

Youth Media Literacy in Interpreting the Ideology of the Film Documentary *The Malayan Emergency* (2010)

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ABSTRACT

Ideology dissemination via historical documentaries provide an advantage to the government in implementing national policies. The characteristics of documentary films which represent 'reality' allow varied interpretations to reach their target audiences. It is thus imperative that the audience's understanding and interpretation be parallel with the ideology that the government wants to convey as to avoid the misinterpretation of information. However, studies have shown that audiences' interpretations are not always in line with what the producer intends to communicate. As such, the objective of this research is to analyse factors affecting youth media literacy in understanding and interpreting the ideology of historical documentary films titled *The Malayan Emergency* (2010). Audiences especially youths have their own views and opinions on any documentary film they watch. Experimental results show that critical thinking, media aesthetics and the exposure to the Internet actually affect ideological interpretations in historical documentary films. Among others, the results of the experimental study also showed that cognitive thinking skills and education backgrounds of youth have influenced the interpretation and understanding of historical documentary films. The interpretation and understanding of youth in ideology towards historical documentary films are influenced by individual factors (educational background and cognitive thinking), media texts (media aesthetic) and external factors (exposure to Internet). Thus, individual factors are the key aspect of media literacy to interpret messages critically.

Keywords: *Documentary, media literacy, critical thinking, aesthetic media, exposure Internet.*

INTRODUCTION

The media communication process involves the delivery of media texts from their sources to the audience who has a different form of ability to interpret the texts in question (Mohd Nor Shahizan et al., 2014). In other words, the ability in terms of skills is required when it comes to interpreting media texts; it is a process of achieving, analysing critically also constructing meaning to the media text, the process of which is known as media literacy (Potter, 2010). Lewis and Jhally (1998) see media literacy as the contextual analysis that emphasises upon the texts and the physical state. The aspect of the text cited from Lewis and Jhally (1998) includes the process of interpretation, reading and understanding in terms of the semiotic part of the media text. In the meantime, other aspects include the influence in terms of production (director, producer), politics, economy, social and technology.

The audience's understanding is important in the communication process so that it can determine the success in the process. According to Mohd. Nor Shahizan et al. (2014) the understanding of a message imparted by a medium to the audience is essential because the content of the media is able to leave a multitude of impacts (both positive and negative) especially history-oriented documentary films. Documentary films are of non-fiction and it

has high credibility to channel information to the audience. To add, the production of various history-oriented films, especially those that are patriotic in nature that have been on the rise in recent days, has become one of the platforms to deliver certain messages (Mohd. Nor Shahizan et al., 2013; Mohd. Nor Shahizan, Hasrul & Mus Chairil, 2011). Thus, the understanding of the mass, in line with that of the producer is very important, to enable an ideology to be channeled to the audience.

The ideology from the ruling party is often channeled in the media text to the audience for certain purposes especially in the entertainment-education communication strategy (Singhal & Brown, 1996). The dominant party, in fields of politics, economy and social is graced with high authority and power to form messages so that the ideologies can be delivered to the audience with success. Ideology is the terminology used in the Marxism tradition which states that the ruling party in the capitalist world has the power to produce and disseminate their ideas in the production meant for the public (Mustafa, 2010).

Documentary films plays its role in mobilizing social awareness decades to tens such as awareness of environmental pollution by David Attenborough, cultivation of humanity in the war by David Bradbury and etcetra (Meor, 1990). Besides, documentary films as an important tool for colonial ruling and social control, also it serves as an important material in spreading the propaganda in various ways especially to the illiterate in the rural areas (Ho, 2004). However, the illiterate among Malaysians is decreasing with the exponential development of education. Even the society today not only has the ability and skill to read media text, but they also have the capability to interpret media text aided by a wealth of information from various media channels- these are the people knows as 'Internet-savvy' (Mohd. Nor Shahizan & Novel Lyndon, 2015).

