fall under <b>response and evaluation</b> , as they involve providing one's opinion and analysis of a work of literature or other media.
personal library, annotation	These codes fall under <b>organisation and documentation</b> , as they involve keeping track of one's own collection of books or other media and annotating them for personal reference.

Table 2: book engagement themes descriptions

In the end, the themes that came up in each category were: interpretation/literary analysis, creative expression, response/evaluation, film/media, organisation/documentation, and social interaction, as seen in *Chart 2*.

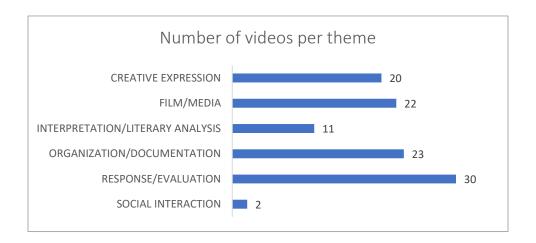


Chart 2: frequency of videos per book engagement theme

# **Book discovery**

As I mentioned earlier, the sample I used to learn more about how books are discovered on BookTok and what books are popular included sixty-four videos that I gathered during a 95-minute scrolling session. The data I gathered with the help of Zeeschuimer includes username, follower count, link, comments, likes, views, and shares. Just like in the section above, I placed each category of data in a spreadsheet column. To analyse further, I assigned a code to each video to

identify its content and relate it to the topic of book discovery. For example, in a video that included the hashtag #booktok in the caption, I assigned the code "hashtag". What is interesting is that a lot of the videos I came across during my scrolling session entirely focused on Colleen Hoover's It Ends With Us. This could be explained by TikTok's algorithmic structure. Since I was conducting research specifically on It Ends With Us to identify how users engage with it, the algorithm learned that I am interested in this specific book. If I had gathered the two samples in reverse chronological order—first the scrolling session, and then the #itendswithus hashtag—the algorithm would not have known about my focus on It Ends With Us. This proves what I mentioned in Chapter I, that TikTok's algorithm learns about a user's interests and shapes their feed accordingly, as Zote (2022) notes. I also gathered all books that were mentioned in those videos. I kept track of each title in a spreadsheet column and then, I determined each book's genre by conducting a Google search. Also, I measured how many times each book was mentioned, to see if I could uncover any more patterns about book discovery. As I noted earlier, to analyse the visual data in my sample (i.e., the TikTok videos), I used a process known as coding. Specifically, I assigned a descriptive word or phrase, also known as a code, to each visual datum that captured its essential content (Saldaña, 2009, p. 3). This allowed me to categorise and organise the videos based on their themes and characteristics. As I continued to assign codes to each visual datum, I noticed patterns and themes that emerged across the sample. By identifying these patterns, I was able to gain a deeper understanding of the overall content and themes present in the TikTok videos I analysed.

# **Codes**

After completing the coding process for all sixty-four TikTok videos in my sample, I was able to assign each one with one or more descriptive codes that explained why they had ended up on my

For You Page. Based on this analysis, there was a total of three codes that could be used to describe the videos. The codes were: "hashtag related to books & reading," "algorithm-recommended (no related hashtags)," "no hashtags but book-related caption." In *Table 3* each code is described more analytically.

Code	Count of videos	Description
Hashtag related to books/reading	57	These videos included hashtags that are related to reading, such as #booktok, #bestbooks, and #ilovereading
No hashtags (algorithm)	6	These videos did not include any hashtags and the caption did not include any element that pointed to the topic of reading or books.
No hashtags but book- related caption	1	This video did not include any book- related hashtags, but it did include a book-related caption.

Table 3: codes assigned to book discovery sample and their descriptions

It is interesting that there were a number of book-related videos that did not include any book-related text or hashtags. These videos are a prime example of TikTok's algorithm working its magic.

#### **Themes**

I also wanted to see how the themes of engagement that I had discovered earlier would apply to this sample. Thus, I assigned each video with one theme that I thought best described its content. To make sure I correctly characterised each video, I looked at *Table 2* that contains each engagement theme's description. Below are the six engagement themes and the number of videos that were categorised under each one.

Theme	Count of videos
response/evaluation	46
organization/documentation	11
creative expression	4
social interaction	3

Table 4: frequency of book discovery videos per book engagement theme

It is obvious on *Table 4* that most videos, over 70 percent of them, fit under the theme of response/evaluation. Based on the description of this theme on *Table 2*, it is reasonable to suggest that the majority of BookTok videos are a medium of book discovery for users. If 70 percent of a user's feed includes creators talking about and recommending books, the chances of the user discovering their next read are bigger. Therefore, the best method of book discovery on TikTok is to simply let the algorithm do its work. On TikTok, book discovery becomes more passive than ever. The users must simply scroll and let the algorithm do its magic! This makes finding a book easy and fast; thus, it has the potential to make reading seem more appealing.

# Books mentioned

In the sampling process I also kept track of all the books that were mentioned in each video. It is particularly interesting that out of 218 books mentioned, 129 belong to the romance genre. That is almost 60 percent! Also, *It Ends With Us* was the book that appeared the most times, in eleven videos to be exact. This must not be a coincidence, since searching the hashtag #itendswithus was the first thing I did when I accessed the new TikTok account. The algorithm noted that I am particularly interested in the book *It Ends With Us* and, subsequently, that I am interested in the

romance genre. Thus, it makes sense why the books I gathered during my scrolling session belonged to the romance genre in their majority.

