WHAT THE INDUSTRY PLAYERS AND AUDIENCES WANT? TRENDS AND CHALLENGES OF THE MALAY FILM INDUSTRY

Apa yang Pemain Indusri dan Khalayak Mahukan? Trend dan Cabaran Industri Filem Melayu

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Abstract

Malaysia film industry has a long history. From the first film, *Laila Majnun* (1933) to the contemporary film, more Malay films have been produced. However, the Malay film industry today is challenged by the influx of Hollywood films dominating the local film market. To understand the challenges of the local film industry, this article depicts a reflection from the industry player and audience about creating a comprehensive ecosystem to develop a model of viable and vibrant film industry. Using an in-depth interview method, this article wants to gauge how deep the Western value seeping in local society and changes the value system of indigenous culture which is based on Islamic teachings. The results showed that despite the hybridity between local and Western values, the audience wishes to watch the local culture featured in local films. Although the film industry is challenged with the influx of foreign films, government policies helped the development of the Malay film industry.

Keywords: national film policy, national creative industry policy, trends and challenges, Hollywood, value, culture.

Abstrak

Malaysia memiliki sejarah filem yang panjang. Bermula dari filem pertama, Laila Majnun (1933) hingga ke filem era kontemporari, lebih banyak filem Melayu telah diterbitkan. Namun begitu, industri filem Melayu hari ini tercabar dengan kemasukan filem-filem Hollywood yang mendominasi pasaran filem tempatan. Bagi memahami cabaran industri filem tempatan, artikel ini mewakili gambaran pemain-pemain industri dan khalayak bagi membantu penyediaan ekosistem yang komprehensif untuk membangunkan model industri filem berdaya saing dan berdaya maju. Menggunakan kaedah temuramah mendalam, artikel ini turut mengukur sejauh mana nilai Barat yang sudah meresap masuk ke dalam sistem nilai dan budaya tempatan yang berasaskan Islam. Hasil kajian menunjukkan walaupun berlakunya proses percampuran (*hybridity*) antara nilai tempatan dan Barat, pada masa yang sama penonton ingin melihat budaya tempatan diketengahkan dalam filem tempatan. Biar pun industri filem tercabar dengan kemasukan filem luar, dasar kerajaan banyak membantu perkembangan industri filem Melayu.

Kata kunci: dasar filem negara, dasar kreatif industri kebangsaan, cabaran dan aliran, Hollywood, nilai dan budaya.

INTRODUCTION

Hollywood's dominance in the international film industry started since World War 2, and today, it churns out movies which are being screened in almost 150 countries around the world. Its enduring grip was the result of World War 1 and 2, which effectively killed off European's film industry. Statistics show that between 40 and 90 percent of the films screened around the world are either produced in Hollywood or by the United States-owned transnational companies (Wendy Su, 2010). As in 2003, in the European continent, Hollywood films controlled 53% of the French film industry; Canada (87%); and the United Kingdom (73.5%). Among the contributing factors for the Hollywood's dominance are huge local market (the United States), the use of English as the medium language (opening doors to international market), the inability of smaller domestic filmmakers in developing and poor countries to compete on a global scale, and the efficiency of the Hollywood's film studio system. Hollywood contributes RM612 billion in term of revenue to American government in 2017 (www.mpaa.org).

Apart from possessing an economic value, Hollywood films also play an important role in injecting American culture, which has been effectively utilised as an element in the form of entertainment that cuts across popular culture genres such as romance, humour, violence, fantasy, drama, fiction and imagination. The elements enable viewers to free themselves from the reality of life and step into the world of imagination, as Lim and Har (2007) explains the revenue and response to local films in many countries are not similar to response well received by the Hollywood films. The American cinema is now seen as a yardstick of achievements in film making. It becomes the root of influence for Hollywood films to seep into global cultures and eventually crafting Hollywood as a Trojan horse for America's cultural invasion in the minds of the younger generation. Today, Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Snoopy and Garfield are not just popular toys; but also the source of happiness among children. While Spiderman, Superman and Batman are already immortalised in films, they are firmly imprinted in young minds as manufacturers constantly come out with superhero-based merchandises such as posters, clothes and books. Lim and Har (2007) also claim that Hollywood films such as *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, the *Harry Potter* series, the *Matrix* trilogy and the *Star Wars* franchise are not only reaping away profits worth billions of US dollars from all over the world, but they also dominate the global world of fantasy.

