THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN PROMOTING INDONESIA'S HORROR MOVIES IN POST REFORMATION ERA

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Abstract – From 2008 to 2013, Indonesian horror movies were amongst the top 10 most watched movies. Unfortunately, the portrayal of women in the Indonesian horror movies was characterized by stereotypes and served as the commoditization of selling point. Despite raising gender inequality, these horror films occupy the highest position as the best- selling films. A hypothesis states that this is inseparable from the promotion strategy of horror films that was to use the communication information technology namely social media and electronic words of mouth. This study aims to investigate how the marketing team of the films combine the use of social media and the electronic words of mouth to promote the films.

Key words: horror movies, technology, prmotion tool, E-WoM

I. INTRODUCTION

Horror movies have had their significant role in Indonesia's cinematic business for a considerable time. Heider (1991) describes Indonesian horror movies as part of supernatural, superstitious, and ghost stories inseparable from the daily lives of the citizens [1]. Unlike people in the western culture that are deemed more rational, Indonesians are more acceptant of supernatural phenomena, making the horror genre very popular to date [2].

Concerning the issue of different era or generation, current Indonesia horror films (1998-present) differ from the ones that were previously made (before 1998). The most significant differences lie in the presentation of the context, the visual aesthetic and the music composition. Prior to *Jelangkung* (2001) horror stories were based on folklore in small town settings while the more recent ones are based on urban legends with the metropolitan city as. their settings.[1] Whilst it was common to see a dead spirit (such as a *kuntilanak*) perching on an old and 'sacred' tree at night, nowadays it is common to see 'it' inside an elevator during the day.

Whilst it was common to see a 'religious figure' (usually an Islamic hajj) at the end of the film restrain 'order' by defeating the evil spirit, the recent ones do not have a definite ending which the evil spirit is being sent back to its 'proper place'. They rely more on maintaining the senseof mystery without focusing on who wins or loses (between the evil spirit and the main character).

Regarding visual aesthetics as well as music composition, the recent horror films are more aesthetically striking and sophisticated possibly because of the new technology in which filmmakers are ableto use effortlessly. Such is also the case for

music composition, wherein the current horror films, have more upbeat tempo and dynamic tunes. The rationale behind the 'differences' or 'conscious changes' made by filmmakers, is that the targeted audience nowadays are teenagers and middle to upper class audiences. "Cinema is a young person's occupation and a teenager's entertainment," explained Heider. As such, the 'old ways' of making horror films need to be revolutionized in order to make the film successfully accepted by the new market.

However, the trend in the world of film has shifted. Apart from being good in terms of content, currently films should also be produced to attract as many audiences as possible. Marketing techniques for films such as advertising promotions on television, radio, banners, meet and greet activities, and not to mention the use of internet, are considered effective in increasing the number of viewers.

This study aims to investigate the use of information communication technology in promoting the Indonesian horrormovies, especially bestselling movies from circa 1998 up to today that is the electronic word of mouth as one of the strategies of films promotions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Indonesian Horror Movies

Horror movies are not a new trend in Indonesia. In her article, Heeren states that movies with this particular *genre* has been produced ever since the Dutch colonization in Indonesia in 1934. Return of the Kyai: Representations of horror, commerce, and censorship in post-Suharto Indonesian film and television. The golden age of the Indonesian horror movies did not occur until the 80's [3].

In the 2000's, Indonesian horror movies entered a new era. New generation of filmmakers in this era share no relations nor common themes with the previous Indonesian horror movies. The figure of

kyai (religious leader), commonly found in older Indonesia movies, were still present in a few horror movies in early 2000, for example in *Kafir* and *Peti Mati*. In the following years, however, religious themes were no longer presented as an important element in Indonesian horror movies. On the contrary, sex and comedy became the new commodity in the new era of the genre. Van Heeren (2012) mentions that crudely sadistic sexuality was very eminent in these movies. Heider (2008) states there arethree things that cannot be separated from Indonesian horror movies in the era of *Orde Baru* (New Order): comedy, sex, and religion. These three were the key to getting a considerable number of viewers [1], [3]

Social Media as a Promotion Tool

Social media has several advantages that make it stronger as a promotion media compared to traditional one : (1) Accessibility. Social media is easy to access because it requires little or no cost to use. (2) Speed. Once published, the content on social media is available to all people in the network, forum or community. (3) Interactivity.   Social media can accommodate two or more communication channels. (4). Longevity. Content on social media remains accessible for a long time, or even forever. (5) Reach. the Internet offers unlimited reach to all available content [4].