#### Discussion

The last step of inductive thematic content analysis is interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This process involves examining the themes that have emerged from the data, and considering how they relate to each other and to the research questions (ibid.). Here I will also use the theories from Chapter I to support the interpretation.

#### User engagement

To sum up, I detected six themes in the ways users engage with Colleen Hoover's 2016 novel *It Ends With Us*: interpretation/literary analysis, creative expression, response/evaluation, film/media, organisation/documentation, and social interaction. Below I look at each theme in more detail and relate them to the theories from Chapter I.

#### Interpretation/literary analysis

Interpreting and analysing books is an activity that usually takes place in the mind of reader, in a book club environment, or at school. However, the digital environment of BookTok presents a space where people with thousands of kilometres between them can share their literary interpretations and analyses with each other. No matter the location of a reader, on BookTok they can connect with like-minded individuals who take reading as a hobby. In the sample I analysed, a lot of users commented extensively on the main characters of *It Ends With Us*, Ryle and Lily. Some videos focused on each character individually and other videos examined the dynamics

between the two characters. Some critics of the novel preferred to give emphasis to the sensitive themes that the storyline contains, for example themes of domestic abuse and physical violence. The shared interpretation and analysis of a novel brings like-minded readers together and can be related back to participatory culture theory because BookTok users not only consume content, but also actively participate in discussions and debate.

#### **Creative expression**

By engaging with a work of literature through creative expression, readers can personalise their interpretation of the text and gain new insights into the story. This theme of user engagement connects to uses and gratifications theory because, as researchers mention in Lawrence's (2020) study, self-expression is one of the main uses of social media.

#### Response/evaluation

Responses may take the form of reviews, recommendations, criticism, or emotional reactions. Like the interpretation/analysis theme, this theme can be traced back to participatory culture theory. Instead of keeping their emotions regarding a book internally, users feel the need to share them with their peers online. Others prefer gathering book recommendations that they think other readers will enjoy. In my sample, some of the videos included reviews reminiscent of those of literary critics. Other videos were more subjective with the users taking a stance for or against the book. This behaviour of sharing recommendations and criticising works online influences which books become popular on BookTok, and eventually in-store.

#### Film/media

Film adaptations of literature have become increasingly popular in recent years, with many books being adapted into blockbuster movies, such as *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games*. Through BookTok, readers can give direct feedback to movie producers about the content of a film based on their favourite book. The videos I encountered during my analysis mostly focused on the cast that each user would have liked to see in the upcoming *It Ends With Us* movie. Most of the videos had a negative undertone because the author had already announced a cast that many readers were not happy about. Even though the cast was set in place, the BookTok community insisted on their wants. This active criticism by the fans can be explained by participatory culture theory, which states that, instead of simply consuming content online, people choose to respond to it.

# Organisation/documentation

As I mentioned in the Introduction, a reader's personal library is a major theme in BookTok content, and the aesthetic component of a personal library is taken very seriously by young readers online. By annotating a text, readers can keep track of their own thoughts, insights, and reactions to a particular book. Researchers in Lawrence's (2020) study of social media's uses and gratifications mention that self-presentation is a vital component of a user's online existence. Thus, by displaying a beautifully organised library, users present the best version of their "reader" identity. Similarly, annotating books in vibrant colours and taking notes in beautiful cursive handwriting contributes to this flawless image online.

#### **Social interaction**

Lawrence's study on the uses and gratifications of social media mentions social interaction and connection as two important needs of users. BookTok, as an interest-focused community, gathers people that can easily bond based on their shared love for reading, or even their shared appreciation of a specific author, such as Colleen Hoover.

#### Book discovery

The application of cultivation theory to the observed findings reveals that exposure to particular books or genres on the BookTok platform significantly influences users' reading preferences and habits. The hyper-focused attention given to specific authors, such as Colleen Hoover, is contributing to the increased fame and recognition of her other literary works, which have all made it on best-sellers lists (Dellatto, 2022). Additionally, the popularity of *It Ends With Us*, which belongs to the romance genre, has led to a notable boost in attention for other books within this particular genre. In the data that I gathered, 129 out of the 218 books mentioned were romance books. This confirms the premise of cultivation theory as it relates to the popularity of the romance genre.

Moreover, participatory culture theory can explain why most videos on a TikTok user's For You Page fall under the response/evaluation theme, as seen on *Table 4* on Chapter III. As I mentioned on Chapter I, participatory culture theory argues that people do not simply consume content online, but also participate in its creation, dissemination, and perception. Videos under the response/evaluation theme include recommendations, reviews, criticism, and emotional reaction, and may affect a user's reading list. Moreover, based on uses and gratifications theory,

information-seeking is an important aspect of a user's social media experience (Lawrence, 2020). Thus, gathering information on which books are worth reading or which books one should avoid is a useful feature of BookTok for readers.

