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Phenomenological Study of Shariah-Compliant Films as *Da'wah* Medium

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Abstract

The discussion of Shariah compliance in film provides the opportunity for the delivery of the message of da'wah (Islamic evangelism) through filmart. Nevertheless, the term sharia compliance in the film field is a newly discussed matter compared to sharia compliance in the banking system. Therefore, this study aims to analyze film audience's perception towards the concept of sharia compliance. This study also examined the role of sharia compliance film as the medium of da'wah. It employed the phenomenology design that involved sampling with the aims to obtain study respondents. The 10 samples were UKM undergraduate and postgraduate Muslim students who like watching Malay films. The data were collected via focussed group discussion. This study employed constant comparative analysis in comparing data that convey meaning in answering the questions and objectives of the study. The findings showed that from the audience's perception regarding sharia compliance, there were two categories of audience, which are negotiated reading and oppositional reading in interpreting meaning. The findings stated the respondents' perception regarding the concept of sharia compliance that was discussed - "Actions in film, socializing limit...the acting should preserve them but not too stiff...for example the scene where husband and wife sleeping together on a bed should be avoided. Frankly, the absent of such scene does not flaw the film." The findings also found that the respondents agreed with the role of sharia compliance film as the medium of da'wah. It is hoped that this study contributes clarity to filmmakers regarding the concept of sharia compliance that could take center stage in da'wah film in Malaysia.

Keywords: *Phenomenological, Shariah-compliant, film, da'wah, medium*

Introduction

Films are a form of communication media used to reflect social culture. Films are also effective in promoting values in society to influence behavioural change in the film audience. Mayer (1977) held the view that films act as a cultural medium because films can influence human

thinking and their reaction in life. In the light of this development, films are very suitable to be used as medium to spread the eminence (*syi'ar*) of Islam. This interesting phenomenon in the context of utilising audio-visual technology as a preaching channel should be utilised as best as

possible to produce quality works which ensure society is educated towards goodness (Abdul Rahman 2010). Naim (2011) also stated that the film industry is the most suitable channel to use for the purpose of preaching.

However, based on observation, most films so far produced in Malaysia lack content and are purely for entertainment. It cannot be denied that entertainment is an important element in films but as works of arts, films should also improve thinking. Here lies the role of the Islamic narrative in submitting that entertainment must at the same time lead the audience to think towards goodness (A. Wahab 2005). It is also not desirable for a film to be labelled as Islamic or *dakwah* when in reality it has bad and shameful elements inserted in its content, plot and casting. It is possible that there is a tendency to produce a film which apparently has an Islamic image, but in substance it is an insult to religion and morality. Faisal (2012) went on to criticise works which submit elements of badness, distraction, promotion of evil and do not play the role of preaching goodness.

The term shariah-compliant is frequently related to the economics question, particularly Islamic economics system in which *muamalah* transactions should comply with shariah. Shariah compliance is very important to be emphasized to ensure that business transactions be devoid of prohibited or illegal (*haram*) elements or even doubtful (*syubhah*) sources (Hafiz 2012). In every aspect of this life, Islam sets a foundation and guidance in order that

man does not deviate from the moral path established by Allah SWT. Likewise, the same should be emphasized in the film industry. This is to ensure that films produced comply with shariah with the objective of forming a society that abides by true Islamic teachings. Raja Nur Junainah (2013) asserted that production of Islamic films is very essential to assist in national development and to produce a *rabbani* (knowledgeable and nurturing) society concomitant with national progress.

Of late, the term shariah-compliant has become a phenomenon and a hotly discussed issue among a minority of filmmakers, academicians and public who have are beginning to realize the influence of films in shaping social values and culture. Hence, many seminars and forums are organized so that filmmakers, academicians and religious figures convene to discuss shariah compliance in producing script and films. However, until today, there is no specific definition of Shariah-compliance in filmmaking. This raises the questions of what is the perception of true Shariah compliance in films and what is the role of shariah-compliant films as medium of *dakwah* (preaching) to society. According to Norman (2014) each member of the audience will receive and evaluate a text with a different view and perception according to his own level of understanding and experience of what he watched. Thus, this working paper will focus on identifying the audience's perspective of shariah-compliance in films and the role of films as medium of *dakwah* (preaching).

