

TEACHING GENDER ISSUES WITH CHICK FLICKS IN FTKW, UMK

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Abstract

The use of questionnaires and interviews, student’s portfolio, and academic transcript are not sufficient to know background of students and their previous knowledges. The objective of the research is to use of movies as supporting criteria to know student’s prior knowledge, and also other useful information to improve student’s performance, and other useful information such as communication skills, high order thinking and valuing. The survey method was undertaken in 20 third year product design students and 9 fourth year multimedia students, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia.

Three questions were used after showing three movies; *Persepolis*, *Monalisa Smile* and *Perempuan berkalong sorban* ; (1) What is your impression of this movie? (2) How the story is told?

Most student in the first and third year students can answer the questions but they can not know the theme of the three movies that focused on feminism issues. Regarding students answer, these movie test will help lecturer to access student performance which can not reveal in the questionnaires and interviews. The results of the test show that movies can improve student’s knowledge and skills and also high order thinking.

Keywords : Movie - Student performance - Assesment - *Chick flicks* - *High order thinking*

INTRODUCTION

Muslim intellectuals in Malaysia has already demanded right for women to have education in 1930. Today, feminism has gone beyond the original meaning to fight for woman's right and legal reform for education, property right and suffrage. The meaning include an awareness and analysis of woman's discrimination in family, working place, in society and all conscious effort by man and women to end inequity between man and women (Ng, C., Masnah and Hui, B.T, 2006). In this ethnographic study, I try to improve the gender awareness through movies in Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia.

Gender study becomes important for student in Kelantan area which are strict with religion and more reserved culture compare to other states in Malaysia. There has no cinema since 1996, so people watch movie through dvd or tv cable. Fashion show has special condition, if someone want to make fashion show, woman's model are not allowed to be watched by male audience, and not allowed to draw nude in the drawing class. However, in Kelantan traditional literature, women image and character show as a hero, wise leader, faithful wife, good lover, good spouse etc in poetry such as *Syair* (a form of traditional Malay poetry)(*Siti Zubaidah, Syai Ken Tambuhan, Syair Bidasari, Syair Siti Sianah, Syair Qahar Masyur*, and many text such as *Hikayat* (the life of)*Syamsul Anwar, Hikayat Panji Semirang, Hikayat Seri Rama, Hikayat Gul Bakawali*, etc.. In contrast, women character reveals as passive, waiting to be survived by male heroes (*wira*), firstly suffered before happy ending etc in their narrative (prosa) literature. One of the most important literature for Kelantan people is *Riwayat kelantan* (kelantan story) which told about two women's life; Encik Siti Jarum Bergiling and Putri Saadong. Encik Siti Jarum Bergiling is a daughter of poor family and build Kelantan empire. Siti's step daughter is Putri Saadong who became wise queen and leader in Kelantan. However, according Siti Hawa Salleh, melayu society is patriarchal and male dominated society (Rahman, N.A. in Hamid and Maryam, 2006).

Movies in Malaysia are seldom touching feminist issues and very rare about chick flicks, and genre of movies are horror, comedy and romantic. One of the most famous old Malaysian Cinematographers, P Ramlee, have four important context in his movies; post japanese occupation, malays and the challenge of modernity, on understanding of islam and poverty. On understanding of Islam, P Ramlee follow Islam law which permit polygamy. The problem is not the Islam law but the implementation of the law. Justice and fairness have to be applied, if man want to have polygamies married (Aljunied,S.M.K. 2005). Similar to Woody Allen, P Ramlee play as an actor who can sing, in many of his movies as a main star. However, Ramlee has seldom cast women as a main star in his movies. The most interesting in Malaysia, malaysian can still watch Ramlee's movies in television until this day. In the millennium era, many independent film maker such as Amir Muhammad, James Lee, Yasmin Ahmad, Ho Yuhang, Bernard Chauly, Deepak Kumaran Menon, Woo Ming Jin, Azhaar Rudin, Hardesh Singh, Albert Hue, Khoo Eng Yow, and Tan Chui Mui begin to explore a new possibilities and opportunity of the movies (McKay, B. 2007, Khoo, G.C. 2008). Yasmin Ahmad's work use female as her main characters in her movies. Although her movies can be considered as chick flicks, but Yasmin's theme portray and represent sensitive issues in Islam, history and race relations, and not about gender issues. The question of this research, how to improve the gender awareness in the art students of University Malaysia Kelantan?

