

The Receptions and Social Media Actions on Malaysia Political Online Documentary among Generation Z

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Abstract

The rise of social media today is drastically changing the way information are being shared among the society. Social media has allowed the digital users to disseminate various issues including political issues. The aim of this study is to define the key receptions and social media actions among the Generation Z towards Malaysian political online documentary, 'Kisah Tauke Mancis dan Minyak Tumpah', an award winning documentary in Freedom Film Fest (FFF) 2011. A qualitative approach was carried out through focus group discussions with 21 informants in Malaysia to collectively analyse the key receptions and social media actions. The focus group discussion was based on two key factors i) internal (Narrative, Visual Images and

Themes) and ii) external (The Internet, and Media Ethics). Findings revealed that the internal factors are significantly relevant in defining the receptions of the users in comparison to external factors which influenced the social media actions.

Keywords: online documentary; visual communication; online youth community; political issue; focus group discussion; social sharing; social media action

Introduction

Communication technology is growing rapidly with many of the Internet-based applications. The existence of new media is not only as a “gateway” to facilitate the delivery of information to the public, but it is more than that. Media is also the most influential tool in effective communication process. Furthermore, with Web 2.0 technologies and moving towards the next phase of Web 3.0, the use of the Internet has dramatically changed. In fact, Levinson (2009) called the rise of new media as the “new new media” which is newer than the new media that shows the difference and the revolution of media in comparison to the classic media such as e-mail and websites.

New media is defined as the media access which offers a variety of options that attract today's generation of communications activities and have little interaction with interactivity (Harrison & Thomas 2009). The advancement of technology specifically the Internet has made it as one of the main sources that are valuable to obtain information and an open platform to share opinions and spread visibility of the issues in relation to other communities including global communication system (Harrison & Thomas 2009; Wakefield and Collin 2013). With the availability of the network connection and the “nodes” in the global, knowledge and information can be disseminated without borders and globally accessible which helps to improve

information, knowledge and new skills among all levels of society community regardless of race, creed, political borders, age gender and social media platforms (June Lu et. al 2003; Dijk 2006; Apple et.al 2020). Globally, the total number of social media users is expected to grow to 3.29 billion users in 2022 which represent be 42.3% of the world's population (Apple et.al 2020; eMarketer 2018).

Following this rapid evolution of technology and communication in the era beyond digitalization, content on social media have also been significantly altered. This includes broadcasting content

such as online documentaries which consequently affect the users viewing patterns, and social sharing actions which has gain interest among scholars to define the users receptions (Podara et. al 2019).

RESEARCH ISSUES

Past studies have highlighted how the rise of social networking sites has led to individual Internet- addiction and individual-level consequences (Grewal et. al 2019, John et. al 2017, Mochon et.al 2017, Zhang et.al 2017). In Malaysia, Internet addiction is common among the youth community specifically the undergraduates (Rozinah Jamaludin 2007). The question is, how the specified targeted group who are claimed to be addicted to the Internet and active on social media engage with certain issues specifically on local political issues? It is obvious how contents on social media allow users today to create and view the content, however much is still unknown in the context of the users receptions and their social media actions (Grewal et. al 2019).

The significant change in the media industry today has decisively altered the channels of producing and consuming audio visual content such as online documentaries

(Podara et.al 2019). This study focuses on defining the receptions and social media actions of social media users based on a Malaysian Online Political Documentary 'Kisah Tauke Mancis dan Minyak Tumpah' shared on a social media video-streaming platform (YouTube). Online documentary has become a tool to release pent-up feelings among the online communities. According to Richter and Riemer (2008), the social networking site is to define identity management, seek specialist, context awareness, contact management and information exchange.

METHOD OF THE STUDY

Specifically, this study focuses on defining the social media actions and key receptions among the Generation Z based on the selected Malaysian political online documentary. This online documentary is a half-hour documentary about a century-old Hindu temple and two communities in Section 19 and Section 23 in Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia. The temple, Sri Maha Mariamman temple made the news in August 2009 which drew a storm of protests.

A qualitative approach was carried out by conducting focus group discussions with 21 informants. The informants were basically subscribers of YouTube Channel of Freedom Film Fest (FFF) 2011. Each group consists a total of 7 informants which were categorized based on the frequency of the Internet usage :- Group A (Less than 4 hours), Group B (4 hours – 6 hours), and Group C (More than 6 hours).

