

THE CRITERIA OF ACTOR AND ACTRESS SELECTION IN ISLAMIC FILM: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The lack of adherence to Islamic guidelines regarding gender interaction in the casting of actors and actresses for Islamic films is one of the primary issues facing the industry. This study aims to define film from Western and Islamic perspectives, explore Islamic views on the film industry based on Maqasid Shariah, and investigate the criteria and role of actor selection in portraying Islamic culture, values, and themes in films and its impact on audience reception. The research uses qualitative method through library research, as well as carried out an interview question to gather data and conduct an analysis. The main finding of this study is that the selection of actors with a religious background has a positive effect on the audience's acceptance of the message conveyed. The research also highlights the importance of actors maintaining high moral standards both on and off-screen. Furthermore, the study suggests that filmmakers and actors may choose to consult with Islamic scholars or advisors during the production of Islamic films. This collaboration ensures accuracy and sensitivity to religious nuances in the storytelling. To be able to create an Islamic film that truly adheres to Sharia law, actors, authors, and directors are required to work together.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, the film industry has emerged as a dominant force in shaping public opinion and cultural narratives. As streaming services proliferate and visual media consumption surges, films have become increasingly influential in molding societal perspectives. This shift underscores the critical role of responsible filmmaking, particularly in representing diverse cultures and religions accurately.

Within this context, Islamic films have gained significant importance as a medium to counter misconceptions about Islam and foster interfaith understanding. These productions, spanning various formats from documentaries to fictional narratives, aim to portray the cultural, social, and spiritual aspects of the Islamic world authentically. However, the creation of such films presents unique challenges, chief among them being the selection of appropriate actors.

The casting process for Islamic films is a complex endeavor that extends beyond mere acting ability. It requires a delicate balance between artistic expression and adherence to Islamic principles. Actors must not only deliver compelling performances but also embody Islamic ideals, as these films serve as vehicles for promoting religious teachings and values. This process is further complicated by Islamic guidelines on gender interaction, which can impact casting decisions for certain roles.

The importance of studying actor selection in Islamic films cannot be overstated. It directly influences the films' authenticity, credibility, and effectiveness in achieving their objectives. Inappropriate casting choices can undermine the intended messages, potentially reinforcing stereotypes or causing offense within the Muslim community. Conversely, thoughtful and culturally sensitive casting can significantly enhance the film's impact, contributing to greater understanding and appreciation of Islamic culture.

By examining the challenges and best practices in actor selection for Islamic films, this study aims to contribute valuable insights to the growing field of Islamic cinema. It seeks to provide guidance for filmmakers, producers, and casting directors in navigating the complexities of creating authentic Islamic films. Ultimately, this research aspires to support the development of a more nuanced, respectful, and effective representation of Islam in global cinema, fostering cross-cultural dialogue and understanding in our increasingly interconnected world.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The selection of actors for Islamic films is a complex and critical process that requires careful consideration of multiple factors. These films aim to promote Islamic values and principles, necessitating a cast that embodies these ideals. However, the casting process faces several challenges, including adherence to Islamic guidelines on gender interaction, the potential casting of actors with controversial pasts, the portrayal of Muslim characters by non-Muslim actors, and ensuring modest dress and behavior in accordance with Islamic values. These issues can lead to problematic outcomes, such as insufficient adherence to Islamic guidelines or potential negative impacts on the Muslim community. The casting choices can significantly affect the film's credibility, its reception within the Muslim community, and its effectiveness in promoting Islamic values. Inaccurate representations or mixed messages resulting from poor casting decisions can undermine the film's intended purpose and potentially lead to misunderstandings about Islam. Given the growing importance of media representation and the potential of cinema as a tool for cultural understanding, studying the impact of actor selection in Islamic films is crucial. It can provide valuable insights for filmmakers, contribute to more authentic representations of Islam in media, and ultimately foster better intercultural

understanding in our increasingly globalized world. The study seeks to answer the following questions:

- a) How is film defined in Western and Islamic contexts?
- b) What are the Islamic perspectives on the film industry?
- c) How does actor selection influence the portrayal of Islamic culture, values, and themes in films, and what is its impact on audience reception and engagement?

