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Interactive Digital Media: Preservation of Local Stories Via Digital Books for the Future Generation

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Abstract

The future generation plays a vital role in influencing the social structure of society in Malaysia. According to Said (2013) the future generation can be encompassed into three categories, namely the generation of the era of nationalism, the generation of independence and the New Economic Policy (NEP) and the Vision generation ranging from 1991 to 2020. The exposure of generation Z to various Malay folk tales needs to be preserved so that the stories are maintained and can be passed down from generation to generation. This study focuses on the importance of interactive media in providing a positive impact to preserve the production of Malay folklore books among the next generation so that it does not just become history. Traditional media mediums such as television, text and radio which are increasingly forgotten because they are unable to interact with consumers, therefore, with the advent of technology agents such as smartphones and others should be used to facilitate the dissemination of interactive media to children. This can be done through the use of interactive media to preserve Malay folklore for the next generation via the production of digital books or electronic books. Analysed data show that digital books provide interactive learning that assists in the process of children's understanding and make learning activities diverse. The study can be further developed by including publishers to explore more interactive creations to attract interest and increase children's knowledge of Malaysian history and at the same time be able to preserve the heritage of Malay storytelling in line with current technological developments.

Introduction

According to Investopedia (2020), the entertainment industry contains a handful of large companies involved in the entertainment business such as telecommunications services, television, music, video games, and live concerts. This is further strengthened by according to Oxford Dictionary (1989), also called this entertainment business as show business and it has been used since 1945. Consumers for the media and entertainment industry is very large with

revenue of around 2 Trillion worldwide. It can be said that more than one-third of the business of this industry comes from companies based in the United States (smallbusiness, 2020). In the phase of new norms and digital technology that has hit generation Z in Malaysia, it is very important to know the methods that are seen to be effective to preserve the Malay folklore. The advent of digital interactive media in Malaysia is closely linked to the advent of the internet in Malaysia in 1992 (science magazine, 2015), and has evolved to date with various variations in providing useful input to its users. This change is slight as much as inhibiting the knowledge of generation Z related to Malay folklore due to various factors. The evolution that occurred as a result of this exposure was with the changes that took place to the storybook. The production of various interesting story books in the digital media interactive era is felt to be able to preserve the Malay folklore so that the traditional work can be maintained until the next generation. There are various changes that can be made so that it can suit the tastes of the next generation so that it remains relevant to this day.

The existence of the entertainment business industry in the digital age that has hit the world and Malaysia proves the importance of the industry in determining the direction of a country. The assistance provided by the government in Budget 2020 in the digital age shows that the local technology industry is getting attention from the government by continuously enhancing the capabilities of the people with focus given to SMEs, strengthening digital content, implementing digitalization, enhancing e-commerce and 5G technology (NST, 2019).

The assistance provided by the government in shaping the next generation should be used as a stepping stone to the entertainment business industry players to help in realising that agenda. This is evidenced through the International Trade Administration (ITA) an agency that regulates US trade stating that the media and entertainment industry covers a wide scope of activity and generated more than 717 billion in 2018 and is expected to increase to 825 billion in 2023 (small business, 2020).

Profits that are multiplied if successfully taken advantage of by industry players in producing a variety of interesting works and according to the latest tastes will have an impact on the results of the Malaysian economy. If viewed from the influence of globalization that occurred during the digital age on the entertainment business. It makes it easier for all corners of the world to connect so that it becomes difficult for a government to control its borders from the intrusion of foreign culture and technology. According to David Loy, a lecturer from Bunkyo University, Japan stated "a complex set of developments: economic, political, technological and cultural" (Khoo & Jomo, 2002).

The interdependence between the entertainment business and technology gave birth to a branch in the technology itself which is interactive digital media or better known as interactive media. The influence brought by the latest media in terms of its content loaded with animation, special effects, interesting audio and video also influences generation Z in getting something useful info. In fact, the mechanism used also influences the print media in Malaysia by enabling book publishers to revolutionize storybooks into electronic storybooks to provide appeal to the next generation to read them.

