

## Creative Content of Shariah-Compliant Short Film in The Digital Media Evolution

Rosmawati Mohamad Rasit<sup>1\*</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Research Centre for Dakwah and Leadership, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), 43600, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.

Email: [rosmawati@ukm.edu.my](mailto:rosmawati@ukm.edu.my)

### ABSTRACT

#### CORRESPONDING AUTHOR (\*):

Rosmawati Mohamad Rasit  
([rosmawati@ukm.edu.my](mailto:rosmawati@ukm.edu.my))

#### KEYWORDS:

Creative work  
Shariah-compliant  
Short films  
Sontent  
Digital media

#### CITATION:

Rosmawati Mohamad Rasit. (2022).  
Creative Content of Shariah-Compliant  
Short Film in The Digital Media Evolution.  
*Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and  
Humanities (MJSSH)*, 7(3), e001369.  
<https://doi.org/10.47405/mjssh.v7i3.1369>

There are advancements in creative work, particularly for short films in the media domain now. The production of short films undergoes digitalisation transformation that promotes the evolution of brand-new media technologies. Nevertheless, the creation of shariah-compliant short film content creates a debate and becomes a polemic among the country's content creator. Nonetheless, shariah-compliant short films grab digital media audiences' attention, such as MTAS Production, Mr Kokom and Syahmi Sazli Production. The discussion related the writing of shariah-compliant creative content scripts from the aesthetic aspect of Takmilah Theory. Thus, this paper aimed to identify shariah-compliant elements as the basis for content formation for short films. Thematic analysis of shariah-compliant elements worked as a primary reference for short filmmakers to plan and organise the content that could meet the needs of the audience. Looking at the marketability of shariah-compliant works through the evolution of digital media, it indicates that the creative community and industry in Malaysia accepts this reform.

**Contribution/Originality:** This is research on Islamic creative content comparing with creative content in general. This study originates new literature on the shariah-compliant based on Islamic creative content. The study contributes in the context of shariah-compliant short film from creative content which are relating to their religion and social value.

### 1. Introduction

Creative industries such as film, drama and animation are among the important sectors contributing to the country's per capita economy. The creative industry products have the potential to open up exciting businesses for both local and international markets. As a country that has ethnic and religious diversity, Malaysia is different compared to the rest of the world in building local identity and values. Nonetheless, the ability of creative industry players in delivering more quality creative content and in line with the religion and culture of the community is often debated. Along with digital media technology development, short film creative work is seen to be well-accepted among social media

netizens. Nevertheless, short films' study is still moderately new compared to mainstream film studies. In fact, research on films are seen as more concentrated on the discussion such as from the perspectives of human capital ([Abdul Razak & Mohd Syuhaidi, 2018](#)), social criticism ([Al-Fatihah & Normaliza, 2014](#)), narrative elements ([Imelda et al., 2017](#)) and Islamic values and culture ([Saodah et al., 2014](#)).

The rise of Youtuber in the evolution of digital media is related to the making of short films. Viewing scenarios and dependence on new media has also evolved. Platforms like Youtube are among the choices for the younger generation to produce short films. Even video and short film competitions have influenced the creative work industry more vigorously nowadays. The production of short films is not only the option of Malaysian but also for international Youtubers. They offer multiple types of short films that are universal.

[Hasrul's \(2015\)](#) discussed the genre and narrative of short films that focused on the strengths of scripts, acting, and messages instead of focusing on aspects of digital visual special effects. In fact, the making of short films in various genres does not interfere with the delivery of linear messages, but it adds aesthetic elements in the work ([Hasrul, 2015](#)). Therefore, the focus of short film scriptwriting is believed to require excellent skills and creativity among creative works activists. Nevertheless, short films that comprise shariah-compliant elements are still new in the production of local creative works. There are various polemics that are often discussed about the need to include shariah-compliant elements in short films' creative writing.

Nonetheless, a new generation of YouTubers has emerged and established the concept of shariah-compliant into their work. Short films in production like Mr Kokom, MTAS Production, and Syahmi Sazli Production have delivered new benchmarks in offering shariah-compliant short films. The concept of shariah-compliant is the choice of the younger generation of the new millennium. Therefore, in line with Shariah-compliant film production, it is imperative to discuss the shariah-compliant elements in detail by writing creative scripts that highlight the aesthetic basis of Takmilah Theory.