This study aims to:

- a) Define the concept of film from both Western and Islamic perspectives.
- b) Explore Islamic viewpoints on the film industry, based on Maqasid Shariah.
- c) Investigate the criteria and impact of actor selection on the portrayal of Islamic culture, values, and themes in films, and its effect on audience reception and engagement.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative approach, primarily utilizing library research to address the first objective. The researchers analyze journals, books, and relevant articles to define film from both Western and Islamic perspectives and explore the origins of filmmaking. To achieve the second objective, which aims to identify Islamic law pertaining to the film industry, information will be gathered from experts with Shariah backgrounds, including authoritative bodies such as JAKIM (Department of Islamic Development Malaysia) and KDN (Ministry of Home Affairs).

To further address the second and third objectives, the researcher will conduct an in-depth interview with Hajar Opir, a lecturer at the Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies (ACIS) in UITM Shah Alam. This interview will focus on elucidating Islamic Law and its principles regarding the film industry, as well as examining the criteria and role of actor selection in portraying Islamic culture, values, and themes in films.

The interview explores several key areas, including: the Islamic perspective on the film industry based on Maqasid Shariah; Islamic guidelines for viewing dramas or movies; the involvement of religious individuals in the entertainment and acting industries; the portrayal of Muslims by non-Muslim actors and vice versa; and specific conditions for actors in Islamic films. Additionally, it will investigate examples of Islamic films where actors significantly impact audience reception, the influence of actor selection on the portrayal of Islamic culture, values, and themes, and the effect of celebrity actors in Islamic films on the dissemination of Islamic values.

Furthermore, the interview will delve into the relative importance of storyline/script versus actors in Islamic film success, the impact of well-known actors on the appeal and religious message of Islamic films, and the advantages and disadvantages of Islamic films in Malaysia. This comprehensive approach, combining library research with expert interviews, will provide a holistic understanding of the subject matter. It will allow for a thorough exploration of the theoretical foundations of Islamic filmmaking, as well as practical insights

into the challenges and opportunities in the field. The qualitative nature of this methodology will enable the researcher to capture nuanced perspectives and in-depth analysis of the complex interplay between Islamic principles and the art of filmmaking.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review analyzes ten studies focusing on Islamic films, their representation of Islamic values, and the importance of actor selection in portraying these values authentically. The studies span from 2012 to 2020, showing the evolution of research in this field.

Development of Ideas

The research in this field has evolved from examining Islamic values in television dramas to more specific studies on Shariah-compliant film production and actor selection criteria. Tibek et al. (2012) initiated the discussion by analyzing Islamic values in Malaysian television dramas. Their study focused on the effectiveness of drama as a medium for da'wah (Islamic preaching) and suggested mechanisms for producing dramas that manifest Islamic messages. This research laid the groundwork for subsequent studies by highlighting the potential of visual media in conveying Islamic values.

Building on this foundation, Rasit (2012) explored the position of religious Malay films in Malaysia from an Islamic da'wah perspective. This study marked a shift from television dramas to films, emphasizing the importance of Islamic elements in movies to counteract the influence of Western films on Muslim audiences. Abu Bakar (2015) further developed this idea by examining the concept of 'Islamic' themes in films. The study introduced the distinction between 'Islamic films' and 'films with Islamic elements', providing a more nuanced understanding of how Islamic themes can be incorporated into cinema.

The research focus then shifted towards more specific aspects of Islamic filmmaking. Opir et al. (2017a) introduced the concept of Shariah-compliant criteria in films based on fiqh laws. This study marked a significant development in the field, as it attempted to establish concrete guidelines for Islamic filmmaking. Kanaker et al. (2017) contributed to the discourse by examining the authenticity of character portrayal in Islamic films. This study highlighted the potential negative impacts of misrepresentation in Islamic films, emphasizing the need for accurate and respectful portrayals of Muslim characters.

