CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This section presents the background of the study, research question, aims and objectives, the scope of the study, and the significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

In this all-digital era, the entertainment industry has become very popular with many people of different ages and societies. In the entertainment industry, film is one of many types of works that can be shown to the audience to entertain them. One film genre is documentary. According to Aufderheide (2008), documentary films are made to present an overview of central issues and discuss various stories that raise important issues of truth and represent reality. Documentaries are claimed to tell stories about real life, where people are invited to have a discussion with many answers that might be true or not. They are well known in terms of inspiration and influence on the audience, such as *Man on Wire* (2008), and *Happy* (2011). Both are inspiring because they show people how to create hopes and face their life challenges in their own way and contexts.

The Social Dilemma (2020) is one of the documentary films that is really relatable to this digital era, where people use social media in every aspect of their lives. It was released on January 26, 2020, directed by Jeff Orlowski and distributed by Netflix. This documentary raises an issue about how social media networks operate to captivate their audience and use their attention as a product of these networks. It also shows the impact of social media on people's privacy and their morale in society. Like most documentaries, this film presents interviews from experts to explain everything that happens on social media. These experts include the top executives from *Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Facebook*, and other popular social media. Besides, this film has fictional segments which highlights the negative

influence of social media. This combination of facts and fiction is another sub genre of documentary, which is called docudrama.

On initial observation, this documentary had several effects on the writer personally after watching it since it influenced her way of thinking about the use of social media in daily life. The effects include decreasing the use of social media, increasing the privacy features on every social media, and being more careful in uploading content on social media. In addition, the film generated a fear that usually arises after watching a horror film, such as excessive fear and cautiousness that can be felt anywhere and anytime. The fear after watching a horror film usually does not last long, but the effect of this documentary film could really be felt and made the writer feel worried about the current living conditions. Those after-effects of this film suggest a construction of fear to hold the audience's interest.

There are some definitions of fear. Starkstein (2019) drawing from Hobbes' concept of fear, defined fear as something related to some emotions such as distrust, suspicion, and "taking heed". Hobbes defines fear as the expectation of future evil, but he interprets the conceptual relationship between fear and the associated behaviors and emotions as relevant in social interaction. Joseph LeDoux (as cited in Mobbs et al., 2019), states that fear is a conscious awareness when a person is in a dangerous or detrimental situation. This emotion can even occur when a triggering event results in a memory that complements the fear. However, fear is something that can help to focus on the problem and practice coping strategies. Moreover, fear is adaptive. It will alert the bodies to avoid danger, as if we have an alarm in us (Susskind et al., 2008). Hence, fear is a feeling that refers to negative things that arise when you feel threatened, but you will automatically find ways to avoid something related to that fear.

There are some previous studies that talk about the construction of fear in films. Noer (2021) analyzed the top 10 horror film trailers to find the elements of what to fear in Indonesian horror movies. This research discussed the recent horror

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films that have refocused on developing the storyline and packaging a slick fear without relying on sexual insemination. Krysanova (2019) did research to address multimodal and semiotic issues of fear construction in film. It showed that the construction of fear in film can be recognized in two ways: as a combination of three semiotic resources (verbal, non-verbal, and cinematographic) and two semiotic resources (verbal and cinematographic). A study by Dreyer (2018) discussed the fear that is constructed and also connected it to cultural beliefs and stereotypes in horror films. Most of these previous studies talk about the construction of fear caused by horror films. A little survey from *Google* reviews of *The Social Dilemma* (2020) also shows that there are people who feel that the film creates fear. It becomes another reason the writer wants to discuss the construction of fear in documentary films.

The previous studies mentioned above give some insight about the construction of fear in horror films but, there have not been many studies that analyze the construction of fear in documentary film. Therefore, this study examines the issue of fear in a documentary film to give insight on how a documentary film can also construct imagination. For this research, the construction of fear is analyzed under the theoretical framework about fear developed by Starkstein (2019) and a critical perspective in order to understand the narrative and visual presentation in film matter. The primary source of data for this research is documentary film, which is analyzed by using film theory from Bordwell and Thompson (2008).

1.2 Research Questions

Only a small number of studies on the construction of fear in documentary films have been conducted. Focusing on the act of fear constructed through the documentary film *The Social Dilemma* (2020), the research question for this study has been formulated as follows:

How is fear constructed in this documentary film?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

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The purpose of this study is to examine the construction of fear in the documentary film.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study investigates the way the documentary film *The Social Dilemma* (2020) constructs fear for its audiences. The discussion focuses on the film aspects—narrative and visual aspects, such as camera work, *mise-en-scene*, and sound that build the construction of fear.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The importance of this study is to understand how fear results from a series of projected scenes in the documentary film *The Social Dilemma* (2020). It shows how the filmmaker builds and processes the various elements that cause that fear. Another significance is that the study is about documentary films and talks about fear, something that is rarely discussed in research on documentary films. In addition, by analyzing how fear is constructed in a film, it helps people understand that films, including documentaries, are able to instill imagination.

1.6 Clarification of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, several main terms in this research will be clarified as follows:

1. Construct: to build something or put together different parts to form something whole (Cambridge Dictionary Online, 2023)
2. Fear: Fear is defined as a highly negative internal state because it organizes the coordinated functions that serve to generate our peak performance for avoidance, escape, or confrontation (Mobbs et al., 2019).
3. Documentary film: a film that is considered to tell a story about real life and build a space where people can have a discussion about the story and issues

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that are delivered through the film, whether the story is true or false (Aufderheide, 2008).

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This study is organized into five chapters, followed by:

Chapter I: Introduction

This section contains the background of the study, which explains the reason why this research was conducted. It also has statements of problems and their purpose, the subject of the study, clarification of some important terms in the study, and the importance of this study.

Chapter II: Theoretical Framework

This chapter consists of relevant theories, ideas, and issues in which the principles and justifications used as the foundation of the research. It also provides findings from previous research and other information that is relevant to the present research.

Chapter III: Research Methodology

This chapter describes the approaches and procedures, research designs, data collection, and data analysis applied in this study.

Chapter IV: Findings and Discussion

This chapter provides the findings of the analyzed data and the discussions of the findings that present the answer to the research question.

Chapter V: Conclusion

This chapter provides conclusions obtained from the findings of the present study. In addition, suggestions for future research are also included in this chapter.