Literature

Phenomenological Study

According to Creswell (1998) a phenomenological study is a method of qualitative research approach. It reflects the meaning of a certain life experience of a person regarding a concept and phenomenon. Noraini (2010) stated that phenomenology is a qualitative research approach, based on thinking which focuses on the subjective experience of man and his definition of the world. Phenomenological approach focuses on the structure or essence of experience (phenomenon or occurrence) and involves an individual's structure of consciousness as experienced by the individual. In addition, a phenomenology

researcher strives to understand the meaning of an occurrence as well as public interaction in a particular situation (Bogdan & Biklen 1992). According to Patton (1990); Rossmann and Rallis (1998), a phenomenological research focuses on human experience and how the experience is lived and shared.

This research uses a phenomenological approach which is a type of qualitative research approach. According to Noraini (2010) phenomenology is a type of qualitative research approach sometimes seen as a philosophical perspective. Phenomenological research focuses on structure or essence of experience (phenomenon or occurrence) and

involves an individual's consciousness as experienced by him. According to Creswell (1998) phenomenological research is one method of qualitative approach. A phenomenological research reflects the meaning of a person's life experience regarding concept and phenomenon. In addition, phenomenological researcher strives to understand the meaning of an occurrence as well as public interaction in a particular situation (Bogdan & Biklen 1992). According to Patton (1990), Rossman and Rallis (1998), a phenomenological research focuses on human experience and how they undergo and share the experience.

Concept of Shariah Compliance in Films

The term shariah compliance in film making is still being discussed. But so far no specific term for shariah-compliant film has been issued to show the concept of true shariah compliance. The production of Islamic films or genre of *dakwah* films must comply with the concept of shariah compliance in an effort to elevate Islam in films. Film narratives which comply with shariah must be not violate shariah in its casting style and presentation (Syed Zulkifli 2010). According to Naim (2011) an Islamic film is assessed from pre-production, production, post-production to screening stage and must fulfill Islamic requirements. Abd Aziz (2007) stated that the process of making film works should emphasize on Islamic films which carry the theme of humanity laced with philosophy, old poems with Islamic element, based on hadith and al-Quran as well as socially acceptable values and morals. In addition, films must uphold the sanctity of Islam.

According to Mohd Hilmi (2010) Islamic films should not contain inappropriate scenes such as embracing between the genders, excessive exposure of *aurat* (body), vivid highlighting of vice, excessively violent acts as well as elements of superstition and idol worship. In addition, the film director plays an important role in the production of Islamic film works. According to Mohd Fadly (2007) the producer and director need to produce films which give identity to the Islamic way of life. In Malaysia, the director and producer like to produce horror movies, love-stories and comedies which are not constructive of civil (*madani*) society. In explaining Islamic tenets,

the *aqidah* or *tawhid* (doctrine of Unity) aspects cannot be taken lightly.

Film as Medium for Dakwah

Dakwah or preaching is the obligation and responsibility of the Islamic community to spread Islamic teachings as enshrined in al-Quran and Hadith, which urges Muslims to invite to goodness and forbid evil (*'Amr ma'ruf wa nahi munkar*). Islam requires society to be strong in *aqidah* (belief), *ibadah* (worship) and *akhlak* (moral character) so as to achieve a *madani* Islamic society. Thus to achieve this *dakwah* is commanded to lead society to the true Islamic teachings.

One effective alternative to traditional *dakwah* or preaching is through media such as films. Today's advanced technology should be utilised as best as possible for the purpose of *dakwah*. The use of technology as a tool for *dakwah* cannot be avoided, rather it is very much encouraged as Islam does not limit its adherents to use any legal means including media so long as it leads to success in preaching to mankind. According to Ab. Aziz (2005), *dakwah* approach needs to adapt to current challenges and circumstances (Rosmawati et al. 2011). The concept of *dakwah* today needs to be streamlined with the mass media approach so that *dakwah* effort becomes a more effective process (Shahril 2006). Hence, post-modern preachers should use the opportunity to convey Islam to the people.