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)

Apart from WOM, lately the internet has become the media most frequently used by the public. Due to the large number of internet users, along with numerous of public opinions that arise about a product or service being marketed, the termElectronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) has emerged. According to Hennig-Thurau et al., [5], E- WOM is a form of marketing communication that contains positive and negative statements made by consumers who are considered potential, customers,or former consumers regarding a product or service that can be read by many people. through internet media. Meanwhile, Gruen

(2006) explains that E-WOM is a communication medium to share information about a product or service that has been consumed between consumers who do not know each other before.

According to Goyette et al., [6] to measure E-WOM can use the following dimensions:

1) Intensity

The number of opinions issued by consumers through a social media. Indicators of intensity are the frequency of accessing information from social media, the frequency of interactions with social media users, and the number of reviews written by social media users.

2) Content

Content is the list of information from social networking sites related to products and services. Indicators of content include information about variations, information on quality, information on prices, and information on transaction security.

3) Positive opinion is a good comment about the product or service, including positive comments and recommendations.

4) Negative opinions are bad comments about these products or services, including negative comments and negative things to other people from social media users.

III. METHOD

This research uses qualitative methods with descriptive writing techniques. This research focused at the forms and marketing processes conducted by horror film producer companies which, although the film contain gender inequality in the films, they have been managed to become the best-selling horror films.

The data collection technique used in this study was derived from records or documents related to research from related sources taken from various literatures such as social media, official website, books, journals, and newspapers.

The population of the study is 5 Indonesian bestselling horror movies in

post reformation period during which the number of new horror movies is relatively smaller. Analysis was carried out on the 5 movies, which is also referred as census.

1). Danur (2017)

his movie sets somewhere in Bandung with a twist of a modern life. It is based on the true story of an indigo child named Risa, who can see spirits and befriend them since she was little.

2) Tali Pocong Perawan (2008)

This movie with a modern life as its background, is about students who live far from their parents. The movie tells the story of a man who is obsessed with a sexy- woman, also loved by his own friend. This man's obsession has made him justify any means to make her fall in love with him. He receives the information that a talisman *tali pocong perawan* is believed to be effective to make someone fall in love with its owner.

3) Air Terjun Pengantin (2009)

This movie is about a waterfall tour in the city of Bandung, named the waterfall of a bride/bride's waterfall. This movie is a thriller, depicting the story of the journey of 8 young women and men on a vacation to the Bride's waterfall that ends miserably.

4) Terowongan Casablanca (2007)

This movie is based on an urband legend, *Terowongan Casablanca*. The background of the storty is the alleged appearance of spirits known as red devils by people who pass through the tunnel . This movie depicts a teenage girl who gets pregnant out of wedlock and is treated improperly by the man who has impregnated her.

5). Setan Budeg (2009)

This comedy-horror movie tells the story of a deaf woman who tragically dies after being hit by a train while running away from the person who is chasing her. Before the fatal accident, she asks for help using sign language to some people she

encounters, but unfortunately everyone ignores her.

The present researchers have used observation by watching and analysing targeted movies to collect the data. The analysis was done by examining the promotion strategy of the best selling movies according to the indicators employed in this study.

IV. RESULTS

To reach the position as the best- selling horror film in Indonesia, the five horror films have various kinds of promotional strategies: using various IMC Tools, namely marketing communication tools that will be used to complement each other in promotional activities [7].

The promotion media of each film is as follow:

1). *Danur (2017)*

Danur was promoted by using advertising (coverage on television, radio, broadcast on YouTube), events, public relations, E- WOM, and community involvement.

i) Advertising

Danur's film was covered in the Insert infotainment television program at the launch of the Soundtrack at Trans Studio Mall Bandung which was documented via Danur movie's official Instagram Apart from television, Danur film was supported by Radio Republik Indonesia which was documented through the official Danurmovie Instagram. Apart from RRI,   Danurmovie   also   did coverage with Mustang FM which was also documented through Danurmovie's official Instagram.

ii) YouTube

The broadcast on YouTube was conducted by uploading MD Talk to the MD Pictures Channel. In addition, the promotion of the film via Youtube was also conducted by collaborating with a famous young artist as well as a Youtuber : Raditya Dika.

