

ADOLESCENTS' AWARENESS ON INDONESIAN CULTURE REPRESENTED IN INDONESIAN MOVIES

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ABSTRACT

The role of adolescents is highly expected to continue to inherit local culture. It will be a force for the existence of the local culture despite being hit by the currents of globalization. They learn cultures mostly from movies, especially nowadays, where movie platforms are accessible anywhere. This study aims to acknowledge adolescents' awareness of the development of Indonesian movies and their awareness of Indonesian culture presented through movies. Their concerns and future suggestions can be an input for the development of the movie industry, especially on how culture can be preserved through movies. The research conducted a qualitative descriptive method using interviews and documentation studies as data collections.

Results show that the majority of the informants are aware of the emerging of Indonesian movies. They also admitted that Indonesian movies have changed throughout the decade. They agreed that Indonesian movies could be a medium to learn Indonesian culture. Adolescents learn various elements of cultures within Indonesian movies categorized by multicultural issues, how people live life, Indonesian myths, tourism places, Indonesian games and sports, clothing, language, songs and accents. Adolescents are concerned that Indonesian cultures in Indonesian movies were like a media form to present Indonesian culture to the world. Their concern was more on how the world could acknowledge Indonesia through movies. Informants agreed the industry needs more support from the government, and as Indonesians, society should also help movies highlighted worldwide.

Keywords: Adolescents; Indonesian Movies; Indonesian Culture; Culture Awareness

INTRODUCTION

Movies' consumption of adolescents has raised over the years. This situation is also side by side with the development of technology in movies itself. Film studies in Indonesia are becoming a trend these last few years and the bibliography on Indonesian cinema has expanded. Even though monographs in English are still rare, there have been more theses, dissertations, journal articles, and book chapters published in English and Indonesian (Arps, 2021).

Most studies focused on the contents, the art, the production, or the distribution of messages that affect

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the audience. Not many have focused on how adolescents perceive these Indonesian movies, especially their concern about the movie industry developments and how films could preserve Indonesian culture, which is much needed for adolescents. Adolescents in building their awareness about the world do not depend only from family at home, teachers at schools but they also learn a lot from movies, even cultures. Learning culture from movies is what it is all about. People watch movies from many parts of the world especially Hollywood movies without realizing that they have learnt other cultures. Films have been chosen to provide insightful learning experiences for students to be engaged in observing and learning about the target culture (Prathoomthin, 2009). Films are intricately concerned with culture which are cultural text, behaviour from artefacts to motivation (Heider, 1991).

“film does not only happen in the cinema, it is a social practice that affects everyday lives through fandom, gossip, fashion, and the whole range of activities through which cultural identities are formed” (Turner, 2006).

Turner's quote emphasizes that film does not stop at the cinema but is a social practice that touches various elements of social life that ultimately shape culture. From this explanation, it can be assumed that films provide examples and guidelines in our daily lives, whether teaching an existing culture or ultimately forming a new culture. Society has a relationship with culture. Society is a place where culture grows, while culture itself is something that exists in society. Nabila (2021) mentioned how harmony which is the core value of the Bajo Sampela culture has been the principle in thinking and making decisions since long time ago. Because the people in Bajo lives on water, they will always maintain a harmonious relationship with the natural welfare they live in, especially the sea. Therefore, culture exists because there is society. Nabilla learnt this from a movie entitles ‘Mirrors never lies’ which is proven to be a film that shows how we can learn cultures from movies and adopt the values inside it (Kent, 2015).

Indonesia is well known as a multicultural country with many islands inside. Each islands have many kinds of ethnics, religions, races, and also social classes. This becomes a characteristic of Indonesia and something that we should be proud of. Adolescents have a major role in preserving these cultures. The role of adolescents is highly expected to continue to try to inherit local culture and will be a force for the existence of the local culture despite being hit by the currents of globalization. Adolescents maintain and preserve Indonesian culture in two ways. that is; culture experience and culture knowledge (Nahak, 2019). Adolescents watching movies is an implementation of culture experience and culture knowledge.

