

Analysis of American Television and Its Impact on the Cultural Perception on Malaysian Youth

Edina Mohd. Nasser^{*}, Tse Kian Neo and Vimala Perumal

Faculty of Creative Multimedia, Multimedia University, Persiaran Multimedia, 63100 Cyberjaya, Selangor, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

In recent years there has been an increase in Malaysian youth crime and misdemeanor ranging from bullying to rape and murder. The root cause of this problem had never been explicitly addressed but it had been suggested that it was due to television exposure. The question is, to what extent does the exposure affect youth, and which elements of exposure have the greatest influence. These questions were tackled in this study by analyzing the relationship between youth, media consumption, and cultural identity. Using surveys, in-depth interviews, and audience research theories, it was found that youth used television for the purpose of entertainment, and as means for social surveillance: a tool to keep abreast of current trends and affairs and to imitate celebrity lifestyles and practices. This process of mimicry was found to have an important impact on their emotional and social well-being. The desire to copy what is on screen is inherently connected to the collective guilt of maintaining and preserving cultural identity. The dynamics between youth, cultural identity and media stimuli are therefore seen as paradoxical.

Keywords: Audience study, culture, identity, mass media, social surveillance, TV, youth

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 20 May 2020

Accepted: 1 August 2020

Published: 25 September 2020

E-mail addresses:

edina.nasser@gmail.com (Edina Mohd. Nasser)

tkneo@mmu.edu.my (Tse Kian Neo)

vimala.perumal@mmu.edu.my (Vimala Perumal)

^{*}Corresponding author

INTRODUCTION

TV has been described as not only a form of art but also as a new means of communication due to its ability to directly affect audiences, as signs and symbolism are subconsciously accepted, and assumptions and conclusions are based on them. TV seems to be the perfect conduit for such a task as it influences through the concept of

alterity, in which identification defines ‘who you are’ and ‘what you are not’ (Orna, 2020). The issue lies in the action of excluding and including, which can be confusing to those from a different cultural background, especially when it is often accompanied by issues of nationalism. Although it can also be used to create a shared national identity, each individual understands the concept of nationhood differently based on their own experiences and upbringing (Fickers et al., 2020).

It is often difficult to separate the notion of national identity from cultural identity. They are as synonymous with each other as media is to society, being both interconnected, elaborative, and complex entities, which can be understood through various means of interpretation. In its most basic form, identity is transmitted not deliberately but through unconscious reaction to natural stimuli (Deller, 2019). TV has replaced these natural stimuli as it no longer mirrors society but it has morphed into a determining factor in the formation of cultural identities (Kellner, 2020). National and cultural identities do however share a common goal: the transmission of messages. Oftentimes more than one meaning is associated with a message and it changes independent to the context it resides in. This can be interpreted using social semiotics as it allows for the significance of actions to be established and deciphered (Berger, 2020), therefore presenting a better understanding of privileged versus suppressed realities (Price, 2019). This is achieved by using the synchronic and diachronic systems of

interpretation (Abell, 2020) which enables a better appreciation of how TV contributes to changes in cultural reality based on theoretical and practical studies.

If a cultural reality is made of a group of sign systems brought together by certain commonalities (Stivers, 2020), the country as a whole should be concerned about what is being consumed through mass media. A study conducted in 2014 by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) showed that Malaysian youth aged between 15-24 noted TV as one of their top 10 daily activities (MCMC, 2014). In the same year, Selangor’s State police chief Senior Deputy Commander Datuk Shukri Dahlan reported a 10 % spike in teenage crime compared to 2013, with those as young as 10 involved in violent crimes such as blackmail, snatch theft, gangsterism, and drug abuse. There was also a 47 % increase in crimes nationwide including rape and murder involving those between the ages of 12-17 (Mahidin, 2018). A different survey conducted in 2012 by the Asia Foundation pointed to TV as being the main factor in making Malaysian youth more informed (Leong et al., 2012). If 72 % of their day is spent on television, it begs the question of what they are picking up it.

TV is a useful source of learning and information, while at the same time poses levels of risk to users, and since it is a well-documented fact that visual texts from TV is pregnant with signs and symbolism that convey various meanings to audiences (Das, 2019) this paper intends to study the activity

of watching TV and how cultural norms are formed because it (Donohue, 2019).

TV's signs and symbolism undoubtedly carry assumptions about reality which is often widely accepted without much deliberation. In order to interpret them, the theory of connotation and denotation was used. Related to this is the theory of identification or more specifically the theory of parasocial interaction (PSI) which comes from the field of identity theory. This theory explains the dynamics of how and why information is picked up from stimuli and structured into their lives and daily routines (Giles, 2019). This theory is important because when interpreting media, the audience must not be viewed as an entity separate from it and its organic links to situational context (Lloyd, 2020). Finally, the theory of structural criticism or reader response was used to identify and explain how reality is interpreted from the perspectives of aesthetics, economics, and other cultural issues (Harari, 2019). This is important as it allows for a comprehensive understanding of how reality is perceived based on everyday human communication (Glazier, 2020).

Semiotics

The process of decoding messages is oftentimes done automatically and without much thought. This is where semiotics is needed as it clarifies the mechanisms for a better understanding of how reality is constructed (Berger, 2020). The traditional understanding of semiotics is that most things can be taken as a sign and tools for

discussing media texts (Kemple, 2019). Semiotics is therefore, the theory of media literacy as it investigates meaning and how it is formed through signs and codes (Sun, 2019). Semiotics therefore claims that TV can be viewed as a vehicle to organize signs into rational systems representing reality (Kress, 2019). Therefore, connotation and denotation is used to make apparent any sign systems that are concealed or not readily distinguishable. This branch of semiotics occurs when a sign or symbol is interpreted as to its literal dictionary definition, as well as the associations and emotional responses that are connected to it.