The social media has become a platform to teenagers to get information (Kim et al., 2014). Teenagers use this piece of information so that it can become one of the current references of the media text exposed to them. Mohd. Nor Shahizan et al. (2015) stated that the interpretation of a text differs between an informat and the artist (producer) due to the great cultural gap and personal experiences that vary among readers today who are really dependent on current technology. This gap results from the effect of the combination of mature understanding which leads to the failure in the communication process. This phenomenon becomes an obstacle to the producer or the ruling party who wishes to deliver their messages to the society because of the varying interpretations by generations known to be 'Internet-savvy' despite the highly credible medium like documentaries (Mohd. Nor Shahizan & Novel Lyndon, 2015).

The use of visual in delivering messages or information has been able to help ensure that the information can be imparted by catering to the target group with the use of the existing technology (Whiting, 2001; Thoman & Jolls, 2004; Mohd. Nor Shahizan et al., 2015; Nadzri, Mohd Nor Shahizan & Mohd Yusof, 2014). The use of visual in delivering information helps the target group to make a careful evaluation, to classify the significance of the information by sequence, to judge and make decisions, and it is the most suitable towards preventing the information from being misinterpreted by recipients (Thoman & Jolls, 2004). The many elements of information like texts, graphics, audio and visual that have increased together with technological advancement have influenced the character of every message or information delivered (Mohd. Nor Shahizan et al., 2015). The characters have become shorter with the combination of every element (texts, graphics, audio and visual) based on the significance of every piece of information conveyed (Potter, 2004; Mohd. Nor Shahizan et al., 2015; Nadzri, Mohd Nor Shahizan & Mohd Yusof, 2014). Thus, the combination of

these elements in the media text has been able to help the audience so that the information obtained is not misinterpreted by the audience.

According to Messaris and Moriarty (2005) one's critical thinking enables him or her to interpret the message contained in the video or film. This is because he or she will have the knowledge and experience about the meaning of formal convention used in other videos or films. Other than that, the abundant of information in this era through the communication medium has changed the communication process (Weidmann, 2015). Internet users especially youth with high Internet literacy able to collect information such as materials in Internet portals and having visual aesthetic values. As the outcome, this particular group develops a mature understanding in interpreting the text media. (Mohd. Nor Shahizan & Novel Lydon, 2015; Mohd. Nor Shahizan at al., 2015). This is because youth finds valid information and has high authority to quickly look up the Internet when they want to validate information that has been exposed through other media.

From the argument above, the use of visual with technological assistance in the media text production such as documentary films, critical thinking and one's Internet exposure clearly show that misinterpretation of information can well be avoided. However, studies have shown that the audience's interpretation is not always in line with producer's requirements. The study done by Mohd. Nor Shahizan et al. (2014) on the interpretation of Indonesian higher learning students on the Indonesian history documentary film entitled *Pramoedya Ananta Teor* has shown that the students had disagreed with some of the situations portrayed in this documentary film. Although this documentary film presents the 'reality' but the students seem to have their own views for evaluation. In this vein, the ideology from the dominant group channelled in this documentary film, especially those with history orientation that cannot be delivered to the recipients, has indeed given a negative impact to the dominant group.

Based on the argument raised, the aim of this study is to analyse the factors that lead to the failure in delivering the ideology of the dominant group to the mass audience through a history-oriented documentary. A locally produced historical documentary film which is *The Malayan Emergency* (2010) is chosen in this study to analyse the relationship between the indicators of critical thinking, media aesthetics and Internet exposure and youth interpretation towards the ideology contained in this documentary film. The viewership reflection on this historical documentary film *The Malayan Emergency* (2010) among the youth doing history and media in five Public Higher Learning institutions has been studied in a formal way.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Documentary Films The Malayan Emergency (2010)

The audio visual material used in this research is a history-oriented documentary film, *The Malayan Emergency* (2010). It is a local production, broadcast in Astro History Channel. The rerun for this documentary film was done in 2013 in conjunction with the National Day and Malaysia Day. Positive feedback has been received from the media and the Internet. It is regarded as a documentary that promotes national integration. This is because for the first time, our audience is exposed to the panoramic view covering several dimensions of this 'battle'.