Film is a form of communication which may be utilised for the purpose of *dakwah*. Films or movies have their own attraction and may be served with variation to attract audience interest. The use of films in educating the society is based on the reason that films are capable of attracting attention and, as some believe, of conveying the message of Islam in a unique way (McQuail 1994). Rosmawati et al. (2011) stated that film is a form of mass media seen as having an effect on audience. Films cannot be viewed only from the arts perspective as it is also a medium for conveying a message to society. Naim (2011) however stated that films become a very important form of media when worked and integrated into electronic and digital media which permeate almost every field in man's life. Syed Zulkifli (2010) stated that film is a medium whereby the audience may be brought to experience whatever is portrayed. The journey of watching

does not allow the audience to pause, think and repeat as in the journey of reading. The audience also has no option to watch what he prefers to be shown as the filmmaker dictates selection. According Rosmawati (2014), film is symbolic of the socio- cultural and religious status of society. It is also an audio-visual tool to convey a message. Some countries use film as a tool to convey their political ideology, propaganda, history and social system in society. Thus, films need to be guided in shaping culture and religion towards civilization.

Films actually have the potential to be used for *dakwah* purposes. Naim (2011) stated that the film industry is a suitable channel to establish inviting to goodness and forbidding evil (*amar ma'ruf dan nahi mungkar*). Abdul Rahman (2010) stated that films have the advantage of rendering the conveyed messages to be touching without the audience realizing it. Moreover, utilising films as medium of communication to spread *dakwah* is very much needed today. The increasing development of the national film industry from year to year creates an opportunity for arts enthusiasts to produce *dakwah* genre of films to educate society.

In summary, utilising films as *dakwah* medium should be optimised in mediating with the public. If the West uses films to convey their ideologies, philosophies, propaganda and cultures, then the Muslim community today has to act fast in using films as medium to promote Islamic values and culture to society. It is acknowledged that films are communication media so close to society. The Muslim community has to be astute to optimally use the opportunity and space available for spreading *dakwah* to society. It is timely that *dakwah* films be highlighted to shape society as from observation of the films produced and available in Malaysia, it is found that films are made purely for entertainment without promoting any good values for society.

Film Audience

Films and audience are closely related. Phillips (2000) stated that understanding the film industry and audience is very crucial in research. The film industry has great power but it has to listen and respond to the audience as the production of a film depends on audience demand and interest. Research shows that

interaction between the film industry and audience has two meanings. The film industry exists through the films produced. The audience interprets the film and also processes the experience in various ways from watching the film. Cohen (2001) stated that scenes in a film portrays experience which can be understood by the audience. Katz and Blumber (1974) suggested that the real public are the people most active and who have detailed information in using media.

Theory of Audience Reception

In research on the public, some new fields of knowledge have developed, among which are *effect* research, uses and gratification research, literary criticism, cultural studies and reception analysis (Jensen & Rosengen 1995). Reception analysis is a new perspective in the discourse and social aspect of communication theory. Reception analysis looks at observation of experience and media effect. Reception analysis suggests that mass communication of the audience and even the general public needs to to be seen as a social specific on its own and becomes the object of empirical analysis. The combination of social approach and discursive perspective gives birth to the concept of Social Production of Meaning. Reception analysis then becomes its own approach which attempts to study in-depth how the processes through media are assimilated with various discourses and practised as audience culture (Jensen & Rosengen 1995).

The theory of Audience Reception was developed by Stuart Hall who held the opinion that media exists as the reflection of reality whereas beforehand media itself builds society. Learning public reception focuses on explaining the relationship between the public and the medium, through a wide understanding in the ethnographic context (Allor 1988; Jensen dan Rosengren 1995). The encoding/decoding model of Stuart Hall is the basis of reception analysis as follows:

1. The same event may be conveyed or interpreted in more than one way.
2. The message often contains more than one potential reading. The purpose of the messages and reading instructions exist but cannot be limited to only one reading.
3. Proper understanding of the message needs to be practised as conveying a one-

way message will cause others to understand differently according to their respective understandings.