Identity Discourse

The debate on identity has become an important vehicle for understanding the dynamics of human communication (Bolin, 2019). Its rise to prominence is partly due to our increased fascination with human society in the age of globalization. However, the postmodern age of mass media has brought upon itself a hybrid form of the formation of identity (Paus-Hasebrink et al., 2019), and the different conditions brought by the modern world means that new dimensions have been added to the idea of both the personal and collective self (Ward et al., 2019). This new process of identification with regards to mass media involves a loss of self-identity and therefore PSI refers to relationships that are formed when viewers interact with characters on screen. PSI is seen as a form of social interaction where its effects are measured by an outsider observing the media user and

not by the personae (Hsu, 2020). In spite of this, viewers have expressed a feeling of reciprocal interaction proving that the verbal and nonverbal performances are accepted as real and authentic. This is a central theme of media consumption as it creates an illusion of real face-to-face interaction leading to the formation of parasocial relationships (PSR) (Hu et al., 2019). This type of persuasion sees the viewer assuming the behavior of another individual, which may result in changes in personal behavior and opinion (Giles, 2019). Identification therefore is a direct result of the relationship between the viewer and on-screen character, whereby the audience accepts the faux reality as real and representation of the character on screen as a complete individual (Agius & Keep, 2018).

Structural Criticism

According to structural analysts, sign systems must be viewed in their own context and cannot be studied from a different point of time. The interpretation of signs and symbols is based on learned knowledge or experiences, which is personal to each individual. A variety of interpretations is only limited by the limitations of the individuals themselves (Bertrand & Hughes, 2019). These limitations not only cause a struggle with the ontological aspects of TV as a medium, but also its narrative conclusions based on rationale (Koehn, 2019). Meaning that familiar perceptual and conceptual systems from the three-dimensional world is employed to decode the received stimuli. Decoding therefore becomes easy as they are seen as extensions

or the objectification of the human mental process (Lubashevsky, 2019). This is vital as it explains the different ways in which signs and symbols are interpreted from different perspectives.

Discourse theory, connotation, denotation, and the reader-response theory tie in as they all deal with some form of a sign. Each sign is interpreted differently depending on various factors. This is done instantaneously by the viewer upon receiving stimuli. The stimuli are decoded using connotation and denotation, where representation and/or meaning both referring to the other are created and analyzed using the reader-response theory. This is expressed through contents, interpretations, abstractions, concepts, and ideas. The representation, also known as the signifier, is then analyzed using the discourse theory and expressed through codes or elements of culture. This is seen in Figure 1.

The purpose of this study is to illustrate how mass media is used as a tool, the associated causes and impacts, and how it helps maintain or change social preconceptions and assumptions of the world. Its effects are far-reaching and highlights the ways the human psyche is influenced towards one thing and not another. The fluidity with which culture deals with matters such as ethics and values results in a constantly shifting understanding of local identities depending on which group is most dominant.

This constant flux of emotions can lead to a lowered sense of consciousness similar to that of hypnosis (Thurlow, 2018). This

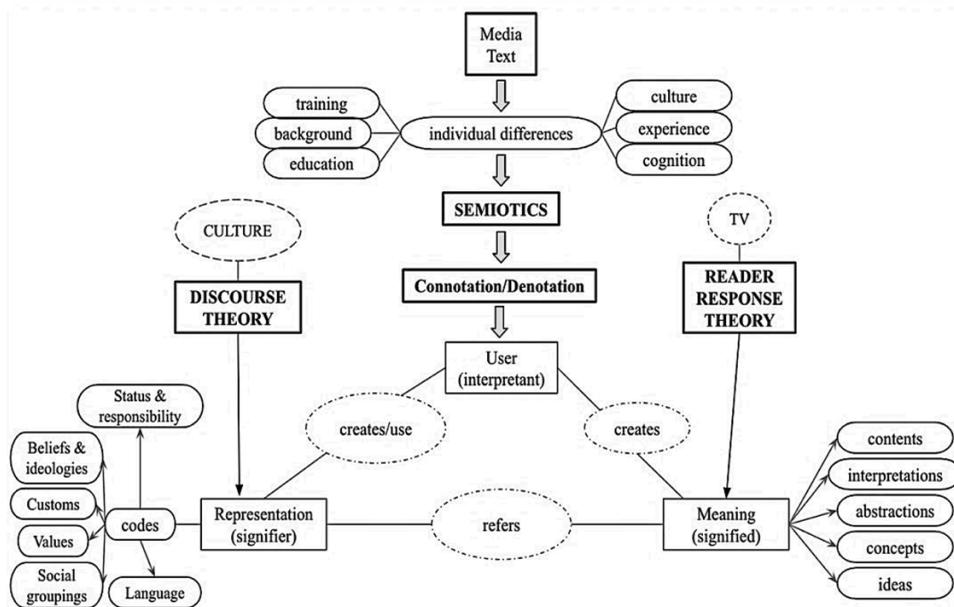


Figure 1. Relationship between theories

mental vertigo results in loss of control that leads to a re-assimilation of the self as the viewer is unwittingly forced to identify with images on the screen. These issues are at the center of this study: to what extent does TV play a role in shaping the perception.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research employed a non-probability sampling technique. The main aim was to uncover the intricacies of the selected sample. The population is youth between the ages of 18–23 who are undergraduates from the Faculty of Creative Multimedia (FCM) of Multimedia University (MMU). The sample was chosen as the admission policy requires an intermediate mastery of the English language and the nature of courses offered suggest that students are technologically savvy.