“In my opinion, representing Indonesian culture in films is a good step to introduce Indonesian culture to foreign countries and our own country because Indonesian culture is no less impressive than foreign culture. There are even foreigners who are interested in Indonesian culture but we ourselves admired foreign cultures and proud of it.” (Saeful, 2021)

Researchers underlined that a country's nation's pride is in their culture. People could learn the vast cultures through movies. However, there are concerns from filmmakers that the enormous culture of Indonesia has not been represented well. Filmmakers in North Sumatra acknowledge that the national film industry was too much Jakarta-centric, which could perceive Indonesian culture referring only to Betawi's culture. Other problems like having partnerships with large production houses have also become a concern. Many local independent movies are struggling to survive because most do not have affiliations with successful production houses. Filmmakers agreed how film contents should be more Indonesian nuanced (Permana et al., 2019).

Cultures in Movies

Before determining what cultures are in movies, the understanding of culture itself must be elaborated. Culture is a memory and control device of society. It may be conceived of as providing the distinction of correct versus incorrect behaviour (Baecker, 1997). This meaning argues that culture can be a set of rules where people seek guidance for how they live life. Culture is everything that relates to how people live their life (Permana et al., 2021). Most people refer to culture as having a different language; however, it is beyond and between. When people are learning a different language, they also need to seek out the culture. Therefore, second language teachers should pay more attention to the diversities of cultures and identify essential cultural items in every aspect when designing a language curriculum (Kuo & Lai, 2006).

Elements of culture consist of material culture: social institutions, individuals and the universe, aesthetics, and language (Permana et al., 2021). Material cultures refers to things and thoughts, social institutions refer to where people go to school, the government and any forms of religion organisations. Individuals and the universe refer to what individuals believe in, aesthetics refer to music, theatres, art and dances. Language refers to verbal and nonverbal communication.

People use movies to understand culture and other elements of life, people also can experience culture through movies, so they do not need to go on field trips that may cost more. Movies are widely used as a teaching material in foreign language classes as medium which convey informational content of interest and relevance to learners' world experiences (Prathoomthin, 2009). Most researchers in film studies focused on what culture is represented in what movie. Most researchers used semiotics approach in finding cultures in movies. However, researchers admitted that movies could be an effective media in learning culture for the society (Kurniati et al., 2009).

From the explanation above, researchers came up with the purpose of the research. Research questions were to acknowledge adolescents' awareness of the development of Indonesian movies, including their awareness, concerns and future suggestions of Indonesian culture represented in Indonesian movies.

METHOD

This study uses descriptive qualitative research methods. Qualitative research methods are commonly used in various research disciplines ranging from education, psychology and social sciences. Researchers used this method to explore the complexities of the phenomenon. Qualitative research with a descriptive approach facilitates holistic findings on how adolescents perceive concerns on Indonesian culture in Indonesian films. The term descriptive study refers to research questions, designs, and data analysis applied to a particular topic. Descriptions emerge after creative exploration and serve to organize findings to match explanations (Holly, 2018). Descriptive methods usually explore a group of people, an object, a set of conditions, a system of thought, or a class of events in the present. This descriptive method aims to make a description, description in a systematic, factual and accurate way about the phenomenon under study.

Data collection techniques used in this research were interviews and literature studies. The selection of informants in qualitative research is carried out to achieve maximum information about the phenomenon under study (Hadi et al., 2012) Therefore, researchers used purposive sampling, a sampling technique used by qualitative researchers to recruit participants who can provide in-depth and detailed information about the phenomenon being investigated. Researchers chose this technique because not all samples had criteria that

matched the phenomenon under study. The criteria of the informants were 20 adolescents aged 18 until 21 years old. They are educated young people who are studying in different universities in Bandung.