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

No.	Factors	FGD
1.	<p>Internal Factors (Narrative)</p> <p>Social media action by the informants are based on the meaning-making of the online documentary.</p>	<p><i>If we understand the story in visual, then we feel like to interpret and share to others. (Informant C2)</i></p> <p><i>To me, we're younger generation must have to understand the meaning first, then we share. (Informant C3) Sometimes when I view a documentary from the Internet, I will try to understand the meaning of the story..after that I will share through my wall. (Informant C5).</i></p>
2.	<p>Internal Factors (Meaning of the Visual Images)</p> <p>Visuals implemented in the online documentary play a significant role in strengthening the message of documentary. The meaning of visuals also define the emotions of the visual which contributed to the social media actions (Kress & Leeuwen 2006; McMillin & Fisherkeller 2009).</p>	<p><i>The purpose of the visual would be the reason why I want to share those visual. (Informant C1)</i></p> <p><i>For me, if there is no intention through the visual, I did not share. (Informant B3)</i></p> <p><i>If I have a visual which is a sad story... portraying humanity image (poor, people needed help) ... normally this kind of image that people share a lot ... so does the effect on me. (Informant A3)</i></p> <p><i>The effect is what gives us a sense of trying to help... to do more than that, can't effort, than share it ... was able to share any kind of visual already ok ... example the visual of bad people ... just share, might be it can help other people. (Informant A5)</i></p>
3.	<p>Internal Factors (Theme)</p> <p>In general, each documentary portrays a specific theme, and a specific emotion which contributes in the social media actions specifically in sharing the political message.</p>	<p><i>I will share only the documentary that I have determine what is the story beside that visual, nobody wants to share all the documentary... theme of the visual such as sad story.. will shared. (Informant B2)</i></p> <p><i>Only the documentary that showing sad story. (Informant B4)</i></p>

Ermmm ... I do not care whatever documentary, but that documentary must develop some feel to audience. (Informant C1)

But ... and this documentary is actually a lot of meaning ... so I share a documentary is for the purpose of self.. I also like the documentary that are emotionally difficult to.. person. (Informant C4)

However, the opinion of informants from group A (the group that less exposure internet usage) show a slightly different answer than informants from groups B and C.

Hmmmm ... I share a documentary because that visual was pretty interesting ... actress or actors. (Informant A1)

I do not care much ... moreover I'm rarely online. (Informant A3)

Share all. (Informant A4)

4. External Factors (Internet)

With the advent of Internet technology and the emergence of social media platforms, it has lift up the interpersonal relationships and social networks (Ali Salman et. al (2010).

If there is indeed easy internet, it will be easy to share. (Informant C1)

For me, as while I go through my Facebook, I also want to share visual that I feel pretty. (Infromant B3)

Indeed, the Internet itself excite us to share the documentary that we see the internet, especially when the speed of wifi really fast. (Informant A3)

5.

Following the advancement of technology, media ethics is a significant factor in social media actions. Mohd. Nor Shahizan (2015) stated that the priorities of media literacy

Why would I want to share a visual which we know are not right? (Informant C6)

To me, we have to look at that visual look like, if sexy or too scary; well do not have to share. (Informant B7)

could actually be a factor to understand each specific visual image and understand the true meaning behind each visual or image. *The kind of horror visual, corpse, does not share. (Informant A3)*
Straight away deleted. (Informant A4)

Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study narrowed down to two major factors, internal and external. Internally, there are three specific sub-factors (narrative, meaning of the visual images and themes) which are all interconnected in sharing and resharing information via social media sites. The narrative structure in the documentary which basically involves the story, conflict, structure and character play a significant role in the process of defining the key receptions and social media actions. This is further supported by Ghaisani et. al (2017) which believed that narrative involving political – based information are always linked to personal, sensational, casual and experience which are the motivational factors of sharing activities in social media. In addition, the advancement of technology allow audiences now to connect, play, and share in a setting made possible by mobile communication and the abilities of the modern world, the investigation of new formats in online media is tied to innovation (Vázquez-Herrero et.al 2019).

In relation to the external factors, two main sub-factors were defined which are the Internet and the ethics. The digital environment today allows and provide opportunities for the audience to disseminate and evaluate media content and decide which element of the content could be viral (García-Perdomo 2018). The study also justifies how the usage of Internet with minimal technical issues such as easy-access, and good Wi-Fi connection would be the ultimate factor in spreading the related information and lift up the interpersonal relationships and social networks (Ali

Salman et. al (2010). However, the study revealed how media ethics is a significant factor in social media actions. Priorities of media literacy could actually be a factor to encourage critical interaction with media messages. Most proponents place emphasis on the connection between media literacy and critical thinking, which they define as "active inquiry and critical thinking about the messages we receive and create" (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009). People who are media literate are better equipped to comprehend public debate, participate in it, and ultimately make wise leadership election

judgments. Regardless of their opinions on a subject, those who are media literate can take a critical perspective when deciphering media messages (Mohd Nor Shahizan Ali 2015; Bulger and Patrick 2018;).

This study discusses the specifics of internal factors (narrative, meaning of the visual images and themes) and external factors (The Internet and media ethics) in the process of defining the key receptions and social media actions. Based on the findings, the study has justified that each online documentary has its own identity in communicating the main message of the story via an online documentary. The Generation Z are justified literate in providing receptions towards social media actions specifically on sharing political issues. Clearly, the advancement of technology has facilitated on how social media actions and the spread of online documentary need to be consistently examined to ensure the link between technology-content-users are always updated to sync with the internal and external factors.

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