A mixed-method approach was used to conduct research in order to obtain robust results (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Utilizing survey questionnaires and in-depth interviews allow for quantitative and qualitative data to be collected. The rationale being that questionnaires have been optimized for discovering respondents’ views on how TV programs affect their understanding of society and culture, and focus groups allow better insight into the reasoning’s behind those perceptions (Leavy, 2017). The survey contains 32 questions relating to the research objectives. Information from the focus group was used to discuss findings from the questionnaires. The study is described as exploratory and descriptive where at the exploratory stage, a case for investigation is compiled through extensive literature review and the

problem, issues, topics, scope, theories, and technologies are defined (Robson, 2002). The study is seen as descriptive as it uses the findings of the study to describe

the demographics, variables, and items investigated in the study. This is summarized in Figure 2.

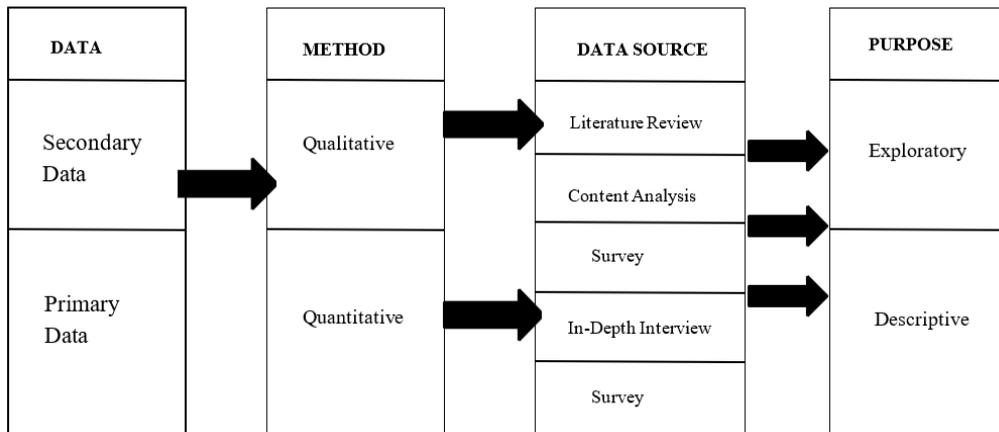


Figure 2. Research design diagram

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A total of 400 surveys were circulated among the students of MMU. Out of the 400 distributed, 335 were returned viable. The response rate of 83.7 % nonetheless represents a high response rate among respondents with only 0.3 % failing to comply. Among 335 respondents, 178 were identified as female and 157 as male. The gender distribution in the sample is therefore identified as 53.1 % females to 46.9 % males. The demographic details of the respondents are summarized in Table 1.

The data reports that female students are perceived to have a statistically significant higher level of reasons to watch American TV programs than males because of the actors, celebrities, and characters. The mean of respondents was calculated as 4.6236

with the standard deviation of 0.83626 as compared to the males with a mean of 4.3631 and standard deviation of 1.13879. The values are tabulated in Table 2.

With regard to the general effects of watching American TV on youth, it suggests that Language is the element with the highest influence constituting 67.5%, whereas Beliefs and Ideologies constitute only 2.1% of the overall effects. In addition, all respondents mentioned that relaxation and entertainment were the main reasons for watching the American TV. It was also found that respondents acquired information, news, and learning materials from watching American TV channels intended for relaxation and entertainment rather than specific informative, news, or learning channels.

Table 1

Participants demographic statistics

		Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	157	46.9
	Female	178	53.1
Ethnicity	Malay	219	65.4
	Chinese	83	24.8
	Indian	33	9.9
Age	19	14	4.2
	20	52	15.5
	21	107	31.9
	22	135	40.3
	23	27	8.1

Table 2

Participants general perception of American TV media affects

		Frequency	Percent (%)
Effects of American TV media	Values	41	12.2
	Customs	9	2.7
	Language	226	67.5
	Views on Society	31	9.3
	Belief/ideologies	7	2.1
	Roles in society	21	6.3
American TV media is a source of	Manipulation	65	19.4
	Information	56	16.7
	Education	43	12.8
	Relaxation and Entertainment	171	51.5

Results presented in Table 3 demonstrate that youth prefers movies to other genres with the mean of respondents calculated

as 4.663. The lowest mean of respondents enjoying news consumption was 1.857. The results are further supported by data obtained

from in-depth interviews showing similar findings. The results support the previous findings, which proves that American TV is used for the purposes of relaxation and entertainment.

Table 3

Participants general consumption of American TV media genres

	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Movies	4.663	0.592	-2.422	9.527
Sitcoms	4.475	0.769	-1.563	2.770
Cartoon	4.370	0.797	-1.265	1.750
Reality Shows	4.164	0.785	-1.306	3.091
Documentaries	3.415	1.681	-0.482	-1.494
News	1.857	1.051	1.129	0.397
Summated USTV Consumption	3.824	0.386	-0.1380	0.2660

On the perception of TV content, respondents generally found that scenes of premarital sex were too much, whereas scenes of smoking were about right. The discrepancy in the number of respondents finding extramarital sex and premarital sex scenes as too much with 129 and 280

counts respectively. This may be attributed to respondents not being able to differentiate between the two. In-depth interview data shows that everyone agreed that there are too many sex-related scenes in the American TV. The findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Participants perception of adequacy American TV media content

Item	Too Much	About Right	Too Little
Violence	96	222	17
Premarital Sex	280	55	0
Extramarital Sex	129	206	0
Foul Language	266	59	0
Homosexuality	253	72	10
Nudity	266	52	17
Smoking	39	268	28

In terms of media usage and purpose, youth watching American TV to learn about social behaviors is represented by the highest mean of 4.672, while the lowest mean of 2.806 represents youth watching American TV for its elements of love and romance. When asked specifically, respondents admitted that they learned social behavior from watching American TV although perhaps not consciously so.