Table 1. Informants

	No.	Informants	No.	Informants
RESULT AND DISCUSSION Adolescents' awareness of the development of Indonesian movies Most informants claimed that Indonesian movies were not their cup of tea. They preferred more Korean drama movies or western series on Netflix. They could not give a straight answer; instead, they had to think first. <i>"I am asked about my opinion and criticism about Indonesian Films. To be very honest, I rarely watch Indonesian movies. For me, sometimes they are too cringe and predictable, so Indonesian movies are not to my liking"</i> (Neyla, 2021). However, all informants interviewed also mentioned that they sometimes watched some Indonesian movies in theatres. Most movies watched were movies that were recommended, like "Warkop DKI". "Dilan", "Gundala", "The Raid", "Laskar Pelangi", "Love for sale" and other movies that hit the big screens. Most informants referred to Warkop DKI when asked about movies as it has quite become an icon for Indonesian Films especially in comedy genres. Indonesian comedy films were mostly produced in the 1980s and mostly starred Warkop DKI (Chaniago, 2018). These findings did not seem to be an obstacle when they were asked about the Indonesian movies' development. They knew clearly that Indonesian movies were improving than before. Informants agreed that Indonesian films can be decent and that there are a lot of great directors. In the last decade Indonesian movies have emerged, the starting point were movies titled 'Kuldesak', 'Pertualangan Sherina', and 'Ada Apa dengan Cinta'. Indonesia movie festivals are also soon be emerging (Imanjaya, 2006). Denaz (2021) stated that Indonesian films almost had a similar storyline. The storyline is basically about innocent people getting problems, then will eventually have a solution. Even though most Indonesian films are like that, Denaz optimizable said it might be the characteristic of Indonesian films, a simple storyline with significant meaning about life. Jihan (2021) mentioned that one movie about life was <i>"Nanti Kita Cerita tentang Hari Ini"</i> . Jihan stated that her experience in watching this film had proven that Indonesian films were improving.	1	Neyla	11	Dinda
	2	Adinda	12	Satrio
	3	Dimas	13	Aufa
	4	Farida	14	Risma
	5	Selvia	15	Cecep
	6	Nabilla	16	Bella
	7	Saeful	17	Dema
	8	Dimas	18	Fanny
	9	Denaz	19	Ratu
	10	Silvia	20	Jihan

many horror films had low quality, value and made people who watched create a stigma about some professions. Time after time, after I watched Indonesian films quite enough, I think the quantity, quality, value, and editing of Indonesian films improved" (Farida, 2021)

Adolescents can also conclude that Indonesian movies are improving because more people are enthusiastic about watching Indonesian movies in theatres. Studies about Indonesian film developments see that several policies are expected to support the development of Indonesian cinema. These policies cover the production stages by providing maximum support for the growth and development of film schools, assisting capital with a funding system, improving policy censorship that takes into account the film production process, encouraging policies that allow the development of the community cinema concept, supporting the promotion of Indonesian films by involving various other government components under the coordination of the Creative Economy Agency, and fostering pride in Indonesian movies through a cultural expansion strategy (Ardiyanti, 2020).

Even though there are informants who have positive perspectives on Indonesian films, however, there are also some informants who have a different opinion about Indonesian films. Some refer to Indonesian films as soap operas (*sinetron*) that are in Television programs. For example, Silvia (2021) cannot figure out why some soap operas' ratings on local television are high. Meanwhile, she thinks that most soap operas are not worthy of watching. Other informants also mentioned that some of these soap operas had many episodes with the same storyline. The example is *Tukang Bubur Naik Haji*'s film. Maybe that movie is excellent for some people, but for these adolescents, they see it differently. The movie started in 2012 where these informants were in elementary school, and it ended in 2017 where they were in junior high school. Informants said they eventually did not want to watch it because it made them feel bored. After all, the episodes were too long, and they could not get the story's point, which had no meaningful value. Therefore, it became dull and uninteresting to watch.

Adolescents' awareness of Indonesian culture represented in Indonesian movies

When asked about their awareness of preserving Indonesian cultures in Indonesian movies, informants were confused about answering. The first reason was that they never really thought about how Indonesian cultures could be transferred or preserved through Films. The second was about how they determined what culture in movies meant. Film as a mass media communication has several functions, and one is to preserve traditional culture or teaching and learning new culture. This is also stated in *the Republic of Indonesia Act. Number 33 of 2009 on Film. It stated that the film has a function: culture; education; entertainment; information; the driving force of creative work; and economy (Komalawati, 2017).*

Informants have a different perception of what culture here means in movies. However, based on the interviews, researchers have concluded into several categorizations which are implied also on what Permana et al (2021) stated before on culture elements. Some perceived it as local Indonesian cultures like traditional ways, Indonesian folktales, Indonesian games, multicultural issues and even Indonesian sports in movies. Others perceived it as songs, religion, clothing's, language, myths and also accents. All of those categories are implied as everything that relates on how people live their life (Permana et al., 2021).