Opir et al. (2017b) further developed the concept of Shariah-compliant film criteria, proposing a mechanism to guide film industry players. This research represented a more practical approach to implementing Islamic principles in filmmaking. Hassan and Sabli (2018) expanded the scope of research by examining the representation of Islamic teachings in non-Islamic films. This study provided insights into how Islamic values can be portrayed even in films not explicitly categorized as Islamic.

Rasit and Razali (2018) introduced a phenomenological approach to studying Shariah-compliant films as a da'wah medium. This study marked a shift towards understanding audience perceptions of Shariah compliance in films. Opir et al. (2020a) focused on the role of fatwas in

addressing faith-related issues in Malaysian films. This study highlighted the importance of religious rulings in guiding the film industry towards producing Shariah-compliant content. Finally, Opir et al. (2020b) developed Shariah-compliant guidelines for film production, representing the culmination of research efforts to establish concrete, practical guidelines for Islamic filmmaking.

Comparison of Studies

While all these studies focus on Islamic values in visual media, they approach the topic from different angles and with varying methodologies. Tibek et al. (2012) and Rasit (2012) both examined the role of visual media in conveying Islamic values, but while Tibek et al. focused on television dramas, Rasit expanded the scope to include films. Both studies emphasized the importance of Islamic content in countering Western cultural influences.

Abu Bakar (2015) and Opir et al. (2017a) both delved into the concept of 'Islamic' in films, but from different perspectives. Abu Bakar focused on thematic elements, while Opir et al. emphasized Shariah compliance based on fiqh laws. Kanaker et al. (2017) and Hassan and Sabli (2018) both examined character portrayal, but while Kanaker et al. focused on misrepresentation in explicitly Islamic films, Hassan and Sabli explored the portrayal of Islamic values in non-Islamic films.

Opir et al. (2017b) and Opir et al. (2020b) both aimed to develop guidelines for Islamic filmmaking, but the latter study represents a more comprehensive and developed set of guidelines, indicating the progression of research in this area. Rasit and Razali (2018) and Opir et al. (2020a) both considered audience reception, but from different angles. Rasit and Razali examined audience perceptions of Shariah compliance, while Opir et al. focused on the role of religious rulings in shaping film content.

The literature review reveals significant progress in understanding Islamic filmmaking's role in conveying religious values, evolving from initial studies on Islamic content in TV dramas to detailed analyses of Shariah compliance in film production. However, notable research gaps persist. These include a lack of comprehensive guidelines for selecting actors in Islamic films, limited exploration of how actors' personal backgrounds affect their portrayal of Islamic characters, and insufficient cross-cultural perspectives on Islamic filmmaking practices across diverse Muslim contexts. Additionally, there's a scarcity of in-depth studies on audience reception of Islamic themes in films, the economic viability of Shariah-compliant films in global markets, and the impact of new film technologies on Islamic film production and reception.

Future research opportunities include exploring Islamic films' potential for fostering interfaith understanding, investigating gender representation in Islamic cinema, and conducting large-scale studies on audience interpretation of Islamic themes. These areas require further examination to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Islamic filmmaking's impact on both Muslim and non-Muslim audiences. Addressing these gaps would contribute to a more nuanced comprehension of the field, potentially influencing the development of Islamic cinema and its role in cultural and religious discourse. Such research could also inform guidelines for

Islamic film production, enhancing the medium's effectiveness in conveying Islamic values while navigating the complexities of modern filmmaking and diverse audience expectations.

DISCUSSION

The film industry has evolved into one of the most influential sectors in modern society, with its impact extending far beyond mere entertainment. Films serve as powerful tools for shaping public opinion, reflecting societal values, and conveying complex messages to diverse audiences. In the context of Islamic cinema, this influence takes on additional significance, as these films play a crucial role in countering biases, dispelling misconceptions, and fostering interfaith understanding (Rosmawati, 2018).

