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Theme Of The Festival And Student Interest In Participating In The Student Film

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ABSTRACT : This research aims to analyze the relationship between film festival themes and students' interest in participating in the Jogja Student Film Festival (FFPJ). On the one hand, the theme of a film festival provides guidance about the films that will be competed in the festival, on the other hand, the theme can also limit students' freedom in expressing ideas or ideas through film works. Restrictions on a theme may reduce interest in participating in the festival. This research uses descriptive qualitative methods. Data was taken from interviews and FFPJ documents from 2010 - 2021. Data analysis was descriptive qualitative. The research results show a clear pattern trend, namely the relationship between themes and the number of film works included in FFPJ. When FFPJ has a free theme, the number of film works tends to increase. When FFPJ has a theme determined by the organizer, the number of films included in FFPJ decreases. Students seem to prefer making films to express their ideas or concepts according to their themes rather than having to make films according to the themes desired by the organizers.

Keywords: Film festival, Theme, Student interest



Introduction

The Jogja Student Film Festival (FFPJ) has been held annually since 2010. The organizers sometimes opt for an open theme, while at other times, they choose to focus on a specific topic. The selection of a theme in a festival plays a crucial role in conveying a central message to the community, particularly to the festival participants. It serves as a reference for both the community and the participating students, guiding them in their contributions to the respective festival. While some may perceive festival themes as potentially limiting the creativity of students in filmmaking, others view them as guiding principles that offer direction on the type of films that should be produced. From 2010 to 2015, FFPJ was conducted with an open theme, except for the year 2011, which featured a specific theme. The number of festival participants steadily increased during this period, with more films being submitted to FFPJ without a specific theme. The lowest number of participants, consisting of 65 films, occurred in the themed FFPJ of 2011.

The specific themes of FFPJ appear to have led to a decrease in the number of participants. However, in 2016, with a specific theme in place, the number of participants reached its peak at 276 film titles. When FFPJ 2017 adopted an open theme, meaning no specific theme was emphasized, the number of participants amounted to 182 films. Subsequently, from 2018 to 2021, FFPJ organizers opted for specific themes. The number of film submissions continued to decrease, reaching a low of 91 film submissions, and in 2020, only 54 films were submitted. The choice between an open theme and a specific theme, as determined by the festival organizers, evidently influences the participants' interest in joining the festival. Participants naturally desire a degree of freedom in expressing themselves through their film creations, without the obligation of adhering to a particular theme.

Film, as an art form, signifies a medium for expressing ideas, thoughts, and emotions (Wibowo, 2007: 196). The function of film as a means of expression and education is emphasized by the festival organizers, underscoring the importance of films critically addressing prevalent social phenomena or issues. Concurrently, organizers also bear a specific mission that they aim to disseminate to the public through the films submitted to the film festival. For organizers, film is not only a medium for expressing ideas but also a form of communication. Films have the power to influence society due to their capacity for mass communication on a national scale. The impact of films is particularly pronounced among individuals who are generally young (Jowett & Linton, 1980, 72-73).

Student filmmakers who possess a keen interest in specific themes find themselves more inspired in creating their films. When festival organizers mandate a



specific theme that differs from the subject matter of a student's film, the enthusiasm of the student to submit their work to FFPJ diminishes, and they may even lose interest in participating in the festival.

The decline in the number of FFPJ participant films from 2017 to 2021 is an intriguing subject for examination in the context of festival themes. The question arises: why has the number of films submitted to FFPJ continuously declined since the adoption of specific themes each year? If the participation of students in submitting their films to FFPJ reflects their interest in the festival, then the decrease in the number of films submitted from FFPJ 2017 to FFPJ 2021 indicates a decline in interest. This research aims to address this question through a qualitative descriptive approach. Data will be gathered through interviews with individuals who have participated in FFPJ and by examining FFPJ organizers' documents from 2010 to 2021. Data analysis will be conducted descriptively.

2. Discussion

The organizers choose specific themes for the festival with the intention of conveying specific messages to the public through the submitted films. Simultaneously, students seek freedom in expressing their ideas and concepts through films that align with their chosen themes. The term "theme" can be roughly synonymous with central idea and central purpose (Staton in Nurgiyantoro, 2013, 117). In a work, the theme plays the role of the main message or idea that the author or director wishes to convey to the reader or viewer. Theme is defined as the "starting point of the message... the element chosen by the speaker as the 'foundation' for understanding the story or news" (Halliday, 2013, 89). The theme directs the listener/reader to the intended message and provides a framework for interpreting the message (Wei Jing, 2015, 179). The theme is like the "peg where the message hangs," and can be identified by the fact that the message is "placed in the first position" (Halliday, 2013, 161). The theme is the narrative aspect that unifies various essential elements in a story.