## 2. Literature Review

The expansion of media from conventional to digital is not a radical or unexpected change. In fact, there is the evolution of digital media through the role of media convergence. The evolution of digital media is a transition from the existence of existing media. For example, video viewing on YouTube is still based on the concept of conventional media, which is a combination of mass media elements such as radio and TV. [Fidler \(1997\)](#) clarified that conventional media is not obsolete, but it undergoes a transformation towards manifesting new media in a complementary manner. According to [Mishra \(2016\)](#), convergence culture motivates a new digital technology scenario in building a dynamic relationship between print media, television and even the internet that eventually devises new media.

### 2.1. The Development of Digital Media Evolution

The emergence of mediamorphosis (changes in media communication) stresses the unification between new and conventional media to form complementary media communications ([Fidler, 1997](#); [Severin & Tankard, 2010](#)). One of the research questions that is being reviewed by scholars of media and communication is about the extent to

which the emergence of new media developments has impacted the existence of existing media. Thus, the discussion of the new media study became the main focus of scholars, including [Fidler \(1997\)](#), who introduced the theory of 'mediamorphosis'. [Fidler \(1997\)](#) introduced the term 'mediamorphosis' by linking the process of change and consolidation of media communication through new and conventional media's functions and objectives to form a more complete media.

According to [Fidler \(1997\)](#), the new media nowadays is not being developed spontaneously and independently. The elements from conventional media are formed through the process of 'mediamorphosis'. Today's media technology complements each other as a whole. The birth of new media did not hinder conventional media development such as press technology as the emergence of television that did not eliminate radio's role and has formed a unique pattern system ([Fidler, 1997](#); [Severin & Tankard, 2010](#)). Furthermore, [Cooke \(2005\)](#) also discussed visual convergence which combines two or more media technologies such as web TV with access from the internet.

The idea of 'mediamorphosis' in the new media initiated by [Fidler \(1997\)](#) has motivated a more holistic combination of media communication unification including through the use of social media such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and so on ([Nyland et al., 2007](#); [Nyland, 2007](#); [Livingstone, 2008](#)). [Fidler \(1997\)](#) argued that the media as a whole has come from the elements through a system that is unified through the concept of unification (convergence). However, through convergence, the emergence of new media does not eliminate the old media function, but rather the combination expands the media function. [Jenkins \(2004\)](#) referred the digital media consolidation as an entity that is experiencing cultural change.

Netizens are ready to accept more accessible and real-time resources such as digital media. This change and transition are known as a convergence which is the unification of the types of media presented in digital form. This media convergence process which combines the types of media resources can be accessed through the internet. Combining these media resources by forming a new platform can represent an easy access to a single media such as a smartphone. For example, by using a smartphone, netizens can access various digital media sources such as online newspapers, videos on Youtube, social media networks, and watching dramas and movies on Netflix and Viu.

## 2.2. Shariah-Compliant Short Film

The evolution of short film creative works that influence the country's creative industry grows in line with digital media. Through the progression of digital media, short films realise a place among local and international YouTubers. This creative industry scenario opens up positive competitions which elevate and enable the short films to communicate its message to the audience. Today's short films are the creative work product that adds to the country's per capita economy. According to [Hasrul \(2015\)](#), short films are works or platforms in creative content for creators to express skills, ideas, perspectives and thoughts in a short period.

Nonetheless, producing short films depends a lot on scriptwriting, which is the heart that moves the storyline. The domain of scriptwriting is part of creative writing. According to [Siti Khariah \(2012\)](#), creative writing includes creating and producing essays, creating works or stories such as novels, short stories, dramas, and poems. At the same time, [Mana Sikana \(2005\)](#) maintained that creative writing involves creating ideas

and inspiration that allows the story's work to occur. [Barbit et al. \(2012\)](#) explained that creativity is delivered from the development of new emotions that are closely related to the imagination and thinking maturity of a writer.

