

RELATIONSHIP OF VIEWING ISLAMIC BASED FILMS WITH PRO-SOCIAL PERSONALITY AMONG TEENAGED AUDIENCE

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Abstract

The viewing of Islamic based films or films that contain Islamic message is seen as a contribution towards positive actions. Therefore, **this** study aims to determine the relationship between the viewing of Islamic based films and the development of pro-social personality among teenaged audience. The social cognitive theory was used as the theoretical framework via the three constructs (observational learning, symbolic modeling through characters and self-efficacy) as the mediating variables. The research design employed was a cross-sectional survey where data were collected through the distribution of questionnaire by using the stratified random sampling as the sampling technique. 1028 students from 5 public universities in the Klang Valley were taken as the sample from the 3324 total of the population. The questionnaire was generated from *Prosocial Personality Battery* (PSB) (Penner et al., 1995; Penner, 2002) and *General Self-Efficacy Scale* (SGSE) (Sherer et al., 1982). The quantitative data were analyzed by using the SPSS 18 through the univariate and multivariate statistical inferential analysis.

Keywords: *viewing of Islamic based films, pro-social personality, social cognitive theory, teenaged audience*

HUBUNGAN PENONTONAN FILEM BERASAS ISLAM DENGAN PERSONALITI PROSOSIAL DALAM KALANGAN KHALAYAK BELASAN TAHUN

Abstrak

Penontonan filem berasas Islam dikatakan mampu memberi sumbangan ke arah tindakan yang positif. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti hubungan di antara penontonan filem-filem bermesej ke-Islaman dengan pembinaan personaliti prososial dalam kalangan khalayak belasan tahun. Teori kognitif sosial digunakan sebagai kerangka teoritis kajian melalui penelitian terhadap tiga konstruk utama, pembelajaran pemerhatian, pemodelan simbolik menerusi watak dan kecekapan sendiri sebagai pembolehkan pencelah. Rekabentuk kajian adalah tinjauan melalui soalselidik yang diedarkan kepada sampel yang dipilih secara rambang berstrata. Seramai 1028 pelajar dari 5 universiti awam di sekitar Lembah Klang menjadi responden dalam tinjauan ini. Soalselidik ini dijanakan dari *Prosocial Personality Battery* (PSB) 1995 dan 2002 serta *General Self-Efficacy Scale* (SGSE) 1982. Data dianalisis secara kuantitatif melalui analisis inferensi univariat dan multivariat.

Kata kunci: penontonan filem berasas Islam, personaliti prososial, teori kognitif sosial, khalayak belasan tahun

Introduction

Media, for example movies act as social models that influenced idea, value, cognitive, and behaviour of audience. Movies besides contributing towards bad effects and influences (Holmes & Johnson, 2009; Steinberg & Monahan, 2010), should also contribute towards highlighting positive behaviour through the learning of pro-social values especially among teenagers and children (Ostrov et al., 2006; Strasburger et al., 2009). In referring to the Social Cognitive Theory, this study will explore on how far watching an Islamic based films influences the process of developing the pro-social personality through cognitive, affective and behavioural. The Social Cognitive Theory mentioned that an individual who observes actively on the media from the action and behavioural point of view is more likely to model the action (Bandura, 2001).

Teenagers are the prime audience who will receive more effects compared to

other audience (McQuail, 2000; Benyahia et al., 2008). The rise of these Islamic based films has caught the attention of the Muslim fans and audience. Films from Indonesia and Iran are seen lately to have dominated the rise of the Islamic based films genre. Nevertheless, these Islamic based films are not among the popular choices in Malaysia and the number is small. The pace of these Islamic based Malay films in Malaysia is still below par. Hence, the product of these Islamic based films can still be put in the category though partially (Rosmawati et al., 2011).

Literature Review

Religious films (Islam)

Religious field has been accepted as a genre in a film that lifts up the elements of God (Teusner, 2002; Bazin, 1997). Religious films produced by Hollywood touched a lot on Christianity, spirit, soul, morality, angel and demon (Lindvall 2004; Nayar 2010; Santana and Erickson 2008; Kozlovic, 2005). The movies are such as *The Passion of Christ* (2004), *Leap of Faith* (1992), *Da Vinci Code* (2006) and *2012* (2009).