Islamic films, as a genre, encompass a wide range of cinematic works that explore themes connected to Islam, its history, culture, values, and narratives. These productions aim to portray, interpret, and sometimes celebrate various facets of Islamic faith and civilization. According to Mohammed (2010), Islamic cinema is defined as "film that conforms to Islamic laws, customs, and values," distinguishing it from Muslim cinema, which is broadly described as films by or about Muslims.

The selection of actors and actresses for Islamic films is a critical aspect that demands careful consideration. These films aim to promote Islamic values and principles, necessitating that the cast embodies these ideals. However, the casting process has sometimes been problematic, either due to insufficient adherence to Islamic guidelines or potential negative impacts on the Muslim community (Kanakaner et al., 2017).

This study aims to explore the criteria for actor selection in Islamic films, the relevance of Islamic law to this process, and the impact of actor selection on the portrayal of Islamic culture, values, and themes in films. Furthermore, it examines the effect of these choices on audience reception and engagement.

Definition and Nature of Film

The term "film" encompasses multiple meanings across various contexts. In its most basic form, as defined by the Cambridge Dictionary, a film consists of moving pictures that have been recorded for display at cinemas or on television, telling a story or depicting a real situation. Technically, a film is a sequence of images of moving objects photographed by a camera, providing the optical illusion of continuous movement when projected onto a screen (Tibek et al., 2012).

From a broader perspective, films are a form of communication media used to reflect social culture and promote values in society, potentially influencing behavioral change in the audience. As Rosmawati (2018) notes, films can significantly impact human thinking and reactions to life events, making them a suitable medium for disseminating various messages, including religious teachings.

Islamic Perspective on Film

In the Islamic context, film is viewed as one of the mediums (*wasilah*) of *da'wah* that can be used to convey the message of Islam, falling under the category of art and culture. According to Dr. Hajar Opir (personal communication, 2023), film serves as a mass communication medium that displays social reality in various ways and enriches community life. Its function extends to raising the dignity of humanity, shaping feelings, building personal character and national pride, and stimulating the soul to draw closer to Allah SWT.

The role of film in Islamic society is significant because it integrates the interaction of hearing and sight, profoundly affecting the audience. It can shape and stimulate behavior, character, and thinking. The elements of story, visuals, sound, lighting, colors, and shapes, when well-executed, harmoniously and effectively exploited, become catalysts and stimuli to the soul, feelings, thoughts, and perceptions of the audience (Rasit, 2012).

Islamic Law (Sharia) and Film

Islamic scholars establish that the origin of everything is permissible, based on the Quranic verse: "It is He who created for you all of that which is on the earth" (al-Baqarah: 29). While there is no direct mention of films in the Quran, Islam provides fundamental frameworks that describe the freedoms and limitations of the religion. These Islamic laws, extracted from the Quran and narrations, guide Muslims in determining the permissibility of new situations that arise in social or personal lives (Opir et al., 2017a).

Watching films or movies is not inherently forbidden (*Haram*) in Islam if they do not contain prohibited elements. This is based on the legal maxim: "The basic principle is that things are permissible until evidence indicates that they are prohibited" (al-Qardhawi, 2000). Muslims are allowed to watch, enjoy, and learn from films that do not contain obscene material and do not cause harm to individuals or society. Hajar Opir (personal communication, 2023) categorizes Islamic law related to film into several situations:

- a) Illegal (*Haram*): When it can arouse lust to do forbidden things such as love of the world, vices, and others.
- b) Reprehensible (*Makruh*): When it doesn't have any effect, just providing happiness and passing time with entertainment.
- c) Permissible (*Mubah*): When it's just for entertainment without leaving any impact, either positive or negative.
- d) Preferable (*Mandub*): If used as a tool to develop love for Allah SWT without causing vile traits.