#### **Summary**

To sum up and to relate the above findings to my research questions, the rise of BookTok has impacted the reading experience of users in a multitude of ways. To begin with, BookTok creates a digital space where like-minded readers can interact and react to books. The BookTok community engages with books by: (a) analysing and interpreting them, (b) expressing their themes creatively, (c) discussing and criticising their film or TV adaptions, (d) evaluating them, and (e) organising and documenting them. Furthermore, TikTok's algorithm facilitates the discovery of new books. Specifically, the For You Page of each user learns about their interest in books by monitoring their activity on TikTok. Once the algorithm is familiar with a reader's primary interest in books, the For You Page shapeshifts to reflect that. Most videos on a reader's For You Page include hashtags that are related to reading, such as #booktok or #ilovereading. The rest of the videos either have no hashtags but a book-related caption, or no hashtags and no bookrelated caption. The latter perfectly reflect the power of TikTok's algorithm, as a tool that accurately identifies the themes of a video with no written information, and then presents it to users that are more likely to enjoy it. Moreover, most videos on a reader's For You Page fall under the response/evaluation theme of book engagement, which shows that readers are highly likely to find their next read by simply scrolling on TikTok. Finally, the romance genre is thriving on TikTok, as this is reflected on the For You Page's content.

# Conclusion

In conclusion, this research study aimed to investigate BookTok's impact on readership. The research focused on the commercial success of Colleen Hoover's 2016 novel *It Ends With Us* by conducting a thematic content analysis of videos under the hashtag #itendswithus on TikTok. Moreover, a second thematic content analysis focused on the For You Page of a TikTok user with an interest in reading, as it was reflected in the user's previous activity on the app. The findings showed that users on BookTok engage with books by analysing and interpreting them, expressing their themes creatively, discussing and criticising their film or TV adaptions, evaluating them, and organising or documenting them. Finally, users discover books on TikTok by scrolling on their highly personalised For You page. The findings concluded that the most popular literary genre for TikTok audiences is romance. This research study provided valuable insights into how social media platforms such as TikTok have the power to shape contemporary literary culture, how readers discover and select books, and how they engage with and discuss literature online. This research can be useful for a range of stakeholders in the publishing industry, including publishers, authors, and readers.

## Limitations

#### User engagement

As I continued to scroll through videos under the #itendswithus hashtag, I noticed that the algorithm was becoming increasingly attuned to my interests. It seemed that the more I engaged with certain types of content, the more the algorithm learned about my preferences and began to tailor its recommendations accordingly. However, I eventually reached a point where I noticed

that the themes present in the videos under the #itendswithus hashtag had become repetitive. While the algorithm was able to surface videos that were relevant to my interests, it was relying on a narrow set of themes and content types, which limited the variety of content to which I was exposed.

#### Book discovery

During the scrolling session, I encountered numerous videos that were unrelated to the subject I was interested in discovering. This made it challenging to find relevant content and required me to spend more time sifting through irrelevant material to identify videos that aligned with the research subject. Moreover, some videos were significantly longer than others, which meant that I had to spend more time on them and missed other videos during the strict 95-minute session.

#### Recommendations

The publishing industry can utilise BookTok to engage with younger readers, foster a sense of community, and promote their books and authors. By creating short videos or other forms of content, publishers can engage with readers in a more interactive and personal manner. Additionally, by trusting algorithmic recommendations based on users' reading habits and preferences, publishers can expose readers to new and diverse content and increase book sales. The viral potential of BookTok can also be harnessed by publishers to reach a wider audience and increase book sales and visibility for their authors. The publishing industry can leverage the power of BookTok to connect with younger readers and promote their books and authors in a dynamic and innovative way. As I mentioned in my literature review, the impact of social media on reading has been a topic of debate for some time with some critics arguing that digital platforms are

harmful to traditional reading practices. However, my research suggests that social media, and more specifically TikTok, may be contributing to the development of a new reading culture that values books in unique ways. In fact, it is now easier than ever for readers to promote and celebrate their love for books through communities such as BookTok. By using TikTok, readers can share their thoughts and recommendations with a wider audience and connect with like-minded individuals who share their passion for literature. As such, I conclude that social media is not the enemy of reading, but rather an ally in the creation of a new, vibrant reading culture that celebrates books and promotes literacy in an innovative manner.

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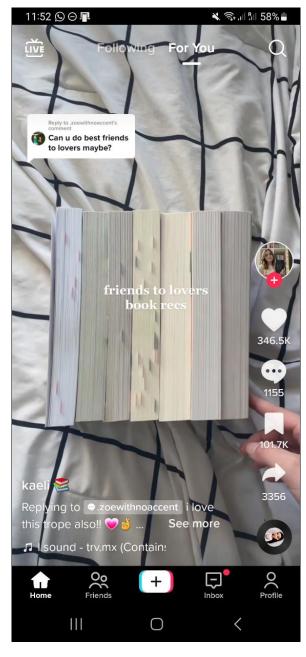
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## **Appendices**

### Appendix A: screen recording of TikTok scrolling session

The 90-minute screen recording can be found <u>here</u> in video format.