According to Hall (1994), there are three categories of *encoding/decoding* as follows:

1. Dominant hegemonic reading : The reader understands and identifies the code of ethics program (which contains the values, attitude, beliefs and assumptions) and overall accepts without dispute.
2. Negotiated reading : The majority of the audience understands almost all that is defined and propagated in tv programs. The audience may reject or accept the message conveyed.
3. Oppositional reading (counter hegemonic): The audience does not go along with the program code and reject the given meaning or reading, and later determine their own alternative frame in interpreting the message of a particular program.

Reception analysis is part of learning about the public. It attempts to study in-depth

the current process where media discourse is assimilated through practical discourse and public culture. There are three basic elements in reception methodology expressed as “the collection, analysis, and interpretation of reception data” (Jensen & Rosengen 1995). Utilising the theory of reception analysis as support for research on the public actually implies that the public is not really passive but is seen as an agent of change with its own power to deduce meaning from various discourses offered by media. Hence meaning taken through media may be open as well as polemical and positively dealt with (Fiske 1997). Research of public reception focuses on an interpretive relation between the public and medium, where the relationship is widely understood within an ethnographic context. Research on the public moves a long way through local analysis, particular context and shifts from specific media analysis to a general analysis based on culture, usage and life background. Research on reception is also an interactive link between text, the public and media content in looking at how the public responds. (Livingstone 1998).

Conceptual Framework

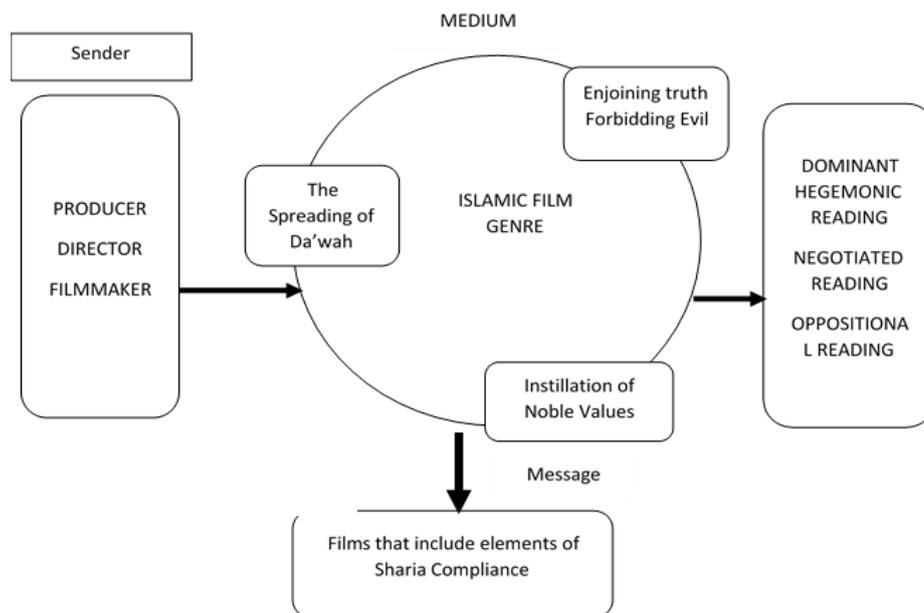


Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework

In the making of Islamic film genre, Naim (2011) divided the main objectives into three, which are to spread da'wah, to enjoin truth and forbid evil, and to instill noble values. Thus, Naim suggested that from the Islamic point of view, good and effective filmmakers are those who master the language of film and able to use it to spread da'wah or other forms of messages of advice and goodness. Through Hall's research, it can be deduced that the reception

theory is used to study the relation between the public and the medium. This theory states that the public actually interprets meaning from what is watched into their lives according to their level of knowledge, background and culture. In addition, this theory also wishes to know and identify the public's view of the films watched as each individual differs from others according to their life background, culture and environment.

Research Methodology

This is a phenomenological qualitative research which studies the phenomenology of shariah-compliant films as medium for dakwah. It uses purposive sampling involving individual considerations in selecting sample based on researcher's knowledge and specific purpose of research. Purposive sampling by the researcher is based on purpose and goals to fulfill research objective. Respondents selected from the public are bachelor or masters degree students at National University of Malaysia (UKM) who watch films, particularly Malay films.

