

The Acceptance of TV Islamic Reality Shows by the Malay Community

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Abstract

Reality television has become increasingly popular since the past few years among viewers and television producers alike due to their own individual reasons. This study tries to understand the acceptance of the reality television, specifically, the genre of Islamic reality television shows among the Malay community. This is a quantitative study, which uses the survey method with questionnaire as the research instrument. The research targets at Malays from the age of 13 years old and above, nationwide. The study includes the level of TV viewing habits among the Malay community, the preference and viewing habits of Islamic reality shows, the reasons for watching and the satisfaction gained from watching the Islamic reality shows, the perception and attitude towards the Islamic reality shows, as well as the involvement in and impact change on viewers of the programs. A total of 540 respondents were sampled and only 460 valid respondents were used for the present study. The study incorporated the uses and gratifications theory (Blumler & Katz, 1974) to understand the motives and satisfaction derived from watching Islamic reality shows. The study also tries to test the cultivation theory (Gerbner & Gross, 1976) for the viewers of the Islamic reality shows on their perception, attitude and behavior. The study found that majority of the respondents had viewed Islamic reality shows; with Imam Muda as the most popular Islamic reality show. They believed that the program is good and educational in nature. The main reason for watching it is the Islamic nature and the positive learning experience gained. The respondents also stated that watching Islamic reality shows improved their Islamic knowledge and practices. The study found that there is a positive relationship between reasons for watching and satisfaction with watching Islamic reality shows and this supported the uses and gratification theory understudy. In addition, the study also found that there are positive relationships between perception, attitude, involvement and impact change with the extent of viewing habits to the Islamic reality shows. Thus, the cultivation theory holds true for

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this study. Based on the findings, it is suggested that relevant authorities take appropriate strategies to ensure that TV Islamic reality shows remain relevant, fun and up-to-date with current issues for the viewers to gain new knowledge and to reinforce that their existing Islamic knowledge and practices.

Keywords: Reality TV, Islamic reality shows, uses and gratifications theory, cultivation theory, Malay community

Introduction

Islam is a religion of peace, mercy, purity and moderation that is constantly being misunderstood by the West which links Islam to negative connotation such as terrorism, honor killing, chaos and fanaticism. The constant negative stereotype by the media reports gives a negative impression that all Muslims are fundamentalists and therefore, senseless terrorists who want to destroy everything of the non-Muslims. Scholars have stated that the media's focus on Islam and Muslim has been particularly intense since September 11, 2001 and even before the tragedy, Muslims were portrayed as 'savage' (Kabir, 2006).

As reality television is a big hit with television viewers, a Malaysian private television station decided to change the perception of Islam using a method that had grabbed headlines even in the international news arena – a religious reality competition – whereby the program uses religion as the platform for a reality competition in search of the next young imam or *Imam Muda* – as the show is called. The success of the show saw more religious reality TV shows being produced, such as, *Solehah*, *Ustazah Pilihan* and *Akademi Al-Quran*.

Prior to this, the majority of most locally-produced reality shows were entertainment-based, such as, *Malaysian Idol* (8TV), *One in A Million* (8TV), *Akademi Fantasia* (Astro Ria), and *Mentor* (TV3), with a few exception such as reality shows *Give Me a Job* (ntv7) and *Explorace* (TV3). Malaysian also aired many overseas reality programs, such as, *American Idol* (USA), *Keeping Up With the Kardashians* (USA), and *Extreme Make-Over* (USA).

The influx of Western reality shows and Western-inspired reality shows drew plenty of critics and in 2005, the current Malaysian Prime Minister, Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak (at the time, was still Deputy Prime Minister) made a statement saying that plenty of the locally-produced reality TV shows were borrowing “extensively from the Western culture which [he] feared could threaten Eastern values and lead to moral decadence” (Juliana, 2010).

Greg Barton, acting Director of the Center for Islam and the Modern World at Monash University in Melbourne claimed that “reality TV sells and religion sells in Malaysia”, which connotes that the two factors are combined together to produce an educational and informative reality program rather than just plain entertainment. Due to the growing number and influence of reality TV shows, it is crucial that media practitioners make full use of TV to disseminate positive information or aspects related to Islam (Gooch, 2011). As such, the objectives of this research are:

1. To determine the preference and viewing habits of Islamic reality shows among the Malay community;
2. To examine the reasons and satisfactions gained from watching Islamic reality shows among the Malay community; and
3. To analyze the effects of watching Islamic reality shows on perception, attitude and involvement, towards Islamic impact change among the Malay community.

Literature Review

Islamic Religious Reality Television in Malaysia

Religion is part and parcel of television programming these days with a number of religious programs broadcasted on different channels. With the introduction of religious channels in Malaysia (TV9, Astro Oasis and Al-Hijrah), the tendency for an increase in the number of religious programs is inevitable. A number of Islamic religious reality shows has already started to gather its own followers of devoted fans such as *Imam Muda* (already into its third season), *Solehah*, *Ustazah Pilihan*, *Akademi Nasyid* and *Adik-Adikku*. In terms of content, the religious reality shows include religious knowledge about Islam, *Quranic verses* and *hadith*, presented to the audiences.