Screenshot from scrolling session

# Appendix B: coding scheme for user engagement

	SOCIALINTERACTION		community	2922	228.7K	1,000,000	community, friends reading https://mukek.com/together, showing book	24/11/2022	100 letisbookss
			community	2734	44 <sub>K</sub>	308,600	community, friends reading	23/02/2023	ddict
INTERPRETATION/LITERARY ANALYSIS	RESPONSE/EVALUATION	themes	review	32	1495	50,400	noratowed reviewing/summary	16/09/2022	98 shelly.doll
	RESPONSE/EVALUATION		review	1043	63.4	713,800	ncatowed reviewing the book	03/10/2022	page
	RESPONSE FVALUATION		review	351	22.58	389 500	https://www.back.co.greviewing.coho.hooks	17/01/2023	the turning page
INTERPRETATION/LITERARY ANALYSIS		emotional reaction	review	15	696	16.900	review/analysis, emotional reaction,	13/09/2022	geminigoober
	RESPONSE/EVALUATION		recommendation	7912 465	497.8K	239,900	https://www.ikok.com/rankling-coho-books	26/11/2022	93 thecatalinawinemxr 94 betteroffread_
ORGANIZATION/DOCUMENTATION	RESPONSE/EVALUATION		personal library	663	82.1K	647,300	https://m.titeck.com/b00k	10/11/2022	nerdybookloverbitch
	criticism RESPONSE/EVALUATION	emotional reaction	personal library	5185	442.2K	2,000,000	showing library, showing inside of	02/03/2021	abbysbooks
	RESPONSE/EVALUATION		emotional reaction	949	70.4K	487,200	https://m.tkok.com reaction to a quote	08/06/2022	90 sophiaslibraryy
	RESPONSE/EVALUATION	Weiver	emotional reaction	19K	1.3M	5 700 000	https://m.tetacon/emotional/feaction	23/11/2022	
	RESPONSE/EVALUATION		emotional reaction	18.2K	2.4M	11,200,000		15/08/2022	
			emotional reaction	231	47.8K	638,200	https://www.taxxi.co	25/07/2022	
INTERPRETATION/LITERARY ANALYSIS		themes	emotional reaction	1367	399.9K	2,600,000	emotional reaction, relatable themes	11/02/2023	
	RESPONSE/EVALUATION		emotional reaction	288	44.8K	276,600	https://m.ukci.com/emotional/reaction	13/01/2023	
	RESPONSE/EVALUATION		emotional reaction	6583	396.1K	2,000,000	https://m.ukok.com/emotional/reaction	23/03/2021	
	RESPONSE/EVALUATION		emotional reaction	10.4K	454.2K	3,900,000	https://www.iaxok.co.emotional.reaction	23/07/2021	
	RESPONSE/EVALUATION		emotional reaction	1377	241.7K	1,900,000	https://www.bask.co.emot.ional.reaction	08/11/2022	
	RESPONSE/EVALUATION		emotional reaction	2847	131K	1,700,000	https://www.axxi.co.emotional.reaction	28/06/2022	
	RESPONSE/EVALUATION		emotional reaction	2847	131K	32,500,000	https://www.back.co/emotionalreaction	06/08/2022	
	RESPONSE/EVALUATION		emotional reaction	343	21.5K	328100	https://m.teo.completends.to.throw.away.como.book	03/02/2022	
	RESPONSE/EVALUATION		criticism	336	19.6K	298,400	https://m.tkek.com/coloring-book criticism	11/01/2023	74 morgannbook
	RESPONSE/EVALUATION		criticism	978	70.7K	383,400	https://www.ikok.com/Coloring_book/criticism	11/01/2023	
	RESPONSE/EVALUATION		criticism	673	8283	120,100	BEST sellers list populated by	08/03/2023	72 booksaresick
	RESPONSE/EVALUATION		orticism	491	11.1K	81,900	https://www.laxic.co/Commentary	10/03/2023	/1 bigbooklady
							best sellers list populated by CoHo.		
CREATIVE EXPRESSION	ORGANIZATION/DOCUMENTATION	annotation	visualedits	14.7K	624.9K	4,300,000	edit of the phrase "īm sorry" in the	18/11/2021	70 asyraaf
	ORGANIZATION/DOCUMENTATION		personal library	35	5686	34,900	https://www.axxk.co/stack.of.books	03/03/2022	69 .fxcky0u2
	ORGANIZATION/DOCUMENTATION		personal library	243	43K	338,700	snowing the cover, together with it	05/11/2022	68 b00kt0k16
	ORGANIZATION/ DOCOMENTATION		personal library	ē	20,70	***,000	https://www.iaxid.co/bOOKS	11/03/2023	
	OBCANIZATION/DOCIMENTATION		portonal library	163	975 53	44 000	showing the cover, stack of other	11 /02/2022	67 hooks hu amm
	ORGANIZATION/DOCUMENTATION		personal library	912	87.6K	376,900	showing of f collection of CoHo	10/03/2023	
	ORGANIZATION/DOCUMENTATION		personal library	8358	911.1K	7,200,000	htps://m.tkok.com/showing.cover, purchase	09/09/2022	65 wandering_chapters
	ORGANIZATION/DOCUMENTATION		personal library	150	5987	308 400	https://www.iaxis.co. Showing.cover_nurchase	27/02/2023	
	ORGANIZATION/DOCUMENTATION		personal library	238	1172	37,000	https://www.bask.co.re.ading	07/01/2022	
	ORGANIZATION/DOCUMENTATION		annotation	US	S.	234,900	https://m.tkok.com/highlighting_showing_chapter	02/09/2022	
	ORGANIZATION/DOCUMENTATION		annotation	2505	193.4K	1,200,000	https://m.tkea.com highlighting, showing chapter	16/07/2022	
	ORGANIZATION/DOCUMENTATION		annotation	5 5	566.6K	7,500,000	natalowed annotating	04/02/2022	