Collection of research data used the method of interviewing focus groups. 10 respondents were involved in interviews. Research results were analysed through constant comparative analysis. At the early stage, raw data of research were transcribed one by one based on each word uttered. Data was gathered based on prepared questions. Later data was analysed based on research objectives set according to particular themes. It is hoped that research results obtained may answer research issues and objectives.

Research Results And Discussion

Concept of Shariah-Compliant Film

Focus group discussion is guided by a set of questions. The discussion consists of some general and specific questions. The group comprises of undergraduates and postgraduates of National University of Malaysia (UKM). They major in Islamic Studies and non-Islamic Studies. All of them are film audience.

The answers of the informants on the concept of shariah-compliant film are based on their level of understanding of it. On average, they considered the selection of actors for the film. As example, one of the informants said that:

"the most mainstream for me is the actor. The purpose of a shariah-compliant film is to convey dakwah message. If in one film the actor complies with shariah and in another film he doesn't, then dakwah is not conveyed. Because people will see this can happen, .. the dakwah doesn't seem to be conveyed"

Another informant added by saying:

"as one of the informants said, it is to convey dakwah...we see acting in the film is fine, shariah-compliant... observe the religion, properly covered, restricted mixing... so there is a need for consistency..let him bring the discipline outside. This requires attention."

This concurs with Mohd Hilmi's statement (2010) that Islamic films should not contain inappropriate scenes such as embracing between the sexes, excessive exposure of the body, vivid highlighting of vice activities, extreme acts of violence and elements of superstition and polytheism.. Each member of the group in this session has given very good response. When one informant submitted his view, another would add to reinforce the issue discussed. For example, when discussing selection of actors, another informant added that:

"when we see Indonesian films we can feel why... during acting the actors are the object of dakwah (*mad'u*)... because among the crew is a religious scholar (ulama) ..someone

knowledgeable about Islam who preaches to the actors... so when the film is screened we can feel the *dakwah*... so of course we feel.. ok fine this is a good sharia-compliant film from Indonesia, better than ours”.

This remark is a great slap on the face to our Malay fiction films. There is some truth in this informant's view as it cannot be refuted that the film industry lags far behind in comparison to Indonesian sharia-compliant films.

Informants also agreed that the concept of sharia-compliant films covers the aspect of restricted mixing between actors and actresses and avoidance of scenes which violate Islamic standards of decency. As example, one of the informants stated:

“action in films, the limits of mixing.. in acting has to be observed but should not be too stiff... for example, spouses sleeping on the same bed should be avoided. Actually, even without this scene, it does not impair the film at all.”

Further, another informant added that other than the cast, the atmosphere at the site of shooting the film must also observe sharia restrictions:

“in creative work, we must also guard the limits, not only for the script, the atmosphere while shooting the film too.”

In addition, one of the informants gave a different reply. When discussing the concept, he divided it into two aspects, external and internal. The internal aspect concerns the values brought into the film whereas the external aspect covers the dressing, mixing, script and related matters. According to him, if a film brings the tawhidic value, even though externally the dressing and mixing do not comply with sharia, but because there is the tawhidic value, it is seen as sharia-compliant from the value aspect. Likewise, if in the external aspect, the casting and script has an effect on the audience towards goodness, then it is seen as sharia-compliant. The views expressed by the informant are based on his observation, understanding and experience on the issue of sharia compliance.

When questioned whether the concept requires actors and actresses to wear a robe or a long veil, most of them disagree. As example, one of the informants said:

“I don't think so..because the external might seem Islamic but on the other hand she may not

do acts which are sharia compliant... like unrestricted mixing, acts mentioned just now. Only understanding from the aspect...maybe normal headscarf only but the way she talks,...Islamic input in the script may bring awareness to people.”

In addition, another informant held the view that the concept of sharia-compliant film is a *dakwah* film which conveys a message to society. Whenever the term sharia-compliant film is mentioned, it must be related to *dakwah*, the purpose of the film must be to show and explain Islamic values so as not to confuse the audience, and then proceed to spreading goodness in society. In this concept, the film script also plays an important role. According to one informant:

“*dakwah* is to convey a message, there are *dakwah* stories which are sharia-compliant, but the script is not good.. some stories have good scripts but the stories are not sharia-compliant.. the two must be combined to produce a strong sharia-compliant film because local films must be supported.”