MATERIALS AND METHOD

I used three movies, *Monalisa smile* (Hollywood movie), *Persepolis* (Iranian movie) and *perempuan berkalong sorban* (women with veil neckles - Indonesian movie), as supporting tools to educate gender issues. The *Monalisa smile* told about the lives of Katherine Watson who is a teacher of art history and work at Wellesley College, a prestigious New England women's school around 1950's, the screen play casts Julia Roberts as Katherine Watson.

The *Monalisa Smiles* embraces feminism issues, when Katherine Watson brings her idea in teaching modern art which is outside Wellesley College's curriculum, and her opinion about pursue carrier for young woman instead of become "intelligent" housewife. The movies encourage women to pursue carrier and become happy with relationship (Ferriss, S & Young, M.(2008). In the movies, Katherine Watson encourages her students, especially her three dominant characters, Elizabeth ('Betty') Warren (Kristen Dunst), Joan Brandwyn (Julia Stiles), and Giselle Levy (Maggie Gyllenhaal). Joan Barndwyn is smart students, and she is accepted in law school, but she prefers to be housewife. Warren is active in school news paper and she is always against Katherine Watson. Giselle Levy follow feminist concept in the negative connotation by using her body to "control" man (Hamdan, 2005). At that time, the young women in prestigious schools are expected to memorise course content as they prepare to become exemplary mothers who look after their children, and to be wives of the nation's elite males. The Wellesley College offered a curriculum that would make student attractive in marriage market (Purvis, 1991). In the movies also show the work of Sautine, Van Gogh, Jackson Polloc, and some comment about their work. *Persepolis* is a French animated film based on Marjane Satrapi's autobiographical graphic novel. The animated-autobiographical film potrayed political, culture, life styles and even art school during Iranian revolution. The main character is the same name with the director, Marjin, grew up in iranian during revolution, and she is sent to France after old regime collapse. She encounter western life in French, and go back to Iran and find difficulty to adjust with patriachal culture.

The third movie is *Perempuan berkalong sorban* (The Girl With the Keffiyeh Around Her Neck)which story about Anissa, is the main character and a Kyai's daughter. Kyai is a religious leader in an Islamic boarding school, so called *pesantren*. Anissa want to get higher education and always want to be treated equals with man since she was a children. The *perempuan berkalong sorban* become Indonesian top hit before the movie was banned.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF FILM

Giannetti (2001) divided the movies into three styles; formalism, classical and documentary. The monalisa smiles can be categorise between classical and realist. The movie try to represent the life of Katherine Watson and life style, social life and education systems in Wellesley college in 1950 at Massachusset State, USA, but the movie is not made as realistic as documentary film, and the way they edit the movie follow classical cutting. According to Hamdan, 2005, the movies have flaws and focus only to middle and upper class society, and do not involve with black movement or working class society. However, the movie still have advantages to be used as class discussion especially about feminist perspective and the implementation of art to change student's perceptions. Similar idea to *Monalisa Smile* such as *Legally Blonde* (2011), *Real Woman Have Curves* (2002), *Bend It Like Beckham* (2002), *The*

Devil Wears Prada (2006), and numerous others promote woman may choose education and carrier does not mean abandoning possibility of happiness (Ferris, S & Young, M., 2008).

Movies can also be examined through the way they made the movies such as style, mise en scene, movement, editing, sound, acting, drama, story, writing, ideology (Giannetti, 2001). Discussion on how to make movie are emphasized in mise en scene, movement, editing, sound, acting, drama, writing, and story. Movie ideology is interesting to discuss especially for older or final year students. Understanding movie or movie appreciation can also be use to improve their creative and critical thinking skills. Student will be more creative in writing when they have to give their opinion about movies, and also they will improve their critical thinking by analysing the theme of the movie. The questions are important to know the entry behaviour of students, if the types of questions follow Bloom Taxonomies (Hamblen, 1984), the questions will try to find the critical thinking of students. The differentiate the levels and types of thinking involved in understanding a particular art work, such as *Monalisa Smile*. The level of questions may be examined as follows: (a) Knowledge: Who paint *Monalisa* or make *Monalisa Smile* movie?; (b) Comprehension: Describe the mise en scene?; (c) Application: Relate the theme of *Monalisa Smile* to the present day?; (d) Analysis: What compositional principles did Mike Newell (the art director of *Monalisa Smile*)?; (e) Synthesis: Imagine yourself as one of the figures in *Monalisa Smile* movie?; (f) Evaluation: What are your opinions of Mike Newells work? List of guided questions can also be found in Giannetti, L (2001) such as: Where is our eye attracted first?, What type of shot? How far away is the camera from the action? Are we looking up or down on the subject? What are the main eye-stops after taking in the dominant? How much visual information is packed into the image? Etc.