	ORGANIZATION/DOCUMENTATION		annotation	543	140.7K	695,200	highlighting chapter, opening line	20/01/2022	ner
	ORGANIZATION/DOCUMENTATION		annotation	91	10.5K	150,200	https://m.tikes.com/hightlightling, showing chapter	17/10/2022	
	ORGANIZATION/DOCUMENTATION		annotation	2892	252.5K	3,000,000	https://www.axxi.co.highlighting.showing.chapter	06/11/2022	54 luvrsplac3
	ORGANIZATION/DOCUMENTATION		annotation	410	45.2K	432,000	https://www.iaask.co.inightlightling.showing.chapter	22/11/2022	53 lasttraintoaugust
	ORGANIZATION/DOCUMENTATION		annotation	83	7709	109,600	https://www.axxk.co.highlighting.showing.chapter	05/10/2022	51 tubafatyma
	ORGANIZATION/DOCUMENTATION		annotation	144	23.5K	259,600	https://www.nax.c.com/sightlightling.showing-chapter	27/11/2022	
	INTERPRETATION/LITERARY ANALYSIS		themes	124	14.5K	322,200	https://m.tkek.com/summary of chapter	18/10/2022	48 shelbyzang
	INTERPRETATION/LITERARY ANALYSIS		recommendation	104	13.3K	155,800	recommendations similar to it ends	16/02/2022	47 barry_happy
RESPONSE/EVALUATION	character analysis TERPRETATION/LITERARY ANALYSIS	themes	review	cu g	125	2,086	https://www.naxx.co/review, themes, character analysis	26/12/2022	46 user928374929222
THE COLOR REPRESENTATION	INTERPRETATION / INTERARY ANALYSIS			SSO .	87 8K	795300	https://www.akok.co.feaction	20/05/2022	
RESPONSE/EVALUATION	INTERPRETATION/LITERARY ANALYSIS	emotional reaction		1412	75.2K	1.200.000	character analysis, emotional	05/08/2022	
	INTERPRETATION/LITERARY ANALYSIS		character analysis	2649	100.6K	824,800	https://www.iaxxk.co/Character analysis	29/11/2022	42roxaana_strat 43 unrecoverwy
	FILM/MEDIA		movie adaption	2025	100K	1,300,000	https://mitroscom/movie adaption, cast announcement	27/01/2023	
	FILM/MEDIA		movie adaption	474	26.1K	218,200	htps://m.tkok.com/movie a daption, preferred cast	29/01/2023	
	FILM/MEDIA		movie adaption	329	22.1K	138,100	eferred	28/01/2023	38 latenightread
	FILM/MEDIA		movie adaption	851	52.9K	411,600	eferred	29/01/2022	
	FILM/MEDIA		movie adaption	2989	136.9K	926,800	https://muteos.com.movie a daption, preferred cast	30/01/2023	
	FILM/MEDIA		movie adaption	2578	273.4K	2,800,000	https://www.haxx.co.movie.adaption, preferred cast	31/01/2023	34 marjan_wali
	FILM/MEDIA		movie adaption	3572	258.8K	2,700,000	eferred	27/01/2023	32 katiefeeneyy
	FILM/MEDIA		movie adaption	569	41.5K	499,400	https://www.abok.co.movie a daption, preferred cast	27/01/2022	31 laus.books
	FILM/MEDIA		movie adaption	7793	591.8K	5,000,000	https://www.axxx.com.ovie a daption, preferred cast	27/01/2023	29 gretahogblomm 30 howkesfilms
	FILM/MEDIA		movie adaption	14	562.8K	3,400,000	https://www.acs.co.movie adaption, preferred cast	27/07/2022	28 tpwk.niq
	FILM/MEDIA		movie adaption	7207	85.4K	2 700 000	eferrec	27/01/2023	
	FILM/MEDIA		movie adaption	1290	66.4K	758,100	https://www.bask.co.movie.adaption, preferred cast	31/01/2023	ads
	FILM/MEDIA		movie adaption	11.2K	504.7K	2,500,000	https://www.hask.comovie.adaption, preferred cast	27/01/2023	
	FILM/MEDIA		movie adaption	9242	430.5K	2,600,000	https://www.bask.co.movie.adaption, behind the scenes	29/07/2022	
	FILM/MEDIA		movie adaption	401	12.4K	70,800	https://www.haxk.co.movie.adaption	10/03/2023	읔
	FILM/MEDIA		movie adaption	4161	313.4K	2,200,000	https://m.ikok.com/Cast announcement reaction	27/01/2023	
	CREATIVE EXPRESSION		visual edits	148	10.88	94,000	https://m.teck.com/edit of atlas with pictures	18/12/2022	
	CREATIVE EXPRESSION		visual edits	839	124.2K	807,900	https://m.tieck.com/etilitagining/une/Characters	30/12/2022	17 pseudaisthish
ENTRE DE LONGE ENTRE MANAGE GO		como	visualieuris	1 400	NO.670	2,700,000	https://m.tkek.com (StairS)	31/00/2022	
			visual edits	11.5%	382.5K	3,000,000	guessing the book from one picture	11/02/2022	
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	CREATIVE EXPRESSION		visual edits	501	178.5K	616,200	https://www.axxx.cole dit with images, lily's insta	08/11/2022	11 book_loveeeee 12 lilvcallowayswifee
	CREATIVE EXPRESSION		visual edits	73	8577	95,200	https://www.laxa.co/Characters	27/02/2022	
	CREATIVE EXPRESSION		visual edits	39	3280	29,200	https://www.iback.co.edit.with.ima.ges, atla's story	21/01/2023	
	CREATIVE EXPRESSION		visual edits	off	14.9K	98,600	https://www.ikxid.co.edit.with.images	08/03/2023	8 atlas_lily
	CREATIVE EXPRESSION		visual edits	156	14.2K	120,200	https://www.iaxxi.co.edit.of.characters.with.videos	24/07/2022	
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# Appendix C: coding scheme for book discovery