The global successes of Hollywood films, according to Thussu, (2006:168) in Lim and Har, 2007), boils down to five factors, namely: universal themes and ideas which are accepted widely with mass appeal; varied and flexible storylines which boosted family values; availability of these films on the market; the growth of television networks across the world; and the aggressive marketing strategies employed by American media conglomerates. Sardar (2008:121) argues that the United States as an empire is using Hollywood films to promote itself as a nation that prioritises the good of mankind, presenting the country as a global power against evil doings. Through Hollywood's war films, viewers are constantly told of the American soldiers who are always fighting tyranny, cruel dictators who oppress people and deny human rights. The storylines also encourage viewers to make choices in life based on Western values – be it on consumerism, democracy, gender equality or technological edge – and further boost chances for the United State to win all wars and finally emerge as the world's sole and undisputable superpower. To Sardar (2008), the United States is a republic based on entertainment, with film as its main weapon. Sardar (2008) also states that a film offers escapism and is instrumental to the creation of the great American dream's mythology, which has been, in reality a nightmare to other countries. Swann (1991), on the other end, points out that the 'American lifestyle' slogan, which interprets development and a high quality life is now widespread, expressing thanks to Hollywood films. Swan (1991) also reveals the close working

relationship between the United States' Department of State and the Hollywood film industry in "painting the right image'.

MALAYSIAN FILM INDUSTRY

As for Malaysia, the government realises the importance of cultural products such as film as an income-generating industry while at the same time promoting local culture and heritage to the world. The government also note that in order to materialize this, an astounding quality and competitive film industry is required in order to help both the industry and local culture withstand. History shows that Malaysia was among the first in Southeast Asia to own an established film industry headquartered in Singapore. The first Malay featured film, *Laila Majnun*, directed by B S Rajhans was produced in 1933. Ever since, there was no turning back in terms of variety and genres. It reached its peak with a studio system pioneered by Shaw Brothers by setting up a Malay Film Production anchored by the late Tan Sri P Ramlee, a charismatic actor, comedian, songwriter, director and scriptwriter. P Ramlee wrote 360 songs, acted in 63 films (40 in Singapore, 23 in Malaysia), and directed 34 films (16 films in Singapore between 1955 and 1964, and 18 films between 1966 and 1973 in Kuala Lumpur). He won the Best Male Actor award in the Asia Film Festival 1957 for his role as a father and son in *Anakku Sazali*; the Best Asian Comedy Film Award in 1959 for the self-directed *Pendekar Bujang Lapok*; and was named The Most Versatile Actor through *Ibu Mertuaku* in the same Film Festival in 1963 (Millet, 2006). Other Malay film stars recognized internationally includes the late Ibrahim Pendek, who starred with Rock Hudson in 1962 western film, *The Spiral Road* (www.arkib.gov.my). It was then notable that the development of Malaya's film industry was contributed by a number of film directors from India. Among them were B S Rajhans, L Krishnan, S Ramanathan and and B.N Rao. Aside from B S Rajhans, who was famous for directing his first film in Malaya (*Laila Majnun*), B. N Rao was another famous director who produced high-grossing box office films. Rao was the individual responsible for introducing horror genre to Malaysia through his *Pontianak* series, with Maria Menado as a household name for films of this genre in 1957. Rao was born in 1908 in Kerala, India, and had joined the Shaw Brothers' Malay Film Productions in 1953. He then joined Cathay – Kerisin 1956 (Millet, 2006: 44-45).