This informant's opinion is that most films which attract the audience's interest are based on scripts which are interesting, casual, not too serious and combined with steady casting, good camera work and clear audio. Films with an Islamic element are perceived as uninteresting to watch because the script is difficult to understand, the dialogue is lengthy and message is heavy, which quickly bore the audience.

In addition, all informants held the view that production of sharia-compliant films require the director to properly understand true Islam. One of them said:

“the director has to be guided on the true Islamic concept”

“ in this issue a director who understands Islam is very important”

It is indeed essential in making sharia-compliant films, for the film director himself to understand the true Islamic concept as well make a study before producing work with an Islamic theme. If this is neglected, the result is like the existing film works with Islamic themes in this country which are severely criticised because of violations and non-compliance with sharia. Faisal (2012) also stated that when a film director does not understand the true

Islamic concept, the tendency is to make the film appear as the face and image of religion as if it is Islamic arts, when in reality what is produced is an anomaly and more of an insult towards religion.

The results of perception analysis obtained from the study respondents found that there is a dichotomy in the concept of sharia compliance in film.

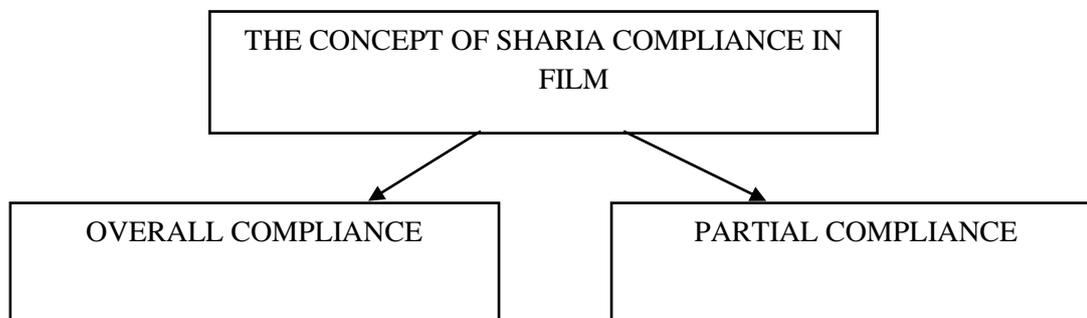


Fig 2. The Concept of Sharia Compliance in Film

The study outcomes regarding the relationship of reception analysis theory in influencing the respondents' perception showed that there are two categories of audience, which are negotiated reading and oppositional reading. Nevertheless, undoubtedly each group had active as well as passive audience in every focussed group discussion conducted. The evaluation on the focussed group discussion conducted found that the audience who demonstrated negotiated reading character appeared to be the dominant audience. They understood almost entirely the meaning conveyed through the film that they have watched and rejected the entire message seen. However, there was a group of audience that rejected the message presented in the text and attempted new interpretation on the message conveyed. This group achieved the oppositional reading category. This phenomenon answered the argumentation by Hall (1994). Hall (1994) stated that audience have different ways in interpreting the meaning from the media they watch. Therefore, in the focussed group discussions conducted, there were respondents who accepted the whole discussion regarding the sharia compliance concept in film. Based on the conducted discussions, the respondents were able to produce elements that must be present in a sharia compliance piece. The respondents also rejected the elements that will

make a piece as sharia noncompliance. This contributed new interpretation among the audience in understanding the message conveyed. However, they did not reject several scenes with elements of sharia noncompliance by making an interpretation that such scenes should have never existed in the film. According to Fiske (1997), audience is not necessarily passive but in fact is seen as the agent of change that possesses the advantage in interpreting meaning from the sources they obtain via different ways. Livingstone (2007) also believe that the reception theory analysis also looks at the audience as being capable of understanding certain things through different means based on several influencing factors such as psychology, social background and also environment.