Documentary film *The Malayan Emergency* (2010) was produced in conjunction with the 53rd anniversary of Independence. The main purpose of producing this documentary film is to instil patriotism especially among youth. Harun Rahman states that he wants to make *The Malayan Emergency* (2010) a compulsory viewing especially among youth (Utusan Malaysia, 2010). This Emergency story that has not been detailed in any television channel has led the History Channel to produce it. A total of 31 interviews have been included in this documentary film to show two parties involved throughout the Emergency.

Media Literacy

Media literacy has been introduced to explain 'the skill in reading media text'. According to Potter (2005) media literacy is defined as a set of perspectives that explains that the audience uses the media actively and they interpret the meaning of the message of the media. The audience or the media users build the perspectives through the structure of knowledge. The skills and information from the media and the real world are needed to build this structure. The use of media actively means that the audience realises and interacts with the media text. Media literacy is also defined as learning about one's capability in producing its own meaning from the visual and the verbal symbols from the television, advertising, films and digital media every day. This learning helps students in coding information. They need critical thinking so that they can understand about the production of media culture around them (Adams & Hamm, 2001). Siverbalatt and Eliceiri (1997) also state that this critical thinking skill enables one to interpret the information obtained through various channels of mass media communication. Critical thinking skills empower the audience as they develop their own considerations towards the media content exposed to them.

Other than the need for critical thinking in the media literacy concept, the knowledge about production also influences one's media literacy in the reading of media text (Hobbs et al., 2013; Phang & Schaefer, 2009; Zettl, 1998 & Messaris, 1998). Hobbs et al. (2013) carried out a research on the relationship between students' involvement in civic activities and the process of producing news in learning. The outcome of the study shows that students involved in pre-production activities such as information research has higher media literacy level towards civic activities, compared to those who are only involved in post production like editing (Hobbs et al., 2013).

Other than Zettl (1998) and Messaris (1998) who talked about the knowledge of media production will enhance one's literacy level, the paper done by Phang and Schaefer (2009) also shows that students with production background have better awareness on media literacy compared to students who do not have the knowledge on production. Phang and Schaeffer (2009) state that the theoretical implication and the pedagogy of the media literacy are crucial for the Singaporean government to meet its objective which is to increase the awareness of media literacy among the public so this will promote civic involvement and reduce the censorship of the media materials by the government. Teenager will have the skills and capability to self- 'read' and 'filter' the media text exposed to them. Better media literacy through education in school is seen as a promoting agent for the democratic system in a country. Media literacy aim to equip the citizen with the skill not only to analyse but also being able to create the the media texts and make them active participants in the political process (Oso & Akhagba, 2014).

Critical Thinking

A fast-paced technological growth has spurred towards a more effective visual use to construct meaning so that it will achieve an ideology that can be delivered to the audience. The use of technology has increased the digital manipulation towards the photo or visual used in the media (Messaris 2012). Today, the use of the computer and digital website thrives to manipulate and the image spreading is easier compared to previous times. This phenomenon has brought upon two impacts to different degrees of visual literacy on the deliverer and the recipient of the media product. First of all, the visual manipulation process produced by the message deliverer has become easier as it is made convenient by the technology. Secondly, a media product or message in the visual form would be tougher to interpret and distinguish after the digital manipulation process. Messaris (2012) states that critical thinking is an important component to increase the visual literacy level at par with the technology that prevails in this digital era.

According to Messaris (1987), the film or television visual is structured by the formal convention normally used and given meaning in both the text media. The formal convention is an important element to an individual in interpreting the visual obtained in the video or film (Messaris, 2001). Formal convention refers to the production techniques used to represent a visual including the use of camera angle, lighting, flashback and so on. Thus, the audience lacking the knowledge about formal convention (production) requires critical thinking which is general cognitive skills to interpret the message delivered in a video or a film. Critical thinking in cognitive skills gives stress on three components of efficacy obtained from this particular audience. The components of efficacy are analogical thinking, spatial intelligence and sensitivity towards the contextual information in the non-verbal, behavioural interpretation (Messaris, 1987).

In this research, the definition of critical thinking refers to analogical thinking, spatial intelligence, non-verbal behavioural sensitivity, cultural content and connotations. Respondents in the experimental methods will be tested on their critical thinking based on these elements. Respondents in the treatment group are tested based on the elements in the critical thinking indicator by watching the original documentary film *The Malayan Emergency* (2010). Meanwhile the respondents in the treatment group are tested by watching the documentary film *The Malayan Emergency* (2010) that was manipulated by editing based on the elements in the critical thinking indicator.