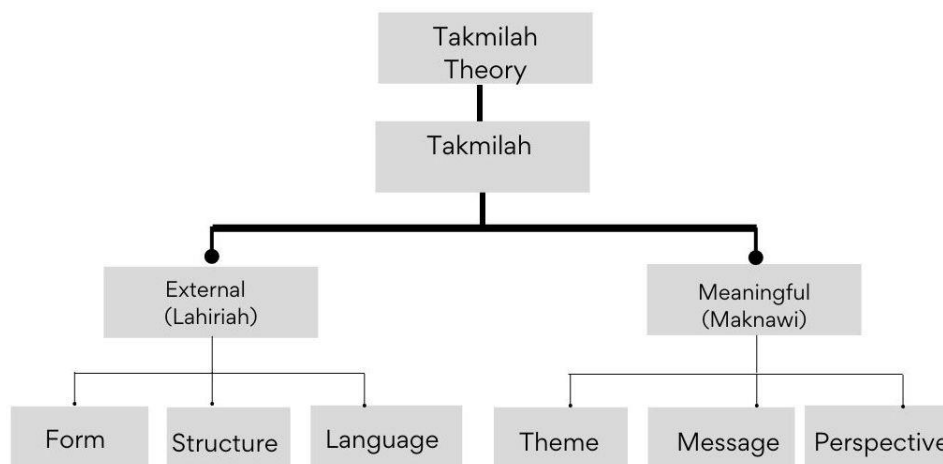
Writing scripts for creative work, necessitates skill and creativity. Indeed, the author of creative work is actually a storyteller who seeks to elevate the concept of storytelling in each work's narration. The production of creative work needs to highlight the characters, plots, and events resulting from the author's design. Scriptwriters should have the capacity to create characters that depend on their creativity. The tendency to compose characters through understanding life experiences from psychology, sociology and humanities aspects can strengthen the creative ingredients raised in work.

One of the viewpoints that need to be considered in the ideas formation process and writing short film scripts is understanding its philosophy. For shariah-compliant short film works, the story's philosophy is often associated with religion where message of goodness from Allah is to be conveyed to the society. [Rosmawati and Azimah \(2016\)](#) claimed that the concept of shariah-compliant should follow Islamic-based standards. Through the concept of shariah-compliant, da'wah can be conveyed through Shariah-compliant elements which aim the target group to stay away from committing immorality and rebellion against Allah SWT ([Rosmawati & Azimah, 2016](#)). Additionally, according to [Hajar et al. \(2017\)](#), scriptwriters who want to work based on shariah-compliant criteria should be more sensitive and adhere to the fiqh law. Scriptwriters need to process ideas more freely but remain creative based on Islamic principles and relevant fiqh laws such as positive and pure language selection (not practising plagiarism) ([Hajar et al., 2017](#)).

### 2.3. Takmilah Theory

Takmilah Theory is an Islamic Literary Theory developed by [Shafie \(1993\)](#). According to [Shafie \(1997\)](#), the study of Islamic Literature without involving the aspects of Islam will not produce Islamic values. Takmilah theory introduces seven essential components with the concept of artwork that emphasises perfection and beauty, namely the divine aspect of Allah that is *kamal*, the apostolic aspect (*Kamil*), the Islamic aspect (*akmal*), the scientific aspect (*takamul*), the aesthetic aspect (*takmilah*), the author aspect (*istikmal*) and aspects of the reader (*kamil*).

However, this discussion focused on the fifth aspect, which is the basis of aesthetics in *Takmilah* Theory by relating to the study of shariah-compliant scriptwriting through short films. According to [Kasmaizun and Kamariah \(2017\)](#), from the aspect of applying aesthetics, *takmilah* leads to the understanding that a literary work is one of the elements of art that emphasises perfection and beauty. [Figure 1](#) discusses aesthetics in Islamic literary works as observed from two aspects, namely external beauty and meaningful beauty. *Lahiriah* is formed from the structure form and language that elevates the work. In contrast, *maknawi* concentrates on the theme, message and view of the work that translates the message. [Shafie \(1997\)](#) argued that the combination of these two elements leads to the process of creation and formation of literary works creatively, beautifully and perfectly from both external and internal perspectives.