Multicultural Issues

Informants also claimed that movies could teach traditional weddings in each region like the movie 'A perfect fit'. The movie showed some ways like *Melukat*, Mud Wrestling and *Paweton*. These ways are how people in Bali should do before they get married. Adolescents seem to learn that learning traditions from different regions will save a relationship.

There seem to have many Indonesian movies which carry out multicultural issues into their story that relates to weddings. Adinda and Aufa pointed out "*Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck*" movie. It is a 2013 movie which tells about a love story between Zainuddin and Hayati with some multicultural issues in their land, West Sumatra. This movie shows some issues about tribal differences and social class differences. Hayati is a woman from a Minang noble family, while Zainuddin is a poor young man born from a Bugis mother and a Minang father. This condition keeps him from getting recognition of his tribal identity. In Minang, there is a primordial culture that maintains maternal lineage. This norm made people in Minang considered Zainuddin as a Bugis, but Bugis people considered him a Minang. The problem happened when Hayati's family refused Zainuddin's proposal because of Zainuddin's unclear tribal identity. Another local wisdom in Minang is that they must marry a person from the same status as they are. Only a man with high status can marry a high-status woman. Hayati's family refused Zainuddin's proposal because he was a poor man with an unclear identity. They prefer to accept Aziz's proposal because he was a true Minang man and was also from a noble family.

"This movie shows a spectacular story with a good visual in it. This movie also shows the beauty of Batipuh in West Sumatra. I can feel and see the strong chemistry between the actors and the actress. Their acting, emotions, and expressions make the story alive" (Aufa, 2021)

Aufa mentioned the movie "*Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck*" pointed out cultures that represented how difficult to get married if you have solid customs and traditions. The movie represented how blood ties are significant and that people could not just get married quickly, but whom they are descended to is vital in marriage. The film shows that primordial ties and ethnocentrism are barriers to multiculturalism in the Indonesian context (Thalib, 2017).

Marriage issue in Indonesian movies is quite interesting, as a country with 34 provinces and 2319 cultural heritage. Let alone each tribe has its cultural way but also pop culture emerges and complicates as a whole. Dinda stated that Indonesia has a unique culture where it is also shown in many Indonesian movies. Dinda mentioned the movie 'Love for Sale', wherein the conflict in this film comes from a mother worried about her son who has not gotten married. This condition is very typical in Indonesia. In Indonesia, parents are concerned when their child is age-appropriate to marry but is not married yet. So the parents choose to match their children with the children of their acquaintances. People will talk behind whenever someone has not gotten married. This culture has been constructed, and it is tough to change it. This reality is because marriage is a symbol of someone's successful in life in Indonesia. The film 'Love for sale' is packaged very well according to the culture and norms that exist in Indonesia. The storyline is about a woman who is paid to be a partner, the culture in the movie relates to the people's lives in Indonesia. In local culture, There is a belief that if the daughter does not get married immediately, it will embarrass the family (Thontowy, 2016).

Weddings and funerals are different from every region—this condition was what Risma (2021) found impressive. The movie "Humba Dreams" was set in Sumba, the island of East Nusa Tenggara. The movie showed how people should dress when they go to funerals.

Way of life

Every country has their local wisdom, which is strongly related to values, norms and culture. For example, as mentioned before, those Indonesian parents would be worried when their children had not gotten married, so parents usually do matchmaking. The other norms or way of life is where children usually obey what their parents tell them to do. Dimas pointed out '*Garuda di Dadaku*', a film about a grandfather who did not support his grandson to become a football player because he was confident that there was no future ahead. However, he finally supported his grandson when his grandson became a successful football player. Even though of his success as becoming a football player, the boy continued to obey his grandfather's wish to become an art worker. Even though he did not really like art, he still tried to please his grandfather. Dimas also mentioned that the movie showed a habit that might be a culture of Indonesians who tend to be impatient in the process and prefer to be successful instantly. The movie describes on what the people should do, to behave correctly or incorrectly (Baecker, 1997).

