

Local Films or Hollywood Films: Malaysian's Preferences

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Abstract

Since nine decades Hollywood films dominate the film industry in majority of the countries. In Malaysia, from year 2012 until 2018 demand for Hollywood films are at least 50% higher compare to Local films. This study aims to find the reason behind it? Are all the Local films have low demand? The purpose of this paper is to investigate the reason why demand for Hollywood films is high. A Qualitative Interview method was used to collect data. Three prominent races of Malaysia were interviewed. Total 49 respondents, 13 from each race with both genders within Nilai, Negeri Sembilan. The reasons why people like to watch Hollywood films are quality of content, story line and characters, visual effects, Stardom. The respondents said that in the last 5 years that Malaysian film have improved and also suggested to include international actor, director and script writer in the production of local films that will boost the quality of Malaysian film.

Keywords

Local film, Hollywood film, Audience preference

Introduction

Customer/consumer is the King, Customer is always right as quoted by Harry Gordon Selfridge, John Wannamaker and Marshall Field. Forbes, (2018). Which has been an undeniable fact, which determines how the business is carried out in the world. Produce goods and services based on the needs of the consumer where there is demand there is an obvious supply. If any manufacturer or service provider fail to provide the needs and wants of the King i.e. consumer, they are going to turn away from the manufacturer and service provider to a new one who can satisfy the needs and wants. This is a proven case in the world-renowned literature of consumer behavior.

It is not good enough to the king if we just keep supplying what they want over a period of time the king might get bored by using the same existing products and services. This leaves the manufacturer and service provider to constantly stay on their toe by creating and innovating new products and services to satisfy the ever-ending appetite of the consumers. As it is the only way to prolong in the race of business. Films are also that sought of business, which needs constant creativity and innovation based on the preference of the consumer or the audience.

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Film economy is one of the biggest industry in the world, which flourished with the globalization of business. Film studios and filmmakers around the world produce content catering to the local and International audience. Since the advent of Internet, it is easy for film studio's and film makers to make the content available for the world audience. Now the consumer I.e. king is overwhelmed with so much of movies and video content that he might have to live his whole life to watch films and videos produced in the world.

In an economic perspective, local content that are produced can be shared to the world audience. Many pop cultures and cult have created a huge fan based audience, which makes it easier for the film studio and filmmaker to benefit from this phenomenon. Many film studios are not only specializing on film making, they also become the best marketers for its merchandise such as Jackets, T- shirts, pencil case, Toys, Books etc, which also adds more economic value to the franchise.

This not only encourage the studios and film makers to see the economic gain through the film, But in many ways. Films not only enthralls the audience in sort of entertainment, it also induces certain products and places unconsciously in the minds of the moviegoers. Many films have product placement, which indirectly influences people to buy the product. Many countries came forward and encouraged many film studios and filmmakers to shoot in their respective countries by creating special policies. It not only encourages local talent in filmmaking, there is a proven record and literature to prove that after the film release many tourists around the world might come to visit the place. Who could deny Dany boyle the director who captured the visual spectacles of Phi Phi island to the world audience through his Film "Beach" in which led to the boost in tourism for Thailand. Lord of the Rings and the impact in New Zealand tourism, Brave heart impact on Scotland.

Films have proven to be a big economy factor in creating a revenue for many countries tourism directly and indirectly. Nevertheless, an important question that needs to answer is whether the consumer is interested to see what is being produced. What is the expectations of the consumer? What is the Genre that the consumer like to watch? Why is that the consumer like to watch certain films? What makes them to follow a certain franchise over a period? What makes it attractive in compared to their local films? Will they support locally produced content if it matches their expectation. These question needs to be answered if Malaysia wants to be one of the countries that can capitalize from this entertainment industry.

No one can deny the impact that the films have in our day to day life, It is consider to be the source of entertainment, Hobby and for some it is life made out of making these films. Ever since the invention cinematography by the lumiere brothers, films have come a long way. From Train leaving the station, Workers leaving the factory, the great train robbery, the imagination and out of the world films such as Trip to the moon by George Melies. Filmmakers have never stopped in sweeping us out of our feet with grandeur and visual spectacles.

