CHARLES UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Social Sciences
Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism

MA THESIS REVIEW

NOTE: Only the grey fields should be filled out!

Review type (choose one):

Review by thesis supervisor ☐   Review by opponent ☒

Thesis author:

Surname and given name: Golden Serena

Thesis title: Marketing 'That Girl' and the Commodification of Womanhood on TikTok

Reviewer:

Surname and given name: Součková Barbora

Affiliation: ICSJ FSS UK

1. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND THESIS (mark one box for each row)

		Conforms to approved research proposal	Changes are well explained and appropriate	Changes are explained but are inappropriate	Changes are not explained and are inappropriate	Does not conform to approved research proposal
1.1	Research objective(s)	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.2	Methodology	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
1.3	Thesis structure	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐

COMMENTARY (description of the relationship between the research proposal and the thesis. If there are problems, please be specific):

Serena Golden's thesis adheres to the main research objectives set out in the approved thesis. The author made some changes in methodology (e. g. extending the studied time period) as well as the structure of the thesis. These changes are explained and I consider them as appropriate

2. EVALUATION OF THE THESIS CONTENT

Use letters A – B – C – D – E – F (A=best, F= failed)

		Grade
2.1	Quality and appropriateness of the theoretical framework	B
2.2	Ability to critically evaluate and apply the literature	C
2.3	Quality and soundness of the empirical research	C
2.4	Ability to select the appropriate methods and to use them correctly	D
2.5	Quality of the conclusion	D
2.6	Thesis originality and its contribution to academic knowledge production	B

COMMENTARY (description of thesis content and the main problems):

The student uses high-quality sources of academic literature, which provide an interesting and important overview of the studied problematics. However, the theoretical part deserves a more profound elaboration in the sense of a critical evaluation of particular theoretical resources.

The empirical part of the thesis could be stronger. The methodological apparatus is somewhat problematic, lacking a detailed description of the used research technique supported by relevant literature. The author describes the whole process of data coding processing in great detail and is very transparent. However, it is redundant, and there is frequent repetition of information.

Since this is a Master's thesis, there should be high demands on the research methods. Also, the width of own empirical research should be appropriate. Unfortunately, the author is working with a small sample of data, which is insufficient even though this is qualitative research. Due to that, it would be beneficial, for example, to extend the studied time period or to combine the content analysis with another research technique in order to explore the topic in more depth. Research conducted in this way is only partially sufficient.

The conclusions of the thesis are, in some points, problematic, perhaps because of the mentioned issues of the methodological part of this thesis. The presented results are very descriptive and need a broader interpretation. Also, the argumentation could be stronger. It is based mainly on assumptions instead of relevant evidence. The author makes some conclusions that are not supported by data (e.g. the effect of trends on viewers/followers or how self-commodification affects viewers/followers – these themes can not be developed via this qualitative content analysis).

The chosen topic of the "That girl" phenomenon is fascinating and important in its broader context. The author brought interesting results from her analysis. It is, therefore, a pity that the author only deals with the topic very narrowly and does not address more critical issues related to social media and broader social phenomenons – e.g. highlighting the beauty standards of the global North through the Tik Tok platform, toxic positivity and glorifying Whiteness on social media or promotion of socially privileged people through these kinds of trends on Tik Tok (or on other social media platforms).

3. EVALUATION OF THE THESIS FORM

Use letters A – B – C – D – E – F (A=best, F= failed)

		Grade
3.1	Quality of the structure	C
3.2	Quality of the argumentation	D
3.3	Appropriate use of academic terminology	B
3.4	Quality, quantity and appropriateness of the citations (both in the theory part and in the empirical part)	B
3.5	Conformity to quotation standards (*)	A
3.6	Use of an academic writing style, and correct use of language (both grammar and spelling)	B
3.6	Quality of the textual lay-outing and appendices	C

(*) in case the text contains quotations without references, the grade is F; in case the text contains plagiarised parts, do not recommend the thesis for defence and suggest disciplinary action against the author instead.

COMMENTARY (description of thesis form and the main problems):
The structure is in some parts of the thesis confusing and disorganized, especially in the chapters on methodology and results – e.g. the research questions should be coherently presented at the beginning of the methodology section, and an elaboration of specific coding procedures should follow this. Due to the chaotic structure, some information in the text is also often repetitive and redundant.

As mentioned above, the argumentation needs to be stronger, and in some parts of the text, the author's arguments are based on unfounded data, which would proceed from the research of this thesis.

The text is written interestingly, and the author's passion for the chosen topic is evident even from the language style. The author uses academic language correctly, but in some parts of the text, the language is more essayistic or journalistic. The text conforms to the quotation standard.

Some things could be improved in the overall graphic layout - e.g., text alignment and prepositions left on the end of the lines. The graphical presentation of the results in diagrams is unclear; it is better to use tables for some results.

4. OVERAL EVALUATION (provide a summarizing list of the thesis's strengths and weaknesses):

The main topic of this diploma thesis discusses very actual and important phenomena, and the author's interest in the topic is evident from the text. Serena Golden writes about the topic engagingly and passionately and presents many interesting results in her research. Unfortunately, the text contains some things that could be improved, mainly regarding the methodological and empirical parts of the thesis - the analysed research sample needs to be bigger, and the author also presents some arguments or conclusions for which the data do not provide the necessary support. Also, the structure of the thesis could be better and more logically organised, as well as the final graphic design of the work. Due to the abovementioned shortcomings, I suggest a grade C or D (depending on the defence).

5. QUESTIONS OR TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED DURING THE THESIS DEFENSE:

5.1	Why did you decide to use this particular research technique?
5.2	What are your personal feelings about the "That girl" trend? Do you feel any of its negative impacts on yourself?
5.3	
5.4	

6. ANTIPLAGIARISM CHECK

⊠ The reviewer is familiar with the thesis' score in plagiarism analysis in SIS.

If the score is above 5%, please evaluate and indicate problems:

6.1	The score is 14%, but the similarities are mainly in direct quotations or in the thesis template.

7. SUGGESTED GRADE OF THE THESIS AS A WHOLE (choose one or two)

A ☐
B ☐
C ⊠
D ⊠
E ☐
F ☐

If the mark is an "F", please provide your reasons for not recommending the thesis for defence:

Date:5. 9. 2023   Signature: ……………………………..