The Role of Shariah-Compliant Film as Dakwah Medium

When asked to what extent can shariah-compliant films play the role of *dakwah* medium, the average response is that it plays a very important role, supporting the view of other informants. As example, an informant gives the following view:

“Films are close to society. On thinking over, how many times in a day do we go listen to lectures at mosques and prayer places? We are closer to television, telephone, internet... we watch tv all day... what we see and hear is what we learn... when we see it everyday, it becomes

a habit... I read once some Japanese writing which stated that a film may change society's perception... so it is important for a film to be a *dakwah* medium”

This is in line with a statement by Naim (2011) that the film industry is a suitable channel to be used to establish inviting to goodness and forbidding evil (*amar ma'ruf dan nahi mungkar*). Abdul Rahman (2010) stated that the advantage of films makes messages conveyed touching without the audience being aware of it. Mohammad (1992) was of the opinion that films reflect the taste and culture of film artistes, and is the driving force towards change in orientation, attitude and behaviour of modern society. Based on this view, it is admitted that media is close to society's heart. Further, statements by informants have some truth because almost all homes in Malaysia have television, so everyday society is served with all types of films. Thus, when films screened do not comply with shariah and do not carry positive values, then the scenes shown will shape society's perception and behaviour. Thus films need to be fully utilised for the purpose of spreading Islam. In addition, there are informants who give the view that:

“Producing shariah-compliant films give society the space to think for themselves and eventually seek the purity of Islam”.

Another informant added that shariah-compliant films play the role in spreading the essence of Islamic goodness and beauty to the society. In other words, the informant's opinion is that such films should play the role of spreading Islamic teachings to the audience so that society

will not misunderstand the true Islamic teachings. Most informants gave the same answer to the question to what extent such films play this role and affirmed the views given in the discussion. Such films are seen as having the role of spreading Islamic culture to society in addition to putting forward issues and solutions so that the society may see the solutions recommended by Islam. In the Malaysian context, most of the people are Muslim Malays, thus the Malay cultural value of civility and purity of Islam need to be highlighted in film works. As Asiah (2009) stated, when the concept of values is put forward as the basic concept in a culture, this means that values become the foundation for thinking and action which determines the whole result exhibited by members of that culture. In addition, such films need to be casual and not heavy in conveying the message to society. It is sufficient to convey a light message which can impact the audience to seek Islam's purity by themselves after they have watched the films.

On the whole, each informant agreed in stating that shariah-compliant films should be highlighted as *dakwah* medium able to suggest solutions to society towards an Islamic way of life. Films, as acknowledged, are very influential in shaping audience behaviour, thus the solutions to issues of the Muslim community should be highlighted in such films. For example, social issues highlighted in such films need to present the solutions recommended by Islam so that the audience may see the solution as shariah-compliant and not leave the depravity to end wrongly such as suicide and so on.

Conclusion

Research results obtained show that each respondent expressed his view and perception to the questions presented based on his level of understanding of shariah-compliant film. In addition, these perceptions and views given need to be highlighted in the production of such film works as they cover important aspects in a shariah-compliant film. Based on the given views and perceptions, the said aspects are as follows:

1. Selection of actors who should really appreciate the *dakwah* message to be conveyed through the film.
2. The restrictions of mixing between actors and actresses must be observed.
3. Values which are constructive of society are to be promoted in the film.
4. The atmosphere and site of shooting films must abide by the limits set to comply with shariah.
5. The message to be conveyed in the *dakwah* film is for the purpose of educating the public.
6. It must be produced by a film director who understands the true Islamic concept.

7. A strong script.

The essence of the views given by informants on the extent of the role shariah-compliant films can play as *dakwah* medium are as follows:

1. In changing the society's perception.
2. In spreading the essence and beauty of Islam to society.
3. In highlighting the true Islamic culture and values.
4. In raising issues and putting forward solutions recommended by Islam.

It is hoped that this research will bring awareness to society about shariah-compliant films and that research results will open the minds of arts enthusiasts to produce quality films. Although in the context of Malaysia, the production of shariah-compliant films seems distant, there is nevertheless a bright future for it. Perhaps the Malaysian film industry seems to lag far behind in the production of quality shariah-compliant works compared to Indonesia and Iran, but there is an opportunity to catch up in discharging the responsibility to make films as medium for *dakwah*, an obligation to make the society concerned about religion.

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