UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF MALAYSIAN CURATORS' PERSPECTIVES ON DIGITAL STORYTELLING PROCESS AND ELEMENTS FOR MUSEUM EXHIBITION GUIDELINE

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ABSTRACT

The museum is considered as a place that embraces the valorisation of stories both in visual display and narrative. Towards this, a digital storytelling (DST) is a technology that combines the art of telling story using multimedia elements in order to create unique understanding and quality of experience. Successively, the trend from international studies on cultural heritage and museum studies established that DST is the most applicable exhibition presentation technique that transformed the way museum visitors think and learn and further reshape visitors' judgement and experience. Across this scenario, however, museum studies trends in Malaysia indicate limited study on DST in museum exhibition that has been attributed to a knowledge gap in the practise of museum exhibitions process and element of DST in Malaysia. Due to this gap, this research aim to investigate the curators' understanding level of DST process and elements in order to develop a practical guideline for museum exhibition across Malaysia practise. This qualitative exploratory case study project utilising museum curators as a sample group, driven by interpretivism research philosophies and an inductive approach across a mono-method utilising triangulation data through contextual document analysis, content analysis, semi-structured in-depth interviews with curators and thematic analysis. The main findings of this research established the most common elements and process among scholars, the level of understanding on DST process and element among Malaysian curators' and proposing an extended set of practical process and elements guidelines of DST to aid curators in designing museum exhibition multimedia or digital content from the Malaysian curators' perspective.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1   Research Background

Stories have a universal appeal which could connect individuals, whether through reading, watching, or listening to the narratives. Stories are usually told to make sense of the world. Messages and ideas are conveyed and absorbed through stories which are told, heard, and responded (Grisham & James, 2006). Experiences are shared in a real and understandable way through stories that may lead to connectedness between one person to another or just between an individual to the story. Stories can be so familiar but are rarely considered good or essential as a form of communication, emotion-stirring, engaging, and entertaining tool that encourage individuals to further participate in what are being narrated. As highlighted by (Bedford, 2001) storytelling is an innate ability through which people make sense of the self and the world which is a common element between storytelling and history. However, Bedford asserted that unstructured narrative is more likely to be forgotten. The museum is considered as a place that embraces the valorisation of stories both in visual display and narrative. Although this viewpoint is valid in many respects, it ignores the human element of museums.

It is essential to consider the museum as a key organisation that gathers and shares human experiences and cultures. The museum can invoke empathy and leads to social bonding through stories (Faherty, 2019; Salort-Pons, 2018) which consequently inspired (Salort-Pons, 2018) who is a curator, resolved to writing stories in his curation. This is because cultural and personal experiences can be shared in real and understandable means through stories. It is then asserted by (Faherty, 2019) that the cognisance in stories from authentic personal experiences allows the audience to identify themselves through the shared narratives. The stories are usually distinctively informative, yet they have rooms for the audiences to include their thoughts, feelings, and individual experiences. Displays in the museum with impactful storytelling could immerse visitors in the narrative and present them with all-inclusive insights which may alter their thinking and feelings. Storytelling at the museum can further be enhanced with digital technologies that would transform visitors' experiences.