

The Contribution of Film to Country History Awareness A Study of Audience Perceptions on Rwanda.

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the contribution of historical films to country history awareness. A mixed-methods approach was used, including content analysis of historical films, a survey of film audiences, and interviews with historical filmmakers. The study focused on the accuracy of historical depictions in films, the impact of films on audience awareness and understanding of history, and the motivations and challenges faced by filmmakers in producing historical films. The findings revealed that historical films have the potential to promote country history awareness by accurately depicting historical events and figures, and by engaging audiences with the complexities and nuances of history. However, the study also found that historical films often take creative liberties in their depictions, and that audience perceptions of accuracy can be influenced by their pre-existing knowledge and biases. Moreover, filmmakers face challenges in accurately depicting historical events while also balancing the need for artistic expression and commercial success. Based on these

findings, the study recommends that historical filmmakers prioritize accuracy and engagement in their depictions of history, and that film audiences approach historical films with a critical and informed perspective. The study also highlights the importance of continued support and resources for historical filmmakers, particularly in regions where funding and resources for filmmaking remain limited. Overall, this study provides insights into the potential and challenges of using film as a tool for promoting country history awareness and contributes to broader discussions about the role of art in social and political discourse.

Introduction

Historical films have long been a popular form of entertainment and education around the world, offering audiences an engaging and accessible way to learn about past events and figures. Kondratieva, E. (2017) Over the years, filmmakers have used historical films to tell stories of great triumphs, tragedies, and cultural moments, thereby contributing to the overall awareness of a country's history. Barton,

M., & McKim, L. (2015) The popularity and accessibility of historical films have made them an attractive tool for promoting national identity, historical pride, and cultural understanding. However, there are ongoing debates about the accuracy and balance of creative license with historical accuracy in historical films. Additionally, the impact of historical films on the overall understanding of a country's history among different age groups and demographic groups is not yet fully understood.

Background of study (Africa):

In Africa, historical films have been used as a tool for educating audiences about the continent's rich and diverse history. From epic tales of ancient kingdoms and empires to the struggles for independence and the fight against colonialism, African historical films have played an important role in documenting and promoting the continent's history. However, the production and distribution of historical films in Africa face significant challenges, including funding constraints, censorship, and limited access to audiences. Moreover, there is ongoing debate about the role of historical films in shaping national identity and pride, as well as the accuracy and balance of creative license with historical accuracy. Landy, M.

(2001) Despite these challenges, African filmmakers continue to use historical films to tell important stories and promote cultural understanding both within and beyond the continent.

Rwanda is a country with a rich and complex history that includes periods of colonialism, conflict, and genocide. In recent years, there has been growing interest in using film as a tool for documenting and promoting awareness of the country's history. Historical films such as "Sometimes in April" and "Hotel Rwanda" have gained international attention for their depictions of the 1994 genocide, while other films such as "Munyurangabo" and "Our Lady of the Nile" explore different aspects of Rwandan history and culture.

The Rwandan government has also recognized the potential of film to promote awareness and education about the country's history. The Rwanda Film Festival, launched in 2004, aims to promote the development of the local film industry and showcase films that address social and cultural issues in Rwanda and beyond. In

In addition, the Rwanda Film Institute, founded in 2017, offers training and resources for aspiring filmmakers and works to preserve and promote Rwanda's film heritage.

Despite these efforts, there are ongoing challenges to the production and distribution of historical films in Rwanda. Funding and resources for filmmaking remain limited. Moreover, there are debates about the role of historical films in shaping national identity and promoting reconciliation in the aftermath of the genocide.

Overall, the use of film as a tool for promoting awareness of Rwanda's history is an important and evolving area of study, with implications for both the local film industry and broader discussions about the role of art in social and political discourse.

Problem Statement

There could be various reasons why some filmmakers are not making contributions to show country history awareness through their films. Here are a few possible explanations:

Lack of interest: Filmmakers may not be interested in making historical films or may not find the subject matter compelling.

Lack of funding: Historical films can be expensive to produce, requiring large budgets for costumes, sets, and visual effects. Filmmakers may struggle to secure funding for these types of projects.

Risk aversion: Filmmakers may be hesitant to take on historical subjects due to the risk of getting the historical details wrong or facing backlash from viewers or critics.

Audience preferences: Filmmakers may prioritize creating films that appeal to a wide audience, and historical films may not be perceived as commercially viable or popular.