These categories align with the definitions provided by Abdul Karim Zaidan in his book '*Al-Wajiz fi Usul Al-Fiqh*' (2007), offering a nuanced understanding of how Islamic law applies to film consumption and production.

The Film Industry from an Islamic Perspective

Islam is recognized as a comprehensive religion or life system (*syumul*), providing guidance for all aspects of human life. This Islamic guidance covers faith, worship, morals, economy, politics, society, health, culture, language, art, knowledge, international relations, environment, philosophy, science, and law. The entertainment industry, including film, is subject to Islamic rules and laws that permit or prohibit certain practices based on religious principles (Opir et al., 2017b).

Entertainment is acknowledged as a natural human inclination in Islam. The religion does not restrict its followers from seeking entertainment, provided it does not transgress the limits of Sharia or neglect religious obligations. The Islamic perspective emphasizes simplicity in entertainment (MAIS, 2019).

In the Islamic context, film is viewed as a powerful medium for *da'wah* (Islamic preaching). It serves as a vehicle to educate and nurture a civilized society with a strong sense of religious, racial, and cultural identity. The messages conveyed through a film's plot, characters, and dialogue have the potential to shape and transform individual character (Rasit & Razali, 2018).

While Islam permits entertainment, including film, there are ethical considerations that must be observed. Today's films often prioritize mere entertainment to satisfy audience desires, sometimes including content that may be considered inappropriate or harmful from an Islamic perspective, such as violence, sexual scenes, or nihilistic themes. Therefore, Muslims involved in filmmaking, particularly producers and directors, have a responsibility to create films that promote positive messages aligned with Islamic values (Abu Bakar, 2015).

Issues in Malaysian Islamic Films

Recent controversies in Malaysian cinema have highlighted the challenges of representing religious figures in film. A local production that portrayed an angel character led to the issuance of a fatwa addressing this issue. According to the Mufti of Wilayah Persekutuan (2023), depicting angels in film indirectly diminishes their sacred status, contradicting the Islamic understanding of angels as beings known only through divine revelation. This practice is seen as diluting Islamic identity and undermining faith in matters of *al-Ghaibiyyat* (the unseen) by adapting Western cinematic conventions to religious themes. Consequently, such portrayals are forbidden through the *Sadd al-Dharai'* method, which aims to prevent potential harm or sin.

The film "Mentega Terbang" sparked significant controversy in Malaysia due to its exploration of interfaith themes. The film, which addressed similarities and differences between major religions in Malaysia, faced criticism from the public and art activists following its online screening. Particularly contentious were scenes depicting the main character, Aisyah, requesting pork from non-Muslim companions and her father allowing her to leave Islam for another religion. In response to these concerns, the Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN) banned the film's screening nationwide (Ibrahim, 2023). This incident underscores the sensitive nature of religious representation in Malaysian cinema and the role of government bodies in regulating

content deemed potentially offensive or harmful to religious sensibilities.

Actor Selection in Islamic Films

The selection of actors for Islamic films is a critical process that demands careful consideration. These films aim to promote Islamic values and principles, necessitating that the cast embodies these ideals. Hajar Opir (personal communication, 2023) argues that actors are even more important than the script in conveying the film's message effectively. While a good script is fundamental to a compelling story, the character portrayal significantly impacts the audience's reception and understanding of the message. In Malaysia, the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) has established guidelines for screening Islamic broadcasting content. These guidelines include specific criteria for actors in Islamic productions:

- a) Muslim actors should not play non-Muslim roles.
- b) Actors must not incorrectly perform or ridicule acts of worship.
- c) Legally married actors should not act out scenes or utter dialogues related to marriage laws.
- d) Actors must not portray prophets, angels, Satan, or matters related to *Sam'iyat* and *Ghaybiyyat*.
- e) Cross-gender acting is prohibited.

