

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In recent years, the increasing globalization of technological advancements have reshaped animation production worldwide (Hamilton, 2004). In this dynamic environment, studies and research are continually seeking the changes made in the industry to sustain the sense of locality in the cultural environment. This chapter delves into specifics of research questions, research objectives and purposes, problem statements and brief overview of the context of the study.

Local animation movies reflect the cultural identity of a particular region or country in several ways, Saputra and others (2021) has emphasized that creative arts have been involving in making global economic impact to the society and the country as creative economy. Animation is considered universal inclusion of the creative industry worldwide as they possess unique characteristics and regional focus in the making of the content (Saputra et al., 2021). Animation underscores a vital role in the creative economy with its technological, business opportunities and global relevance in developing country (Suyanto & Wibowo, 2018).

Animation often incorporates elements of local traditions, customs, and folklore, providing a visual representation of the cultural heritage of a specific region or community (Khalis et al., 2016). These cartoons may feature characters dressed in traditional clothing, showcase local architecture, or depict traditional celebrations and rituals. Local animation film appears to be the literary narrative structure for children which portrays through themes,

characters, plot, choice of words, storytelling style and many more as a form of teaching to promote awareness (McAdams, 2001).

Viewers may be drawn to these animation movies because they feature familiar settings, characters, and feel more relatable watching in their native language, because of the language, humor, and social norms portrayed in local cartoons are often reflective of the cultural identity of the community in which they are created (Halverson-Wente, 2018). By incorporating these elements, local animations serve as a means of preserving and promoting cultural identity, while also providing a source of entertainment and education for the audience. Children's cognition is formed through observation and listening to representation through signs visually and audio (Larkin, 2022). They have the critical ability to comprehend children's literature and practice valuable teachings that give them excitement and interact with their cognition. The signs displayed are non-verbal messages that significantly influence by their upbringing and environment to easily recognize hidden meanings as people can see through children's feelings and understanding (Locke, 2016).

Local animation also provides insights into the daily lives and traditions that resonate their own cultural experience, significantly impacting real-life situations and the perception of reality. The incorporation of cultural elements in visual design not only affects the visual works themselves but also has a profound impact on the audience's cultural awareness and perception. The mutual relationship between cultural elements and local animation film serves the way producers draw inspiration from diverse cultural backgrounds to create innovative and meaningful designs (Tavakoli, 2020). By acknowledging and incorporating cultural enrichment, designers can create moving pictures that are not only aesthetically pleasing but also meaningful and effective communication across cultural perspectives. This exchange

would enrich the cultural experiences of viewers and contribute to a broader understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures.

1.2 Problem Statement

The growing significance of global interconnectedness necessitates an in-depth examination of the perceptions toward nonverbal communication and intercultural communication as depicted in the movie (Bennet, 2013). Non-verbal elements in movies often rely on symbolic actions (Ewata, 2016) that define their meaning on their own or along with verbal communication and it can give extra meaning or compliment with other meanings. According to Khalis and Mustaffa (2017), the production team must be mindful of how certain symbols may be perceived in different cultural contexts and have a sense of identity in developing visuals in character design or attributes that represents local identity of a country especially amongst today's generation.

Western countries and Japan seem to be the dominant and most influential animation in the creative industry as a potential platform to contribute their national identity (Khalis et al., 2016). The studio production would create strategic plan in hiding or emphasizing cultural identity to appeal and differentiate local characteristics in the global market by tapping into nationalist sentiment that produces lasting outcomes (Martin, 2018). However, Malaysia has proven to not be an exception and developed legendary artists that created Kluang Man, Kampung Boy and many other local animation series sustaining the local identity without being influenced by other animation styles (Hasri et al., 2020).

