UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

MANAGERS BEHIND THE CAMERA: A SURVEY OF THE MANAGEMENT OF FILM PRODUCTION IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

The Malaysian society places high demands on filmmakers. From the standpoint of cinemagoers and film critics, Malaysian films are expected to match the production standards of imported films, especially those Hollywood, Hong Kong and Bollywood. This is expected because what the cinemagoers pay at the ticket counter is the same amount of money, irrespective whether the films are imported foreign films or made in this country by local filmmakers. This seems to be a tall order. Thus, we tend to hear many voices of discontent toward locally made films in the newspapers and magazines. However, many of these negative reports were often on what were seen on the silver-screen, especially pertaining to storylines, acting, character development, and weak production techniques. The major aim of this study is to understand the film production practices among the three key managerial personnel as they ultimately determine the standards of the production output. In any film production, the producer, the film director and the production manager decide most of the key activities in the development, pre-production, production and post production phases. The research employs a quantitative approach through a survey method involving a total of 42 samples of film producers, directors and production managers. The study had a sampling error of ±8 percent at the 68 percent confidence level. The samples were selected by systematic sampling technique based on the population of membership listings from the Malaysian Association of Film Producers, Malaysian Association of Film Directors, and for the production managers from the membership listing of the Malaysian Association of Professional Film Workers. The major findings indicated that the three key personnel in Malaysian film production lacked formal education and trainings and there was significant mistrust among them. This resulted in the lack of understanding of functional responsibilities and aggravated the production phases when all the three key personnel wanted to be involved in them. The conclusion reached was that there should be greater entrenchment of professional practices in film production management among film producers, directors and production managers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Of all the media, movies have the most captive and attentive audience. This is because people have to make a conscious effort to go to the cinema and pay to see a film. Once they are in the dark theater, the large screen can be very dominating. Since cinemagoers pay to see a movie and find the screen totally absorbing, they usually watch the entire show.[1] Generally, what gets shown on the screen is make-believe. According to Cleve (2006), movies are designed to portray reality to such an authentic degree that even stories taking place millennia ago in far away galaxies look true and convincing.[2]

However, most people regard movies as "an escapist medium", especially in the context of a film theater environment. As they watch a movie, they begin to "leave the real world," away from the distractions and demands of daily chores. They enter a fantasy world where they can experience events vicariously.[3] But then, producing a movie requires a person to consciously aware of the realities of the world he or she is in. According to Gregory (1979)[4], being aware of reality in filmmaking is to acknowledge that [it] is a colossal means of communication set upon an uncompromising industrial base.

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[1] Gross, Lynne Schafer and Fink, Edward John. (2006). *Telecommunications: Radio, Television, and Movies in the Digital Age* (9th Ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, p. 111.

[2] Cleve, Bastian. (2006). *Film Production Management* (3rd Ed.). Boston: Focal Press p.1.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Gregory, Mollie. (1979). *Making Films Your Business*; New York: Schocken Books, p. xi.