

TRANSCRIPT

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

AUDIENCE RECEPTION ON ANIMATION IN MALAYSIA

GROUP 5: YOUNG ADULTS (NON-MALAYS)

ASSISTANT: FATIMAH YAHAYA

- Moderator: Good morning everyone. I would like to thank you for coming in to participate with this focus group research as explained earlier. So let us begin with an introduction. As I said, my name is Mohd Amir. I'm currently conducting a research on Characteristics, Audience Reception and Future Direction of Malaysian Animation. Why don't we get to know each other? Can we start by telling your names and what Malaysian animation that you have viewed before. Can we start with you, Sir?
- Kelvin: Hi. I'm Kelvin. The local animation that I've watched before, I can't remember the title. I just searched animation but I just prefer western animation. I think it is Kampung.
- Moderator: Kampung Boy?
- Kelvin: Yes! Kampung Boy.
- Caster: Hi. My name is Caster. Malaysian animation that I have watched is Upin Ipin and Boboiboy.
- SK: Hello. You can call me SK. I have watched Upin Apin and Along.
- Caster: Upin Ipin
- SK: Sorry. Upin Ipin.
- Hemma: Hi. I'm Hemma. I've watched Upin Ipin.
- Chan: I'm Chan. I've seen Upin Ipin too.
- Kelly: Hello. My name is Kelly. I watched Upin Ipin before, Boboiboy and Anak Sidek.
- Leonard: My name is Leonard. I've seen most of what these people have seen. Anak-anak Sidek, and also Keluang Man.

Caster, SK & Kelly: Yes, Keluang Man.

Moderator: Alright. So, how did you first learn about these animation? Where did you first see them?

Chan: Upin Ipin from high school. For IT subject, there were people marketing it at our school.

Moderator: Anyone else?

Leonard: I can't remember. I think I was still too small.

SK: When I was small, during my free time, my mom would encourage me to watch animation.

Moderator: What were your first impressions on the animation?

Caster: Actually, for local animation there are more benefits. Like culture, we can share our culture with people internationally.

Kelly: Yes, local culture. It is good that people can see how our people are like. But local drawing isn't so good. Look at Upin Ipin. The drawing is kind of ugly.

Moderator: What do you think, Chan? You're Chan, right?

Chan: Right. I think if it's interesting, I would watch local animation. But I actually prefer to watch anime. The drawing is better, looks nice.

Moderator: What makes the drawing look nice?

Chan: The characters are attractive, handsome.

Moderator: Anyone else?

SK: When I was small, I remember I asked mom to buy CDs of Along and Kluang Man. But mom said waste of money, just watch on TV.

Moderator: Why was that?

SK: She feels there's no quality. Waste of money if we buy.

Leonard: Actually Malaysian animation is not that bad. I thought they were okay. Lots of moral values. But quality-wise, very poor.

Moderator: What quality? Can you explain?

Leonard: Picture, graphics and all that.

Moderator: Alright, so what do you particularly like about Malaysian animation?

Cas: Actually Malaysian cartoons are interesting, memorable. We can also recall back what happened in kampung, the kampung life.

Moderator: How about you, Kelly?

Kelly: If compare to animation now, I prefer older animation like Anak-anak Sidek. Now it's just based on culture. Animation should instill more on country achievements like Nicole David, Lee Chong Wei.

SK: I like the multi-language. How Chinese, English and Malays is used, how proper sentence can be made.

Moderator: Can you elaborate, SK?

SK: The way characters talk to each other. They show how to talk to other people properly.

Chan: Dialogues are used give a more familiar conversation. I think it helps close racial relationship. It shows Malaysia as a multi-cultural country.

Kelly: Yes, it also shows the lifestyle here. People from multi-culture.

Leonard & Kelvin: Yes.

Leonard: It shows people from different races can live together happily.

Moderator: Anybody else?

SK: I see a lot of moral values in the animation. Like if people do good, they will be blessed with good.