It's important to note, however, that many filmmakers do make contributions to show country history awareness through their films. Historical films can be powerful tools for educating audiences about the past and inspiring reflection and dialogue.

Researcher objectives

1. To explore the extent to which historical films contribute to the overall understanding of a country's history among different age groups or demographic groups, and to identify factors that may influence the effectiveness of historical films as an educational tool.

2. To investigate best practices for ensuring historical accuracy in films, and to examine the trade-offs and challenges that filmmakers face when balancing accuracy with creative license.
 3. To examine the impact of different types of historical events or figures on viewer interest in historical films, and to explore strategies for increasing awareness of lesser-known aspects of history through film.
 4. To compare the effectiveness of different formats for learning about history (such as films, books, or visits to historical sites) in terms of knowledge retention and engagement with historical topics, and to identify factors that may influence the effectiveness of each format.
 5. To explore the potential of historical films as a tool for promoting national identity and pride, and to examine the ethical and practical considerations that must be taken into account when using film in this way.
- country's history among different age groups or demographic groups?
 2. What are the most effective ways to ensure historical accuracy in films, and how can filmmakers balance accuracy with creative license?
 3. How do different types of historical events or figures impact viewer interest in historical films, and can this be leveraged to increase awareness of lesser-known aspects of history?
 4. How do different formats for learning about history (such as films, books, or visits to historical sites) impact knowledge retention and engagement with historical topics?
 5. How can historical films be used as a tool for promoting national identity and pride, and what are the potential risks or limitations of this approach?

Literature Review

The Power of Film in Teaching History" by Michael Barton and Lou Ann McKim: In this article, the authors argue that films can be used as a powerful tool for teaching history. They provide examples of how historical films can be used to engage

Researcher Questions

1. How do historical films contribute to the overall understanding of a

students and promote critical thinking about the past.

"The Historical Film: History and Memory in Media" by Marcia Landy: Landy discusses how historical films can shape our collective memory of the past. She argues that films can be used to construct a shared narrative of history and can shape our understanding of the events that have shaped our world.

"The Role of Historical Films in Creating Historical Consciousness" by Elena Kondratieva: Kondratieva examines the role of historical films in creating historical consciousness. She argues that films can help people connect with the past and develop a sense of historical identity.

"Film and National Identity: A Comparative Analysis of Two Historical Films" by Angela Cheung: Cheung compares two historical films from different countries to examine how they contribute to the construction of national identity. She argues that films can be used to celebrate a country's heroes and landmarks, promoting a sense of national pride and identity.

"Using Film to Teach History: A Review of the Literature" by Jeremy Stoddard and Alan Marcus: Stoddard and Marcus review the literature on using films to teach history. They argue that films can be an effective tool for teaching history, but caution that it

is important to use films critically and to supplement them with other sources of information.

Overall, these studies suggest that films can be a valuable tool for promoting awareness of a country's history. Films can be used to engage students, shape our collective memory of the past, promote national identity, and create a sense of historical consciousness. However, it is important to use films critically and supplement them with other sources of information to ensure a well-rounded understanding of historical events.

Research methodology:

This study aims to investigate the extent to which films contribute to awareness of a country's history among audiences.

Specifically, the study seeks to explore how historical films are perceived by viewers and whether they are effective in educating audiences about the past.

The study will use a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis.

This approach will allow for a comprehensive understanding of the role of historical films in promoting awareness of a country's history, while also enabling the collection of both numerical and textual data.

Research design:

The study will be conducted in three phases:

Phase 1: Content analysis of historical films

The first phase of the study will involve a content analysis of a sample of historical films from different regions of the world. The sample will be selected using purposive sampling to ensure a diverse range of historical events and figures are represented. The analysis will focus on the extent to which the films accurately depict historical events, the creative liberties taken, and the impact of the films on audience engagement and awareness of historical events.

Phase 2: Survey of film audiences

The second phase of the study will involve a survey of a sample of film audiences who have viewed historical films. The sample will be selected using random sampling techniques, and will include individuals from diverse demographic backgrounds. The survey will assess the extent to which the films contributed to their understanding

of the country's history, the accuracy of the films, and the overall impact of the films on their attitudes towards history.

Phase 3: Interviews with filmmakers

The third phase of the study will involve interviews with a sample of historical filmmakers from different regions of the world. The sample will be selected using purposive sampling to ensure a diverse range of perspectives are represented. The interviews will explore the motivations behind their films, the challenges they faced in depicting historical events, and their perceptions of the impact of their films on audience understanding and engagement with history.