Lutfi (2021), when interviewed about his awareness about Indonesian cultures in Indonesian movies, he pointed out the Trilogy Movie '*Merdeka*', which was a story about Soekarno, the first Indonesian President. Lutfi mentioned that '*Gotong Royong*' was clearly presented inside the story. '*Gotong Royong*' is an Indonesian culture that should be known to the world as a unique culture. Soekarno once proposed Pancasila. He summed up Pancasila in one word: "mutual cooperation!" This is because the basic feeling of the Indonesian state is the spirit of '*gotong royong*' (Dewantara, 2018). Lutfi was sure that no other country would have such a culture and the movie '*Merdeka*' had represented it well.

Ghinna mentioned that movies show cultural barriers, which are stereotypes. People have perspectives and interpretations of the behaviour of others who are seen from their cultural perspective. So that sometimes one cannot separate oneself from the background and biases of one's own culture in understanding the culture of others. However, stereotypes can be balanced between the stereotypes that are positive and negative. These positive are also seen in Indonesian movies (Rumondor et al., 2014), for example how Indonesian are very friendly.

Indonesian Myths

Stories about Indonesian myths have always become eminent for the audience, and this is because Indonesia is rich with many myths that come from many cultures. Indonesian myths are very famous among adolescents. Most informants claimed that they had watched every Indonesian horror movie which was rich in myth. '*Wayang Kulit*' was represented in Joko Anwar's best Horror movie '*Tanah Jahannam*', not only that it represents the local values, it also represents myths that apply in villages, especially in Java. Cecep (2021) stated that we could also learn various values applied in villages, even myths and local wisdom from movies. Supernatural beings are also constructed by culture, which is represented in movies. The film narration strengthens myths about spirits as a representation of Javanese culture that adheres to animism and dynamism. However, on the other hand, horror films show that evil deeds will negatively impact them. Historically, this phenomenon is religiously contrary to Islam. However, sociologically it has the meaning of self-evaluation in determining attitudes and behaviour, as happened at the beginning of the entry of Islam in Java (Nur, 2016).

Tourism place, Games and sport

The movie '*laskar pelangi*' was mentioned many times. Adolescents acknowledge how this movie influenced how other countries perceive the Indonesian landscape and culture and become a world-class tourist destination. Satrio (2021) mentioned '*The Raid*', the first action movie made in Indonesian. He pointed out

how proud he was that the movie used *'Pencak Silat'* in fighting scenes equal with modern weapons. *Pencak Silat* is an Indonesian Culture that then was acknowledged by movies because the movie *'Raid'* was also known globally.

Clothing, Language, Songs and Accents

Blankon was seen as a part of the Javanese culture in the movie *'Sang Pencerah'* mentioned by Ratu. It was a semi-documentary movie where she was astonished by the Javanese language and accents. Some songs were Javanese songs used in the movie. As an adolescent born in Sundanese land, Ratu was informed well about Javanese culture in the movie *'Sang Pencerah'*. She also said that the artistic features in the movie added more nuance to the Javanese culture.

Fanny mentioned in the movie *'Bumi Manusia'*, Nyai Ontosoroh, a character that represented a strong and independent Indonesian woman, wore kebaya and wanted to be called "*nyai*" rather than Madam. Lulu which also has seen *'Bumi Manusia'*, pointed out that the movie introduced *Blankon*, Javanese language, kebaya and other traditional Java clothing.

Most movies mentioned from these informants represent a small part of the vast cultural heritage across the country. There are still a lot of other cultures that can be represented in movies. From that said, adolescents agreed that movies are great platforms to learn their vast cultures around Indonesia. As what Heider (1991) pointed out that movies are effective vehicles for expressing Indonesian culture whether it is new or not.