However similar to other industries, including Hollywood, the golden era of the Malay film industry began to lose its spark. The fall of the Malay film industry from its glory days was due to the falling numbers of cinema-goers, the introduction of the television in 1963, the rising cost of production, fallout between studio employees and their bosses, the separation of Malaysia and Singapore, and the flooding of films produced in Indonesia, Hong Kong, Bollywood and Hollywood (William, 2002) in the local market. Malaysian film industry in mid-60's faced a downfall but later trend turned exuberant when the Malaysian Government formulated and introduced New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1970. The NEP emphasized on 30 percent ruling of equity in economy to be given to Bumiputera. This policy was also implemented in the entertainment industry. Some artists such as Datuk Sarimah Ahmad and her late husband Yusof Majid established Sari Artist, the first movie company established by Bumiputera artists (Fauziah Kartini, 2009). This establishment became a catalyst for other Bumiputera artists to follow this similar footstep. Among them were the late Tan Sri P. Ramlee, Tan Sri Jins Shamsuddin, Jaafar Abdullah and H.M Shah who joint together to formed Perfirma.

Permintaan Terakhir (1975; dir. the late Datuk Jamil Sulong) produced by Merdeka Studio Ltd was the first film in colour to be produced after the closing of Studio Merdeka in 1974, one year after the demised of the late Tan Sri P. Ramlee. However, local film industry gained significant impetus when one of the entrepreneur Deddy M Borhan from Sabah, produced a comedy film titled *Keluarga si Chomat* (1975) in colour and wide screen. This film was a hit among local

audiences and this success gave a confident among local producers to make local movie. Perfima first film was *Menanti Hari Esok*, which was screened in 1977, and received good respond from local audiences when it was screened for 53 days and *Si Badul* produced by Sabah Film stayed for 73 days on cinema screen. However, *Azura*, also produced by Sabah Film, became the first local film to hit RM1 million box office in 1984 (Fauziah Kartini, 2009). The film was starred by local famous singer Jamal Abdillah a.k.a King of the Pop and local famous actress Fauziah Ahmad Daud and it was romance genre targeted for youth market.

The success of *Permintaan Terakhir*, *Esok Untuk Siapa*, *Si Badul* and *Azura* proved that local films still have the audiences and can give a huge profit to the movie companies. This success convinced certain artists such as Tan Sri Jins Shamsuddin to came up with idea to propose to the government to revive local film industry, especially to give encouragement for Bumiputera entrepreneur to participate in local entertainment industry. National Film Development Committee was established in July 26, 1980 from that idea and one of its suggestions was to establish the National Development Film Cooperation to lend support to–develop local film industry. The establishment of FINAS is in accordance with the National Development Film Act 1981 (Act 244) and was supervised by the Ministry of Trade and Industry Malaysia at the early stage and now is under the supervision of the Ministry of Multimedia and Communication.

To strengthen the local film industry, National Film Policy (NFP) was fine tuned in 2005 after it was formulated in 1997. The policy is in blue print for local film industry to move ahead with its two main objectives, (i) to develop local film industry to become more vibrant and to compete with international film industry and (ii) Malaysia is to become a hub destination for filmmaking. To give more impetus to the NFP, National Creative Industry Policy (NCIP) was formulated and introduced in 2010 to spur the growth of creative industry as the source of income.; one of the Malaysia strategy to become a high- income nation in 2020. The NCIP was approved by the Cabinet in November 2010 as a framework for local culture industry. The policy encompasses three elements: creative multimedia, cultural and art creative industry. Creative art such as creative multimedia produces film and television, advertising, animation, digital content and fine arts; cultural art creative industry – craft, visual art, music, performing art, creative writing; and cultural heritage creative industry – museum and archiving involving restoration and conservation.

These policies are aligned with National Transformation Plan and New Economic Model introduced by former Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak for Malaysia to achieve a high status income in 2020. According to National Economic Advisory Committee Report (NEAC), for Malaysia to achieve a high-income status it will use a strategic growth economic which Malaysia has a potential to expand creative industry such as music, film, art and culture and can become one of the important economy sectors in the future. The move by the government is according to the regional development which ASEAN nations such as Thailand, Philippines and Singapore had used creative industry to generate income for their nations and at the same time introduce their own culture globally. This action which taken by the former Prime Minister of Malaysia is similar what happened in South Korea where the potential of creative industry to become wealth creation has been proven. South Korea former President, the late Kim Yeong-sam (1992 to 1997) when being compared between the success of Hollywood film, *Jurassic Park* (revenue collection of the film was more than RM1 billion) was seen to be equivalent to Hyundai exporting 1.5 million vehicles yearly (Lee, 2010). The success of South Korea exporting its local product through *Hallyu* (Korean Wave) is a living proof of how Asian country exports its culture globally.