Media Aesthetics

Zettl (1998) introduces five basic fields of contextual aesthetics in the Literacy Media Model to code and decode the meaning in the media product. The five basic fields include lighting and colour, two-dimensional space (field of view), the three-dimensional space (camera angle view), time and movement, also sounds. Video producer or director constructs the meaning of the text media through five basic fields of media aesthetics. In turn, the audience will interpret the meaning of the media through five basic fields of media aesthetics.

Nicholson (2010) researched about the use of media aesthetics to present characters more effectively in a motion picture. Three main functions of media aesthetics were used in this study namely, the emergence of the character through lighting, camera lens angle, (camera positioning) and camera manipulation (in camera effect). The study outcome shows that all three functions of media aesthetics have presented the characters more

effectively and they engage the audience better. Other than the fact that media aesthetics studies have been done on the fictional genre, there is also literature on media aesthetics in the non-fiction. A study done by Baym (2004) on television news concerning the dismissal of Watergate 1973-74 and Clinton 1998 aims to study the pattern of the report based on two similar news reports but in different eras. In Watergate report (package), producer has used the typography sensitivity system and the verbal function as crucial in the presentation, the mimetic image to produce the indexical trace about the truth, and sound-bites used as shorthand. Reporters for the Watergate report had their own way of reporting and it shows the special culture of the time. Meanwhile for the Clinton report, the visual took the mainstage in presenting truth and the image was used symbolically in line with the narrative context. In Clinton's TV news Sound-bites was used as story-telling. Thus, this study has shown that media aesthetics has been used for certain agenda that is appropriate to the socio-cultural change in the society.

In 2014, Smith had done a study on 2010 Olympics Ice Hockey. His objective was to see how the male and female players playing ice hockey was shown on TV using the Hegemony Masculine framework. Previous research showed that the male players in the sport were portrayed in their masculine form compared to female players through the camera lens. The study used the two-dimensional space (field of view), the three-dimensional space (camera view angle), four dimensional space (movement and time) introduced by Zettl (1998). The study outcome shows that Olimpik (2010) Ice Hockey (female event) attracted the audience more through the production technique like camera shot, camera angle, and slow motion replay effect compared to the male event. Although the outcome shows that the female event for ice hockey is more interesting than the male event, the event stressed more on the hegemony masculine as established in the past.

In this research the definition of media aesthetics refers to the five fields of media aesthetics introduced by Zettl (1998) namely lighting and colour, two-dimensional space, three-dimensional space, time, movement and sound. The respondents in the control group were tested based on the elements in the indicator of media aesthetics by watching the original documentary film *The Malayan Emergency* (2010). The respondents in the treatment group were tested by watching the documentary film *The Malayan Emergency* (2010) that was manipulated by editing based on the elements in the media aesthetics indicator.

Internet Exposure

Our current media users are no longer passive, but they have the ability to revise the information exposed to them through the information in the Internet to ensure the validity of the information. The study done by Mohd. Nor Shahizan et al. (2015) and Mohd. Nor Shahizan with Ali Salman (2017) found that the technological progress has spurred the youth to construe the visual literacy on the documentary interpretation. There is information gathering such as collecting materis in Internet portals and the visual aesthetics values would go hand in hand with the current technological development. This factor has influenced the youth's visual literacy skills in interpreting a media material. The youth known as Internet-literate have high literacy in finding valid information and have high authority in validating the informatin exposed by other media thourgh fast Internet.

An individual must have basic skills in the use of resources, information and technology in line with the exponential pace of the technology (Topaloglu & Tekkanat, 2015). There is a very close connection between the technology literacy level and the

information technology literacy level. An efficacious communication technology user has higher information technology literacy than those who lag behind (Livingstone, 2004; Selwyn, 2006; Topaloglu & Tekkanat, 2015). Livingstone (2004) stated that the information technology literacy is the continuance from media literacy. He stated further that information technology literacy differs from the print and audio also visual, It relates with the analysis about multimedia text, hypertext, anarchy organisation, simultaneous communication, interactive, diversity, cultural unity, visual aesthetics, the use of bricolage and so on. Thus, information technology is a complex medium and it necessitates skills to interpret, analyse, evaluate and produce it.