Figure 1: Adolescents' Awareness

Source: Researcher's Findings

Adolescents' concerns and future suggestions on Indonesian movies

Most informants were concerned that Indonesian cultures in Indonesian movies were like a media form to present Indonesian culture to the world. Their concern was not the quality of a movie, not how the movie's story was like, but how the world could acknowledge Indonesian culture through movies. Saeful (2021)

reinsured that Movies with stories could preserve Indonesian culture. So that the young generation has a vital job to do so, they need to be more creative in combining narrative stories while also representing Indonesian cultures.

Adinda is proud that Indonesian cultures are slowly but sure emerging in Indonesian movies from Java and other regions or provinces. However, sometimes, she noticed how some of the actors still speak with an imprecise and inconsistent regional accent in some scenes. *"I think they should practice the regional accent more to the natives to make the story more alive than this"* (Adinda, 2021).

Nabilla found that the movie *The Mirror Never Lies* was nicely summarized. The cultural values exist in the Bajo tribe and focus on the life of the society who still engaged intensely with the customs of their ancestors. Unfortunately, the movie did not hit the big screen and was not acknowledged enough by society. Nabila assumed because it was poorly packaged. Nabila suggested that some Indonesian movies should be remade to be more attractive, especially the storyline. It should be packaged in a modern way with cinematography that is suitable for the current generation, as in the Korean drama *Hometown Cha Cha Cha* which highlights the culture of Gongjin village society so that it might not seem dull. The audience can respect the cultural values displayed.

Neyla, even though she stated that she was 100% sure Indonesian producers could create incredible movies that could succeed worldwide. However, she noted that there were financial problems.

"Besides, we have to beat all the Hollywood movies to make people all over the world watch our movies, and that is an arduous task. Trying to surpass marvel or DC seems like a very tough job ... Also, movies and films are not what this country is "focused on". We tend to worry about other things, and in my opinion, this is why the Indonesian movie industry cannot unleash its best potential. People are so absorbed with boring, predictable, and repeated soap operas, while none of those soap operas will get worldwide recognition. So, let us focus on producing the best kind of cinema movies instead of those small soap operas" (Neyla, 2021).

These adolescents are very optimistic that if the movie industry in Indonesia emerged, it would help the country economically and give a better recognition in the world's eyes. The Indonesian movie industry cannot succeed worldwide because of the quality of our movies, such as the editing and storyline, which all need improvement. The wrong choices of dramas and soap operas titles also made it seem like the industry is doing such a lousy job at making these so-called "movies". These dramas don't gain that much interest from audiences. They got many critics from this.

Informants agreed the industry needs more support from the government, and as Indonesians, society should also help movies be highlighted worldwide. If the industry's quality can be improved, it could help Indonesia economically and compete with big movie industries in other countries.

Jihan stated that Indonesia has the potential to be more recognized globally, which can help other economic conditions be better than before. The country's film production needs their netizens to be more aware of it. A lot of Indonesians are more into other countries' films.

CONCLUSION

Results show that the majority of the informants are aware of the emerging of Indonesian movies. They also admitted that Indonesian movies have changed throughout the decade. They agreed that Indonesian movies could be a medium to learn Indonesian culture. Adolescents learn various elements of cultures within

Indonesian movies, categorized by multicultural issues, how people live life, Indonesian myths, *tourism places, Indonesian games and sports, clothing, language, songs and accents.*

Adolescents are concerned that Indonesian cultures in Indonesian movies were like a media form to present Indonesian culture to the world. Their concern was more on how the world could acknowledge Indonesia through movies. Informants agreed the industry needs more support from the government, and as Indonesians, society should also help movies highlighted worldwide.

Findings from this research can give more acknowledgments on communication studies specifically on mass media communication on content analysis in films. Findings can also give awareness to the society how significant the role of Indonesian films in preserving Indonesian culture and how films are learning tools especially for adolescents.

LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

The study limits only on how adolescents perceive the Indonesian culture throughout the movies, their argumentations and thoughts. Future research suggestion should seek more on how adolescents become advocates and what they have done to help and support the movie industry in Indonesia especially in preserving Indonesian culture. This study can use a more applicative method for example case study.

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