Nevertheless, the audience and people in the community need to be explained on the differences between films that are Islamic based and Islamic films. Naim (2010 & 2011) differentiates between Islamic films and films that are Islamic based. Naim (2010) said that films that are Islamic based are films that contain elements that parallel to the laws of Islam. However, not necessarily the movie has to be Islamic as a whole. The Islamic elements could only be at its narrative, dramatic, cinematography, semiotic, application, technical and contextual. Whereas, Islamic films according to Naim (2010:10) brings a message of self-surrender, obedience and believes in Allah the Creator. He added by saying:

“Product of explanation from the discussions about arts in Islam, as Islamic film is uttered as an art in the form of ‘halal (legal) product’, pre and post production with the input and elaboration on codes of ethics and Islamic values until the process of spreading, watching and audience viewing. The purpose is to spread Da’wah, absorbed moral values and practice the concept of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong”.

Teenaged audience

Watching movies is a social activity (Sargent, 2005; McQuail, 2005), activity to be done during free time (Md Salleh et al., 2009), entertainment (Rosmawati et al., 2011), as well as a popular culture (Hariyadi, 2010) especially among the teenaged audience. The films produced here in Malaysia have put teenagers as their target to sell their films (Mohd Yusof, 2003). Damico (2007) in his study showed that films that are showing have different influence onto different

individuals. Damico (2007) also discussed the media effects including the films that have great impact on the teenagers' social life, ways of dressing and types of judgement.

Bandura (2001) said that audience who are exposed to the mass media like television and films will obtain values and standards through observation and modeling other people's action. Thus, whatever that the film portrays somehow influences the audience's understanding about certain issues or phenomena that happen around them.

Pro-Social Personality

Pro-social personality has been introduced by Penner et al. (1995) through the *Prosocial Personality Battery* (PSB) instrument that discusses two main factors (structures); *Other-oriented Empathy* and *Helpfulness* (see Penner et al., 1995; Penner, 2002; Skoe et al., 2002; Finkelstein et al., 2005; Gillath & Karantzas, 2007). The characteristics of the pro-social personality involves the cognitive, affective and behavioural factors which have close relationship with the pro-social elements through thinking, feeling and emotion as well as behaviour of an individual (see Penner et al., 1995; Penner, 2002).

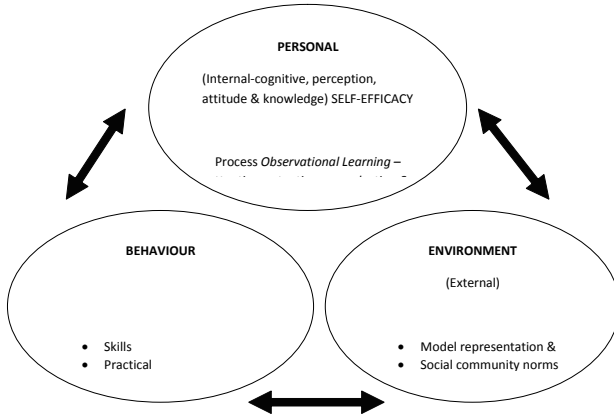
The pro-social personality has relationship with the pro-social behaviour (Penner et al., 1995; Penner, 2002; Skoe et al., 2002; Finkelstein et al., 2005). Based on a study done by Penner et al. (1995), helpfulness acts as a predictor that better explains a pro-social behaviour than the Other-oriented Empathy. Penner's et al. (1995) explanation involves helping that has a strong relationship with self-efficacy and surrounding mastery skills. This shows that an individual that throws in him/herself in the pro-social action consistently not only due to who has been contributed but what has he/she done to him/herself.

Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive theory appears from the development of the social learning theory (see Bandura, 1986; Bandura, 2005; Bandura, 2004; Bandura 2001). Bandura (2004) said that humans are able to arrange their own behaviour through the influenced of their environment based on the concept of *reciprocal determinism* (Figure 1). Individual's personal factor has closed relationship with the cognitive process that can influence the individual's behaviour itself. Based on the *observational learning*, individuals are able to think and value every action that they want to learn or copy based on the processes of *attention*, *retention*, *reproduction* and *motivational*. However, motivation and strong determination are not the only factors that determine and shape behaviour, environment too. Individuals also learn something through modeling from the people around them; parents, family members, peers and popular celebrities that could attract their attention (Bandura, 2001; Bandura 2005). Nevertheless, through high self-efficacy (see Bandura, 1994; Bandura, 2005) these individuals would be able to

defeat the environment factors eventually.

Figure 1. Reciprocal Determinism Model



Source: Adapting from Bandura (1986)

Conceptual Framework

Based on the social cognitive theory (1986), researcher has built a conceptual framework (Figure 2) to show the relationship between variables. The independent variable in this study consists of watching Islamic based films through the constructs of the effects of watching and frequency of watching the Islamic based films. Whereas the dependent variable of the study is the pro-social personality. Researcher uses three social cognitive constructs as the mediating variables and they are *observational learning*, *symbolic modeling through characters* and *self-efficacy*.

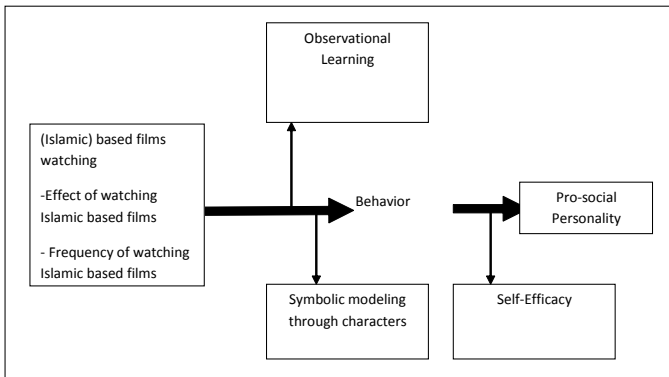


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

Objectives Of The Study

The general objective is to determine the relationship between watching Islamic based films and pro-social personality among teenaged audience. Specifically, the objectives of the study are:

- i. To determine the interest level of teenaged audience towards watching the Islamic based films.
- ii. To determine the relationship between watching the Islamic based films and pro-social personality with the *mediating variables; observational learning, symbolic modeling through characters and self-efficacy*.
- iii. To determine the effects of watching the Islamic based films and frequency of watching the Islamic based films with the existence of the three constructs of the social cognitive theory; *observational learning, symbolic modeling through characters and self-efficacy*.

Methodology Of The Study

This study used the cross-sectional survey. Data were gathered through self-administered questionnaire. Researcher also used two readily built instruments; *Prosocial Personality Battery (PSB)* (Penner et al., 1995; Penner, 2002) and *General Self-Efficacy Scale (SGSE)* (Sherer et al., 1982) to explain on the two variables pro-social personality and self-efficacy. The quantitative data were analyzed quantitatively by using SPSS 18 through the statistical descriptive and multivariate statistical inferential analysis.

This study used stratified random sampling technique by taking samples that are heterogenous. Researcher chose samples randomly from each stratum with 1028 samples in total. Five public universities (UPM, UIA, UM, UKM and UiTM) from the Klang Valley were chosen which offer courses like media studies, communication, film arts, theatre and animation. The sampling size was determined randomly through the Cohen et al. (2007) table by taking care the significance level at $p < .05$ (level of significance=95%).

Findings Of The Study

Level of interest in watching the Islamic based Films

Based on the frequency distribution, the interest level towards watching the Islamic based films showed a majority of 61.1% respondents who like to watch Islamic based films. (Table 1).