In early 2010, the broadcast of *Imam Muda*'s first session on the Islamic lifestyle channel Astro Oasis managed to attract many headlines, both locally and internationally (Yoong, 2010; Hartenstein, 2010). The reality television program that uses the religion of Islam as the backbone of the program had fascinated many. The reality show originally targeted the teenagers but was reported to pull attention from the adults and elderly viewers (Zalida & Mariah, 2011). Due to its overwhelming response, *Imam Muda* began its second season in 2011, which also proved to be a success. In 2012, *Imam Muda* started its third season.

With a successful formula at hand, Astro Oasis branched out with a new religious reality program, only this time the spotlight belongs to the women. On October 1, 2011, *Ustazah Pilihan* was aired on Astro Oasis. Concurrently,

a newly established Islamic-lifestyle television channel, Al-Hijrah, also came out with a similar religious reality competition called *Solehah*, which is also featured an all female-participants. Besides religious reality TV shows on the two Islamic channels, other channels such as RTM1 offers program such as *Adik-Adikku*, while TV9 offers *Akademi Nasyid* and *Akademi Al-Quran*.

It is important to note that religious television programming also consists of popular secular programming genre, including talk shows, game shows, children shows, soap operas, news/magazine shows, sports programming, music/variety shows as well as reality television (Abelman, 1987; Zalida & Mariah, 2011).

Abelman (1987) found that the viewers have 22 motives on why they watch religious television programs which includes information learning, dissatisfaction with other media, spiritual guidance, entertainment, avoiding commercial TV, feeling close to God, religiosity, moral support, topic for discussion and many more.

Religious talk shows have also occupied space in television scheduling in Malaysia, with programs such as *Forum Perdana Ehwat Islam* (TV1), *Al-Kuliyah* (TV3) and *Halaqah* (TV9), and this is credited to the concept of *Islam Hadhari* (Civilisational Islam) introduced in 2003 by the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Seri Abdullah Hj. Ahmad Badawi (Juliana, 2011).

Religious television users are more towards the implicit impact such as the need to know one-self through various aspects such as mentally or spiritually (Zalida & Mariah, 2011). Thus, it can be said that the audience seeks/watches religious programs to gratify their needs. Zalida and Mariah (2011) also discovered that viewers admitted that they watched religious programs as substitute for not attending any sermons.

According to Zulkiple (2001), Islamic programs' objective should include strengthening Islamic belief, spreading Islamic thinking, reinforcing Islamic cultures, forming public opinions and serving as a watchdog towards negative values that affect the development of the societies (cited in Musa et.al., 2010). In view of religious programs from an Islamic perspective, it should have a 'mission' to encourage followers to spread and to preach (*dakwah*) in order to inform people about Islam through various means of the mass media such as radio, TV, magazines, video, fax and the Internet (Musa et.al, 2010).

What these reality shows is trying to achieve by using Islam as the platform for competition is to utilize elements of popular culture to tackle the religious

concerns of Muslims in a fresh and relevant manner especially to the younger generation.

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Taking the uses and gratifications (U&G) approach (Katz, Blumber & Gurevitch, 1973) as a base, it is believed that viewers are active audience who seek and try to meet their needs through the media. An exploration of U&G of reality programs is used to determine what motivate them to watch the programs. It is believed that audience actively seeks out media messages to satisfy certain needs, which is completely opposite from the assumption that audience is undifferentiated mass that passively receives media messages (Kaye & Johnson, 2002).

The U&G examines the nature of audience involvement and the gratification obtained from viewing television, with an emphasis on motives by psychological, social and socio-cultural that influence them, and thus use it, that is, the behavior and attitude that develop as a result of the combined influence of motives and traits known as 'gratifications' (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007; Swanson, 1987). Empirical studies have discovered that gratification takes many forms, from learning information that can be instrumental in performing one's role as a citizen to consuming media fare in a relaxing habitual ritual.

Identifying U&G of religious reality shows holds both theoretical and practical benefits as the U&G approach has proven helpful in identifying a variety of motives regarding media use. The researcher is able to understand what motivates Muslim youth viewers to watch religious reality television shows and how the content impacts their changes in life. The most straightforward U&G approach to message content would focus on connection between audience motivations, attributes of message content, and the interpretations of content by audience (Swanson, 1987).

U&G supports the understanding of viewers' motives and predisposition, while placing reality TV shows on larger spectrum of communication channels that are more or less available to audience, with the understanding that individuals are frequently, but not always, actively engaged in the selection of media contents (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007).

Various aspects of a received message (i.e., attributes of the medium, genre of media content, or specific message or program) may provide gratifications. Audience exhibit some independence and diversity in linking gratifications to media messages as they creatively use mass communication in trying to accomplish their desired ends (Swanson, 1987). The seeking of gratification

has sometimes emerged as the strongest single predictor of exposure. Yoon and Garma (2006) noted that understanding the level of involvement of the target audience (youth) and what motivates them to be involved in reality TV shows is important for both the broadcasters and government agencies when formulating practical policies in Malaysia.