Film such as Jurassic park gave life to the world of Dinosaur. Thanks to the Director and the producer, it has turned out to be a huge franchise, which makes billions of dollars for every film produced. Ever since there has been successful movie franchise for each studio from the

Hollywood. Super hero movies by Marvel and DC are no exceptions. Transformers franchise by Michael Bay, Fast and Furious has revolutionized the way in which automotive is spoken among the public. Hollywood film over the years have come out with variety of Genre to cater to the ever-increasing appetite of world audience. Action, Horror, comedy, romance, sci-fi, sports, Adventure are few to be mentioned.

Some films even use science as the base of its story to tell the people about life in space. The first man, The Martian, Gravity, were made exclusively to tell the audience and to bring the life of astronaut which were huge success in box office. Film such as wonder, Fault with our stars portrayed a positive way of living which has a positive effect on the minds of the people.

Review of Literature

There are many researches have been done in few countries such as South Korea, China and even Russia but in Malaysia the study between local and Hollywood films are still less. The explanation in this part will be divide into supply side and demand side. In supply side, this paper will explain factors that contribute to success of Hollywood films better compare to local films from the perspective of film while in demand side will explain from perspective of consumers
Supply Side

Lee & Han (2006) study the relationship and the strategies between Korea and Hollywood films with using interview and correlative analysis. Lee, M. H., & Han, E. K. (2006) said there are 3 strategies used by Hollywood distributor to secure their market share in South Korea films industry. First, increase their supply by releasing Hollywood film in most of the South Korea Theater. Second, Hollywood distributor also increase their sales by releasing Hollywood movies in flexible time manner. According to Lee, M. H., & Han, E. K. (2006) before 2001, most of the Hollywood films will be distribute in South Korea 1 month after release in US but after 2001, Hollywood films seem to release their films within 15 days compare to US release. Third, Hollywood distributor also try to avoid the competition with local movies.

Jonathan Derek Silver (2007) in his paper did mention the Hollywood industries domination in films industry is mainly because of marketing management orientation. Marketing management orientation is a study that externally focusing on market, competitor and markets. Based on his research, he concluded that major studio uses marketing strategies to understand customer preference become one of the reason eight major studio hold big market share in films industry for nine decades.

Sophia, Oliver and Daria (2018) study the success of box office movies in Russia mention that the reason international movies are more preferred compare to local movies in Russia are because of 3 reason. The author using quantitative econometric method to analyze the result. This paper said the budget of the movies, franchise, word of mouth and audience rating are the main reason behind high demand of international movies. Where the authors said rating of international critics and adaption of the movie title to Russian language have negative effect to the success of box office in Russia.

Ye Chen (2018) using Qualitative method and Heckman model explain the impact of culture towards Hollywood films from demand and supply perspective. Ye Chen (2018) did mention in this paper the supply of the foreign movies in domestic market are decided by distributors that select the movies based on their taste and prediction. In this paper Ye Chen (2018) said from demand perspective people from culturally distant choose to watch Hollywood movie compare to local where else from supply perspective distributor prefer to release Hollywood movies in the country that have similar cultures storyline. Other than that, the author added English language proficiency and economic wealth of the countries also one of the reason demand for Hollywood more than local movies. In this paper, he mentioned English speaking and high purchasing power countries tend to have higher demand on Hollywood movies.

Demand Side

Fu and Lee (2008) examined the demand from the audience on foreign movies in Singapore. The author said the cultural and economic factors have significance impact towards audience demand on foreign films in Singapore, included Hollywood movies compare to films from country that have different cultural and economics background. Other than that, they also said films from country that own large market share in domestic tend to experience box office success in Singapore.

Liew and Lee (2012) did a study on the reason young people prefer Hollywood movies compare to local movie in Malaysia within Klang Valley, Malaysia. The author using quantitative method by collecting questionnaire from 100 respondent age between 18-25-year-old and analyze in SPSS. The study found that young generation highly satisfied on Hollywood films compare to local films because of technology, special effect, good storyline and actor/actress. Liew and Lee (2012) also add the satisfaction between Hollywood and local films usage shows significant differences. Other than that, author added lack of support from government and less marketing also one of the reason demand gap between Hollywood and local films become more wider. In this paper also, the author suggest that government should support local films industry by proving fund and tax incentives to reduce film makers burden.