Figure 1. Takmilah Theory from Aesthetic Aspects (*Takmilah*)

### 3. Methodology

The study was a preliminary literature review to obtain shariah-compliant concept. Thematic analysis was used to identify themes associated with the development of shariah-compliant elements in short film based on the theory of takmilah as a theoretical framework.

### 4. Result

The paradigm of theoretical image focuses on building the nation's image and society that is a reflection of the public itself. The philosophy highlighted in each work is essential in order to establish the backbone of the creative story. The philosophy of the story must have a message to the audience. The message of goodness is one that needs to be emphasised in work. However, as a universal religion, Islam is also free in raising humanity's value, which is more comprehensive. Among the purposes to elevate the philosophy is to educate through the humanitarian values brought in the work. This shariah-compliant concept will lead to continuous da'wah efforts through creative works such as making short films which are the choice of the new generation of YouTubers now. Therefore, a solid understanding of the concept of shariah-compliance is quintessential for the short film industry players so that the manuscripts and messages enjoyed become a medium for continuous da'wah (Figure 2).

The aesthetic principles of the Islamic context focus on the human concern in understanding the meaning of nature and life. Writing a short film based on this aesthetic aspect demands an understanding of external features such as structure and plot, characters, language, and dialogue. While from the point of view of meaning, it necessitates one to look at themes, ideas, messages of values, symbols, and metaphors that can be associated with Islam's image. Both of these aspects complete the process of synthesising a work creatively, beautifully and artfully. This effort strives for '*takmilah*' in creative work. In discussing the concept of shariah-compliant in creative work, there are two dimensions of layers that need to be sifted through and in great detail, namely from society's cultural values and Islam's image (Figure 3). The dimension of society's cultural values is seen from the three principal elements, namely humanity, local culture, and pure values. Simultaneously, the image of Islam highlights the principal basis of *aqidah* (faith), *akhlaq* (morals) and sharia (Islamic Law).

Figure 2. Shariah-Compliant Short Film

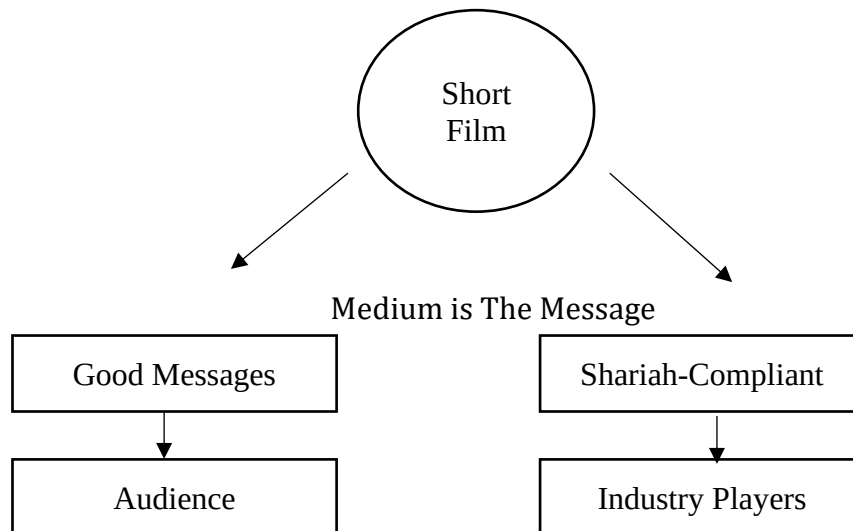
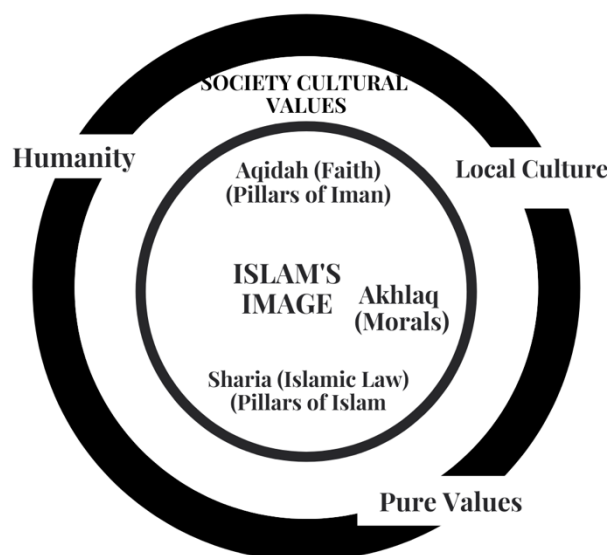