Youth, or those called Internet literate have their own understanding on the information they receive through the Internet because of the influence of the information that 'spills' all over the websites. According to Tapscott (1997) the generation who grows with the Internet, Gen N (the Net Generation) within the range of 2 to 27 years old in 1997 do not watch television a lot and they try to communicate through emails, develop websites and start up their Internet businesses. He also emphasised on the fact that this generation takes advantage of the Internet to explore into their world and create their own identity through the social media. They play an active role in using the Internet compared to the traditional media usage.

Therefore, the youth today have used their time surfing the Internet more compared to the previous time. The study by Mehrabi et al. (2009) shows that the more the Internet is used, the higher the credibility given by Internet users for this information superhighway. Thus, the Internet has become one of the information sources deemed credible for the people today.

In this work, Internet exposure is divided into two components namely Internet literacy and Internet usage. The first one is defined as the capability in accessing, analysing, evaluating and producing online content and it is seen as multidimensional structuring (Livingstone & Helsper, 2010). Here, the second dimension, Internet literacy was used as a measurement for the independent variables, skills and self-efficacy. The skill in accessing the Internet covers the activity of being able to find information needed through the Internet, to send an email or message through the Social Service Network and to download the information or the audio-visual materials.

The component of Internet usage is divided into two namely the probability of Internet usage and the total number of hours used to surf the Internet. Both components are seen to influence the teenagers today especially in their interpretation towards other media. The Internet usage probability means how many hours or times per week that one uses the Internet, whereas the total amount of the time indicates how long one surfs the Internet for various purposes.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses the experimental method to analyse the interpretation among youth in the Public Higher Education Institutions in both the control and treatment groups on the documentary film *The Malayan Emergency* (2010). The use of the method in the study is to see the effect that happened to the dependent variable due to the maximum manipulation on the independent variable.

The experimental method was one of the earliest methods to detect if it was logical for an independent variable to have a connection with the dependent variable. In other words, the experimental method was used to see the changes that might happen because of the stimulations set by the researcher (Ahmad Munawar & Mohd. Nor Shahizan, 2014). Davies et al. (2005) stated that this approach was one method that tests the hypothesis to determine the cause and effect relationship. For the procedure, the first step is that the youth will be given a test (pre-experimental study) to ensure that they are from the group with the same media literacy skills. The pre-study was done by showing seven video clips then they were required to answer the pre-experimental test form. In the form, there are questions about basic media aesthetics such as lighting and colour, two-dimensional space, three-dimensional space, time and movement, also sound. Then the youth from both courses who were deemed qualified were divided into control and treatment groups.

Next, the youth from both groups had undergone the post-experiment. They watched the documentary film *The Malayan Emergency (2010)*. The data delivered to the control group was systemised and controlled (Creswell, 1994). The control group was exposed to the first version of documentary film *The Malayan Emergency (2010)* which was not manipulated whereas the treatment group was shown the second version of the documentary film *The Malayan Emergency (2010)* which had been manipulated. As the final step, students from both groups were required to answer the post-experiment test form after watching the film. The study outcome obtained from the data given to the youth was seen as the effect of the stimulation tested.

This research uses the non-probability sampling method which is purposive sampling. It has a system of choosing elements of the sample that adopt expert evaluation to select the case or for certain purposes (Rozmi Ismail, 2015). Researcher extracted the element that he wanted to include in the sample based on experts' discretion. Individuals chosen had certain characteristics or who can give information required in the study (Chua, 2011). The sample for the experimental method were the youth from the Public Higher Learning Institutions (IPTA). The justification for the choice is because researchers want to ensure that the youth participating in this study have the same educational background and this can increase data reliability.