Nabi et.al., (2006) found that different genre of reality programs have different viewing motives that vary from happiness, parasocial relationships, social comparison, self-awareness, negative outcome, and dramatic challenge. They also noted that the motivation for voyeurism (i.e., curiosity about others) appears to be a key distinguishing gratification between reality and fictional programming. Researchers do not yet fully understand motives for viewing reality programming, although evidences gathered to date suggest that these motives are quite diverse (Woods & Ebersole, 2005).

In studying the viewing motives of reality TV, Woods and Ebersole (2005) listed five factors that explain program choice preference, which are personal identification with real characters, entertainment, mood change, pass time and vicarious participation and they found that 'personal identification with real characters' was the strongest motives for reality TV viewing as it could resemble audiences' own demographic and psychographic identity. Meanwhile, Reiss and Wiltz (2004) examined the association between 16 human desires and values with reality TV viewing, and they concluded that the motivation to feel self-important or social status was most strongly associated with reality TV consumption. However, they mentioned that as there are many genres that constituted reality shows, thus the results of motivation vary accordingly and are affected by different variables, for example, gender.

Park and Villar (2011) discovered that perceived realism predicts the desire to imitate people from reality TV as the casts on reality TV are perceived as realistic for African-American college students. They also noted that scholars have determined that not all television programs' influence is considered negative as reality television programs can appeal to human desire to discover truth and genuineness to promote social integration. A U&G approach to the question of perceived realism in reality television found that audience who used reality TV for its entertaining and relaxing values, perceived the interaction in the shows as realistic (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007).

Meanwhile, Yoon and Garma (2006) concluded that their research by stating that the underlying motives for watching reality television in Klang Valley, Malaysia is due to suspense (the most dominant factor), personal identity and social interaction, engaging/entertaining, romance/attractiveness

of contestants, and sensation-seeking. However, the research does not mention any motives for religious reality show, which is usually packed with religious information rather than just challenges, shocking scenes and weekly elimination which leads to the suspense motivation. Since this research focuses on religious reality TV shows, it is expected that viewers are motivated to watch due to its educational content as religious shows have been determined to be informational in nature (Abelman, 1985; Zalida & Mariah, 2011).

Based on the discussions above, it can be hypothesized that:

H1: There is a positive relationship between the extent of exposure to reasons for watching Islamic reality shows and to satisfaction with watching Islamic reality shows.

Cultivation Theory

According to cultivation theory (Gerbner & Gross, 1976), individuals exposed over a prolonged period of time to television content, come to develop perceptions that are consistent with the television content and its portrayal of what constitute the reality. The central hypothesis of a cultivation research is that viewing television gradually leads to adoption of belief about the nature of the social world that is shaped by the stereotype and selective views of reality as portrayed on television (Woo & Dominick, 2003).

The emphasis of this theory is placed on the notion that cultivation of perceptions occurs only through repetitive, consistent, and long-term exposure to patterns common to most programming (Holmes & Johnson, 2009) and the most popular genre associated with the cultivation theory is violence. However, Hirsch (1980) criticized early cultivation analysis by Gerbner and his colleagues for categorizing viewers into light, medium, and heavy, "...with no theoretical or statistical rationale" (p. 418) and he later conducted a reanalysis of the available National Opinion Research Center's (NORC) general social surveys data collected in 1975, 1977, and 1978 which was earlier used by Gerbner and colleagues. Hirsch (1980) also re-created the viewing categories into non-viewers (0 hours of television watched per day), light viewers (1 hour; formally 0-2 hours), medium viewers (2-3 hours; formally 3 hours), heavy viewers (4-7 hours; formally 4+ hours), and extreme viewers (8+ hours).

Previous research related to cultivation theory takes on a variety of television program formats such as news, action movies, dramas and more recently it has included talk shows (Woo & Dominick, 2003) and music video (Zhang, Miller & Harrison, 2008). Woo and Dominick (2003) tested the cultivation effect towards international students who were heavy viewers of daytime

talk shows and their perception and attitude towards the US society. They found that the international students who are heavy viewers of daytime talk shows have negative attitude and perception towards human relationships in the US.

Meanwhile, a study on cultivation effect towards the expectation of relationship beliefs from television portrayal supported the cultivation theory as a positive association between television consumption and a number of dysfunctional relationship beliefs (Homes and Johnson (2009). The research shows that there is a tendency for media to portray men and women as having different relationship priorities and partners as happy in their relationships without needing to communicate their relationship needs to one another. Therefore, it can be said that the cultivation effect takes place with prolonged viewing of a television program and can cultivate audience on a variety of aspects.

Following the above discussion, it can be postulated that:

H2: There are positive relationships between extent of exposure to Islamic reality shows with perception, attitude, and involvement in Islamic reality shows, towards Islamic impact change to their life.