username	follower	caption	comment	lites -	views -	sharer_	method of dicovery	way of engagement based on findings from other RQ -	books mentioned
boookttokk	1956	verity by colleen hoover #teammanuscript #verity #colleenhoover	855	71500	489100	552	algorithm	creative expression	verity
oceansgirt222	1994	i love them sm & ® #aesthetic #ilityanderlas #itandswithus #ilitybloom #atlascorrigan #pinterest #oceansgirt222 #lyp	708	63700	402800	1219	algorithm	creative expression	it ends with us
myfriendsdontnead	27000	Replying to @dervirplus Comparison to books where I trained the spine #protectyourpaperbacks #myfriendsdontnead #roneofmyfriendsnead #readwithms #readwisemskessyouhappy	0	45700	603500	405	algorithm	organization/documentation	twilight, from blood and ash, charming your dad, the ex hex, the kiss curse, the very secret society of irregular witches, small town big magic, payback's a witch, broken bords,
bookswithjess kierralewis75	9325 945000	#darkromance #hauntingadeline	1139 1204	103800	673900 788700	861 1410	algorithm algorithm	response/evaluation response/evaluation	it ends with us heunting adeline
saracerrolii	53700	I love u lucy score	154	44200	449400	61	algorithm	response/insituation	terms and conditions, one last stop, purk 57, the song of schilles, from blood and sich, set your age eve brown, things we never got over, delay of 40, so plante berbarisars, the worst best man, boyfriend material, seven hasbands of evelyn hage, book lovers, the spanish love deception, book proving the love hypothesia.
ashkowspizzi	4887	"do you already have an emotional support text chain set up or do you need us to assign you a group?" Records Woodsersies Was allymas Sight Rejmass Wacourtofftomsandroses Wacourtofmistandfury Withysand Withysandandfleyre Weyre Woodhaul	1298	79800	546000	5615	book hashtag	creative expression	acotar
bookswithbeau	35500	Weyre 8bookhaul 「m sorry to everyone on Insta, who witnessed my reaction to this book. ② 下めookhok #bookracs # tital travelhus #flyp Wendawithus #colleenhover #bookish #reading #bookloker #flyp シ #flypage Faber sert ms some books! Lat's urbox them ②	745	133100	959100	563	book hashtag	creative expression	it ends with us
tiggysbooks	6940	effoher ethonomoù ethonom ethonomhouring	1	31	344	0	book hashtag	organization/documentation	ellie pilai is brown, ellie pilai is almost in love, the lesbian's guide to catholic school
iceboundreader	66	subbookton #yabooktok* the first plert of the video was \$8.00 hardcover sale. The second part was buy 5, gat 1 fine. I live checking out the saless at bookoutlet because you rever live what you will find! #booksonsale #eadmorebooks.	0	56	691	0	book hashtag	organization/documentation	vespertine, all of our demise, demsel, the queen will betray you, all of us vitains, the king will kill you, the cursed sea, the glace spare, house of [scorething] by krystel [scorething], crown of feathers, morrighan, the maps of memory.
calismadingg	36000	#bookhaul ♥	36	7906	69600	7	book hashtag	organization/documentation	[something], crown of feathers, morrighan, the maps of memory the ice twins, snowed in for christmas, deadly housewives, the enemy inside, fly away, christmas in the scottish
thebristo/bookworm	2744	What I'm currently reading, 200 pages in and liking it a bit most then the first book. Hoping to finish it this weekend \$\frac{1}{2}\$ shirts/books/wern whaterreading earbeit/reading/shorts/weekend/shor	56	1770	15100	1	book hishtag	organization/documentation	highlands bloodmarked
readsholic19	9509	Reading 34 update 34 Time Freadingupdatetime #currentlyreading Medifinishanead Mashownest #emilyheny Mapppyslice Mazyscone #thingsweltidefrombelight #sahenehmafi #igniteme #miletich	134	31700	322400	47	book hisihting	organization/documentation	happy place, things we hide from the light, shatter me series, mile high
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theworksstores	20600	It's here and we can't wait to read it @ #theworks #bookstok #colleanhoover #colleanhooverbooks #nevemever #nevemeverbook @ Collean Hoover This sound with this book (A)	107	14700	164700	67	book hashtag	organization/documentation	never never
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whososzge	8829	#Goryoupage #reading #sadness #thoughts This book absolutely broke me - uply love by Collean Hoover ♥ #uplylove #uplylovebook	1618	247600	1600000	1414	book hashtag	organization/documentation	how to make friends in the dark, you'd be home now, girl in pieces, the way I used to be, how it feels to flost