Students chosen for this study are in two different courses, History studies and Media studies. They constitute various racial compositions. A minimum of three hundred youth had taken part in this experiment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The linear regression analysis was carried out to predict and explain the value for the dependent variable (film documentary ideology interpretation) based on the value for one or more independent variables (critical thinking, media aesthetics and Internet exposure) among youth in these two aforementioned courses (one in control, and another in treatment group). The dependent variable was measured in the continuous scale while the independent variable measured in both continuous and discrete scales.

Table 1: The influence of Critical thinking, media aesthetics and Internet exposure on the interpretation of ideology in a documentary among youth studying history and youth studying media in control and treatment groups

Youth Studying History and Media Courses	Independent Variable	Significance	Results
History Students (Control Group)	Media aesthetics	.000	Media aesthetics has an influence on the interpretation of ideology.
Media Students (Control Course)	Media aesthetics	.003	Media aesthetics has an influence on the interpretation of ideology.
History Students (Treatment Group)	Critical thinking	.000	Critical thinking and media aesthetics have an influence on the interpretation of ideology.
	Media aesthetics	.005	
Media Students (Treatment Group)	Media aesthetics	.008	Media aesthetics and Internet exposure have an influence on the interpretation of ideology
	Internet exposure	.005	

The Level of Significance set at 0.05

Table 1 shows the influence of critical thinking, media aesthetics and Internet exposure towards the interpretation of the film documentary ideology of youths studying media and History (both are treatment groups). The analysis outcome has shown that only media aesthetics has an influence on the interpretation of the film documentary ideology to the treatment group youth doing history. Thus, media aesthetics plays an important role to the History students in interpreting the film documentary ideology.

For the treatment group studying history, media aesthetics and critical thinking do have an influence on the film documentary ideology interpretation. The two independent manipulated variables (critical thinking and media aesthetics) contribute towards the interpretation of the film documentary ideology to the youth doing History where their interpretation of ideology in the documentary film was not quite accurate. The mean score for the interpretation of the film documentary ideology for the history students was 3.935 and the mean score became less by 3.711 for those doing History. Thus, this proves that critical thinking dan media aesthetics has an influence on the interpretation of the film documentary ideology to those studying history. In relation to this, critical thinking has a higher influence compared to media aesthetics in the interpretation of the film documentary ideology for History students.

Thus, the analysis outcome shows that media aesthetics contributes to the influence on the interpretation of film documentary ideology for the youth treatment group doing media. Thus, media aesthetics has an influence on this group to interpret film documentary ideology. Meanwhile, for the treatment group doing History, it is found that other than the fact that media aesthetics has an influence on the interpretation of film documentary ideology, the Internet exposure also has an influence on the interpretation of the film documentary ideology for this group. The two manipulated variables namely media aesthetics and Internet exposure also contribute to the influence of the documentary film interpretation for the youth studying Media (treatment group). The total percentage of the media aesthetics and Internet exposure 38.2 percent has contributed to the influence on the film documentary ideology interpretation for the youth studying History. Thus, media aesthetics and Internet exposure have influenced the interpretation of the film

documentary ideology for those doing media. The influence of Internet exposure is higher compared to the media aesthetics in the interpretation of the film documentary ideology for media-learning students.

The independent variable for the factor of Background which is course of study, is the main factor that influences visual reading based on critical thinking and media aesthetics and further influences the understanding, acceptance and interpretation of ideology for the youth treatment group. Youth who have different courses of study lead to different visual reading based on critical thinking. Those studying history have visual reading that is different from those studying media. Although our finding reveals that critical thinking does not leave any impact on both groups of students to read a visual, critical thinking does contribute to the influence on the understanding and interpretation of the ideology behind a documentary film. The better the critical thinking, the higher the level of understanding, acceptance and interpretation of the ideology for history students. However, the critical thinking for youth studying media does not influence the aspects of understanding, acceptance and interpretation of the ideology. The outcome of this study supports the statement made by Messaris (1987, 1997) whereby critical thinking is done to interpret the visual meaning. An individual needs a higher level of understanding to segregate visual into vital elements based on the use of techniques implied by the director. Nonetheless, the factor of Background or specifically the course of study influences the understanding, acceptance and interpretation of the documentary film ideology.