Methodology

The Method

This study employed a quantitative approach which uses a cross-sectional survey as the research method in understanding the acceptance of Islamic reality television shows among the Malay community, using questionnaire as the research instrument for the study. The survey questionnaire was then distributed to Malays who reside in Peninsular Malaysia and a total of 540 returned questionnaires were used for data analysis. Not all of them were found to be watching TV and only 485 of them did so. From 485 respondents, 460 of them spent at least one hour watching Islamic reality shows on an average sitting.

The questionnaire included measures of preference for TV Islamic reality show, exposure and attention given to TV Islamic reality shows, reasons for watching TV Islamic reality shows, satisfaction gained from watching TV Islamic reality shows, perception towards TV Islamic reality shows, attitude towards TV Islamic reality shows, involvement in TV Islamic reality shows, impact change from watching TV Islamic reality shows, and demographic data.

The Measurement

Measure of preference for TV Islamic reality shows used a 5-point Likert-like rating ranging from 1=not at all to 5=very much. Exposure to TV Islamic reality shows was measured by an average hour spent on watching TV Islamic reality show per sitting (ranging from 0 to 8 hours) and attention given to watching TV Islamic reality shows also used the five-point Likert-like rating ranging from 1=not at all to 5=very much.

Reasons for watching TV Islamic reality shows were measured using a 5-point Likert-like rating ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. There were 10 items asked for the reasons of watching TV Islamic reality shows. The reasons, among others, are “it is interesting”, “it helps me learn practical religious knowledge” and “I can learn how to be a good Muslim”.

Satisfaction gained from watching TV Islamic reality shows was measured by using a 5-point Likert-like rating ranging from 1=strongly dissatisfied to 5=strongly satisfied. There were 11 items asked for satisfaction with watching TV Islamic reality shows. Among others are “I am satisfied with the Islamic reality shows because ‘its content is educational’, ‘the participants are talented’ and ‘the mentors are qualified’.

To access their perception and attitude and involvement with TV Islamic reality shows, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a 5-point Likert-like rating, with 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. There were 10 items used to measure perception on TV Islamic reality shows. The questions asked, among others, are “I think watching Islamic reality shows is enjoyable”, “I perceive that people who watch Islamic reality shows are pious” and “I perceived that Malay community should watch Islamic reality shows to keep the *ummah* intact and together”.

The attitude towards Islamic reality shows was measured using 10 items where the respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement to each item using a 5-point Likert-like rating, with 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. The items include “I feel that Islamic reality show teaches me how to be a respected Muslim”, “I believe that watching Islamic reality show is beneficial for me” and “I believe that Islamic reality show presents actual life expectations of a Muslim”.

Impact change from watching TV Islamic reality shows was measured using a 5-point Likert-like rating ranging from 1=no change at all to 5=very much. The 6 items are that after watching the Islamic reality shows: I have experienced change in my life in terms of Islamic “knowledge”, “teaching”, “belief”, “practices”, “skills”, and “spirituality”.

The overall percentage was calculated based on the sum of weighted item and later the value was multiplied by 100/5, since the Likert-like rating is on a 5-point scale measurement. The range for each rating is 5 point. Therefore, to calculate for the percentage, each range percentage $(1/5 * 100) = 20\%$. So an interval of 20% is added to each level of the 5-point rating, with the lowest value of 1% and the highest value is 100%. This calculation is computed and applied to all tables.

All variables in the study were subjected to reliability test and it is found that all the variables were reliable with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .855 to .950 and these values were found to be higher than the acceptable reliability value of .70 (Table 1)

Table 1: Reliability test of items

Variable	No. of Items*	Cronbach's Alpha	M	SD
Reasons	10	.921	3.59	.70
Satisfaction	11	.915	3.58	.65
Perception	10	.855	3.73	.60
Attitude	10	.914	3.63	.70
Involvement	12	.877	2.00	.69
Impact Change	6	.950	3.70	.69

*Items measured on a 5-point Likert-like rating

Findings of The Study

Demographic Background of Respondents

Based on the 540 respondents, the study found that approximately 52% of the sample was females and the rest (48%) were males. Two-thirds of them (67%) were from urban areas while 33% of them lived in the rural areas. More than half of the respondents (54%) aged between 13-25 years, others were aged between 26-39 years old (23%) and another 23% of them were 40 years old and above. While almost two-thirds of the respondents (65%) reported that they were still single, others were either married (33%) or divorced (2%). Most of them were educated with a bachelor degree (32%), diploma holders (27%) and many had completed their Form Five education with school certificate (26%).

Objective 1: Preference and viewing habits of Islamic reality shows

Viewing patterns of TV Islamic reality shows are looked at in terms of the respondents’ preference to the program, average time spent, attention given to, and the extent of exposure to TV Islamic reality shows.

It is good to reveal that the respondents’ preference to the TV Islamic reality shows. It was found that many of respondents preferred to watch *Imam Muda* (62.2%) and *Akademi al-Quran* (62.2%) more than *Adik-adikku* (46.6%), *Ustazah Pilihan* (46.4%), and *Solehah* (43.4%). The detailed results are shown in Table 1. These results generally indicate that *Imam Muda* and *Akademi al-Quran* are highly preferred by the Malays more than the other Islamic reality shows.