These guidelines serve as a reference for producers, advertisers, and broadcasters to ensure that their content aligns with Islamic principles and values (JAKIM, 2015). Hajar Opir (personal communication, 2023) outlines several key criteria for actors in Islamic films:

- a) Basic religious knowledge: Actors should have a foundational understanding of Islamic faith and Sharia.
- b) Maintaining purity of belief: This includes avoiding the propagation of deviant beliefs or questioning the authority of Islamic sources.
- c) High moral standards: Actors should maintain dignity, avoid obscene behavior, and respect religious and cultural sensitivities both on and off-screen.
- d) Compliance with Islamic law: This includes adhering to Islamic dress codes and avoiding portrayal of prohibited activities.
- e) Responsibility and accountability: Actors should be aware of their influence and act responsibly.

While the general preference is for Muslim actors to portray Muslim characters, non-Muslims can play Muslim roles under certain conditions. These conditions include maintaining moral standards consistent with Islamic teachings and avoiding sensitive religious or cultural elements in their portrayal. Dialogues and expressions should be *mahmudah* (good) rather than *mazmumah* (evil) (Opir et al., 2020).

Impact of Actor Selection on Film Reception

The selection of actors with a religious background is highly encouraged as it can positively influence the audience's acceptance of the film's message. Actors with a strong understanding of Islamic principles can more authentically portray Islamic characters and values, potentially leading to greater audience engagement and a more effective conveyance of the film's religious themes (Hassan & Sabli, 2018).

Actors in Islamic films are not merely performers but are considered *da'wah* agents or preachers. Their role extends beyond entertainment to include the responsibility of conveying Islamic messages and values to the audience. This perspective aligns with the Quranic injunction: "Let there be a group among you who call (others) to goodness, encourage what is good, and forbid what is evil—it is they who will be successful" (Ali Imran: 104). Hajar Opir (personal communication, 2023) identifies three main elements that influence an actor's ability to convey Islamic messages effectively:

- a) Character Formation: The integration of various film elements (hardware, software, presentation methods, and performing arts) contributes to the formation of a character that can effectively embody Islamic values.
- b) Cognitive Aspects: Films serve as a medium for ideological transmission, with actors playing a crucial role in conveying Islamic concepts and worldviews.
- c) Emotional Effects: Well-executed performances can evoke strong emotional responses in viewers, potentially leading to a deeper understanding and internalization of Islamic teachings.

Portraying Islamic characters presents unique challenges for actors. They must not only deliver compelling performances but also ensure that their portrayal aligns with Islamic principles and values. This dual responsibility often requires a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings and a commitment to authentic representation (Kanakaner et al., 2017).

The Need for Improvement in Malaysian Islamic Films

While there have been notable efforts in producing Islamic films in Malaysia, there is still significant room for improvement. Many current productions rely on stereotypical depictions of Islamic characters and themes, often limiting Islamic representation to superficial elements such as clothing or setting. There is a need for more nuanced and comprehensive portrayals of Islam that reflect its all-encompassing nature and relevance to all aspects of human life.

Directors and producers should consider expanding the range of themes in Islamic films to include history, romance, action, horror, thriller, and mystery genres. This diversification can attract a wider audience while still conveying authentic Islamic teachings. By creating compelling storylines that incorporate Islamic values, these films can compete with Western productions that may not adhere to Shariah principles.

Casting directors should prioritize actors with strong religious backgrounds or those who possess both excellent religious knowledge and high moral standards. This approach can enhance the authenticity of character portrayals and improve the audience's reception of the film's message (Tomaric, 2023).

The Mufti of Selangor (2018) recommends appointing Shariah consultants to address sensitive religious issues in film production. These consultants should be involved from the script-writing stage through to the end of filming. Additionally, productions should consider including explanatory notes at the beginning of the film or in an addendum to clarify any potentially ambiguous storylines that might lead to misunderstandings about religious matters.

Authorities such as the Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN) or the Film Censorship Board (LPF) should strengthen their oversight of film production and distribution. Films should be submitted for screening and censorship before public release, with appropriate Censorship Certificates issued within a specified timeframe. This process can help prevent the distribution of content that may be deemed offensive or harmful to religious sensibilities.