The function of a theme in a work is to provide the audience or reader with a better understanding of the conflicts, experiences, discoveries, and emotions of the main characters stemming from these conflicts. Through the theme, a writer seeks to give their reader insight into how the world operates or how they perceive human life (Ainajm, 2015, 99).

Over a decade of FFPJ, from 2010 to 2021, the organizers established a number of themes that served as a reference for FFPJ participants, as shown in Table 1.



Tabel 1. Tema-tema dan Jumlah Film Peserta Festival

Tahun Festival	Tema	Jumlah Film
2010	Bebas	115
2011	Bhinneka Tunggal Ika	65
2012	Bebas	66
2013	Bebas	122
2014	Bebas	161
2015	Bebas	170
2016	Persahabatan dan Perdamaian	276
2017	Bebas	182
2018	Persahabatan dan perdamaian	167
2019	Kebhinekaan, Persahabatan dan Perdamaian	118
2020	Srikandi Bumi Pertiwi	54
2021	Urip iku Urup	91

The open theme in FFPJ 2010 provided freedom in creating films as an expression of art, culture, communication, and education. Creative freedom remained within boundaries that did not disrespect ethnic, religious, racial, and social elements. Even though no specific theme was mentioned, the established boundaries emphasized a commitment to diversity, as reiterated in the themed FFPJ of 2011 with the "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" theme. In this first festival with an open theme, the number of student-produced films reached 115 titles.

The "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" theme was chosen for FFPJ 2011 due to sociological and historical facts proving that since ancient times until today, the Indonesian nation is indeed highly diverse, consisting of various ethnicities, religions, cultures, and languages. "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" serves as an agreement and bond that unites the diversity in Indonesia. The adoption of this theme carries the function of reminding us of the timeless guidance of our ancestors, which remains relevant in strengthening and advancing the Indonesian nation. Although the theme of "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" has a very broad scope, it still gives the impression of limiting creativity in filmmaking, resulting in only 65 student-produced films participating in FFPJ.

From FFPJ 2012 to FFPJ 2015, open themes were established. The number of student-produced films submitted to FFPJ increased from 66 titles in 2012 to 170 titles



in FFPJ 2015. Conversely, when the festival adopted specific themes each year, the number of student-produced films submitted to FFPJ decreased. In FFPJ 2016, the number remained high at 276 titles, but in the subsequent years, it continued to decrease, reaching only 91 film titles in FFPJ 2021. The 12-year time series data of FFPJ above demonstrates a relationship between the festival theme and the students' interest in participating in FFPJ.

The theme provides direction or guidance for participants regarding the theme of the film to be submitted to the festival. In creating a film, students are not only bound by the festival but also by the existing story ideas, meaning that they cannot be directed entirely according to the wishes of the FFPJ organizers. This implies that the determination of the theme can limit the students' interest in participating in FFPJ. According to Muhibbin Syah (2013, 152), interest means a strong tendency or great desire towards something, driving one to make efforts to achieve it. Individuals with a strong interest in a particular story idea and its transformation into a film will be reluctant to change the storyline or deviate from their original idea to align with the festival theme. Students prefer the internal satisfaction derived from expressing their artistic sense, ideas, and concepts in the form of a film over participating in a festival with a theme that does not align well with their created work. While film festivals remain important as a platform for promotion, they are no longer the sole means of promoting a film due to the existence of alternative media platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, SnackVideo, and the like. The public recognition gained through these alternative media platforms also brings its own sense of satisfaction.

3. Conclusion

The implementation of FFPJ from 2010 to 2021 revealed festivals with both open themes and themes determined by the FFPJ organizers. The number of submitted films in FFPJ varied, but displayed a clear trend showing a correlation between the theme and the quantity of films entered into FFPJ. When FFPJ had an open theme, the number of submitted films tended to increase. Conversely, when FFPJ had a theme specified by the organizers, the number of submitted films decreased. Students appeared to prefer creating films to express their own ideas or concepts in line with their chosen themes, rather than being constrained by the themes mandated by the organizers.



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