Table 2: Preference of TV Islamic reality shows

Islamic Reality Show (N=485)	Extent of Preference* (%)					Mean	SD	Overall (%)
	1	2	3	4	5			
<i>Imam Muda</i>	13.4	18.4	28.5	22.7	16.9	3.11	1.27	62.2
<i>Akademi Al-Quran</i>	13.9	18.0	26.9	25.5	15.7	3.11	1.27	62.2
<i>Akademi Nasyid</i>	34.3	23.1	21.7	14.3	6.6	2.36	1.27	47.2
<i>Adik-adikku</i>	36.4	21.1	22.1	14.5	6.0	2.33	1.26	46.6
<i>Ustazah Pilihan</i>	32.6	26.0	23.9	11.9	5.6	2.32	1.20	46.4
<i>Solehah</i>	38.4	24.5	22.8	10.4	3.9	2.17	1.16	43.4

*1=not at all (1-20%), 2= little (21-40%), 3=moderate (41-60%), 4=much (61-80%), 5=very much (81-100%)

Further analysis was carried out to gauge the extent of exposure to Islamic reality shows for the programs mentioned above (Table 2).

Table 3: TV Islamic reality shows viewing habits

Islamic Reality Show Viewing Habits	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Average hour spent watching TV Islamic reality show per sitting	0 hour	25	5.2
	1 hour	122	25.2
	2 hours	155	32.0
	3 hours	86	17.7
	4 hours	52	10.7
	5 hours	28	5.8
	6 hours	12	2.5
	7 hours	3	0.6
	8 hours	2	0.4
	Total	485	100.0
M=2.36, SD=1.47			
Attention given to watching TV Islamic reality show	Not at all (1)	38	8.3
	A little (2)	105	23.0
	Moderate (3)	162	35.5
	Much (4)	107	23.5
	Very much (5)	44	9.6
	Total	456	100.0
M=3.03, SD=1.09			
Extent of exposure to TV Islamic reality shows (average sitting x attention given)		M=7.94, SD=6.64	

Regarding the number of hours spent on TV Islamic reality shows, results showed that more than half of the respondents (57.2%) spent for one (25.2%) to two (32.0%) hours watching TV Islamic reality shows per sitting. On the whole, the respondents spent an average of 2.36 hours ($SD=1.47$) on watching TV Islamic reality shows per sitting. They also reported that the amount of attention given to watching TV Islamic reality shows was moderate (35.5%).

Looking at the viewing pattern among the Malays, the study also found that some of them (19.6%) were considered as heavy viewers (those who watch TV Islamic reality shows at least 4 hours and more per sitting). For this study, the extent of exposure is calculated based on the average time spent on watching TV Islamic reality shows and the attention given to the show. It is found that the average extent of exposure to TV Islamic reality shows is 7.94 ($SD=6.64$) with a minimum of 1.0 and maximum of 35.0.

Objective 2: Reasons and satisfactions gained from watching TV Islamic reality shows

Respondents indicated their level of agreement with each of the 10 statements for the reasons on watching TV Islamic reality shows. Table 3 shows that, on the whole, the respondents’ level of agreement to all the 10 items is 72.0%. The mean for the reasons in watching Islamic reality shows is 3.60 ($SD=0.68$) on a five point Likert-like rating. The top three reasons being “because it helps me learn practical religious knowledge”, “so that I can learn how to be a good Muslim” and “so that I can encourage my family members and/or friends to be well equipped with Islamic teaching”. The reasons are positive reasons towards self betterment.

Table 4: Reasons for watching TV Islamic reality shows

I watch TV Islamic Reality Show...	Level of Agreement* (%)					Overall (%)
	1	2	3	4	5	
Because it helps me learn practical religious knowledge.	0.7	3.5	20.1	48.6	27.2	79.6
So that I can learn how to be a good Muslim.	0.7	4.4	24.0	47.6	23.3	77.6
So that I can encourage my family members and/or friends to be well equipped with Islamic teachings.	1.3	7.0	24.2	45.4	22.0	76.0
Because it is interesting.	1.1	5.5	32.8	45.4	15.2	73.6
Because it is stimulating.	1.8	7.3	35.1	43.7	12.1	71.4
Because I like to watch how participants take the challenges.	3.1	10.6	28.2	44.5	13.7	71.0
Because it relaxes my mind.	2.2	9.0	36.3	40.7	11.7	70.2

So that I can learn how to present myself in the public.	3.5	10.8	33.3	41.2	11.2	69.2
Because it entertains me.	1.8	9.9	40.5	39.0	8.8	68.6
So that I can talk with other people about the capabilities of the participants.	7.9	16.7	33.5	30.8	11.0	64.0
Overall reasons (N=450; M=3.60, SD=0.68)						72.0

*1=strongly disagree (1-20%), 2=disagree (21-40%), 3=slightly agree (41-60%), 4=agree (61-80%), 5=strongly agree (81-100%)

The respondents were also asked questions pertaining to their level of satisfaction of the TV Islamic reality shows (Table 4). The respondents were found to be satisfied with watching TV Islamic reality shows (71.8%). More than three-quarters of them were satisfied that the content is educational (79.6%), the challenges given are meaningful (75.2%), and the mentors are qualified (75.2%), only 67.8% of the respondents were in the opinion that the promotion and publicity are sufficient.