Table 1: Percentage of Interest towards Watching Islamic based Films

	Frequency	Percentage
Level of interest towards watching the Islamic based films		
Strongly Interested	249	24.2%
Interested	628	61.1%
Slightly Interested	129	12.5%
Uninterested	22	2.1%
TOTAL	1028	100.00

Relationship between watching the Islamic based films and pro-social personality

Based on the study (Table 2) showed that without having to control the three constructs of the social cognitive theory, there was a weak positive relationship between watching Islamic based films and pro-social personality ($r= 0.319$, $p <.05$). Besides that, there was also a relationship between the dependent variables (pro-social personality) with the three mediating variables (*observational learning, symbolic modeling through characters and self-efficacy*); a weak positive relationship with *observational learning* ($r= 0.488$, $p <.05$) and self-efficacy ($r= 0.319$, $p <.05$). There was also a very weak positive relationship with *symbolic modeling through characters* ($r= 0.285$, $p <.05$). This shows that pro-social personality received direct influence by the social cognitive theory.

Table 2: Coefficients of Inter-correlation Variables by Zero Order Partial Correlation

Variables	Watching Islamic based films	Pro-Social Personality	Observational Learning	Symbolic modeling through characters	Self-efficacy
Watching Islamic based films	1.00 (0.00)				
Pro-Social Personality	0.319 (0.00)	1.00 (0.00)			
Observational Learning	0.252 (0.00)	0.488 (0.00)	1.00 (0.00)		
Symbolic modeling through characters	0.217 (0.00)	0.285 (0.00)	0.612 (0.00)	1.00 (0.00)	
Self-efficacy	0.223 (0.00)	0.319 (0.00)	0.388 (0.00)	0.481 (0.00)	1.00 (0.00)

Referring to Table 3, by controlling all the three controlled variables, it was found out that significantly, there was a weak positive relationship between watching Islamic movies and pro-social personality ($r= 0.218, p <.05$). Therefore, this study rejects the null hypothesis and it can be reported that with the elimination of the social cognitive theory effect towards the pro-social personality, the audience to the films who were the respondents of this study do possess the pro-social personality. In other words, the higher the level of watching the Islamic based films, the higher their pro-social personality.

Table 3: Coefficients of Inter-correlation between Watching Islamic based films and Pro-social Personality by Zero Order Partial Correlation and controlling *observational learning, Symbolic modeling through characters and Self-efficacy*

Variables	Watching Islamic based films	Pro-Social Personality
Watching Islamic based films	1.00 (0.00)	
Pro-Social Personality	0.218 (0.00)	1.00 (0.00)

Factors that contribute to the Pro-Social Personality

The Anova test for the regression analysis showed that there was a significant relationship between the (independent) predictor variables with the dependent variable at the 0.05 level of significance. The analysis showed that the effects of watching Islamic based films (Model 1) gave a significant result with the F value was $F=321.427, p <.05$. It was the same results to the combination of effects and frequency of watching Islamic based films (Model 4) gave a significant results with the F value was ($F=114.146, p <.05$) (Table 4).

Table 4: Analysis of Variance of Variables

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig. Value
1. Regression	21895.095	1	21895.095	321.427	.000
Residual	69889.403	1026	68.118		
Total	91784.498	1027			
4. Regression	28323.700	4	7080.925	114.146	.000
Residual	63460.798	1023	62.034		
Total	9178.498	1027			

On the other hand, the multiple regression test showed significantly that *observational learning* contributed to 23.9% of variance ($R^2=0.239$) on the pro-social personality. This showed *observational learning* ($\beta=.831$, $p <.05$) was a main predictor in the study that influenced the pro-social personality of the respondents. Nevertheless, with the combination of the predictor *observational learning* ($\beta=.630$, $p <.05$), effects of watching the Islamic based films ($\beta=.519$, $p <.05$), self efficacy ($\beta=.156$, $p <.05$) and the frequency of watching Islamic based films ($\beta=.090$, $p <.05$), the contribution variance value towards the pro-social personality increased to 30.9%. The factor that did not contribute significantly in the study was *Symbolic modeling through characters* (Table 5).