Looking back in time, from the golden era of the Malaysian film industry in the 1950s to the current situation, it is reasonable to say that this small and fragmented film market presents a challenge for the government to promote as part of a creative industry with economic potential (Jamaluddin, Hasrul & Faridah, 2014). From the early film trend of tearjerkers, melodrama, comedy and romance that were classically popular with the local audiences, the innovative and contemporary filmmaking movement emerged in two waves (Hassan, 2013). The First New Wave of alternative filmmakers appeared on the scene in the early 1980s and worked alongside the mainstream filmmakers; they brought the subjects and issues of a post-Independent Malaysia. The Second New Wave of (digital) filmmakers, beginning in the late 1990s, brought more colour to local film, and addressed issues of not only the Malays, but also the two other major ethnic groups, the Chinese and the Indians (Hassan, 2013).

From the first film produced in 1933 to the golden age of films in the 1950s and 1960s, and to contemporary cinema until the end of the 1990s, Malaysian cinema has always been a Malay cinema. Films were only made in the Malay language (Bahasa Malaysia) and were aimed at a Malay audience; this is parallel to Mansor Putih's (1990, cited in Van der Heide, 2002) argument that, "the cultural identity of Malaysian film is a constant issue [since] 90% of the audience for Malaysian films are Malay and that cinema is probably the most racially segregated activity in the country today" (p. 154). However, with the rise of the new filmmakers' movement and the utilisation of digital technology that put paid to all of that in the late 1990s, a revolution of sorts descended on the film community when films began to be made in a multitude of languages which, for the first time, truly reflected the multi-ethnic nature of the country (Hassan, 2012).

Globalization of media at international level influences the distribution of cultural products across the globe. The process of globalization was supported by the advancement of information technology and communication (ICT), allowing the cultural flow to be distributed globally swiftly. Before the convergence between information technology and communication, for example, the television and radio, the government through its policy can control and filtering foreign culture into the country by controlling the import of television program.

The convergence of ICT allows the producer of the culture product can deal directly to consumer without government intervention. This allowed the Western culture to be exported Excited directly to consumer without filtering by the government agency. Azizah Hamzah (2006) explains that ICT revolution and open economy had begun in Malaysia, a globalization period, Various television programs and films entering Malaysian air space and household through satellite which introduces international news and current affairs, entertainment, culture, education, history and nature originated from Hollywood, London and Tokyo. The impacts of the openness and media globalization have weakening tradional institution and the state. Lukman and Azmi (2003) view that media globalization has a potential to displace local culture to Western culture because the West is using the advantages it has such as ICT, politics and economy to disseminate its value to the developing countries. The Western value, which is more modern and superior, will replace a set of local culture; materialistic values, secularism and life style shown in cultural products accepted by Malaysian youths. The Malaysian youths remember more Western heroes such as Superman and Batman as compared to our local heroes, Tok Janggut and Mat Kilau, two Malay warriors who are famous for their bravery and nationalism; fighting against British colonial. The distribution of Western values such as individualism, secularism and materialism are against the local values which Islam embedded as its core that promotes family values, camaraderie and respect on the elders.

In relation to the status of Islam and its influence on the country's socio-economic and cultural structure, Malaysian society has undergone a radical change and transformation over the past

three decades (Azmi & Shamsul, 2004). At one level this has been brought about by the country's rapid economic transformation, however, equally significant has been the deepening Islamisation of the country. From banking to law, from dress to education policy, almost no sector of Malaysian society has escaped the growing influence of Islam upon the socioeconomic and political nature of the country (Abbott & Gregorios-Pippas, 2010; Azmi & Shamsul, 2004). This transformation process, which occurred at the multilevel structure of government and society, has helped to shape a host of activities in the spheres of education, economy, administration and the arts that were supposed to be informed by or based upon Islamic principles (Azmi & Shamsul, 2004). Thus, it has also inspired various works of art and entertainment, including film production.