Table 5: Satisfaction Gained from Watching TV Islamic Reality Show

I am Satisfied with the TV Islamic Reality Show Because...	Level of Satisfaction* (%)					Overall (%)
	1	2	3	4	5	
Its content is educational.	0.4	2.9	22.6	46.6	27.5	79.6
The challenges given are meaningful.	0.7	4.2	31.9	45.4	17.8	75.2
The mentors are qualified.	1.8	4.4	29.2	45.7	18.9	75.2
The program is interesting.	1.1	7.0	34.5	42.2	15.2	72.6
The production is professionally done.	1.1	6.2	36.8	44.9	11.0	71.8
The time is appropriate.	1.1	9.0	39.0	38.2	12.7	70.4
The participants are talented.	1.8	8.8	36.4	42.1	11.0	70.4
The winner is superb.	2.2	9.9	38.2	35.4	14.3	70.0
Judges decision is accurate.	1.8	7.9	42.5	37.7	10.1	69.2
The award is valuable.	3.3	10.7	39.0	34.4	12.5	68.4

The promotion and publicity are sufficient.	2.9	12.5	38.5	34.7	11.4	67.8
Overall satisfaction (N=450; M=3.59, SD=0.64)						71.8

*1=not very satisfied (1-20%), 2=not satisfied (21-40%), 3=slightly satisfied (41-60%), 4=satisfied (61-80%), 5=very satisfied (81-100%)

Objective 3: The effects of watching TV Islamic reality shows on perception, attitude, and involvement, towards Islamic impact change

The following tables present the results on the effects of watching TV Islamic reality shows on perception (Table 5), attitude (Table 6), involvement (Table 7), and impact change (Table 8).

Perception of TV Islamic reality shows

The respondents felt that the TV Islamic reality show that had watched is a very good program (84.4%). They claimed to know that the content of the TV Islamic reality show is educational (81.2%), and that they perceived that the Malay community should watch the TV Islamic reality shows to keep the ummah intact and together (80.2%). The respondents agreed to most of the items, thus giving an overall perception of TV Islamic reality shows of 74.8%.

Table 6: Perception of TV Islamic reality shows

Perception of TV Islamic Reality Shows	Level of Agreement*					Overall (%)
	1	2	3	4	5	
Overall, I perceive that TV Islamic reality show is a very good program.	0.4	2.4	14.6	40.2	42.4	84.4
I know that the content of the TV Islamic reality show is educational.		2.6	20.3	45.5	31.6	81.2
I perceive that Malay community should watch TV Islamic reality show to keep the ummah intact and together.	1.3	4.4	20.5	39.3	34.4	80.2

I perceive that Malay family watches TV Islamic reality show tend to help improve their Islamic teaching obligations.	1.3	5.5	22.3	42.2	28.7	78.2
I think watching TV Islamic reality show is enjoyable.	0.9	5.5	29.8	47.7	16.1	74.6
I think watching TV Islamic reality show is exciting.	1.3	7.1	29.7	45.0	16.9	73.8
I know that many Malay parents are encouraging their children to watch the TV Islamic reality show.	1.5	9.9	29.8	38.4	20.3	73.2
I think watching TV Islamic reality show is challenging.	2.7	10.8	35.4	38.1	13.1	69.6
I know many Malays are watching TV Islamic reality show.	3.5	8.4	38.6	37.5	11.9	69.2
I perceive that people who watch TV Islamic reality show are pious.	6.9	20.0	37.5	26.6	9.1	62.2
Perception items (N=450; M=3.74, SD=0.59)						74.8

*1=strongly disagree (1-20%), 2=disagree (21-40%), 3=slightly agree (41-60%), 4=agree (61-80%), 5=strongly agree (81-100%)

Attitude towards TV Islamic reality shows

Majority of the respondents (81.8%) felt that TV Islamic reality show should be continued. Many agreed that “watching TV Islamic reality show benefits them” (78.0%), and “teaches them how to be good Muslims” (76%). However, the least that they did with the TV Islamic reality show is joining the program. Overall, they have a positive attitude towards the TV Islamic reality show as a whole (72.6%).