Figure 3: The Concept of Shariah-Compliant



#### 4.1. Society Cultural Values

In elevating shariah-compliant works, society's cultural values become an essential aspect that needs to be well understood. Shariah-compliant short films together with scriptwriting are important in ensuring that it does not neglect the cultural values of society. Starting from the formation of the story's character and background, the concept of the story needs to observe in terms of the suitability of the phenomenon that practices the cultural values accepted by the society. The application of the concept of cultural values of this society indicates the respect for the nation's civilisation image.

Thus, in an attempt to appreciate the creative content of shariah-compliant short films, elements of humanity, local culture and pure values must be associated with the nation's culture that supports a country's aspirations. The content created needs to look at the more universal aspects of humanity. Humanity explored from the human side is closely

related to life, the quality of happiness and also on the basis of their success or failure. Hence, raising the dimensions of humanity in short film works is inherent to provide a universal interpretation of the concept of human development.

While local cultural elements and pure values are also crucial for shariah-compliant short films, for example, the famous Malay culture to be shy and virtuous character should not be eliminated even in the name of progress of the digital media. The new generation that employs new media platforms in marketing their work needs to understand the local cultural customs and not to make mistakes in their work. Similarly, the issue of racial and religious diversity in Malaysia should not be provoked by any party in order to preserve the harmony of the country. In this context, it takes the wisdom of short filmmakers not to involve prejudice and racism. Their work should lead to differences of opinion that can be celebrated with open hearts and mutual respect. The pure values that lead to peace and mutual tolerance should be well articulated in short film works.

#### 4.2. Islamic Image

There is a polemic of discussion when religious works are often described as misunderstood and punitive. Creative work should be upheld more gently and relaxed without ignoring the actual image of Islam. Of course, the message of Islam must be well understood among the filmmakers so that the work they produce does not harm the audience. Therefore, the guidelines for films that comply with sharia must be completely adhered to *da'wah* elements.

Every story and narrative produced must definitely be in line with the beliefs of *Sunnah Wal Jamaah* members. The element of faith is a pillar of Iman that needs to be conformed by every believing Muslim. Believing in the *qada* 'and *qadar* of Allah determines a Muslim's faith that needs to be well understood. Avoid producing story plots that disputing Allah's power, practices polytheism to Allah, and acts against destiny. The same situation applies to the moral element that should be exhibited with good morals. Short film creative work is not a medium to show unconditional creativity. The moral element should be the didactic essence that supports the concept of kindness and provides the audience with the choice to be a better person and not the other way around.

#### 5. Discussion

[Saodah et al. \(2014\)](#) explained that filmmakers from Islamic countries should emphasise human-themed manuscripts embroidered with philosophy, Islamic poems, based on hadith and the Qur'an. The production of quality work is one of the social responsibilities that filmmakers need to take into account. Thus, shariah-compliant works will uphold the sanctity of Islam and in turn, help in curbing Western propaganda which attacks the Islamic world through films and dramas.

Among the aspects that are also concentrated in making short films is about the exploration of the pure values. Pure values are universal values that involve religious communities. According to [Kabadayi \(2012\)](#), short films play a role in educating the audience through the value of storytelling that is being highlighted. [Kabadayi's \(2012\)](#) study proved that short films could be used as teaching materials in the learning and teaching (PdP) process of teachers. Generally, religion encourages human life that

always does good to all. A study attended by [Gurusamy et al. \(2019\)](#) designated that short films' role to provide awareness of moral sensitivity among Moral Education students.

In fact, [Jamaluddin et al. \(2014\)](#) asserted that local works that were produced has actually mimicked many styles and developments of Western filmmaking, especially from the socio-cultural and thought aspect, especially the intimacy of male and female actors compared to the quality and content of the film. Nonetheless, the relationship between male and female actors needs to have boundaries, even if they are doing their job as actors. From the aspect of dialogue, it should be substantial compared to the visual. Nevertheless, [Hasrul \(2015\)](#) stated that visual works in short films through special elements of digital visuals become part of teenage culture. Teenager produces more creative work through the interpretation of imagination and art ([Hasrul, 2015](#)).