Malaysian Islamic Cinema
The emergence of Islamic cinema has shaped film production in Muslim countries. In the Muslim majority world, the role of religion in social and community life has changed and developed but never receded (Van Nieuwkerk, 2008:174). Islam has been a common feature in Malay films, although not necessarily as special type of film genre. In Malaysian Islamic cinema, Islam is often depicted as one of the narrative features of resistance to non-Islamic or the Western decadent influence, which morally to advocate the Islamic principle of 'enjoining good and forbidding wrong' (in Arabic known as *ammar ma'ruf nahi mungkar*). Van Nieuwkerk (ibid) in her discussion on creating an Islamic cultural sphere from Middle Eastern perspective, examine views of several religious scholars towards a more relaxed and accepting position of art and entertainment within the limit of religious sensibility. Moderate scholars such as Al-Qaradhawi and the lay preacher Amr Khaled did not consider music in itself *haram* (forbidden). Instead, scholars acknowledged that respectful art and entertainment can promote Muslim lifestyles and the God-given talents should be used to express core religious values (Van Nieuwkerk, 2008:171; Al-Qaradhawi, 1926). Enhancing this, Turner (2006:181) sees films at best of a work that uses representational conventions and repertoires available within the culture in order to make something fresh but familiar, new but generic, individual but representative.

The Malaysian cinema has also witnessed efforts made by several Malay filmmakers in presenting their version of Islamic films, mainly by adapting Islamic values and morality in their films. Among the earliest Malay film, *Semerah Padi* (The Village of Semerah Padi, dir. P.Ramlee, 1956), for instance, is recognised as being one of the films to portray the spirit of Islam (Mustafa A.R., 2012). In particular, this film emphasizes a storyline that touches the fundamental teaching of Islam i.e. morality and submission to the one God, as well as social norms, traditions and also the traditional Malay songs and dance; which represent the celebration of the Malay culture. In another example, the recent work in the film *Khurafat* (The Superstition, 2011; dir. Shamsul Yusof) and *Maut* (Death, 2009; dir. Bade Haji Azmi) have used the genre of horror to represents the notion of the Islamic *feqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) to the audience. The narrative in both films are concern with the concept of what is right and wrong as well as sustaining the *akidah* (ties) of a Muslim.

As Turner (2006) argues, film and culture deal with the contextual approach; the cultural, political, institutional, and industrial determinants often influence the national film industry. Film has a complex system of signification ranging from the intrinsic components (e.g. the mise-en-scene i.e. visual composition, lighting, sound, setting and editing) to the extrinsic such as the nature of the industry and the wider cultural practices of which cinema is a significant part (Dissanayake, 1992). In this context, the Malaysian film industry should be acknowledged as a prevalent institution filled with specific ideologies to be disseminated to society. As Nichols (1976:25) claims, "the majority of films in all categories are the unconscious

instruments of the ideology…whether the film is 'commercial' or 'ambitious', 'modern' or 'traditional'…whether it belongs to the 'old' cinema or 'young' cinema, it is most likely to be a re-hash of the same old ideology." In other words, the film industry does not operate in a vacuum. Rather, the role of the film industry, which operates in the world of capitalism and simultaneously disseminates specific discourses, should be taken into account to understand the complexity of the relationship between film and ideology and the creation of meaning in society (Juliana & Mahyuddin, 2009).

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Based on the media globalization and the monopoly of films and television programs by the West (Hollywood) and its impacts on local Islamic value, what action does the Malaysian government take to counter the impacts? What are policies introduced to help local films industry to withstand the globalization waves that swept the Malaysian household?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For this study, mixed method was used which involves both quantitative and qualitative aspects. Mixed method was used to obtain a more convincing data analysis and conclusion where quantitative results (in figures) are supported by justifications from the qualitative data.

However, the qualitative technique has its own drawback. As stated by Azizah (2004), the sample size used is typically low and this brings difficulties to generalize the findings and the data obtained could be influenced by the researcher's leading questions. This would make the results ambiguous.