According to Nadia and Mohammad (2018), creativity and appealing content are essential to disseminate representations of diverse culture in Malaysia successfully depicted from balanced portrayal of the country. In building local identity involve exposure of local

cultural symbols and narratives reflected by non-verbal communications and intercultural communications in animated series to develop stronger sense of pride in their national identity, by integrating cultural teachings into entertaining media can effectively deliver important attributes of national identity to young audiences (Omar & Ishak, 2014).

The pervasive influence of visual media in shaping cultural awareness, there is a gap in our understanding of how to interpret symbols that can vary across cultures and respond to the nuances of nonverbal cues and intercultural dynamics portrayed on the cinematic screen (Sawyer & Chen, 2012). Thus, this study is to explore and to investigate the attributes of nonverbal communication and intercultural communication that helps viewers become more media literate. It enables them to critically assess how cultures are portrayed in the content, fostering a discerning approach to media consumption (Arqoub & Alserhan, 2019).

1.3 Research Question

The central issue of this study is to explore the portrayal of nonverbal communication and intercultural communication in animated film. As highlighted in the problem statement, this study is to find out if certain symbols and visuals may be understood in different cultural contexts that sustain the local identity of a Malaysian. To do that systematically, it is critical to understand nonverbal communication and intercultural communication in the storytelling context before doing further investigation in the related phenomena. The detail research question for this purpose are as follows:

1. What are the attributes of nonverbal in the selected movie?
2. What are the intercultural communication attributes in the selected movie?
3. What are the most significant implications and contributions in sustaining local identity focused on their nonverbal communications?

1.4 Research Objective

Based on the research questions, the objectives of this study were set to achieve the following aspects:

1. To outline the attributes of nonverbal in this animation movie.
2. To identify intercultural communication in this animation movie.
3. To recommend significant implications and contributions in sustaining local identity focuses on their nonverbal communications.

1.5 Significance of the Research

This study focuses on the communication related to nonverbal in film to enhance media literacy (Omar & Ishak, 2011). It enables the audience to critically comprehend signs and symbols portrayed. According to Sabri and Adiprabowo (2022), an analysis on intercultural communication will enhance understanding and awareness of different cultures. This will allow in breaking down stereotypes and appreciates the cultural diversity in the multi-ethnicity society in Malaysia, because awareness increases on the importance in preserving cultural representation and heritages are respectfully portrayed in animation and appreciated globally (Khalis & Mustafa, 2017).

The overall outcome of this study will offer valuable insights for fostering effective nonverbal interactions in the society and recommend significant implications and contributions in intercultural communication (Sutanto, 2022) with comprehensive insights provided from understanding the context of the animation in interpreting the meanings and relevance of each non-verbal scene and cultural elements (Aini et al., 2023).

1.6 Keywords Definition

In this study, the following terms are defined as follows:

1. Nonverbal communication: Nonverbal communication refers to a communication without using words in their messages through a nonverbal platform, known as non-linguistic messages expressing feelings and building connection assists with the element of sounds or voices, gestures and appearance (Burgoon et al., 1996).
2. Intercultural communication: Intercultural communication refers to the communication between people different cultures or social groups in interacting with each other (Chen & Starosta, 1998), it is essential for understanding various backgrounds and how culture empower nationalism in communication.
3. Storyline content: In the context of film, storyline content refers to the narrative elements and structures that form the foundation of the story being directed (Egan, 1978). This includes character development, sequence of events and many more to get the audience engaged and essentially being used to deliver impactful stories and plots in the production.

1.7 Limitations

The researcher decided to implement narrative analysis as a research method to complete this project. One must have comprehensive and detailed information to correctly justify the sources of the content and retelling the stories provided requires researchers to be insightful with potential issues with the content. The selected story to be analyzed highlights only Malay cultural authenticity that restricted in connecting with other races and traditions in Malaysia, a country of multi-ethnicity and multi-cultural.

1.8 Conclusion

In the first chapter, the researcher explained the background of study, the problem statement, the research objectives, the research questions and the significance of the study. It is necessary to highlight the problems that linger around the subject and as a result that the purpose of the research can be clearly stated and achieved.