Scriptwriters and plot developers must ensure that their stories are appropriate for public viewing and that religious messages are accurately conveyed. This approach can help prevent religious defamation and misinformation about Islam among both Muslim and non-Muslim audiences.

Viewers should be encouraged to critically evaluate films before watching them. Given the potential of films to influence perceptions and behaviors, it is crucial for audiences to make informed choices about the content they consume. This recommendation underscores the importance of media literacy in navigating the complex landscape of religious representation in cinema.

Actors cast in Islamic films should fully understand and value the roles they are playing. They should approach religious portrayals with sincerity and commitment, recognizing the potential impact of their performances on audience perceptions of Islam. Careless or insincere portrayals of religious characters can not only dissatisfy audiences but also potentially damage the reputation of Islam (CareerExplorer, 2017).

CONCLUSION

This study has explored the complex interplay between Islamic principles and the art of filmmaking, focusing on the critical aspect of actor selection in Islamic films. The research has revealed that the film industry, particularly Islamic cinema, holds significant potential for shaping public opinion, promoting Islamic values, and fostering interfaith understanding. However, this potential is accompanied by challenges that require careful navigation to ensure authentic representation of Islamic culture and values.

This study explores the critical role of actor selection in authentically portraying Islamic culture, values, and beliefs in film, aiming to provide insights into its impact on audience reception and engagement. It emphasizes the importance of audience connection with characters and story for a film's success, investigating how suitable actors contribute to the

credibility of Islamic films. The research has significant implications for the Islamic film industry, offering valuable guidance to casting directors, producers, and filmmakers on creating impactful and successful Islamic films. By addressing these aspects, the study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on Islamic cinema and its contemporary societal role, potentially influencing future practices in Islamic filmmaking towards more nuanced and effective representations of Islamic culture and values on screen.

Furthermore, the study may illuminate broader implications of representation in media, extending to other forms of cultural and religious representation in cinema, and providing insights into film's potential as a tool for cultural diplomacy, interfaith dialogue, and combating stereotypes. In an era of globalized media consumption, this research not only serves the immediate needs of the Islamic film industry but also contributes to the larger discourse on cultural representation in global cinema, underscoring the importance of accurate and respectful portrayal of diverse cultures and religions in media.

The findings underscore the importance of adhering to Islamic guidelines in the production of Islamic films, especially in the selection of actors. This adherence is crucial not only for maintaining religious integrity but also for enhancing the audience's reception and engagement with the film's message. The study has shown that the selection of actors with strong religious backgrounds or a deep understanding of Islamic principles can significantly impact the authenticity of character portrayals and, consequently, the effectiveness of the film in conveying Islamic teachings.

The study compares Western and Islamic perspectives on film, noting that while the West sees film primarily as entertainment and art, Islamic viewpoints also consider its potential for religious education and moral guidance. It outlines Islamic rulings on film, ranging from forbidden to recommended, based on content and impact. The research emphasizes the importance of actor selection in Islamic films, identifying criteria such as religious knowledge, moral standards, and compliance with Islamic law. Actors in these films are viewed as agents of religious outreach, responsible for authentically representing Islamic teachings. The study highlights that actors with religious backgrounds often more effectively convey Islamic messages, significantly impacting audience reception and engagement. This research underscores the unique challenges and opportunities in Islamic filmmaking, balancing artistic expression with religious and moral considerations.

For future studies, several recommendations can be made. First, cross-cultural analysis exploring Islamic filmmaking practices across different Muslim-majority countries and in Muslim-minority contexts could provide valuable insights into diverse strategies for integrating Islamic values into cinema while respecting local cultural nuances. Second, more in-depth, large-scale studies on how audiences receive and interpret Islamic themes in films are needed, encompassing both Muslim and non-Muslim viewers to gauge the effectiveness of Islamic films in promoting interfaith understanding.

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