Moderator: Anymore to add? Anyone? Ok, next question. What do you guys find frustrating about Malaysian animation?

Chan: Graphics. The drawing style is not nice. If compare drawing styles for Japanese anime with Malaysia, anime is better.

Hemma: The characters. Animation here often portray Malay characters more than Chinese, Indian, other races. They should approach it differently. Reflect all the races.

Kelvin: I think the storyline is not as interesting as other countries. It's very boring. Difficult to feel like wanting to watch local animation.

Leonard: Yes. I think the storyline should be better. It can be more interesting, then people will watch it.

Moderator: Anyone else would like to add anything?

Cas: I think Malaysia need to improve many things.

Moderator: Such as?

Cas: The design. Other countries got so many 3D. Malaysia got only 2D.

Leonard: But Upin Ipin is 3D.

Cas: Oh yes, but other countries got more. And the design is not so good.

Moderator: So, how is Malaysian animation different from those in Japan, United States or in any other countries?

Kelly: I think voice mimicking is also very important. If compare with the Japanese, the Japanese are better.

Moderator: It looks like you have something to say, SK.

SK: Yes. Malaysian animation is only one episode per week, too long to follow.

Moderator: But isn't it the same with other animation, from other countries?

SK: Yes, but the storyline is slow. Then it becomes boring to follow.

Chan: If I can add, the soundtrack is unattractive. They should add in more children rhymes. And also, for Japanese animation, you can download. Very easy. But Upin & Ipin are hard to download. Cannot find.

Kelly: If compare Upin Ipin to Boboiboy, graphics is better with Boboiboy. But if Boboiboy, how relate to moral values,

Leonard: Well, the graphics in Malaysia is a bit poor. Not so interesting. The characters not so attractive like compared to Japanese. The soundtracks also.

Moderator: What do you mean by soundtracks?

Leonard: The music for animation is like normal only. Like in Japan, real bands play real songs for the animation. Sound effects in Malaysia also normal. If other countries, more action type. Adults can watch. But for Malaysia, animation is more to kids.

Kelvin: I prefer to watch Japanese, Korean drama. Malaysia animation is quite boring.

Moderator: Boring as in how?

Kelvin: The storyline. If Malaysian animation wants to improve, they have to change the storyline to more advance. Not just a simple story.

Kelly: If we compare local animation to other countries, the details in animation, the Koreans and Japanese are much better.

Chan: Malaysian animation lack audience variety. Like Japanese animation can capture children, adults, matured people. People can also watch online. Malaysia should plot storylines in different ways like war, friendship, others.

SK: I disagree. We should have our own culture. We should show what we have like normally in graphics, buildings, structures and also other values.

Moderator: Why is that so?

SK: We must show we are Malaysia. Not like any other countries. We have our own way.

Leonard: Malaysian animation doesn't do much on education. Like if we see other countries, they have Dora the Explorer, Sesame Street and others. Some Spanish cartoons as well.

Moderator: Okay, let's move to the next question. How far do you agree or disagree with the portrayal of Malaysia in these animation?

Kelly: I would agree. Like for example we can see Hari Raya in Upin Ipin. But sadly not much on Chinese New Year, Deepavali. They should show more.

Leonard: Right. We also can see language. BM is used. But it is more of conversation language, not 'bahasa baku'.

Moderator: Any other answers? Anyone would like to add anything?

Caster: I think it reflects more on Malays than Malaysia.

Moderator: How's that?

Caster: A lot of Malay characters, Malay language. Chinese culture, not so much.

Moderator: I see. Any more points to add? No? Okay, I think I missed a question just now. Alright, how has Malaysian animation affected your animation viewing patterns?

Kelly: What do you mean, sir?

Moderator: Okay, how far do you feel like watching more of Malaysian animation after you have seen a few of them? How often do you watch them?

Kelly: Well, I think I have seen quite a few. But I don't feel addicted to it.