whatchloreads_	22800	This book absolutely broke me - ugly love by Colleen Hoover () #uglylove #uglylovebook	4371	772900	7000000	9735	book hashtag	organization/documentation	ugly love
readingbooks_f	1127	#colleanhoover #booklok #bookrecs #bookloker It's no surprise that it "it ends with us" is, but this book got me into neading and "im greated I for that ® Book! Tok #books #bookwom #reading #ftyp #reader #booktoker #briefliktok #fty #booklokok #ftyp: #briefliktok #fty #booklokok #ftyp: #briefliktok #ftendiwithse #iewu	100	5144	27900	33	book hashtag	response/evaluation	it ends with us
alicecrgoncalvess	4802	read some of my absolute fav books this year, very thankful. #booktok #booktokportugal	62	14500	70100	17	book hashtag	response/evaluation	november 9, furny you should sisk, house of earth and blood, love and other words, book lovers, shatter me series, acotar, addictediotaway sisters series, magnolia parks series,
_kathyreads	42500	have you ready any of these? #bookseries@ve #shattermeseries #accerseries #fogseries #theinherhancegames #dinyairserie #megnolisparksuniverse #bominbloodseries #camorrachronicles #darkverseries #camorrachronicles #darkverseries	466	88600	640700	361	book hashtag	response/evaluation	shatter me series, acoter, throne of glass series, inheritance games series, dirty air series, magnolis parks series, born in blood series, the camonra chronicles series, dark verse series
kendra reads	134000	snother great year of reading #bestbooks2022 #bookrecommendations #reading #romancebooks #fyp #literaryliction Favorite reads of 2022 #booktokfavorites	442	41500	429900	295	book hashtag	response/evaluation	book lovers, honey and spice, terms and conditions, fuel the fire, addicted after all, lessons in chemistry, tomorrow and tomorrow and termorrow, the no-show, managolia parks, daisy hates: the creat undoing, part of your world.
myfriendsdortread	27000	Pavoras reacts of 2012 reconscissations wisconstances(2012 #2022/bookstonead #fivestanneadsc/2012 #burnytymonaswad #fisshiseasonforrevenge #bondsthattis Replying to @becoalsaktty rating Collean Hoover books!!	1277	86400	662000	865	book hashtag	response/evaluation	fractured freedom, tis the season for reverge, broken bonds series, burry, touch of darkness, icebreaker
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sydneyyybooks	305800	ebookstropes  Cent start any of these right before bed I'm warring you m ♥ shookstok #booksrecs #books #booksrecs #books #booksrecs#books #booksrecs#books#booksread #booksrecs#books#boo	1222	346900	2600000	11700	book hashtag	response/evaluation	the good lie, what lies between us, still missing, a flicker in the dark, every last secret
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pavisfrancesca	53800	How many of 2022's top 5 books have you read?  2 — #mostpopulathooks #goodreadsoplist #mostreadauthors #mostreadbooks #booktok Started the book last right and just finished it!	99	12300	161600	77	book hashtag	response/evaluation	naminders of him, the love hypothesis, verity, seven husbands of evelyn hugo, it ends with us
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sienabellaS	5330	#romancabooks #booksish this book tore my heart apert ⊕ ⊕ #bookstok # booksthatchingedmyffe #booksthatmidernesob #thiseverhabbandsdevelyhtugo #emotionabooks #booksthatmilbreskyou #booksthathurt #deepbooks	1497	205200	1100000	1088	book hashtag	response/evaluation	unfireshed seven husbands of evelyn hugo
bookie_nookie	8480	parsonal opinion #book #addictedtonasding #booktok #bookwom #booksithrikyoushouldraid #foryou #training #forous #blooktins #brial #fyp > #books #reading #brary #BookTok #bookchib #booksh #books #booksecommendations #booksinscommend #reacomendation	615	105200	695700	246	book hisihtag	response/wellustion	the seven husbands of evelyn hugo, book thief, the perks of being a wallflower, the hate u give
hopesbooknook	2788	Hers part 1 of my February wrep up! If you want to waich my other booksin Nelson IT link my recreat account for you so waith them thereof High Pebodoks thoolook QL Michausy werpup a Bookmarked brown waith was the property of the property for the waith of the property of the property for the waith of the property of the property Michael Section 1 of the property Michael Section	361	33000	180700	86	book hishtag	response/evaluation	bloodmarked, seven husbands of evelyn higo, throne of glass series, twisted series, the five print