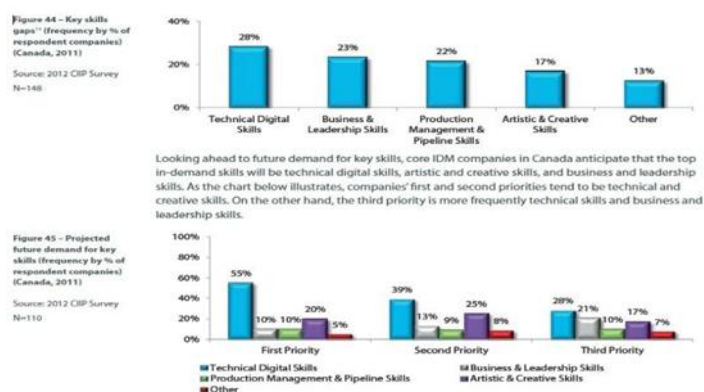
Interactive Media and Children

Digital interactive media can also be described as interactive multimedia and interactive media. According to Britannica Encyclopedia (2021) states the method of communication in which the output of the program depends on user input and user input can also affect program output. Among the elements of interactive multimedia in influencing users, especially generation Z are text, graphics, audio, video and animation (Ibrahim, 2019).

In the current era, interactive media can be categorized as the latest and seen to be more dominated by the society now compared to traditional media such as print media, electronic media, and broadcast media. According to a Communication and Media Scientist at New York University, Professor Dr Paul Levinson states that the latest new media is related to the progress and impact of 'newer' media than 'new media'. (BH Online, 2015). As such, among the international companies that have been successful in reaping various profits from the entertainment business in this new media is the British Columbia Company. They also serve as an international digital entertainment center for the production of console games and mobile games, internet, applications and also have a section dedicated to interactive media. Developments in digital design include film, video games, social media, interactive marketing as well e-learning is their specialty (pwp, 2015).

This will also benefit Malaysian entertainment industry players by making foreign companies such as Canada and the United States as a catalyst for enthusiasm in producing a creative work and capable of innovating traditional media. This is evidenced by the data shown in Figure 1 where the interactive media industry also opens up employment opportunities to the community and is more focused on anyone with creative talent. Therefore, the creative talents in Malaysia will not be wasted but will help sharpen their talents with the help of new media now such as interactive media.

Figure 1. Search for creative experts in the field of entertainment business.



Source. 2012 Canadian Interactive Industry Profile Final Research Report

Producing creative and competitive people requires the help of all parties. It does not just depend on government efforts but must be shared with the private sector. Mobilise energy together in making Malaysia a country that produces generations that are IT literate, productive, creative, and competitive. As taken from the words of Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyidin Yasin when launching the National Technology & Innovation Sandbox (NTIS) on 19

August 2020 "Malaysia needs to be a high-tech country towards gaining the status of a high-income country".

Among the main focus is to produce an IT literate generation is through the involvement of generation Z towards technology. According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (2012), defines that generation Z starts the age range of birth up to the age of eight and can be categorized as a child. The age of birth to reach eight years is an active period for them to play and explore various branches of knowledge because at this age they will quickly recognize and capture something.

Children are among those affected by this due to the sophistication of technology that is happening nowadays. This is because their knowledge of Malay folklore is so lacking due to the overflow of technology that occurs before their eyes (Sohana, 2016). However, stories are important in children’s lives as stories help children in understanding natural phenomena through their own perspective as well as sharing views according to their understanding. It is also used to assist children in combining ideas, touching emotions, describing life, expressing the views of society (Weinberger, 1996), enhancing literacy development (Wells, 1987) and enhancing the development of their natural literacy skills.

However, it seems to erode the curiosity of children through storytelling towards a more new norm that is to get input through technology agents such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and many more (Sohana, 2016). As such, it has an impact on traditional media mediums such as television, text and radio which are increasingly forgotten because they are unable to interact with consumers. Therefore, with the advent of technology agents such as smartphones and others to consumers facilitate the dissemination of interactive media to children. According to Figures 2 and 3 show the medium that is frequently used by Malaysians in general to access the internet and also applications that are frequently browsed by them.