iii) Events

The events carried out included a gala premiere, #RBTStoryOfPeter to win meet and greet tickets, launching a soundtrack and attendance of the cast at an event held by a campus. The marketing team of the movie created a 'Story of Peter' personal dial tone activation competition event and uploaded it via Instagram to win a free pass thanksgiving press conference for Danur and Meet and Greet with Risa Sarasvati.

iv) E-WOM

The film's marketing team held a #MemeDanur contest in 2017, and and there were 392 posts on Instagram. E- WOM amplified was conducted to provoke curiosity and grow Danur Film in the minds of the audience

2).   *Air Terjun Pengantin* (2009)

The film *Air Terjun Pengantin* was promoted by using various promotional strategies to attract audience interest, including advertising, events, public relations, and E-WOM.

i) Advertising

In *Air Terjun Pengantin movie*, the advertisement was carried out in collaboration with KapanLagi, a news site on the Internet to review the film on the news site so that readers are interested and choose to watch the the movie in theaters.

ii) E-WOM

At the time the film had been premiered in 2009, no memes had yet been uploaded but there were comments from viewers on the internet and the hashtag #AirTerjunPengantin on Twitter.

3).   Tali Pocong Perawan (2008) Various promotional strategies were used to promote the film of Tali Pocon

Perawan (2008), including advertising and E-WOM.

i) Advertising

The advertisement in *the Tali Pocong Perawan* film was collaborated with KapanLagi, a news site on the Internet to review the film on the news site.

ii) E-WOM

At the time this film was shown in 2008, there was no meme uploaded but several reviews of the film already appeared on many social media.

4). Terowongan Casablanca (2007)
Casablanca Tunnel

The film was promoted using various promotional strategies to attract audiences, including E-WOM, Advertising, and Events

i) E-WOM

At the time the film was shown in 2007, no memes had yet been uploaded but there were several reviews of the film that were reviewed by netizens on blogs and social media.

ii) Advertising

Advertisements carried out in the Casablanca Tunnel are collaborating with several media which are news sites on the Internet to review films and coverage on these news sites

5). Budeg Satan (2009)/ Setan Budeng Of the 5 best-selling films in Indonesia after the reform era, only this film did not use the internet technology as a form of its promotional strategy. This film was promoted by events and public relations through various activities.

V. DISCUSSION

In film industry, marketing a film is not merely marketing communication. Film Marketing starts from the concept of films and continues to consumption behavior, consumers also channel their viewing experience through making or reading reviews and then watching the film in question. (Kerrigan, 2010: 7).

The results showed that to promote Indonesian horror films, the marketing team took advantage of cooperation with one of the online media portals: Kapanlagi.com. In the collaboration, the film company asked to create a special page that talked about the films. Strategies related to promotion through the use of social media and e-WOM have a significant impact on people's decisions in choosing films to watch due to the clear and interesting information on social media, as well as the positive e-WOM. Currently consumers tend to trust word of mouth communication more than in assessing a film in advertisements. The story and experience of a person watching a film turns out to be more attractive to film lovers and influences them to watch the movie

The use of online media did not end there, the 'memes' that are widely circulating on social media were also used as a medium for promoting the movies. In line with technological developments, memes are not only used to convey messages, but are used as a medium for marketing so that the film become viral in the community.

But not all films are suitable for using memes as promotional material. One very effective way of promoting films is electronic Word of Mouth. The use of online media as a tool to promote a film is quite effective, in addition to the rapid dissemination of information, online media is also seen as a very important need in the digital era like today .The testimonials from viewers who have watched films and recommend them to others are in fact a very effective promotion tool.

VI. CONCLUSION

The increasing number of internet and social media users is a huge opportunity for the film industry to market their films. And the increasingly widespread trend of Electronic Word of Mouth provides such a great opportunity in the promotion of films via the internet. Electronic Word of mouth is now starting to be widely used by movie

lovers and is an alternative in obtaining information about films. Consumer shows good response towards the current technological developments. With the internet, it is easier for film lovers to get the information they want. The ease, convenience, and completeness of information provided by technological developments (the internet) are the reasons why many film lovers use e-WOM today. Information that contains reviews from other consumers is very useful for consumers who take advantage of the e- WOM marketing communication model

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