The results also demonstrate that youth watching American TV spent more time on media, which had the highest calculated mean of respondents than those watching other forms of mass media. When asked respondents answered that TV offered

various content selections compared to other forms of mass media. Notably, respondents also found local media content as tame and boring.

Additionally, the calculated mean of respondents representing youth watching more non-American TV compared to other media is 4.519 as observed in Table 5. Interviewees stated that programs on American TV networks were more varied and ‘fun’ to watch while local content was dull and boring. Table 5 summarizes the data collected from an investigation to determine the media uses and purposes, amount of media usage, and respondents’ trust and confidence in media.

Table 5
Participants use and purpose of American TV media consumption

	Items	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Media use and purpose	I watch American TV program to learn social behaviors	4.672	0.855	-2.848	7.490
	I watch American TV programs for actors/ celebrities/ characters on screen	4.501	0.997	-2.049	3.044
	I watch American TV programs for fashion and lifestyle.	4.403	0.998	-1.658	1.583
	I watch American TV programs to keep up with current affairs (i.e. the news).	4.170	0.669	-1.117	3.628
	I watch American TV programs for fantasy elements.	4.081	1.312	-1.374	0.565
	I watch American TV programs for violence and gore.	3.988	1.345	-0.707	-1.394

Table 5 (Continued)

	Items	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
	I watch American TV programs for love and romance.	2.806	1.689	0.214	-1.661
	SUMMATED Media use and purpose	4.089	0.449	-0.396	0.266
Amount of media	I spend more time with American TV program than I do on other forms of mass media (i.e. newspapers, radio, and social media)	4.418	1.020	-2.101	3.858
	I watch American TV program regularly	4.287	0.967	-1.499	1.626
	I spend a minimum of 1-hour daily watching American TV programs.	4.227	1.114	-1.385	0.777
	SUMMATED Amount of media	4.310	0.595	-0.895	0.421
Trust and confidence	I prefer watching American TV program compared to locally available content.	4.430	0.886	-2.334	6.240
	I watch more non-American TV program (i.e. British or Asian).	4.519	0.922	-2.482	6.283
	SUMMATED Trust and confidence	4.475	0.638	-1.790	3.269

Results show that American TV influences respondents' beliefs and behaviors as summarized in Table 6. The highest calculated mean of represents respondents finding American TV as having a negative impact on youth (Item 14) with a value of 4.725. Findings that it is acceptable to call parents by their first names (Item 10) are represented with the lowest calculated mean of 1.985. Data from in-depth interviews prove that respondents are aware that

American TV does produce negative effects on social behavior. Notably, respondents specifically highlighted the scenes of smoking, sexual nature, and bad language.

Interviewees were adamant that American TV would "never" be able to affect certain cultural behaviors, particularly those related to national and religious customs such as "removing shoes before entering the house" and "respect for parents".

Table 6

Participants perceived negative impact of American TV media

	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Q10	It is acceptable to call parents by their first names.	1.985	1.175	1.222	0.558
Q11	It is acceptable to refer to older people by their first name	2.666	1.507	0.281	-1.480
Q12	I will do whatever I feel it takes in order to get what I want or feel is due to me	3.663	0.962	-0.662	-0.590
Q13	It is acceptable to show sex scenes on American TV media	2.203	1.030	0.512	-0.075
Q14	American TV media has negative impact on youth	4.725	0.538	-2.423	7.824
Q15	American TV media normalize bad behavior and make it acceptable	4.307	1.046	-1.353	0.434
Q16	It is acceptable to show violence on American tv media	3.567	0.932	-0.398	0.500
Q18	I have more role models who are fictional characters from American TV media that I do in real life	3.633	1.327	-0.424	-1.311
Q19	Body image ideals shown on American TV media have made me consider body augmentation, plastic surgery, or other body enhancements such's as piercings, tattoos, and diet pull.	2.857	1.598	0.028	-1.638
Q20	Religion plays an important role in my life	4.003	1.426	-1.327	0.246
Q21	American TV media has made me devaluate the institution of marriage	2.355	1.316	0.488	-1.247
Q22	I learn the English language by watching American TV media	3.806	1.027	-1.305	1.356

Table 6 (Continued)

	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Q23	I find myself copying the speech patterns and speech styles of characters I see on American TC media	3.036	1.528	-0.061	-1.581
Q24	I learn more English at institutions of education compared to while watching American t media	2.899	1.385	0.176	-1.290
Q25	Children should stay with their parents until they are married	3.624	1.343	-0.520	-1.054
Q26	I am responsible for the wellbeing and happiness of my parents until they pass away	3.881	0.927	-1.596	2.734
Q27	I have taken culture and habits from American tv media and adopted it into my daily life	4.131	1.132	-1.269	0.672
Q28	Success is measured by how rich a person is	2.552	1.114	0.612	-0.716
Q29	It is justified to use violence to settle disputes	2.245	1.334	1.190	0.221
Q30	Everyone has the opportunity to succeed and those who don't is because they are uninitiated and lazy	2.081	1.217	1.148	0.295
Q31	I am envious of the lifestyles shown on American TV media.	3.776	1.207	-1.034	0.144
Q32	I sometimes find myself thinking about how different my life would be if I lived like what is shown on American TV media.	3.066	1.487	0.052	-1.540
	SUMMATED perceived impact of American TV consumption	3.230	0.246	0.068	0.567

Table 7 shows the calculated means of respondents according to the general consumption of American TV. It shows the highest calculated mean represents youth's trust and confidence in American TV.