Figure 2: Gadgets used to access the internet

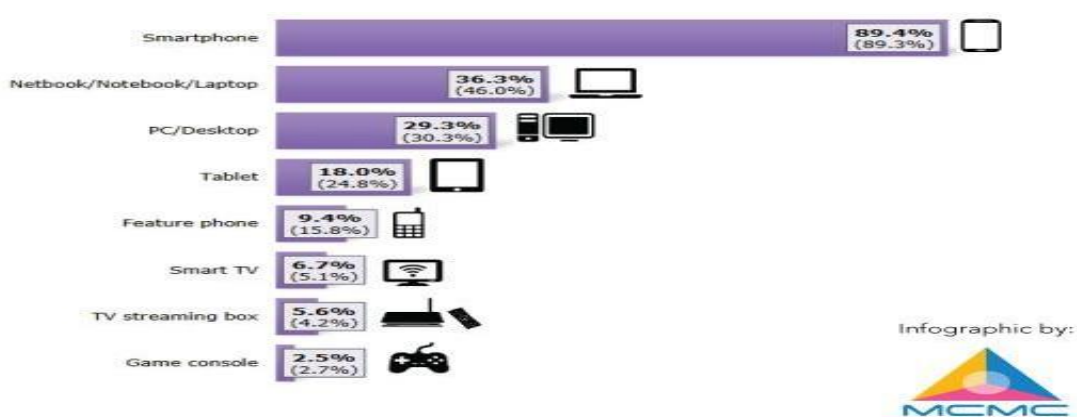
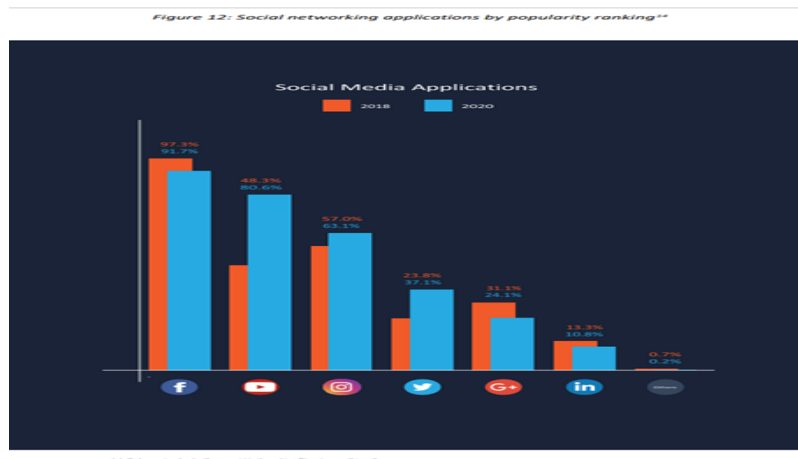
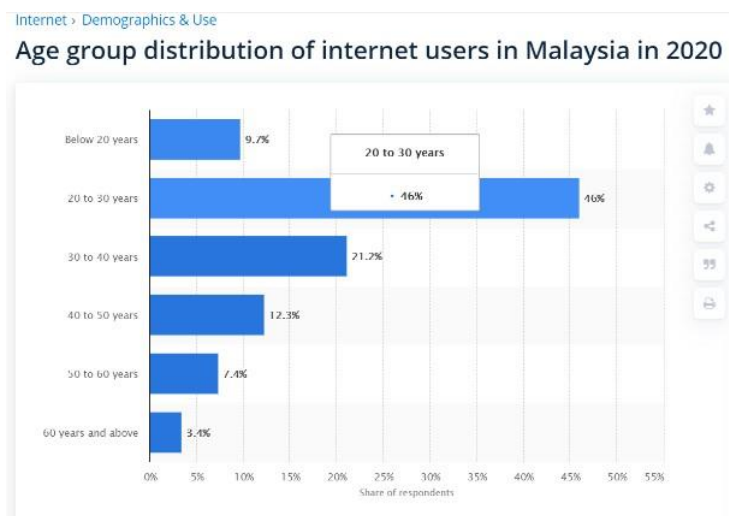


Figure 3. Most visited social apps. Source. Pwp



This should not be taken lightly by book publishers. In fact, they should be open -minded to see some of the role that technology can play such as interactive media in providing a positive impact to preserve the production of Malay folklore books among the next generation so that it does not just become history. All are aware of the dependence of the children's generation on the use of the internet. According to Miller (2021), he surveyed internet usage by various age groups in Malaysia. Figure 5 below shows that the study conducted by J.Miller.