For qualitative research, the researcher chose the focus group discussion technique. Azizah (2004), explains that this technique is popular among researcher in culture study which, in this technique the researcher will select a group of individuals with certain criteria to have a discussion. It is used to extract inner feelings, attitude, believes and knowledge inside them. The researcher divided the discussion into three phases, first was an in-depth interview among players in the local film industry, audience from professional background (Bernama TV staffs) and students from Media Studies Department University of Malaya. Among local players interviewed were the President of Malaysian Film Producer Association, FINAS research Director and film directors.

For the survey, the researcher had distributed 300 survey forms at three locations that have cinemas. The locations were Alamanda in Putrajaya, IOI Puchong and One Utama in Petaling Jaya. The reason why the survey forms were distributed at the cinemas in those places, to gain a set of specialized data from local movie audiences who watch local and foreign movies. From 300 survey forms distributed, the researcher only received 146 answered questionnaires back. The survey forms were collected and brought to the computer lab to be analyzed. The process to enter the data was done extremely carefully, including the coding process. Each time the data was entered in the computer, the researcher will do a second checking to avoid wrong data entry. After that, the analysis process began by using SPSS software.

Then the triangulation process was done to check the credibility of the data. Neuman (2011) states that a triangulation process is a method where a researcher looks at certain phenomena from various perspectives. This is in contrast with the conventional method that uses a methodology only.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question (1) What is the status of Malaysian film industry especially on script, production cost, exhibition, ticket sales, marketing and audience?

Malaysian film industry has shown tremendous growth within ten-year period (2006-2016) as a result of the support by Malaysian government and local audiences who watched local films. This is visible through the titles of film produced, ticket collection and the box office collection. This could also be seen through the tickets sold which doubled up the previous figures; from RM49 million in 2009 to RM126 million in 2011. The increase in the number of films produced could be seen in the year 2000 where there were only six titles of film produced where four of them were of comedy, one drama and the other one was on war. In terms of collection, there were only two films hit between RM2 million to RM4 million collection. *Pasrah* managed to collect RM2.74 million whereby *Senario Lagi* made a record of a box office collection worth RM4.37 million. *Mimpi Moon* and *Anaknya Sazali,* on the other hand did not perform very well in terms of collection which was less than RM1 million (RM560 thousand for *Mimpi Moon* and RM220,000 *Anaknya Sazali*). In the same year, *Soal Hati* had RM1.27 million tickets sold but this was not the scenario for, *Leftenan Adnan*, a film that showcases the heroic act of our national figure, Leftenan Adnan Saidi who fought Japanese Occupation during World War Two. It was directed by the famous director, Aziz M Osman. The film only managed to collect RM1.08 million (shortage of RM420 thousand to recover RM1.5 million production cost). Positive responses on local films by local audiences became an eye opener for producers to produce more good quality of films. Local film industry that was missing from both local and international radars has finally be found. This could be seen in terms of the number of films produced from six titles in 2000 to 11 titles in 2001. The increasing number of titles produced also had significant impacts to local film industry where there was an increase in the variation of film genres. From 2002 to 2012, we observed an elevation in the total number of gross tickets collection. In 2005, the gross revenue of tickets sold showed an increasing trend from total RM217.35 million, RM234.98 million (2006), RM288.96 million (2007), RM380.72 million (2008), RM430.03 million (2009), RM518.16 million (2010) and RM601.90 million (2011). In 2014 local film industry made a history where local film *Journey* produced by Astro Shaw managed to collect RM17.17 milion (56 days exhibition and was shown at 57 cinemas all over Malaysia). This revenue beat *KL Gangster* produced by Skop Productions which collected RM11.74 million (was shown at 71 cinemas all over Malaysia). This revenue improved the confidence to in the local filmmakers to keep producing more quality films and this year (2016), two films; *Police Evo* and *Munafiq*, both respectively collected more than RM17 million revenue overtook *Journey*. It is a good sign of revival of local film industry.

Based on the in depth interviews on the respondents, they agreed that local film industry has shown tremendous growth compared to 30 years ago. All respondents interviewed by the researcher had agreed that local film industry has astounding potential to grow and receive good responses from local audiences.

Razak Mohaideen (RM): "Overall I believed that local film industry has shown its potential. If 20 years ago not many films were produced but now we can see between 20 to 30 films are produced each year, compared to 4 to 5 films produced 20 years ago. In terms of quantity is good, we can see the growth and I believe it is an early sign that more and more entrepreneurs show their interest to invest in the film industry. Before this we can see only a few producers but now the number is increasing."