Xu and Fu (2014) in their paper analyze the relationship between aggregate bandwagon effect and consumer preference on Hollywood movies with using Qualitative data from 2003 until 2009 in 73 countries. In their paper, Xu and Fu (2014) used regression analysis and concluded that bandwagon effect will be more impactful on the moviegoer that didn't have any information about the movies. The more uncertain moviegoers, the higher the aggregate bandwagon and revenue contribution in those country.

Methodology

For the purpose of the study, a qualitative Interview method was used to elicit important information like why and what kind of Genre that Malaysian would like to watch?, why they prefer certain type of film?, are they aware about the film economy?, What was their favorite film and why?, Has the Malaysian film improved over the years?, What could be done to improve the quality of Malaysian films? These were the questions prepared to know the reasons for their preferences. Based on the respondents' response we tried to match the highest grossing film of

Malaysia with the help of FINAS top 50 grossing report of the movies, box office collection and the Genres of the last 5 years. Purposive sampling technique was used to understand the interest of all the three races of Malaysia viz, Malay, Chinese and Indians. Forty nine (49 respondents were selected for the purpose of the study to have 13 people from each race with equal difference in gender.

Results

Common themes were achieved based on the Interview questions. They were based on the question, which were asked to the Interviewee. Majority of the respondent said they all watch films.

Reasons for Liking

90% of the respondent said that they like to watch Hollywood films, followed by films made in Hong Kong, India and Thailand. The locally produced Malaysian film is their last choice. All the Interviewee have acknowledged the fact that the Malaysian film have improved over the years with variety of content and quality of film. 80% of the Interviewee are not aware about the economy of films in Malaysia. 20 % have an Idea of Top grossing film such as Avengers and Fast and furious Franchise.

All the respondents have accepted that Hollywood films offers them better quality of content and variety such as good story line, characters, superstars, visual effects, CGI and different genres to choose from. Some of the respondent said the Malaysian films are concentrating more on drama than any other genre.

Cultural Influence

90% of the Chinese and 90% of the Indian respondents do not resort to watch Malaysian films. As per the respondents, they get better quality content in the form of Hong Kong and Bollywood movies, which reflects their culture more.

Favorite Genre

The favorite genre of all the respondents were as follows Action, Horror, thriller and Romance. All the respondents have accepted to the fact if any Malaysian movie has good review and good word of mouth response they sure going to watch it. Few Malaysian movies, which were watched by 60% respondents, were Munafik, Paskal and Polis Evo. One of the respondent said Ola Bola as it talked about the origin and unity of Malaysian in the form of sports.

70 % of the respondent said their favorite film genre was action, which was Avengers, followed by fast and furious followed by Horror film with 20 % and Romantic film with 10%. All the respondent has recognized the contribution done by the Malaysian government by curbing piracy and by supporting local produced content. 90% of the respondents said that the Malaysian film tickets should be less than the other countries film to encourage moviegoers. 10% felt that all

the prices of movie tickets should be cheaper than the existing one to increase the affordability factors for moviegoers.

Expectations on Malaysian Films

80% of the respondents suggested to include International actors, story line and Directors to be part of the Malaysian film to make sure that the Malaysian films gets the global reach. 20 % felt that need to have strong and good story line which is equal to Hollywood style quality and asked to give up usual drama genre which Malaysian film opt for.

Conclusions

In a multicultural country like Malaysia it is difficult to adopt one formula movie for all the races however all the three races have accepted that the Malaysian movies have improved their quality of film which is a positive sign for the film Industry. Malaysian customers would like to watch movies which has good story line, visual effects and strong theme in the film they watch. The preference of the Malaysian is very clear they like to watch good action film and acknowledge film such as Paskal and Polis Evo. They would like to see good Horror films and said Munaifk series is their favorite Malaysian Horror film.

Some of the respondent also told to take inspiration from Thailand films, as they are good in making horror film. All the respondents expect Malaysian film makers to have quality of Hollywood films and expect Malaysian government to support locally produced film by reducing the price of movie tickets which will eventually help in foot fall to Malaysian movies. Looking at the FINAS report we can conclude that the Malaysian film have started generating more revenue compared to the last decade. Films mentioned by the respondents such as Munafik, Paskal, Ola Bola and Polis evo are the highest grossing Malaysian film in the last 5 years, that proves the Malaysian filmmakers have understood the pulse of their local audiences and preference. This will eventually help in generating more money to the economy and to the Industry as a whole.

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