Figure 4. Age distribution of internet users in Malaysia 2020. (Source. Statista)



The figure above shows that almost all young people and children spend time with the internet and browse the various applications available and this immediately forgets traditional media such as storybooks which were once a place to channel information and provide useful input to the audience (Colin, 2015).

The data provided shows that children spend more time with smartphones than spending social time with family and friends. The agenda brought by the government has changed the lifestyle and the entry of various types of agents from technology such as social media, video games and many more has given birth to a generation of digital natives who are heavily represented by the generation of children (Zuriati et al., 2014).

In turn, this is detrimental to Malay folklore due to the lack of exposure to Malay folklore by the current generation to the next generation. Exposure to Malay folklore to the next generation is so important that the traditional medium is preserved to this day.

Malay Folk Stories and Digital Books

Malay folklore can be termed as consisting of folk music and songs, animal fairy tales, ghost stories, epics, fairy tales, and myths. Each story has its own strengths in terms of characters, timeline and narrative. This is evidenced by Puteh (1984) stating that Malay folklore has long been established in Malaysia based on Malay culture and also the influence of the environment according to the timeline of the story was written. Among the famous Malay folk tales are Mahsuri, Tun Fatimah, Puteri Gunung Ledang, Badang, Si Tanggang and many more.

Once upon a time, Malay folklore was used as entertainment and guidance to the community because of its transparency and closer to the soul of the community (Mustaffa, 1987). This is because, in the storytelling that is presented, positive elements such as advice, jokes, satire, and even jokes are often inserted and are very easy to understand by the people at that time. However, the progress experienced by the world now seems to swallow the greatness behind the Malay folklore which is so synonymous with the village community at that time.

Word of mouth is one of the reasons for the spread of Malay folklore and has been successfully passed down from generation to generation. Such privileges began to fade and change in line with technological advances in various fields with the emergence of interactive media agents such as Youtube, Facebook and others (Syamril, 2014).

The evolution that has taken place towards storytelling has indeed changed from generation to generation. From word of mouth to book production to evolving into technology -driven interactive media. Among the roles brought by technology through interactive media to preserve Malay folklore for the next generation, namely children, is the production of digital books or electronic books.

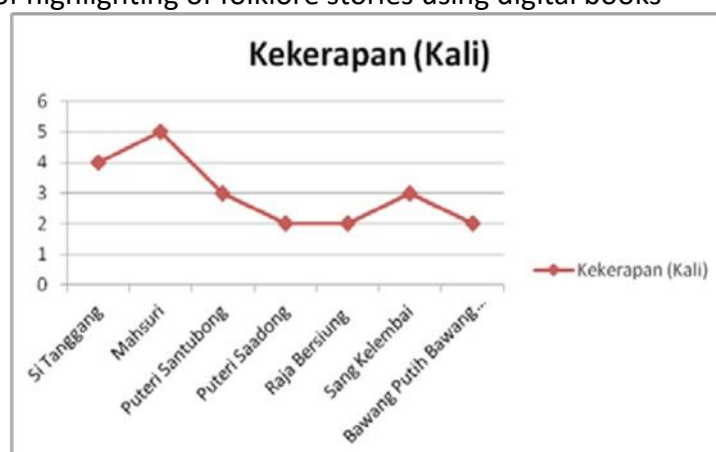
Among the reasons why digital books are able to preserve Malay folklore is as mentioned by De Jong & Bus (2003) that "Most technology enhanced stories are loaded with interactive features such as puzzles, memory task, amusing visual or sound effects, dictionary function, or picture labels appearing when activating the hotspot". The placement of various special elements when reading an e-book such as inserted video games that will indirectly attract children to know and learn about the matter in the electronic storybook. In fact, according to Labbo & Kuhn (2000), "incongruent interactive features have been found to result in the child's failure to retell the story".