Leonard: Yes, it's like meant for children. If I was still a small kid then maybe I would watch it more.

Moderator: How about the rest?

Chan: I think a lot of people know about these animation, but they don't watch it often. Just saw it on TV. If it's on, people watch. If not, people won't go finding them.

SK: But I remember old animation, people watch. We always discuss it at school. Nowadays, no.

Leonard: Probably we are too old for it.

Moderator: Anyone else?

Caster: I agree to what they said.

Moderator: Which one?

Caster: All of them.

Moderator: Alright then, next question. If you had the opportunity to change anything about animation in Malaysia, what would you advise?

Kelly: Better graphics. The design and all should be better. So they can grab more attention.

Leonard: 3D option than 2D. Nowadays everyone is doing 3D animation. 2D is old technology.

Moderator: But Japanese anime still works on 2D, right?

Leonard: Yes, but more people are using 3D nowadays. Japanese, they are different. They have a lot of followers.

Kelly: 3D to draw in detail is difficult.

Moderator: Any other answers?

Chan: What other friends say, local animation is more towards kampong. Malaysia should produce two categories, i. kampong and ii. modern storyline. We would like to maintain local stories, like children to watch.

Leonard: And more use of characters from other races besides Malays.

Moderator: Anything else?

SK: There should be a collection of all animation in history. Then people can buy and learn about local animation as well.

Kelly: I think local animation needs to improve drawing, storyline. There is lack of detail. Sometimes, the animation is not properly done.

Chan: We should have a P. Ramlee cartoon. P. Ramlee is a Malaysian icon. We should have a cartoon of him.

Moderator: Interesting idea!

Chan: Everyone knows P. Ramlee. I just thought it would be interesting.

Kelvin: I think Malaysia should use animation to express voice over country matters. Deliver messages which is important about the country.

Moderator: Can you explain?

Kelvin: If like talk about national unity, relationship between races. Like that.

Kelly: Well, local animation is based on our own culture. They should try to create awareness about our culture, educate children on personal safety, survival needs.

Moderator: Survival needs?

Kelly: I mean in a multi-racial country like Malaysia, people need to know how to survive. They need to understand the sensitivities of others.

Moderator: Great. Okay now, is there anything that you feel we might have missed? Or is there anything else you want to say about Malaysian animation. Anything?

SK: Our government should help to promote local animation. They should give support. I see very rare that local animation is shown in cinema. We want all animation in cinema to be cheaper.

Moderator: There are local animation in the cinema, right?

SK: Last I remember was Upin Ipin. Not that many. Government should do campaigns. To parents, if they know of animation in the cinema, they should bring their children to watch the animation.

Moderator: Okay, anyone else?

Leonard: I would prefer they use English than BM so that there's better proficiency because English is an international language.

Caster: Yes, and Chinese must be used as well. Every language must be learned and known. That's what makes us special. A lot of Chinese people have to speak Mandarin.

Moderator: Any more?

Hemma: I think we should send 2D, 3D companies to the US for training. We are just beginning. We are working hard but it is up to us whether to go and learn.

Chan: I think the government should provide more training and scholarships to people to go to Japan and US.

Kelvin: There is lack of emphasis on media, consultancy.

Kelly: I recently paid attention to Japanese merchandise. They sell quite well. Malaysia must look at this.

Moderator: Merchandising?

Kelly: Yes.

Moderator: Upin & Ipin has been doing it. Same as Boboiboy.

Kelly: But we need more.

Moderator: Anything else?

Chan: I think the storyline must be improved while maintaining culture. Right now I think Indonesian drama series is more interesting than drama in Malaysia.

SK: Yes, maybe they should produce animation on Lee Chong Wei's pathway to success.

Moderator: Right, like the P. Ramlee one.

Kelly: Yes. Something similar to Anak-anak Sidek, about sports, athletes and still have moral values.

Moderator: Anything else? No? Well then. I would like to thank you for your participation in this focus group discussion. We really appreciate your time. Thanks again.