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als.bookclub	29600	should i do a part 2777 #booktok #booktavcmba #booktivuoutak #myfavchabooks #booknas #bookracommandations #booksiracommand #anatomysivoostory #mydarkvimasaa #kingdomofthaviokad #kookt #normalpacple #fyp #foryout #fyspae #fyp books i boogle bo of booktok and bookstagram forked in fixe fixe #fixed	560	63300	599800	426	book hashtag	response/evaluation	anatomy, normal people, kingdom of the wicked, my dark varietisis, every summer after
bookswithrafia	14500	books I bought be of booktok and bookstagnam (linked in bio ''') #booktok #bookstagnam #bookworm #bookish #bookstone #bookheal #hyo plus the third in the series just carne out and I still	242	64600	330000	71	book hashtag	response/evaluation	twisted series, a good gifts guide to murder series, things we never got over, reminders of him, better than the movies, five survive
bookshelfofeuphoria	4380	olas the third in the series just cares out and I still have t read the first one @ I HAVE to @ Whatfinsprint Meading Mooks Wooksk WGetCrackin Mook Wookish Weading Weads Wookinecommendations Reads Weader Wookishtick, Wookish Mookken Mookshelfs	757	120700	581100	731	book hashtag	nesponsia/invaluation	the fine print, the love hypothesis, the song of achilles
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nicsbookshelf_	4621	what book or books do you absolutely bow? 36 (2) Booksok Robodoksar Robonabooksok  womancebooksok Robodoksok Robonabooksok  womancebooksok Robodoksok Robodoksok  womancebooksok Robodoksok  womancebooksok Robodoksok  warmaliowercemanoa Rifferedatokowara  warmaliowercemanoa Rifferedatokowara  warmaniinosokowa Robonabooksok  warmaniinosokowa Robonabooksok  warmaniinosokowa Robodoksok  Robodoksovomance Reliabiorence Robodoksokowa  Robodoksokowa Robodoksokowa  Robodoksokowa Robodoksokowa  Robodoksokowa Robodoksokowa  Robodoksokowa Robodoksokowa  Robodoksowa  Robo	84	26100	164700	78	book hashtag	nesponse/evaluation	by a thread, the deal, say you swear, archer's voice, the simple wind, martiage for one, things we never got over
megsbookbabes	13400	my faves #booktok #books #bookrecommendations #cruelprince #shatterme #acotar #fyp	756	108700	709000	373	book hashtag	response/evaluation	shatter me series, cruel prince, acotar
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leadariellereada	2775	Phodolish Modistatin Some of my 54 madas-3 siGerCrackin edisast-hooks efficiat-hook efficiat-hooks recording edisast-hooks efficiat-hook efficiat-hooks-recording edisast-hooks-recording edisast-producting edisast-productin	917	111700	587800	254	book hashtag	nesponse/evaluation	it ends with us, good girl bad blood, daisy jones and the six the silent patient, as good as dead
777den	16600		923	275800	2600000	1126	book hashtag	response/evaluation	a thousand boy kisses, verity, binding 13, twisted series, hopeless, love and other words, archer's voice
kastis.books	16200	Bookhaid Hooksforvou Ivvad the thell of these books! Auggetmeries ethenewys! Histoenthree Hebbookhevoods shollyjackson Hookhaid Phockreceremendations Bookneview Blookkoi étrurdermystery Hirtillerbooks! Augustystory	630	102800	660400	507	book hashtag	response/evaluation	a good girts guide series, the box in the woods, the new girl, hide with me
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readsbyjess	4093	#booktokchailenge #booktok/yp #booktokviral #booknecemmendations #booknec #booknecm	165	13400	140600	75	book hashtag	response/evaluation	things we never got over, it ends with us, his and hers, sometimes I Se, archer's voice, shatter me series, seven husbands of evelyn hugo, if he had been with me, regrettin you, twisted series
mexican.befs	80400	faves by trops # #booktok #booktropes #finonitebooks #2002/arrapped #2002/arrapup #booksbytrops #th #bookrecs #bookrecommendations	4217	411600	3400000	5831	book hashtag	nesponsia/exakuation	habbards of evolyn happ, if he had been with me, regentler breatled sealers, flowbook, westford, vipers and virazion, the sealers, flowbook, westfords, vipers and virazion, reliestantly young, and of your world, caralvethand sealer, leding stars, water under the inright, by a threatly the post- shatet, worst beards which in cross, the appeared one surress, committing wides, wides at heart, the wedding contained by the committee of the committee of the countries of a start with our sould you. I would not sould be appeared to the countries of the Soulds, sequently, you, with you down the name.
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speed up songs08	80	Ry Pooleenhouver Ryp Rhooks Prumocheineinzigesmal Ritends withus	50	3022	13500	24	book hashtag	social interaction	it ends with us
bookswithrafa	14500	terrified #booktok #bookworm #bookish #bookstore #bookhaul #books #twistedseries #fyp #bookstore	643	83000	339200	636	book hashtag	social interaction	twisted series
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Rows 1-35 Rows 36-65