The difference that allows children to be more influenced by interactive media than traditional media is that television can only influence children with animated illustrations in addition to music and sound effects. However, the role played by a computer or tablet as an interactive media agent is to involve children in the story through interactive displays such as questions, dictionaries, games, animations, or sounds that will be activated when children click or touch an illustration.

This is evidenced by a study conducted by the Joan Ganz Cooney Center doing a study of 137 most popular electronic books in America for children in 2012 found that 75% of those electronic books have hotspots and 65% more to play activities. Only about 20% of hotspots and a quarter of such gaming activities are storyline -related (Center, 2017). This shows that children abroad are already exposed to interactive media such as e-books and have a positive effect on children's observation of something.

As such, it is vital that books on Malay folklore is produced digitally. Malay folk tales that are loaded with lessons, jokes, satire and advice can make a difference to the production of the e-book. Various elements of attraction can be placed as well as lessons that can be found to attract the interest of the next generation. Examples such as the production of the work of Puteri Gunung Ledang into an e-book. The creators can put various elements in the e-book such as Malay classic songs, video games about the messenger's adventure in finding Puteri Gunung Ledang, the production of classic clothes, and placed challenges and quizzes that can sharpen children's thinking.

Figure 5. Frequency of highlighting of folklore stories using digital books



Source. Glee Studios

All that can be done in the medium of interactive media and facilitate parents, educators and teachers in applying interactive media in teaching children. This is also confirmed by Norah et al (2012), stating that the use of media in education and learning will help in the process of children's understanding and make learning activities diverse. As shown in figure 5 shows the folk tales that are often read by children using digital books in school.

It should be noted that in accordance with the latest technological developments, the change of folklore from oral form to printed material further penetrates the digital space in providing variation and diversifying its presentation to meet the needs of society in the current era. However, historians in the West especially in the twentieth century was concerned that the introduction of modern technologies such as interactive media would turn off the folk literary tradition. However, some historians believe that folk literature will develop and grow with the influence of interactive media. This is evidenced in Figure 6 below showing the changes in reading that occurred in Malaysia which are all more to e-book reading than physical books.

Figure 6. Countries that use digital books

Country	I download e-books and read them offline	I purchase a physical copy
France	42.9%	57.1%
Germany	48.2%	51.8%
India	70.7%	29.3%
Italy	52.7%	47.3%
Japan	40.1%	59.9%
Malaysia	74.7%	25.4%
Singapore	64.3%	35.7%
South Korea	43.4%	56.6%
U.K.	49.2%	50.8%
U.S.	55.6%	44.4%
All	54.6%	45.4%

Figure 14: How do you typically obtain books?

Source. Silvermouse

The diagram above shows the evidence and influence brought by e-books in Malaysia. Indirectly seen to be able to preserve Malay folklore and able to influence children with the special effects brought in each e-book. The skills that children have at this time regarding smartphones make it easier for them to get information about Malay folklore (Syamsulaini & Mashitoh 2016). Therefore, to provide variation on the products of the creative industry, the book industry must revolutionize according to the tastes of society, especially children and play a role in preserving Malay folklore in order to produce rich IT literate children with cultural manners. In fact, the production of digital books is seen as one of the branches of the creative industry because it involves creativity, innovation and technology and even gives emphasis on aspects of education and learning.

The Challenge of Producing Digital Books

Efforts to develop the book industry, including using interactive media for promotional purposes so that the products produced to reach the right users. The preservation of Malay folklore in digital form is indeed a challenge for book publishers. This is also acknowledged by Jasni (2015) stating that the movement to initiate change in a sophisticated environment is a bitter challenge that must be faced by Malaysia.

In an effort to preserve Malay folklore among children, of course, there are challenges to be faced by book publishers. However, in producing a book in digital form, the technical skills possessed by an individual are highly emphasized so that all work related to the publication of digital books can be speeded up and simplified. For example, in addition to textual content, the artist needs to have the skills to determine which graphics and special effects should be used. In its development efforts, skilled manpower in the preparation of design, graphics and animation is also needed so that the folklore works produced are of quality and according to the tastes and desires of children.