SURVEY RESEARCH

Using the movies for teaching elementary to senior high school is quite common in USA, but it will be the first time in UMK, Kelantan. Before I did the research, I show *Monalisa Smile*'s movie to 150 first year art student in 2011 and asked three questions; 1) what is your impression of this movie? (2) How the story is told? However, most of the answer inform about love story between student and teacher, and none of students answer about feminist issues. Most of them can not answer no 2 because they have not yet got basic movie. After that I choose 9 fourth year multimedia students who took video product course because senior student have already took some basic art course .

The survey method (Cresswell, 2008) was undertaken in 20 third year product design students and 9 fourth year multimedia students, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia in 2011/2012. The use of questionnaires and interviews, student's portfolio, academic transcript were conducted to know background of students and their previous knowledges. In addition, entry behaviour is supported by movie appreciation. This is the first time, I used movie to support entry behaviour of students. I expected that movie appreciation is more appropriate to know the knowledge, skill and ability of art's student. 100% product design students and 100% multimedia students joined the behaviour test so that I can improve our teaching materials.

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Pre test and post test were to compare students' interpretations of movies before and after they had received instruction in movie appreciation course. Using these results, the student's initial interpretation of the movies compared with their interpretations of the same movies near the end of the movie appreciation course to see learning outcomes. For written questionnaires, all three movies were projected through projectors along with the questions.

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Two questions were used after showing Monalisa Smile's movie; (1) What is your impression of this movie? (2) How the story is told?. I gave three stage of test: the product design students and multimedia students answer after Monalisa Smile's movie finished. Second stage, multimedia students discuss in three group about the movie. The third stage, I gave a journal which title Mona Lisa Smile by Hamdan, 2001 and multimedia student made the review with their own opinions. In this paper, I do not try to compare product design students and multimedia students but the objective of this paper is to know whether Movies can be used as a supporting tool for assessing student's performance test.

DISCUSSION

The backgrounds of 20 third year students are as follows: 12% of their parents have jobs which are related with art, 12% of their parents graduate from university, and only 43% students chose art when they entered university. The cumulative performance indexes are 8% A+, 46% A, 38% A-, and 8% B. The backgrounds of 9 multimedia students are as follow: 33% of their parents have jobs which related to art, 12% of their parents graduate from university, and 100% students chose art when they entered university.

Table.1
Student's background

| | Product Design Students | Multimedia Students |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Parents have jobs related to art | 12% | 33% |
| Parents have university degree | 12% | 11% |
| Art as student's first choice | 43% | 100% |

Table.2
Cumulative Performance Index

| Mark | Product Design Students | Multimedia Students |
|------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| A + | 8% | - |
| A | 46% | 67% |
| A- | 38% | 11% |
| B+ | 8% | 22% |
| B | - | - |
| B- | - | - |

I chose the best answer from Product Design Student.

(1) What is your impression of this movie?

- *the important of learning history of art*
- *student should prepare the lesson before the instructional from the lecturer*
- *art works can be interpreted thorough reading book or references, students should know how to criticize.*
- *every days live affect learning. Students should balance with every situations.*
- *art is continuous, I can see art works which was produced long time ago.*
- *every situation is not the same with what I see*

(2) How the story is told?

- the story about the relationship between teacher and students*
- the way of art's student respond differently about art works.*
- monalisa smile have moral story from different aspect such as: education, household, family, relationship.*
- the story about culture, citizen in the past*
- the connection between theme and story*

(3) What is the element and principal designs which are used in this movie?

- the combination of scene*
- line, form, shape, texture and value*
- harmony, unity, and principal design apply in story*

The best answer from three groups of multimedia students

(1) What is your impression of this movie?

- *women are more interested in family relationship*
- *critize mindset of people in 1950s who are giving more previledge to man than to woman.*
- american try to save their family's dignity by ignoring their real problems.*
- mindset revolution*

(2) How the story is told?

- story is divided into three different groups*
- framing shot within range from medium shot to close up and some long shot*
- the role of women in arts and tell story about american culture*
- editing style : grand + romantic*
- the difference opinions between old and young generations in husband-wife relationships.*

(3) What is the element and principal designs which are used in this movie?

- *Colours tend to brown, yellow and romantic*
- variation in making story*

The best answer after they read Mona Lisa Smile by Hamdan, 2001.