In producing shariah-compliant short films, apart from society's cultural values, the dimension of the Islamic image becomes an important foundation that moves the storytelling. The basis of faith, sharia and morality must be studied well in line with the demands of actual Islamic teachings. According to [Naim \(2011\)](#), apart from the aspects of art directing or involving production designs such as locations, sets and props, clothing that includes attire and jewellery worn by the characters in the film must also follow the manners and rules that are being outlined by Islam. The interests, needs and laws of drama should not override religious law. Allah's law supercedes everything. However, what happens in most films, including Islamic films, is the opposite. The significance of the drama becomes the priority or else the film produced will not be real and well-narrated.

The short film work involves a broader scope which not only tied up to religion alone which revolves around prayer and worship but other good values as well. If scriptwriters and short filmmakers could somehow fully understand this dimension, the result will change the way people think in looking at life more positively and solve their problems calmly and return to the Almighty Creator. According to [Maulana \(2016\)](#), preaching creatively promotes a *da'wah* approach that can reach the audience. Even in the face of changing world developments, the *da'wah* approach also needs to evolve.

While the elements of sharia carry the concept of the Islamic pillars, the work produced is not meant to bring the audience to the scene of immoral acts. According to [Hoesterey and Clark \(2012\)](#), people who commit immorality are found in abundance among Muslims. Even filmmakers who understand the concept of the shariah-compliant well can easily misconstrue the elements of sharia as demanded by Islam such as maintaining the boundaries of communication, covering the *'awrah* (intimate part) and showing the implementation of worship in line with the demands of Islam.

## 6. Conclusion

In an attempt to highlight the creative content of shariah-compliant short films, script formation needs to be guided by *lahiriah* (external) basis and the meaning. The aesthetics of the principle of *Takmilah* Theory complete the understanding of the dimensional layer of society's cultural values and the image of Islam as well. Skills in writing short film scripts are a major condition in the extent to which the younger generation's ability, especially in forming the structure and plot of storytelling that attracts the audience, characterisation and the use of dialogue that fits the language of

the society. This external aspect is a fundamental skill that must be built in line with the dimensions of the cultural values of the society in the concept of shariah-compliance. Besides, all these would bring the dimension of Islam's image to impart the message of goodness without ignoring the elements of faith, morals, and religious law.

Making the shariah-compliant concept as the basis for producing short films will enable the younger generation Youtuber to convey goodness through digital media platforms. Ergo, the evolution of digital media through the change of mediamorphosis from conventional media to new media has become a catalyst that sparks new creativity among young activists. Similarly, media evolution through media convergence strengthens the creative content of shariah-compliant short films for the purpose of conveying *da'wah*.

### Acknowledgement

Part of this article was extracted from research finding 'Da'wah Short Film Based on 'DaieScript2Screen' Module of Shariah-Compliant Script Writing Workshop'.

### Funding

This Research was Funded by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Through Innovation Grant (INOVASI-2017-003)

### Conflict of Interests

The author declare no conflict of interest in this study.

### References

- Abdul Razak Mohaideen & Mohd Syuhaidi Abu Bakar. (2018). Meneroka Permasalahan Tenaga Modal Insan dalam Industri Filem di Malaysia. *Forum Komunikasi*, 13(1), 41-56.
- Al-Fatihah Md. Adnan & Normaliza Abd Rahim. (2014). Kritikan Sosial dalam Filem Melayu Zombi Kampung Pisang. *Journal of Business and Social Development*, 2(2), 62-73.
- Barbit, B., Tan, M., Randi, J. & Donato, G. S. (2012). Essential Skills for Creative Writing: Integrating Multiple Domain-Specific Persepctives. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 7 (3), 209-223.
- Cooke, L. (2005). A Visual Convergence of Print, Television and the Internet: Charting 40 Years of Design Change in News Presentation. *New Media & Society*, 7(1), 22-46.
- Fidler. (1997). *Mediamorphosis: Understanding New Media*. CA: Sage Books.
- Gurusamy Vasanthan., Thambu Nadarajan & Vengadasalam Chander. (2019). Moral Sensitivity Awareness Through Film Analysis Activities: an Action Research in a Moral Education Class. *Education Journal*, 44(1), 9-19.
- Hajar Opir, Mohammed Yusuf, Luqman Abdullah & Wan Yusnee Abdullah. (2017). Kriteria Patuh Syariah dalam filem berasaskan Hukum Fiqh: Satu Kajian Awal. *Journal of Contemporary Islamic Studies*, 3(2), 151-167.