Interviewees claimed they picked and chose what facts and information to trust. However, they were unable to explain how or why this happened, with the exception of one respondent who mentioned that the overall presentation of the story could either make facts more believable or not.

Most of the interviewees were inclined toward "just accept as truth" about most information they were exposed to until it was rebuked. Such inclination is observed in the low mean of 1.857 which represents youth preferring American TV news channels over other channels. Only 1 respondent expressed skepticism toward what they saw on mass

media, labelling it as 'conspiracy theories'.

Youth's preference for movies (mean = 4.663) over news channels (mean = 1.857) implies the pressing need for access to news and informative contents that are attractive. The youth find that it is more entertaining to watch programs where facts and information are embellished with dramatic or theatrical elements. The high value of trust and confidence placed on American TV (mean = 4.672) may explain why youth use it to learn about social behaviors.

Additionally, respondents claimed that they watched a minimum of 1-2 hours of American TV daily (mean = 4.227). This is particularly significant as interviews show respondents admitting that they spent too much time watching TV, notwithstanding the fact that they did not seem to want to change their viewing habits. The calculated

Table 7
Summative means for general consumption of American TV media

	<i>Summative Mean</i>	<i>Summative STD</i>	<i>Summative Skewness</i>	<i>Summative Kurtosis</i>
Participants general consumption of American TV media genres	3.824	0.386	-0.138	0.266
Purpose of American TV media usage	4.089	0.449	-0.396	0.266
Amount of American TV media usage	4.310	0.595	-0.895	0.421
Trust and confidence in American TV media	4.475	0.638	-1.790	3.269
Impact of American TV media towards participants beliefs and behaviors	3.230	0.246	0.068	0.567

Table 8

Core ideas from in-depth interviews

Core Ideas	Positive views on TV media
	Negative views on TV media
	High interactivity and engagement
	Learning opportunities
	Social Experience
	Increased confidence
	Inclusivity
	Learning opportunities

mean of respondents adopting culture and habits from American TV into their lifestyle is also notably high with a value of 4.131.

Content analysis of the interviews discovered 3 main themes: personal, kith and kin, and societal. These themes are broken down into several categories, which are summarized in Table 8. There are 5 core ideas discovered from the content analysis, which relate to the research hypothesis as follows:

1. Behavior is picked up unknowingly.
2. The perception of reality is based on media, experience, and knowledge.
3. Understanding of right and wrong is through experience and knowledge and influenced by those who shape the narrative.
4. A sense of belonging.
5. Knowledge, attitude, and beliefs about the world.

Learning appears to be a recurring element within the 5 core ideas. It is also the driving force behind the need for better understanding of particular concerns and

questions and how things relate to one another.

The 1st core idea refers to issues of learning which seems to be the undertone of almost all matters brought up during the interview sessions. The 4th core idea relates to self-learning and discovery and more so to societal connectedness and questions about identity. The 5th core idea is on self-learning emerging from questions and issues that are provoked by real-life events. Cross analysis of the results through measuring the frequency of occurrence was conducted to organize the data (Bruce & Bruce, 2017). The summary of results is presented in Table 9.

Theme 1. This theme questions how behavior is picked up from watching American TV. Regardless of gender and age all interviewees voiced concern about the behavior that they picked up from watching TV. The findings indicate that youth are aware that TV has some influence on their behavior.

Table 9

Summary of results

Domain	Themes	Core Ideas	N	Frequency
Impact On Behavior (RQ1)	Behavior is picked up unknowingly	Learning opportunities	5	General
Component In Media that Can Effect Change (RQ2)	Perception on reality is based on media, experience, and knowledge	Interactivity and engagement	5	General
Other Factors that Cause Change (RQ3)	The understanding of right and wrong is determined by those who shape the narrative	Views on topics and issues (either positive and negative)	3	Typical
Component in Media that Can Effect Change (RQ2)	Social experiences	A sense of belonging	4	General
Other Factors that Cause Change (RQ3)	Increased confidence		3	
Impact On Behavior (RQ1)	Knowledge, attitude and beliefs about the world	Inclusivity	4	General

Responses obtained range from bewilderment to disbelief when respondents were asked to think about the habits that they picked up from watching TV. However, respondents voiced their annoyance over the implication that they were too young to be able to distinguish between good and bad elements on TV. Such a response suggests the discernment among youth in relation to what they watch and absorb.

“I hate it when I hear people saying that they gonna [sic] censor things on the TV. Because like [sic] yes, we watch a lot of TV and stuff but that doesn't mean we just gonna [sic] swallow what we see completely. I think like the people who control that [sic] should give us more

credit like we can decide what's good and what's not.” (Interviewee 3)

Theme 2. All interviewees responded that they receive local and international news largely via TV or Facebook. The interviewees admitted that they do not read newspapers citing that it is too boring or depressing, with repetitive issues being covered.

“I only read the papers if it's on the train and someone has left it on the seat. Or on the bus when my phone is dying. I don't even listen to the radio because there's nothing good on it. So I've always got my headphones in and on the phone.” (Interviewee 2)

When asked if they viewed themselves as well-informed citizens, all respondents answered in affirmative. This prompts a discussion centering around the ramifications of such habits. Respondents argued that news and information have to be vetted for accuracy but they pointed out their inconsistent commitment to doing so. The lapse in the process of verifying information is blamed on time constraints and so on associated with daily life.

Theme 3. Closely related to the previous theme, this theme discusses the normalization of certain behaviors on TV. Specifically, all interviewees mentioned the portrayal of sex scenes, which seem to appear more frequently than before.