(1) What is your impression of this movie?

This film, Mona Lisa Smile is mainly about the culture of the people in the 1950's in England, where the society expects the young woman during that time to be highly educated to be ready for marriage and be a good mother to their children and a wife for the nation's elite males.

The education is just a bonus to add so that they will be a “high demand” product in the marriage market. During this time, women are proud to get married and to start building a family, which is the highest point of success that they can achieve in life. The society in England this time prioritize their name and pride so much they even do not mind sacrificing their own children in order to keep their names and status clean. When Miss Watson came to that school, realizing this fact made her eager to teach those girls about choices in life that they can make to be better women of the society. She thought them to be career-oriented and told them that they can make a change provided that they stop following the tradition of the culture. Some girls have bigger dreams but they are all swept away by the social pressure. She was about to fail and give up, but standing on her own principles, she manage to shake the culture and made those girls realized that it is time to prove that women can do more than just raise kids and be house-wives. At last, towards the end of the film, those girls managed to grab their guts for their own independence and for their own decision making in life. They have made a revolution.

(2) How the story is told?

The setting of this story is during the 1950's in the country of England and most of the time the place location in the film is in the Wellesly College's compound. This film is linearly narrated for there is no flashback going on in the film from the beginning towards the end. The film is a multi-narrative structured where it consist of the combination of five stories told at the same time. The story of the teacher, Miss Watson and her few students, about their characteristic, their background, their dreams and their life. The colours used in this film are prone to brownish and pale. This is to align with the setting of time and place of the 1950's. Also, the pale colours symbolize the fix mindset or traditional kind of thinking of the community or the culture that time and how close minded they are, not able to accept any new ideas or changes in the community's norm.

Zahar (2010), Zahar and Kammaluddin, (2011) identified that art student usually are trained to make designs, and they are seldom do written test. Most of their mark's come from studio assignments or make designs, drawing, photos and also products and furniture. The lecturers mostly teach how to make things or tangible object, but they do not teach how to criticize art works from established artist or art criticism. In other words, lecturers criticize student works to improve their work, but they do not expose student to criticize the work of famous artist. The answer of question no 1 can be embraced wire range of issues such as teaching methods, social life in 1950s, feminist issues, art issues, relationship and moral issues. The student can discuss about social life, moral issue, teaching method, but they did not understand feminist issues in the movie. Student's answer improves after they discusses with their friends, especially when they have time to read the critical review. Although their answers are influenced by the opinions of Hamdani, they make progress in writing an essay on their own opinion. None of the students can get the correct answer about the main messages of the Monalisa Smile's movie, i.e. Feminist's issue.

Students do not encounter problems when they answer the question no 2. How the story is told? The answer of question no 2 depends on the style of film. The classical narration edits out unimportant scenes and keeps the action on track, moving toward story's central conflict. The conflict starts from Katherine Watson against Warren (her student), colleagues, principal, and reach to the peak before she quit the job as Wellesly's school. None of students answer

the plot structures of the movie, so lecturer need to improve the course materials in making story in movie. These results proved that students need to learn how to criticize the movie and not only focus on how to make movie.

In order to determine the entry behavior, test a small sample of the learners to establish if the assumption of their threshold knowledge and the starting point of the course program are correct. The proposed learners have the needed knowledge, skill and ability (KSAs) to master the terminal learning objective in the course program. In addition, the entry behavior test ensure that student are not thought by the materials that they already know. Usually the materials in art schools use visual literacy; therefore, the entry behaviour test should not use only written test, but also couple with image.

Students' academic achievements in art derive from project assignments, and students have seldom done written test (Zahar, I and Kamaluddin, A.S, 2011). Students in UMK have also seldom criticized their own work or self-criticized, and done art criticism. Most students have a little knowledge about social science or general knowledge. Interdiscipline studies have not yet been implemented in FTKW; therefore, movies can be used to improve student's knowledge and high order thinking. The recommended movies can be used for test and teaching Interdiscipline studies such religion (Marsh, 2007), philosophy (Falzon, 2002), history (Hughes-Warrington, 2007), contemporaries movies (Buckland, 2009). Also the independent movies which are produced by Malaysian movie maker such as Amir Muhammad, James Lee, Yasmin Ahmad, Ho Yuhang, Bernard Chauly, Deepak Kumaran Menon, Woo Ming Jin, Azhaar Rudin, Hardesh Singh, Albert Hue, Khoo Eng Yow, and Tan Chui Mui

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