- Hasrul Hashim, Mohd Azul Mohamad Salleh & Emma Mohamad. (2015). Usage Analysis of Visual Digital (DVFX) Special Effects on Short Films and Genre. *Jurnal Komunikasi Malaysia Journal of Communication*, 3(2), 99-115.
- Hoesterey, J. B. & Clark, M. (2012). Film Islami: Gender, Piety and Pop Culture in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia. *Asian Studies Review*, 36, 207-226.
- Imelda Ann Achin, Zairul Anuar Md Dawam & Addley Bromeo Bianus. (2017). Analisis Elemen Naratif dalam Filem Seefood. *International Journal of Law, Government and Communication*, 2(6), 87-100.
- Jamaluddin Aziz, Hasrul Hashim & Faridah Ibrahim. (2014). Malaysia Film Industry in Transformation: Challenges and Potential. *Jurnal Komunikasi Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 30(1), 37-51.
- Jenkins, H. (2004). The Cultural Logic of Media Convergence. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 7(1), 33-43.
- Kabadayi, L. (2012). The Role of Short Film in Education. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 47, 316-320.
- Kasmaizun Enuni Mohd Sarji & Kamariah Kamarudin. (2017). Nilai Islam dalam Teks MISA Melayu. *International Journal of The Malay Letters*, 5(1), 101-125.
- Livingstone, S. (2008). Taking risky opportunities in youthful content creation: teenagers' use of social networking sites for intimacy, privacy and self-expression. *New media & society*, 10(3), 393-411.
- Mana Sikana. (2005). Proses Penulisan Kreatif. Singapura: EDN Media Singapura.
- Maulana Akbar Shah. (2016). Islamic Da'wah Through a Creative Ideological Approach. *Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 4(6), 194-202.
- Mishra, S. (2016). Media convergence: Indian journalists' perceptions of its challenges and implications. *The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 22(1), 102-112.
- Naim Ahmad. (2011). *Filem Islam satu pembicaraan*. Shah Alam: Uni-N Production Sdn. Bhd.
- Nyland, R. (2007). *The gratification niches of internet social networking, e-mail and face to face communication*. Tesis Sarjana, Faculty of Brigham Young University.
- Nyland, R., Marvez, R. & Beck, J. (2007). Myspace: social networking or social isolation? Paper Presented at AEJMC Midwinter Conference, 23-24 Feb. Reno, Nevada.
- Rosmawati Mohamad Rasit & Azimah Misrom. (2016). Analisis Elemen Patuh Syariah dalam Filem Nur Kasih The Movie (2011) Berdasarkan Teori Filem ar-Risalah. *Jurnal Komunikasi Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 32(1), 580-602.
- Saodah Wok, Rizalawati Ismail & Nor Faridah Abdul Manaf. (2014). Impact of Islamic Film on Understanding of Islamic Values and Cultures for a Multiracial Society in Malaysia. *International Journal of Science Commerce and Humanities*, 2(5), 161-174.
- Severin, W. J. & Tankard, J. W. (2010). *Communication theories origins, methods and uses in the mass media*. New York: Pearson.
- Shafie Abu Bakar. (1997). Takmilah: Teori, Falsafah dan Prinsip, dlm. Mana Sikana, *Teori Sastera dan Budaya dalam Kajian Akademik*, JPM, UKM, Bangi, 125.
- Siti Khariah Mohd Zubir. (2012). Penulisan Kreatif dalam Menjana Minda dan Sumber Pendapatan Belia. *Malaysian Journal of Youth Studies* 7, 159-169.