“...there is a lot of that on TV nowadays... even before there was [sic] but it was not so explicit. Today you have total nakedness of the man and woman. Sometimes it’s weird because you’re watching a movie with your parents then suddenly there’s like a naked man on screen. I guess being naked is ok but there’s [sic] also full on [sic] sex scenes. One time I had to leave the room [sic] I was so embarrassed.” (Interviewee 4)

Among all interviewees who alluded to the fact that negative influences from outside are brought home via TV, 2 female interviewees voiced their opinions regarding the issue.

“I think my generation grew up with this new media and so we are more careful of it. Like it’s part of us now. You see one thing from the west and you think is [sic] that [sic] right or not...I wouldn’t

say it’s being paranoid but it’s just the way it is. Plus, after the classes here we know about globalization and like [sic] all the media theories so it prepares you for what to see...like [sic] I think those kinda [sic] classes were good because you learn you know [sic]. Before that, I was kinda [sic] careful but I didn’t know what to be careful about. Like [sic] maybe it was an automatic response but now I know why I need to be careful... like [sic] I have a name I can put to it.” (Interviewee 3).

All respondents however strongly rejected the use of any sort of censorship claiming that it is useless and could possibly lead to more harm.

“...no way censorship is good. First of all, the person doing the censoring they have to see all the things they are censoring...I think it’s better to teach people what to look for instead of banning it. Because you know kids they’re just gonna [sic] go [sic] look for it elsewhere. Like they said downloading movies is illegal and they put blocks on the torrent sites but c’mon [sic] we know how to use VPN...so honestly if they educate not just us but everywhere on what’s coming in and what it does it’s way better than banning outright...” (Interviewee 5)

Theme 4. All interviewees are proud of their patriotism and consider themselves as part of the global community. The response suggests that global issues are just as important to the respondents as national issues are.

“We see the shows on TV and think that’s not how it is here but actually it is. Like everyone wants to fit in and belong...shows like Glee show you what the US kids do but if you think about it, it’s actually the same here. Probably if we watch more shows like umm [sic] from Korea or Spanish shows or I dunno [sic] shows from the Middle East, we’d be like that, but we get it from the US so we follow them I guess.” (Interviewee 1)

Theme 5. Some of the respondents spoke about how TV shows of late had become more engaging with a variety of TV shows and easy access via pay-per-view subscriptions such as Netflix and iFlix. One of the keywords used was accessibility and opportunity. The general tone on the issue was positive, where they were pleased with the overall accessibility and opportunity that technologies related to media streaming had brought to them. Most agreed that if it were not for TV they would not be as knowledgeable about the world outside national borders as they are today. TV is therefore seen as having a positive role in their lives with benefits that surpass the negative effects.

“I can’t condemn TV too much because I feel that it’s actually a window of experience. Obviously, you can get carried away like I guess umm [sic], a hammer can build things or break things. Depends on what you use it for, right? I think that’s what happened with the internet but now we can even see what space looks like. Otherwise, that would only be for people who worked in NASA la [sic].” (Interviewee 3)

The outcomes from the in-depth interview sessions are summarized in Table 10 according to the five main discoveries identified as domains.

Table 10 shows that 4 out of the 5 domains yielded specific outcomes from the interviewees. Realization of the impact of watching TV on the behavior of an individual prompting youth to feel the need for a change in attitudes related to TV watching habits as observed in the first domain. This includes the need for self-reflection, which outcome is similarly concluded for the fifth domain of study.

The findings from the two domains demonstrate increased consciousness among youth in regard to the stimuli received from TV watching. In the second domain, the study yielded no significant outcome. The finding may be attributed to the lack of ability among youth to differentiate and connect the individual components of TV shows to their associated effects, due to their tendency to view TV as one whole entity. However, it has been mentioned several times that other social networks, both online and offline, can be equally responsible for affecting one’s perception about reality, which can be created and maintained.

Special mention made to online social networks such as Facebook and others, which suggests that elders in the community can influence youth to change. The third domain seems to be of typical response, which is associated with the increasing skepticism about the true motives of media outlets. Interestingly, by the end of the interview sessions, the respondents found themselves questioning more about the real

Table 10

The outcome from in-depth interview sessions

Domain	Themes	Specific Outcome
<i>Impact On Behaviour</i>	Behaviour is picked up unknowingly.	Need for an increase in self-reflection. Changed attitudes while watching TV.
Component In Media that Can Effect Change	Perception on reality is based on media, experience, and knowledge.	None of special note.
<i>Other Factors that Cause Change</i>	The understanding of right and wrong is determined by those who shape the narrative.	Increased skepticism about the <i>true</i> function of media outlets.
<i>Component In Media that Can Effect Change</i>	Social experiences.	Increased self-confidence.
<i>Other Factors that Cause Change</i>	Increased confidence.	Increased awareness and appreciation of own culture.
<i>Impact On Behaviour</i>	Knowledge, attitude, and beliefs about the world.	Need for an increase in self-reflection.