Table 7: Attitude towards TV Islamic reality shows

Attitude Towards TV Islamic Reality Shows	Level of Agreement*					Overall %
	1	2	3	4	5	
I believe that TV Islamic reality show should be continued.	0.9	3.3	17.6	42.3	35.9	81.8
I believe that watching TV Islamic reality show is beneficial for me.	0.7	6.0	23.9	41.6	27.9	78.0
I feel that TV Islamic reality show teaches me how to be a respected Muslim.	0.4	7.0	26.7	43.4	22.5	76.0
Overall, I prefer TV Islamic reality show very much.	0.9	9.3	28.2	37.0	24.7	75.0
I like the content of the TV Islamic reality show.	0.4	6.4	32.7	44.2	16.3	74.0
I believe that TV Islamic reality show presents actual life expectations of a Muslim.	1.3	9.3	31.9	38.5	18.9	73.0
I like watching TV Islamic reality show.	0.7	8.1	34.4	40.3	16.5	72.8
I prefer watching TV Islamic reality show to other TV reality show.	2.7	13.1	35.2	33.4	15.7	69.2
I prefer watching TV Islamic reality show to other TV programs.	4.0	14.2	38.8	31.5	11.5	66.4
I feel like joining the TV Islamic reality show.	13.5	19.6	33.6	23.6	9.7	59.2
Average attitude items (N=450; M=3.63, SD=0.70)						72.6

*1=strongly disagree (1-20%), 2=disagree (21-40%), 3=slightly agree (41-60%), 4=agree (61-80%), 5=strongly agree (81-100%)

Involvement in TV Islamic reality shows

There is very little involvement in TV Islamic reality shows (40.2%). The highest two being “I watched the Islamic reality show on TV only” (69.6%) and “I watched the final competition live on TV” (60.0%). About half of the respondents admitted that they watched and listened attentively to the TV Islamic reality shows (50.2%).

Table 8: Involvement in TV Islamic reality shows

Level of Involvement in TV Islamic Reality Show	Level of Involvement*					Overall %
	1	2	3	4	5	
I watched the Islamic reality show on TV only.	6.3	10.5	31.7	31.3	20.1	69.6
I watched the final competition live on TV.	17.5	15.3	27.6	28.9	10.7	60.0
I watch and listen attentively to their programs.	25.2	22.6	31.6	17.1	3.5	50.2
I keep up with their progress and development.	37.7	21.5	26.5	12.1	2.2	44.0
I watched the TV Islamic reality show live.	42.5	17.5	24.5	13.3	2.2	43.0
I download and share the winner's videos.	62.0	15.2	12.5	8.4	2.0	34.6
I voice out my opinion by writing in blogs/ social media sites for my favorite candidate.	64.3	12.5	14.4	6.6	2.2	34.0
I attended at the final competition live at the stadium/hall.	69.7	13.2	10.5	4.8	1.8	31.2

I join the winner's fan club.	74.3	9.0	7.7	6.8	2.2	30.8
I voted a few times for my favorite candidate through SMS.	74.3	1.3	9.2	5.5	0.7	29.6
I took photo with the winners.	79.2	6.8	7.7	5.3	1.1	28.4
I wore t-shirt showing my support to my candidate.	82.5	5.9	7.4	3.3	0.9	26.8
Average involvement items (N=450; M=2.01, SD=0.69)						40.2

*1=not at all (1-20%), 2=very little (21-40%), 3=moderate (41-60%), 4=much (61-80%), 5=very much (81-100%)

Impact change from watching TV Islamic reality shows

TV Islamic reality shows have changed much on the viewers, percentage ranges from 73.6%-75.0%. The highest being in terms of Islamic belief while the lowest being Islamic skills. As such TV Islamic reality shows have positive impact change on the viewers. This is a very good indication for the future of such programs.

Table 9: Impact change after watching TV Islamic reality shows

After watching the TV Islamic Reality Show, I have experienced change in my life in terms of...	Level of Impact Change*					Overall %
	1	2	3	4	5	
Islamic belief.	0.9	7.2	29.8	40.6	21.5	75.0
Islamic practices.	0.7	7.0	31.0	41.1	20.2	74.6
Islamic knowledge.	1.3	6.1	32.2	40.6	19.7	74.2
Islamic spirituality.	1.1	8.1	31.1	39.6	20.1	74.0
Islamic teachings.	0.9	7.5	32.2	40.4	19.1	73.8
Islamic skills.	0.9	8.8	31.6	39.3	19.5	73.6
Average impact change (N=455, M=3.71, SD=0.81)						74.2

1=no change (1-20%), 2=little (21-40%), 3=moderate (41-60%), 4=much (61-80%), 5=very much (81-100%)

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between the extent of exposure to reasons for watching Islamic reality shows and to satisfaction with watching Islamic reality shows

Table 10 presents the results of the relationships between the exposure to TV Islamic reality shows with reasons for watching and satisfaction with the programs. There exist a weak relationship between exposure and satisfaction ($r=.336, p=.000$). The relationship between exposure and reasons for watching TV Islamic reality shows are moderate positive ($r=.441, p=.000$). However, there is a strong positive relationship between reasons for watching and satisfaction with watching the TV Islamic reality shows. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is supported by the results of the study. It can be suggested that the reasons for watching Islamic TV reality shows have influenced the respondents' satisfaction. In other words, individuals who were strongly motivated to gain religious knowledge will gain satisfactions from watching the educational nature of Islamic reality shows. Thus, uses and gratifications theory holds true.