Table 5: Coefficient Regression of Independent Variables: Multi Regression Analysis, Stepwise Method

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1. (Constant)					
Observational learning	47.130	1.469	.488	32.084	.000
	.831	.046		17.928	.000
4. (Constant)					
Observational learning	35.942	1.805		19.908	.000
Effects of watching Islamic based films	.630	.049	.370	12.742	.000
Self-efficacy	.519	.081	.177	6.404	.000
Frequency of watching Islamic based films	.156	.035	.127	4.466	.000
	.090	.021	.115	4.192	.000
	R		R Square		Adjusted R Square
1	.488		.239		.238
4	.556		.309		.306

Based on the analysis from Table 4 and Table 5, the null hypothesis of this study was failed to be rejected due not all factors predicted were successfully contributed to the pro-social personality. The Symbolic modeling through characters did not contribute to the pro-social personality.

Discussion

The findings of this study found that high level of interest exists among the respondents in watching movies that have the Islamic elements with a percentage of 85.3%. This study was also done to determine the relationship between watching Islamic based films and the pro-social personality. However,

the correlation analysis proved the relationship that exists was weak. Whereas, through the multiple regression analysis, the overall predictor factors discussed in the study contributed to 30.9% only to the respondents' pro-social personality development. The findings also revealed other factors that could be the main predictor which was not included in the study. This showed that even though the respondents' interest towards the Islamic based films was high, it did not give too much of effects on their pro-social personality because the correlation value was weak.

Besides that, this study also proved that the role played by the social cognitive theory constructs; *observational learning*, *symbolic modeling through characters* and *self-efficacy* act as the main mediator in connecting the role of watching Islamic based films and pro-social personality. This study strengthens the social cognitive theory that has helped a lot of research on the effects of media including films and pro-social personality. Research on attitudes of pro-social and media has connected a few important constructs in the social cognitive theory; observational learning, modeling and self-efficacy (see Dumova, 2006; Carlo et al., 2003; Hasting et al., 2007; Udornpim & Singhal, 1999; Yates, 1999; Eisenberg et al., 2006; Caprara & Steca, 2007).

According to Dumova (2006), based on the social cognitive theory, children are exposed to modeling the pro-social and the content of educational media will be easily influenced by the pro-social behaviour while they are interacting with their friends. Udornpim & Singhal's (1999) research has brought forward the main character in the Japanese soap opera "Oshin" as a role model in the media among the people in Thailand. Their research found that "Oshin" has portrayed strong, bold, charismatic and positive thinker characteristics. There were 23 pro-social values discussed in the Udornpim & Singhal's (1999) research. Among them are tolerance, independent, responsibility, helping each other, caring, forgiving, hardworking, sharing and ambitious. "Oshin" has become the positive role model in the audiences' eyes and how they shape themselves according to Oshin's characteristics.

Hence, the pro-social personality development that is related to the role of the media through the social cognitive theory does not touch on the developing of character through *qudwah gain*. This is because, as a theory that is based on the Western perspective, the social cognitive theory did not discuss any existence of god and faith which could support the development of an individual's character and personality.

Furthermore, Islam as the religion that promotes peace and serenity accepts the pro-social values positively. This is because religious people see noble religious values highly. Allah said in al-Maidah verse 2:

Surah al-Maidah verse 2:



Meaning: “And help each other in righteousness and piety, and do not help each other in sin and aggression. And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is severe at punishment”. (Al-Maidah : 2)

Conclusion

The pro-social values that underlie the development of the pro-social personality among the teenaged audience are needed to balance their self demeanour. This study showed that the choice of good and religious based films contribute to the development of the pro-social personality. Hence, the making of the content of a film needs to be given special attention so that audience of a film especially Muslim teenagers have a choice to choose films that could make them the real Ummah (people). Therefore, producing more Islamic based films are a kind of da'wah struggle that da'ies have to support. This can lift up the functions of a film that can spread positive messages to the society.

Environment, personal and behavioral factors correlate with each other and contribute to the decision and action taken. This has been explained by the social cognitive theory through the reciprocal concept. Therefore, the development of character as a strong Muslim teenaged audience, who is not easily influenced by anything that he/she watched is very important. They must know how to filter whatever that they are watching. The internal strength has to have a good connection with one's faith and piety towards Allah SWT. As an Islamic audience, one needs to choose the type and genre of a film that could draw them closer to find pleasure from Allah SWT.

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