

# Creative Strategy Of Documentary Films To Embrace College Students Viewers

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**ABSTRACT** For most college students, documentary films are not a well-liked film genre. A documentary film that shows reality without engineering is not interesting enough for college students who are accustomed to the dramatization of Hollywood and other mainstream film industries. This study aims to (1) find out the reasons why documentary films are less attractive to college students, and (2) formulate creative strategies in packaging documentary films that are able to attract them. This study uses qualitative methods with the object of research are college students of Universitas Sebelas Maret. The results of the study show that most college students viewers feel bored with the way the documentary film feels flat. To attract the college students audience, a documentary films need to consider a simple story, implementation of a dramatic structure, the use of modern visual techniques, the selection of distribution media, and the duration of the film.

**Keywords:** *film, documentary films, creative strategy*

## INTRODUCTION

Film is one of the popular cultural industry products that are in great demand. The number of film productions and the number of viewers continues to increase from year to year. As one illustration, according to Bayu Indra Permana on its website <http://www.tribunnews.com/seleb/2018/07/30/production-film-indonesia-meningkat-joko-anwar-akui-sampai-rebutan-kru>, mentioning that the Indonesian cinema film industry in 2017 produced around 140 film titles, rising to around 180 film titles in 2018. The number of spectators also increased as Desy Setyowati said on her website <https://katadata.co.id/berita/2018/09/18/bekraf-sebut-investasi-di-film-lebih-menguntungkan-dari-startup>, that the number of moviegoers continues to increase from 16 million in 2010 to 42.7 million in 2017. Desy added that the number this continues to grow until as of August 2018 the number of viewers has reached 36.3 million and is expected to reach 50 million viewers by the end of the year. In addition to cinemas there are many other distribution networks that increasingly support the penetration of film media to the public. Affordable internet data service rates and the lower prices of gadgets make it easier for people to see movies through video sharing sites such as Youtube, or various video on demand services such as Netflix.

There are many genres and types of films available. Some of the most popular types of film genres include action, horror, comedy or drama.

Films with this genre are most often produced and aired in theaters.

One interesting but less popular film genre is documentary. Documentary film is a type of film which is an actual report that is creative based on reality, in accordance with Heinich et al (Yudhi Munadhi, 2008: 117). In the documentary there is no fictitious story made up to dramatize scenes throughout the film. That is, documentary films are used to represent reality and re-display the facts in life that are made more structured in the duration of the film. Even further, documentary films have 2 (two) conditions that must be met, namely: there is no attempt to deceive the audience and the event does not conflict with its reconstruction (Bazin, 2005: 26).

The term documentary was first used in a Moana film in 1926, precisely on February 8, 1926. The film's release was released by Robert Flaherty. The term documentary was also used to describe all non-fiction films. This means all films that tell facts and facts, including in this type of documentary.

The documentary is also a recording of events taken immediately when a real event is taking place. In documentary films, entertainment elements are not really highlighted. The important point is of course a special message from the theme of the documentary. Even so, in some documentary films, it also shows enough entertainment.

Documentary films are often used as a medium for social criticism by photographing dark things in the country such as portraits of the

lives of the poor or social inequalities that occur within a country. In addition, documentary films are also used to make biographies of a character.

Watching fact-based documentary films certainly opens our horizons about the outside world. Inspiring stories that are often packaged in documentary films can also make anyone inspired. The stories that inspire many of these people have the power to change many people for the better. Even has the power to change the world.

A series of positive benefits from the documentary made documentary films very important to be seen especially by the younger generation. The problem then is that documentary films themselves are not a film genre that is quite popular even for students.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Some research on documentary films have been done before, especially about the use of documentary film media as learning material, and also about the process of making the media itself. Among them is the study of Novia Ayu Puspitasari (2013), "The Use of Documentary Films as Media in Improving Student Learning Achievement in PPKn Subjects in the X-MM Class of Muhammadiyah Vocational School 5 Kepanjen". This study aims to determine the effect of documentary films use in improving student learning achievement in PPKn subjects in class X MM Muhammadiyah Vocational School 5 Kepanjen. The study said that documentary film can improve student learning achievement. This happens because with documentary films, students get different learning experiences. The presence of documentary films can temporarily prevent them from getting bored from the routine of daily learning processes. However, the use of documentary films cannot emerge as a medium of self-learning, to increase their effectiveness, the presence of teachers as companions still has an important role in improving learning achievement.