The next factor that influences one's understanding, acceptance and interpretation of the ideology underlying a documentary film for the youth studying history and the youth studying media (treatment group) is one factor for the media text namely media aesthetics. This factor has a positive relationship with the understanding, acceptance and interpretation of the ideology within a documentary film for the treatment group. Visual reading based on aesthetic media improves with the higher level of understanding, acceptance and interpretation of the ideology. Media aesthetics has contributed to the influence on the understanding, acceptance and interpretation of the documentary film ideology for the treatment group including those doing History and Media courses. After undergoing the post-experiment for the treatment group where the media text (media aesthetics) is manipulated, the understanding, acceptance and interpretation of the youth doing both courses become low. This means that the aesthetics media for the youth of both courses lies in understanding, accepting and interpreting the ideology of the documentary film. The outcome of this study supports the statement made by Zettl (1998) where the audience interprets the visual based on kepada media aesthetics yang terdapat dalam visual.

The study outcome for this research also shows that the treatment group demonstrated that the external factor namely Internet exposure also contributes to the influence for the understanding, acceptance and interpretation of ideology for the youth. Internet exposure has a negative relationship with the understanding, acceptance and interpretation of the documentary film ideology. It has shown that the higher the Internet literacy and the use of the Internet, the lower the understanding, acceptance and interpretation of the ideology. Internet exposure has become one of the factors for increased understanding, acceptance and interpretation of the ideology in documentary films. Mohd Nor Shahizan et al. (2015) and Kim (2014) state that the use of the Internet and literacy information has influenced the way media users interpret the video or film to which they are exposed. This study outcome has supported this statement where the more the

Internet is used, the higher the Internet literacy level that will influence one's understanding, acceptance and interpretation of the documentary film ideology.

Other than that, the research outcome also shows that cognitive thinking among youth also influences the understanding, acceptance and interpretation of youth in this study. Here, cognitive thinking means the education system received during the schooling years has affected the media text interpretation exposed to them. In this study, almost half of the youth have stated that the documentary film *The Malayan Emergency* (2010) is the current history during the secondary school and this shows that they do not have the basic knowledge about the events narrated in this documentary film. The knowledge they gained at school did influence their understanding, acceptance and interpretation of the ideology contained in this documentary film.

All in all, the factors influencing understanding, acceptance and interpretation of the film documentary ideology in this study include Background (course of study, education system) which will further influence the critical thinking that affects the understanding also acceptance and interpretation of the film documentary ideology. The next factor will be the text media which is media aesthetics and the last one will be Internet exposure covering Internet literacy and the use of the Internet.

CONCLUSION

The right understanding, acceptance and interpretation of the media text are very important in the communication process. A communication process will be deemed successful when the receiver of the message can receive the message and is able to understand it, and can well interpret the idea conveyed by the deliverer of the message. Documentary film as the medium of the mass media plays an important role in relaying information and as a tool for government ministries, departments, and agencies in distributing and strengthening the image of their respective organisations (Asiah Sarji et al., 2009) especially film documentaries with a history orientation. Therefore, the advantage of a documentary film is that it is a genre that documents the facts of a story (Buckland, 2003) so it has been used by the dominant group as a propaganda tool (Asiah Sarji et al., 1996; Swann, 1989; Megat Al-Imran Yasin, 2004; Mohd. Nor Shahizan et al., 2012) to consolidate their positions in society. Related to this, documentary films with historical elements contain certain ideologies weaved into the visual-audio materials so that they can influence their target audiences (Pramaggiore & Wallis, 2011). Therefore, the right understanding, acceptance and interpretation of the ideology in documentary films are of great importance so that the audio-visual materials can convince the audience especially the youth of today.