agenda of mass media. The fourth domain obtains two outcomes: an increase in self-confidence and an increase in appreciation of one's own culture and heritage. The outcome may be attributable to the hidden thoughts and emotions the respondents have regarding the issue, which keeps bottled up due to the absence of the premise for sharing views. The interview sessions have therefore provided a place for youth to articulate their thoughts.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings support the fact that youth sift through media texts and pick what they want from it. According to one research, the purpose of doing so is for surveillance,

relaxation, and as a substitute for friendship (Ismail et al., 2019). One of the main issues that motivate this research is to understand the power play that exists between social groups. Power structures like hegemony are defined as dominance and control expressed either subtly or overtly through various means and tools manifesting itself through cultural appropriation and economic might sitting comfortably on the boundary between compulsion and consent. The modern iteration of its definition has moved away from Antonio Gramsci's concept to evolve into one without maintaining an ecosystem that is built on fear and intimidation, where control is exerted through influencing cultural and social

institutions. One of the easiest means is through media to carve out boundaries between what is acceptable and what is not. This is one of the many tendrils of globalization. It is enforced globally through various key methods: economic power, military might, international organizations, global allies, and ideas, and culture. The last mechanism is perhaps the most influential. This study will lead to further investigations into how cultural norms are shaped or eroded through the use of media including suggestions for monitoring it. TV has a strong social presence and impact on society predicated by the fact that it is everywhere. It targets everyone and policing can be cumbersome and at times impossible. As TV is a tool for the creation of meaning and transmission of cultural values this research attempts to describe the impacts, identify the mechanisms involved and analyze the inner workings.

While TV is viewed as an important cog within the wheel of mass media its function can be broken down into several parts: legitimation, concealment and camouflage, integration, disintegration, and reification. Legitimation is described as ideals being presented as acceptable to different groups in a society. Concealment and camouflage occur when certain elements are either minimally shown or misrepresented for the benefit of one group. Integration arises when all members of that group are made to appear equal to one another when in fact there may be differences. Disintegration or fragmentation occurs when power is maintained through social schisms. Lastly,

reification is a phenomenon of normalizing unequal social structures by waving them off as normal or expected. If a media organization or entity is formed based on the national policy to educate citizens on the types and effects of media content then it can be used as a buffer against the challenges of globalization.

Significance of the Study

This study will benefit society in a way it equips audiences with knowledge about media influence and its associated effects. It provides information about how media can negatively affect audiences, thus preparing individuals with the knowledge to tackle challenges and warning them of dangers to be avoided. There is a great demand for media literate individuals where mass media permeates every aspect of life. This justifies the need for more effective and lifelong learning opportunities. Guidelines for schools and training centers may be derived from this study which informs on what should be prioritized and how the curriculum should be structured. This study may serve as a basis for future research which could explore other related critical areas. Theories and frameworks may be derived with regard to media influences from a Southeast Asian perspective. Other significant findings will be promote good working environments for media content creators and administrators. This research will also be beneficial to marketers and business practitioners so better practices can be performed allowing for more specific targets to be met.

Suggestion 1: Developing New Models of Thinking.

For decades, historians and social scientists worldwide have been using the Western concept of media to develop their own material and research. While the advantage is vast, it overlooks the characteristics and nuances of individuals and societies that do not fall within that category. The Western idea of media serves as a surrogate for Eastern thought. The first suggestion is to understand that a new model needs to be created for developing and testing theories on human behavior from an Asian perspective.

Suggestion 2: Enhancing Media Attractiveness.

Training governmental organizations so actions can be put in a more concerted manner to develop and train key stakeholders such as donors, industry experts, professional practitioners, and agencies must be treated with utmost urgency for the advancement of the local media industry. The need for training, formal and lifelong, in media professionalism, skill development programs and ethics is vital for those involved in media. Agencies involved in talent development should be well-connected to the media industry so resources such as formal training and funding, donations, and grants can be shared. Media giants should also familiarize themselves with stakeholders by forming links with academics and training agencies as well as professional bodies and other non-governmental organizations.

This study proves that youth do not prefer local media because of the little value

of entertainment it delivers. The theoretical impact suggests that adopting the style of American TV to a certain extent may be able to increase the likelihood of youth watching local media. For local content creators to be encouraged by the idea of creating better content, they must be allotted funds and other forms of assistance with clear codes of conduct that are non-discriminatory and clear in its objectives. The main objective should be creating content that viewers want to watch. Infrastructure sharing prevents wasting resources where opportunities are equal for all involved. There must be an incubation program that can assist creative entrepreneurs and start-ups in developing quality content. Marketing strategies should be employed to attract companies with much-needed manpower, locally and internationally, who can assist in this. It is important that the government conducts periodic surveys for data collection and analysis on media and the associated impact so they are ready to face challenges related to the constant change in the media environment (Damratoski et al., 2011).

Suggestion 3: Improve Media Literacy.

The impact of media globalization observed within the country signifies the need for constant efforts in monitoring media exposure. It should be a catalyst to fully develop a program that helps stakeholders differentiate between the associated negative and positive effects. A critical look must be given into the advocacy of media globalization as a key concept in research related to local media.

Working hand in hand with academics and other media-related organizations, the government must try to accelerate media literacy among citizens. Researchers think that media literate citizens will not be prone to 'news abuse', which is described as one narrative that is placed above another using various methods in order to create conditions that are selectively favorable to only a certain segment of society (Damratoski et al., 2011). Citizens should have free and easy access to projects, programs, and classes that equip them with the skill to understand and critically analyze all aspects of various types of media contents.

The government must work closely with media regulators worldwide to ensure local media can keep up with the latest trends in global media. Setting their sights farther abroad ensures that the authorities are well exposed to different natures of media practices (Steiner & Xu, 2018). There should be a body within the government that can monitor the current and latest trends in media worldwide, trickled down to smaller agencies, and lastly reaching the end consumers. The need for effective monitoring also signifies the potential demand for media specialists in regulatory agencies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The utmost appreciation goes to my supervisors who assisted me in completing this task. I extend a heartfelt thanks to all those who participated in my research whether actively or not. Without them, I

would not have been able to get to where I am today.