Another research is the writings of Iin Ekawati, Ruqiah Ganda Putri Panjaitan, and Eko Sri Wahyuni (2017), "Development of Documentary Films as Submaterial Learning Media Disruption of Class XI High School Excretion Systems". This study states that for a documentary film to be accepted as effective learning media, the film needs to consider several aspects, namely: 1) visual aspects, especially the use of readable texts and the use of images that are easily visible; 2) using consistent words, sentences or terms; and 3) synchronization

between sound, writing, and proper image display.

The third study from PM. Onny Prihantono, Listia Natadjaja, and Deddy Setiawan (2009), "The Right Documentary Film Making Strategy for Raising Traditions Behind the Ponorogo Reog". The research emphasizes more on the process of creating documentary film works to provide insight to the public about the lives of real Ponorogo reog actors. The hope is that people not only look at reog art in terms of their negative stigma, but can continue to preserve the arts which are full of history and cultural values that are now forgotten by the current generation.

From some of the studies above, none of them have specifically targeted the target audience of college students. Related to the third study that explores the process of reog documentary filmmaking, the research focuses more on the elements of the story, especially about the reog art controversy that is closely related to the stigma of sexuality, especially homosexuality. The study presents several alternative solutions that are appropriate to reduce the controversy that arises in the art of Reog.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Departing from the background of the problems that have been written above, the general problem in this paper is to formulate a creative strategy in packaging documentary films to be preferred by students. While specifically this problem can be described as follows:

1. Why are students less interested in documentary films?
2. How to make documentary films that college students like?

## METHODOLOGY

This paper is prepared with a descriptive qualitative approach. This approach produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from people and observable behavior, this approach is also directed at the background and individuals holistically (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982: 53). Data collection methods were carried out in the form of: 1) in-depth interviews with students from various departments, filmmakers, especially documentaries, as well as lecturers with audio visual courses; 2) direct observation ; and; 3) documents: several internet references. This purposive sampling technique (choosing a sample that is considered the most knowledgeable of the problem) is often referred to as judgmental sampling because researchers consider

incorporating elements that are considered special from a population where researchers search for information (Black and Champion, 1992: 264-265) Sampling used is snowball effect that is developing informants.

Data analysis refers to the stages described by Miles and Huberman, including: 1) Collection of information; 2) Data reduction; 3) Presentation of data; and 4) Conclusion or verification conclusion of drawing / verification. To guarantee the validity of the data to be obtained in this paper, the improvement of data validity is done by triangulating data, namely collecting the same data from different sources (Patton, 2002) Thus, one data will be controlled, cross-checked and compiled by the same data from different sources so that a valid conclusion will be obtained.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Documentary films are considered films that are quite segmented. One of the UNS Faculty of Engineering students named Farid (19) said, "This documentary film in my opinion is segmented. If for example the person likes historical themes, and given a historical film, he will likely to watch. But if the theme is something he doesn't like, that will be difficult. " Another student Renata (20) added, " The documentary has its own audience. For example, I like comics, if there's a documentary about comics I definitely want to watch. Oh yes, the type of audience is special, usually those who don't watch mainstream movies anymore, they want to see something different. ". Documentary film viewers are divided into themes that are liked by each audience. Some of the themes that are often featured in documentary films for example are history, biography, social, natural knowledge, or technology. The characteristics of documentary film viewers are also generally quite specific, for example, those who are already saturated with commercial main stream films and looking for alternative films. The two factors above make documentary films not easy in attracting many viewers.