This research outcome demonstrates that the youth's course and cognitive thinking have influenced their visual interpretation and further influenced their understanding, acceptance and interpretation of the film documentary ideology. Individuals with different courses will have different critical thinking levels. The research outcome supports the statement by Hobbs et al. (2013) and Pahang and Schaefer (2009) where different backgrounds will influence one's visual interpretation. Knowledge about production will enhance the individual's literacy level (Zettl, 1998; Messaris, 1998; Phang & Schaefer, 2009; Hobbs et al., 2013). Those who do not have the knowledge will need critical thinking to interpret the visual exposed to them (Messaris & Moriarty, 2005). As found in the outcome, the individual factor, which is critical thinking for History students, influences their understanding, acceptance and interpretation of the film documentary ideology. The

research findings show that there is a positive relationship between critical thinking and the interpretation of the film documentary ideology. The higher the level of critical thinking, the more accurate the interpretation of the film documentary ideology. Individuals who do not have the knowledge of formal conventions (in production) need critical thinking to interpret the message found in a video or a film (Messaris, 2001).

Thus, the factor of individual background would be under cognitive thinking. The study outcome has shown that knowledge that the youth obtained during their schooling years has influenced the understanding, acceptance and interpretation of the ideology in documentary films. Institutions such as schools where there is high dominance by people in power are a place to disseminate ideas, values, symbols, also concepts about an issue for them to retain their positions and power in society (Althusser, 1984; Juliana & Mahyuddin, 2009; Downing & College, 2013). For Malaysia, various policies have been implemented after the 1969 racial riot to bridge the gap between races such as the 1971 New Economic Policy, National Pillar and the 1971 Cultural and National Policy. The school has become one of the important institutions in promoting these policies and certain ideas are subtly injected into the education system in Malaysia. Therefore, what we know and think about the history of Malaya – our cognitive thinking – is actually the ideology brought forward from the discourse of the Malayan history infused in the History subject at school. According to Potter (2004) cognitive thinking is one of the factors for one in interpreting meaning in media text. Thus, cognitive thinking contained in youth research serves as one of the factors that influence their understanding, acceptance and interpretation towards documentary films.

The outcome of the research shows that media aesthetics has a positive relationship and contributes to the influence on the understanding, acceptance and interpretation of film documentary ideology. The higher the use of media aesthetics, the higher the level of understanding, acceptance and interpretation of film documentary ideology by youth. The media aesthetics (Zettl, 1998) in the media text plays a significant role in constructing meaning in the visual. The media aesthetics in the documentary film *The Malayan Emergency (2010)* has been used to enhance the reality, emotions, dramatization in the story-telling structure (Zettl, 1998; Pierce & Kaufman, 2012; Nicholson, 2010; Baym 2004; Smith, 2014). Every media aesthetic namely lighting/colour, dual-dimensional space, the three-dimensional space, time/movement all have their own functions in constructing meaning for this documentary film. Although a history-oriented documentary film is non-fiction, similar to news, it requires media aesthetics to produce a more interesting visual to leave an emotional impact on the audience.

The next factor will be the external factor which is Internet exposure. The outcome has shown that Internet exposure has a negative relationship with the understanding, acceptance and interpretation of the ideology among youth. As Internet literacy and Internet usage levels increase, the understanding, acceptance and interpretation decrease. This outcome supports the study by Mohd Nor Shahizan et al. (2015) and Kim (2014) that the use of the Internet and literacy information influence the way the media users interpret the video or film. The exponential growth of technology has led to information spillout on the Internet. Pieces of information have become the source of reference to youth today – those literate to communication technology, when they are presented with something that is ambiguous or vague. They are able to access, analyse, evaluate and produce online content, and they are regarded as having high Internet literacy. (Livingstone & Helsper,

2010). Thus, those with this advantage are seen to be more able to interpret and construct the meaning embodied in the media text.

In sum, the understanding, acceptance and interpretation of a film documentary ideology are crucial for higher authorities to consolidate their power in society. The outcome of this study has shown that the factor of Background (course, cognitive thinking) is the main aspect in media literacy to evaluate the message critically. Technological advancement in the world today enables youth to obtain information at their fingertips. Thus, the different course backgrounds are not the main reason for the different interpretations towards documentary film, especially historical ones. However, the research outcome has shown that the education received by the youth in their schooling years has become the main factor for them to interpret the historical documentaries. Next, the factor of Background (course, cognitive thinking) has influenced the factor of Individual (critical thinking), the factor of media text (media aesthetics) and the external factor (technological constraints) in understanding, accepting and interpreting the film documentary ideology, especially those with historical elements.

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