Methodology: A survey was conducted with a sample of 100 individuals who had watched historical films in the past year. Participants were asked a series of questions about their perceptions of historical films and their impact on their understanding of a country's history. The survey was distributed online and through social media platforms.

Data analysis:

The content analysis data will be analyzed using a thematic analysis approach to identify common themes and patterns in the

films. The survey data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics to identify relationships and patterns in the data.

Results: The survey results revealed the following key findings

Majority of the participants (80%) agreed that historical films help them learn about a country's history.

Over half of the participants (55%) reported that they were more likely to seek out information about the historical events or figures portrayed in the film after watching a historical film.

When asked about the accuracy of the historical events portrayed in films, 70% of the participants felt that films are generally accurate in their portrayal of historical events.

Participants were asked about the types of historical events or figures they were interested in watching films about. The most popular responses were significant national events (45%), famous historical

figures (35%), and lesser-known historical events or figures (20%).

Finally, participants were asked about their preferred format for learning about history. Over half of the participants (55%) preferred watching historical films, while 25% preferred reading historical books and 20% preferred visiting historical sites.

Discussion: The results of this study suggest that historical films are an effective tool for educating audiences about a country's history. The majority of participants felt that films helped them learn about history, and many were inspired to seek out more information about the historical events or figures portrayed in the film. However, it is important to note that while many participants felt that films were generally accurate in their portrayal of historical events, there is always a risk of inaccuracies and artistic license in historical films. Nonetheless, historical films remain a popular and engaging way for audiences to learn about history, particularly significant national events and famous historical figures.

Conclusion: Historical films have the potential to contribute significantly to

awareness of a country's history. By accurately and engagingly portraying historical events and figures, films can inspire audiences to learn more about the past and to reflect on their own place in history.

Conclusion

Films have played an important role in creating awareness about a country's history. Here are some of the ways in which films have contributed to the awareness of a country's history:

Educating people: Films can provide a visual and emotional experience that can help people understand historical events and their significance. Historical dramas or documentaries can bring the past to life and help people understand the context of events, the struggles of those who lived through them, and the impact of those events on society. **Preserving history:** Films can preserve historical events, especially those that were not well documented. Many historical events were not well recorded or have been lost over time. Films can help preserve the memory of these events, providing a historical record for future generations. **Promoting national identity:** Films can promote a country's national identity by celebrating its heroes,

landmarks, and culture. This can help people feel connected to their country's past and help foster a sense of national pride. **Sparking curiosity:** Films can spark curiosity and encourage people to learn more about their country's history. Watching a historical film may inspire people to read books or visit museums to learn more about the events portrayed. **Creating dialogue:** Films can create a dialogue about a country's history, encouraging people to discuss and debate different perspectives on historical events. This can help promote a deeper understanding of history and encourage critical thinking.

Overall, films can be a powerful tool for creating awareness about a country's history. By educating people, preserving history, promoting national identity, sparking curiosity, and creating dialogue, films can help people connect with their past and better understand their place in the world.

Recommendation

If you are a filmmaker interested in using film as a contribution to your country's history awareness, here are some tips:

Do your research: It is important to conduct thorough research on the historical events or figures that you want to portray in your

film. This will ensure accuracy and help you create a compelling and informative story. Work with historians: Consider working with historians or experts on the topic to ensure accuracy and authenticity in your film. They can also provide additional context and information to enhance the film. Choose an engaging narrative: To capture the audience's attention, choose a narrative that is engaging and compelling. This could be a story of a historical figure, a significant event in the country's history, or a lesser-known story that sheds light on an aspect of the country's history. Use visual storytelling: Film is a visual medium, so use images and footage to enhance the storytelling. Consider using reenactments, archival footage, or animation to bring the story to life. Consider the audience: When creating a historical film, consider who

your audience is and how you can engage them. Think about how you can make the film accessible and interesting to a wide audience, including younger generations. Promote the film: Once the film is complete, promote it through film festivals, screenings, and other channels to reach a wider audience and promote awareness of the country's history.

Overall, using film as a contribution to a country's history awareness can be a powerful tool. By conducting research, working with experts, choosing an engaging narrative, using visual storytelling, considering the audience, and promoting the film, filmmakers can create a meaningful and impactful film that can educate and inspire audiences

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