Table 10 : Correlation between exposure with reasons and satisfaction with watching Islamic reality shows

Variable	M	SD	Exposure		Reasons	
			r	p	r	p
Exposure	7.94	6.64				
Reasons	3.60	0.68	.441	.000		
Satisfaction	3.59	0.64	.336	.000	.681	.000

Hypothesis 2: There are positive relationships between extent of exposure to Islamic reality shows with perception, attitude, and involvement in Islamic reality shows, towards Islamic impact change to their life.

All the relationships between the variables are significant, but the degree and magnitude of such relationships vary. Specifically, exposure to TV Islamic reality shows are weakly related to perception ($r=.343, p=.000$), to involvement ($r=.319, p=.000$), and to impact change ($r=.309, p=.000$). However, the relationship between exposure and attitude is moderately ($r=.463, p=.000$) related to one another. Different trends exist for perception with attitude, involvement and impact change. There exists a strong relationship between perception and attitude ($r=.702, p=.000$); a weak relationship for perception and involvement ($r=.206, p=.000$); and a moderate relationship between

perception and impact change ($r=.598, p=.000$). Attitude, on the other hand, has a weak relationship with involvement ($r=.287, p=.000$) but with a strong relationship with impact change ($r=.611, p=.000$). Involvement has a weak relationship with impact change ($r=.247, p=.000$). The pattern is such that all relationships relating to involvement in TV Islamic reality shows tended to be weakly related to all the variables understudy; they are significant. Therefore, the findings support Hypothesis 2 of the study. Hence, the cultivation theory holds true.

Table 11: Correlation between exposure with reasons and satisfaction with watching Islamic reality shows

Variable	M	SD	Exposure		Perception		Attitude		Involvement	
			r	p	r	p	r	p	r	p
Exposure	7.94	6.64								
Perception	3.74	0.59	.343	.000						
Attitude	3.63	0.70	.463	.000	.702	.000				
Involvement	2.01	0.69	.319	.000	.206	.000	.287	.000		
Impact change	3.71	0.81	.309	.000	.598	.000	.611	.000	.247	.000

Discussion and Conclusion

This investigation lends a further support and extends research on Islamic TV reality shows which is currently lacking. The purpose of this study was to examine the acceptance of TV Islamic reality shows by the Malay community in Malaysia. Specifically, the study investigated what they watch, reasons for watching, satisfactions gained, and its cultivation effects. Despite its new inception to the Malaysian community, the study findings provide a support that TV Islamic reality shows gain a considerable attention from the Malays and are widely accepted as a source of religious information.

The results indicate that Malays place a higher preference on *Imam Muda* and *Akademi al-Quran* than other Islamic reality shows. The present investigation also suggests that Malays primarily watch Islamic reality shows for educational gratifications. Importantly, TV Islamic reality shows are often used as a substitute to the traditional religious knowledge-seeking methods including attending religious talks and sermons (Zalida & Mariah, 2011) or reading books which are less entertaining. Considering this, it is not surprising that television has a great potential in conveying the messages

of Islam as a substitute to the current non-media methods of performing *da'wah* (preaching the messages of Islam). Notably, the strong motivation for seeking religious knowledge is possibly due to the Malays' high level of religiosity (Selvarajah & Meyer, 2008).

The current study also investigated the possibility of the extent of exposure to TV Islamic reality shows on impact change resulting from viewers' perception, attitude and involvement in the program. For this sample, the results indicated that more people watched the program but they were not that involved in the shows. However, they were more likely to develop good perception and positive attitude, which in turn leads to positive religious changes in their life. In other words, this could indicate that TV Islamic reality shows will not have given any change impact without a high consumption of television (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007).

The present study has several limitations. The major limitation is that the sampling was not representative of the Malay population in Malaysia. The small sample was not randomly selected and only restricted to students of an Islamic university and those of whom they know. The results, therefore, cannot be generalized to all Malays in Malaysia. Notably, not all Malays are well-equipped with religious knowledge, and their acceptance of TV Islamic reality shows might be different from the current study. It would have been helpful to have more of the less educated respondents and the older group of people in the sample.

In addition, qualitative interviewing or observing the TV Islamic reality show viewers of a smaller Malay sample might be useful for future studies to understand more complex behavioral changes that would be impacted from the TV Islamic reality shows viewing. Significantly, using survey alone is not adequate in an understanding the human behavioral studies. Therefore, future studies might need to consider using a mixed-method research methodology. As such, an experimental research method would be helpful to see the impact change on the viewers of the TV Islamic reality shows, by using the pre-test and post-test experimental method with a controlled group.

Overall, an investigation of the Malays' acceptance on TV Islamic reality shows framed by uses and gratifications and cultivation theories extends a better understanding of the reality viewing patterns particularly the motives, gratifications sought and its cultivation effects. Although this study was exploratory and explanatory in nature, it is considered as prominent in this contemporary world and more similar studies would have been conducted and expanded to other Malay segments in the neighboring countries, like in Indonesia, Brunei and Singapore to better understand the role of religious television contents in the community.

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