Ahmad Puad Onah (APO): "Malaysian film industry has increased in terms of number of films produced. If 20 years ago it could only produce 3 to 4 films in a year, the number has

increased to 10 and 12 films each year and in 2009 to 50. Some still in the making, some have finished and waiting to show in the cinemas."

Although Malaysian film industry has shown some potentials to grow and become source of revenue to Malaysia but it has to face 11 challenges connected to each other and need to be addressed by the industry players and the Malaysian government. Based on in-depth interview from respondents, the researcher had come out with 11 themes that had become challenges for Malaysia to make its film industry more vibrant and competitive.

a) Production cost – between RM1.2 million – RM1.5 million
b) Script – story telling weakness
c) Intellectual property – lack of awareness
d) Actors/Actress – lack of quality in acting
e) Unjust profit distribution – split 50%-50% between producers and exhibitors
f) Easy to screen foreign films – no quota (days or numbers of film imported)
g) Low wages – among below the line (production crews)
h) Local Audiences – 200,000 to 300,000 (not enough)
i) Not enough cinemas – this problem has been addressed by the cinema company
j) Not grant to help producers to export their films abroad
k) Lack of promotion – producers do not promote their films

Issues that were highlighted by the researchers need to be addressed by the government holistically. To help revive Malaysian films industry the issues cannot be settled individually because the industry is like a chain. Without the government assistance, local film producers are no match to Hollywood filmmaker who has financial muscles, aggressive marketing and good story lines. The local film industry also needs an assistance from Government Link Corporation (GLC) to give impetus to the industry, a similar role by the Chebol (e.g Samsung) who spearheads Korean culture industry.

Research Question (2) What are the impacts when the distribution of Western values through Hollywood films are accepted by local Islamic audience?

The entry of Western culture in Malaysia does not displace local culture or as dubbed by some scholars; cultural imperialism, but what happened was the glocalization process and hybrid. If the race has a strong self-confidence, they will filter the positive or negative elements in the Western values that are aligned with their values.

Respondent 27 (Paridah): " I will filter negative and positive elements from Western values that are shown in the films. The negative elements such as free sex that is against of Islamic teaching will be rejected and the positive elements such as honesty will be accepted and adapted according to local customs."

Based on the quantitative survey, local audiences who were exposed to Western culture and values do not accept them directly. But they are actively searching and filtering, which means meaning that they can be adopted and adapted with local Islamic values and local cultures. Based on the survey, 55 respondents (37.7 percent) agreed that they will filter the Western values they watch in the movies whereby 39 respondents (26.7 percent) fully agreed but at the same time 22.6 percent or 33 respondents were not sure, while 8.9 percent or 13 respondents disagreed and 4.1 percent (6 respondents) strongly disagreed.

Based on the focus group interviewed, Malaysian films have their own audiences based on the local settings such as *kampungs* scenario, story that can be related in their lives, education and

information. Cultural proximity is not the main factor that local audiences choose when they watch movies but the main factors that motivates the local movie buffs are the story, CGI usage, genre, actors, actress and promotion by the media.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, local film industry is in the process to revive itself to its former glory. After the slowdown process of the Malaysian film industry in 70's and 80's, with the help of Malaysian government through Economy Transformation Programme, National Film Policy and National Creative Industry Policy, impetus was to the industry. The consistent assistance by the Malaysian government is needed to nurture and spur the industry. The entry of foreign films such as Hollywood according local film producers has its impacts on local films industry in terms of revenue collection but the Western values conveyed through the films failed to displace local culture because of the education that taught the students to filter the values.

For local film industry, there is a market for Malaysian audiences. Based on the research, the vast majority of local audiences go to the cinemas to release work stress but still there are the audiences who watch local movies because of the stories and technical qualities, and majority of them preferred comedy, horror and action. Local films have a great potential providing that local producers can fine-tune the script, invest more on production cost and insert educational values in the film.

For Western values that transfer through Western television programmes and films to local audiences are not happen especially among educated Malays, they are active participants to find meanings that are align to Islamic teachings.

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