According to Yu et al (2009), among the challenges faced during the process of producing digital books related to folklore are such as the construction of story structure, preparation and production of content that impacts children from both positive and negative angles and management in compiling the essence to be laid from the front page to the last page.

This is because the effort to compose a digital narrative requires a careful creation process because it has a combination of various media elements in trapping children such as text, images, video, animation and audio. Furthermore, to produce the most expressive narrative

for children in the form of cartoons or animations is not something that is easy and needs to be presented in a creative and imaginative way in order to attract the attention of children (Sidin, 2005).

Apart from that, maintaining its originality is also a challenge in revolutionizing Malay folklore into digital form. Authors need to be smart to produce content without disturbing the original content so that children can find out about the authenticity of Malay folklore. This is because according to Abdullah (2011), folk tales that exist in various versions are prone to exaggeration because they are spread through word of mouth and the matter is unavoidable. Therefore, the situation should be wisely handled by the players of the book industry in putting something originality in the right place. However, the original content of the story is retained so that the next generation knows about what happened.

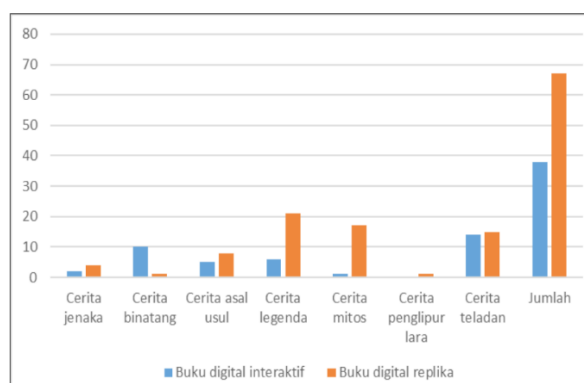
The challenges in producing oral stories to digital books not only cover the creative and content aspects, but also the marketing aspects that need to be taken seriously. For example, cultural heritage involving folklore is experiencing great competition with the emergence of new media that are more oriented to Western influences (Zalina, 2016). This situation presents a challenge to the publication of paid digital books compared to content published through social media such as Facebook and Youtube which are more free in marketing their content. However, this challenge must be viewed from a positive angle so that this competition will continue to remain healthy so that it can produce quality products for a country.

The problems faced by book publishers in revolutionizing books into digital form should be commended due to their tireless efforts in perfecting them. Various challenges are faced to elevate a Malay folktale into the form of a digital book so that it continues to be preserved for several generations. Even with the help provided by the interactive media is able to diversify various versions of Malay folklore.

Obstacles and challenges faced by book industry players in revolutionizing books into digital form can be a paradigm shift in making it a reality. In making Western -owned companies such as the United States and Britain such as Amazon, Barnes & Nobles and even the Big Five Publisher as examples in looking at the fluctuating performance of such companies in the book business industry. To ensure that the target group such as children reap the benefits, book industry players in Malaysia must diversify their work in line with the rapid pace of technology in the current era.

Therefore, with the production of digital books in the era of interactive media, Malay folklore can be preserved until the next generation. As shown below, efforts to produce digital folklore books are being actively pursued with the involvement of book industry players in upholding Malaysia's traditional art.

Figure 7. Number and categories of folk tales published by the Malaysian community through digital books



Source : E.sentral

Conclusion

Therefore, to preserve the treasures of the Malay race, folklore needs to be renewed and evolved by injecting various creative elements as found in digital books. So that it can be inherited and can be passed down to future generations so that the folklore remains fresh in the minds and hearts of the Malaysian community.

Publishers should not be shy to explore more interactive creations to attract interest and increase children's knowledge of Malaysian history and at the same time be able to preserve the heritage of Malay storytelling in line with current technological developments. Therefore, all parties must mobilize energy to re-engineer folklore not only through printed materials but also using available technology so that Malaysia's heritage can be preserved and can be shown to the world community through various technology platforms provided.

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