REFERENCES

- Abell, C. (2020). *Fiction: A philosophical analysis*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Agius, C., & Keep, D. (2018). *The politics of identity: Place, space and discourse*. Manchester, England: Manchester University Press.
- Berger, A. A. (2020). *Humor, psyche, and society: A socio-semiotic analysis*. Malaga, Spain: Vernon Press.
- Bertrand, I., & Hughes, P. (2019). *Media research methods: Audiences, institutions, texts*. London, England: Palgrave.
- Bolin, G. (2019). Generational "we-sense", "they-sense" and narrative: An epistemological approach to media and social change. *Empiria: Revista de Metodología de Ciencias Sociales*, 42, 21-36.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Los Angeles, USA: SAGE Publications.
- Damratoski, K. J., Field, A. P., Mizell, K. N., & Budden, M. (2011). An investigation into alternative television viewership habits of college students. *Journal of Applied Business Research*, 27(1), 69-76.
- Das, D. (2019). *A multimodal approach to sarcasm detection on social media*. Missouri, USA: Missouri State University.
- Deller, R. A. (2019). *Reality television: The TV phenomenon that changed the world*. Bingley, England: Emerald Publishing House.

- Donohue, C. (2019). *Exploring key issues in early childhood and technology: Evolving perspectives and innovative approaches*. New York, USA: Routledge.
- Fickers, A., Mustata, D., & Weber, A. K. (2020). The rise of television: Institutionalisation and the forming of national audiences. In K. Arnold, P. Preston, & S. Kinnebrock (Eds.), *The handbook of European communication history* (p. 239). New Jersey, USA: Wiley Blackwell.
- Giles, D. C. (2019). *Twenty-first century celebrity: Fame in digital culture*. Bingley, England: Emerald Publishing.
- Glazier, J. W. (2020). *Arts of subjectivity: A new animism for the post-media era*. London, England: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.
- Harari, J. V. (2019). *Textual strategies: Perspectives in post-structural criticism*. New York, USA: Cornell University Press.
- Hsu, C. L. (2020). How vloggers embrace their viewers: Focusing on the roles of para-social interactions and flow experience. *Telematics and Informatics*, 49, 101364.
- Hu, M., Chen, M., Li, M., & Yin, Z. (2019). Meet the media characters from another culture: Influence of ethnocentrism on parasocial interaction. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 8(2), 170-179.
- Ismail, N., Ahmad, J., Noor, S. M., & Saw, J. (2019). Malaysian youth, social media following, and natural disasters: What matters most to them? *Media Watch*, 10(3), 508-521.
- Kellner, D. (2020). *Media culture: Cultural studies, identity and politics in the contemporary moment*. New York, USA: Routledge.
- Kemple, B. (2019). *The intersection of semiotics and phenomenology: Peirce and Heidegger in dialogue*. Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG.
- Koehn, D. (2019). *Toward a new (old) theory of responsibility: Moving beyond accountability*. New York, USA: Springer International Publishing.
- Kress, G. (2019). Pedagogy as design: A social semiotic approach to learning as communication. *Universitas Tarraconensis. Revista de Ciències de l'Educació*, 1(2), 23-27.
- Leavy, P. (2017). *Research design quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, arts-based, and community-based participatory research approaches*. New York, USA: The Guilford Press.
- Leong, L., Azhar, N., Herizal, H., & Mulakala, A. (2012). *The youth factor: 2012 survey of Malaysian youth opinion*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: The Asia Foundation.
- Lloyd, G. E. R. (2020). *Intelligence and intelligibility: Cross-cultural studies of human cognitive experience*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Lubashevsky, I. (2019). *Physics of the human mind*. London, England: Springer.
- Mahidin, D. (2018, December 28). *Crime statistics, Malaysia, 2018*. Putrajaya, Malaysia: Department of Statistics. Retrieved February 12, 2019, from https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cthemByCat&cat=455&bul_id=SnJIWjNGZ3VWajUraDIBcFpMQ3JWUT09&menu_id=U3VPMIdoYUxzVzFaYmNkWXZtcGduZz09
- Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission. (2014). *Media matters: Networked media content research report*. Cyberjaya, Malaysia: Author.
- Orna, R. (2020). *Ethics of cinematic experience: Screens of alterity*. New York, USA: Routledge.
- Paus-Hasebrink, I., Kulterer, J., & Sinner, P. (2019). The role of media within young people's socialisation: A theoretical approach. In *Social*

- inequality, childhood and the media* (pp. 45-75). London, England: Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
- Price, G. (2019). *Language, society, and the state: From colonisation to globalisation in Taiwan*. Boston, USA: Walter de Gruyter.
- Robson, C. (2002). *Real world research: A resource for social scientists and practitioner-researchers*. Oxford, England: Blackwell.
- Steiner, E., & Xu, K. (2018). Binge-watching motivates change: Uses and gratifications of streaming video viewers challenge traditional TV research. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 26(1), 82-101.
- Stivers, R. (2020). *The media creates us in its image and other essays on technology and culture*. Oregon, USA: Wipf and Stock Publishers.
- Sun, J. (2019). *Contemporary urban youth culture in China: A multiperspectival cultural studies of internet subcultures*. North Carolina, USA: IAP Inc.
- Thurlow, A. (2018). *Social media, organizational identity and public relations: The challenge of authenticity*. New York, USA: Routledge.
- Ward, L. M., Moorman, J. D., & Grower, P. (2019). Entertainment media's role in the sexual socialization of Western youth: A review of research from 2000-2017. In S. Lamb & J. Gilbert (Eds.), *Cambridge handbooks in psychology. The Cambridge handbook of sexual development: Childhood and adolescence* (p. 395-418). Cambridge University Press.