In the interview session, most students said that "boring" is the first word crossing their minds when they heard about documentary films. Adinda (19) said, "The documentary is boring. Especially from the visual appearance and the story. The duration is too long, the cinematography is not good, the story is long-winded even though it can be shortened. " Rachmad (19) added, "The documentary film is monotonous, the story is flat. It mostly shows a long dialogue or even monologue. That's a lot of words. Eventually the audience gets bored and

sleepy. " Some things that make documentary films considered boring are mainly about the way stories are delivered and the visual techniques used.

Almost all student informants like commercial films from local and international cinemas such as Hollywood. The most interesting factor for them in a film is the story. The narrative structure that is able to move up and down the audience's emotions is the key to sweeping the audience into the film's story. This is considered to be one of the shortcomings of documentary films in attracting a high number of audience.

Regarding the documentary film that tends to be flat, Arief Iman (38), a lecturer in the audio visual subject, has his own opinion, "Indeed documentary films tend to be boring, especially for students who are still looking for entertainment. Emphasis on the aspect of fact makes the story feel flat. To overcome this there is a genre whose name is doku drama. So it includes elements of the drama in the delivery of the facts. But indeed the formulation is less clear, how much the percentage of the facts, and how much for the dramatic. So this genre is still being debated whether it's still into the documentary genre or not.". Packaging story facts by adding elements of dramatization that raise the emotions of the audience can help the film become more interesting. However, the filmmaker must still hold fast to keep as many facts as possible.

In order for a documentary to reach more viewers, it is necessary to raise a broader theme, not too specific, and not too heavy to convey. Regarding the light theme, Ahmad (21) a Law Faculty student said, "If you want a lot of viewers don't use themes or heavy terms. For example, talking about black holes or some-quantum subject. Yes, it's just the science kids who are interested. Take a more general theme, such as a documentary about nature, traveling to the mountains, to the beach. In general, people are more receptive. ". Most informants also mentioned that several documentary shows that they often watched on television were about nature, tourist attractions, flora and fauna, or natural knowledge that was packaged lightly and entertaining like a series "Laptop si Unyil" for example.

Visual techniques are also an important factor in attracting viewers. Windy (18), a student of the Faculty of Economics said, "Visuals is really important. Children nowadays like watching Youtube, look at the good Vlogs, yes they make this for their reference." A more modern visual style needs to be displayed so that they feel more

up to date with the visual tastes of today's generation. Reza (21), a filmmaker said, "Some visual techniques commonly used to feel modern today is like time lapse or slow motion. A shoot taken with drone is also a common technique today. We can also utilize animation to re-create some events." Galang (21), also a filmmaker added, "Editing styles can be more tight, with dynamic transition effects for example. Don't forget that color grading in the style of widescreen films can also help documentaries appear more interesting. ".

Following today's visual style is very important to attract the attention of students. The aesthetic tastes of these students are also formed with their experience while consuming videos that appear through the media such as Youtube. By following the same visual style reverence, it will make documentary films that are made more easily accepted by the target audience in this case the college students.

The emergence of various alternative distribution channels for films and the style of media consumption of students also need to be addressed. With their current gadget, Youtube is the number one place for them to enjoy video content. It's important to use this Youtube distribution channel to reach a larger audience.

The duration of the film also plays an important role. Informants said the initial 3 minutes determined whether or not they would finish watching the film. The total duration of a film is also very important. They suggested that a short documentary film of about 10 minutes would be more easily accepted.

## CONCLUSION

Documentary films are less favored by students because they are considered unattractive and boring. To overcome these problems, filmmakers must pay attention to several things including the theme of the story, visual style, and duration. Stories that are too long-winded should be avoided and only convey stories that are considered important and interesting so that the audience does not feel tired. Visual techniques should be made modern according to the tastes of today's youth, including taking pictures using drone equipment, dynamic editing techniques, slow motion and timelapse video techniques, and the use of animation techniques to re-create some events or illustrate a story. The duration of the film is made solid and concise for approximately 10 minutes. Distribution channels should also utilize media that is favored by students such as Youtube.

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