

# ISLAMIC VALUES IN THE MEDIA (CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE FILM HATI SUHITA)

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## ABSTRACT

This study discusses the Islamic values contained on the media in the form of the film *Hati Suhita*. with a relatively large audience of 507,167 in 2023. The aim of this study is to reveal the da'wah discourse and the Islamic values contained in the film. There are a number of theories used, including the da'wah theories popularized by Ansari and Asmuni Syukur. The theories discuss "maddah" or material and "wasilah" or media. Another theory used in this study is about the basic Islamic values which were popularized by Hadi Yasin and Muhammad Quraish Shihab. The Islamic values discussed in the theory regarding aqidah, sharia, and akhlak. This study is qualitative research with Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis approach. Data collection was carried out by text analysis, observing the production team's statements, as well as extracting audience opinions through surveys and interviews. The results of this study show, 1) strengthening the Islamic message in the film was carried out from the preparation period in the production process; 2) Islamic messages about aqidah, sharia and morals can be received directly by the audience; 3) da'wah discourse with the main values of Islamic teachings packaged with narratives of relationships among characters.

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## 1. Introduction

As a country with a predominantly Muslim population, studies related to Islam in Indonesia are always fascinating (Bahri, Kholis, & Bakar, 2023). Particularly if the study discusses how mass media is a communication tool that is inextricably linked to daily life (Hadi, 2021). Film is one of the widely used mass mediums. Film or cinema serves as a vehicle for message reinforcement (Rachman, 2020). The production crew works to formulate concepts that they hope to convey to the viewer. As a result, it is impossible to isolate the impact of filmmakers from cinematic works. Film is a medium for conveying messages that are created through (McQuail, 1987).

According to *World Population Review* data, Indonesia is the country with the second largest Muslim population in the world. In total there are around 236 million people in Indonesia who embrace Islam. Meanwhile, the country with the largest Muslim population in

the world is Pakistan, which reaches around 240.8 million people. In other words, around 87 percent of Indonesian people embrace Islam. Therefore, there is always a market for films with Islamic nuances in Indonesia. In fact, horror films with Islamic nuances have found a place in the hearts of cinema viewers. The film *Hati Suhita* which is studied in this paper is not a horror film, but a drama of everyday life (Mutholi'ah & Nurapipah, 2024).

Films have a cultural transmission function. It has the ability to shape meaning, open human perspectives, and even in an era, it can function as a propaganda tool (Lippman, 1998). A film can influence perceptions about certain things and even ideology. In this context, it acts as an information medium. Conceptualization through cultural transmission functions is also popularly known as representation (Ismandianto & Sari, 2021). The film is filled with representation. In a representation process, meaning is shaped by the specific environment and circumstances surrounding it as well as the cultural background of the person absorbing the meaning (Ida, 2014).

Films are a product of technological progress that already has a connection with society (Mayanti & Haryono, 2023). Meanwhile, Muslims always have the obligation to preach or convey the truth without being against current developments. Grounding Islamic teachings in an era of ever-growing technological progress has increasingly complex problems. This does not imply, however, that every Muslim has fulfilled their mission (Hosen, 2017). On the other hand, those who are involved in the world of mass media, including film industry, must take strategic steps to spread moral and religious messages through the channels that are their habitat. Media managers, producers, directors, scriptwriters and production teams in technology-based media have the responsibility to help disseminate Islamic messages to the public (Kosasih, 2019).

Conveying da'wah messages is an obligation for all Muslims (Rachman, 2018). This is contained in many verses of the Holy Quran and the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad. Among them, Surah An-Nahl verse 125: *Call (people) to the path of your Lord with wisdom and good lessons and refute them in a good way. Indeed, it is your Lord who knows better those who stray from His path and He knows better those who are guided*; and Surah Ali Imron verse 110: *You are the best people born for mankind, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah*.

It is clear from the aforementioned scriptures that da'wah must have the power to inspire (motivate) all people to do kindness and adhere to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. Apart from that, da'wah must contain "amar makruf nahi munkar (commanding good actions and preventing evil actions). Da'wah has three main Islamic teachings that are conveyed: *aqidah* (monasticism and justifying all Islamic teachings), *sharia* (enforcement of religious rules) and *akhlak* (moral behavior) (Zalikhha, 2013).

This research discusses the message of da'wah in an Islamic film entitled *Hati Suhita*. *Hati Suhita* is a 2023 Indonesian drama film directed by Archie Hekagery and produced by Chand Parwez Servia. The duration of this film is two hours and seventeen minutes. This film, which is adapted from the novel of the same title by Khilma Anis from Islamic Boarding School An-Nur Wuluhan Jember, stars Nadya Arina, Omar Daniel, and Anggika Bölsterli. This film was first shown in Indonesian cinemas on May 25 2023. Data as of September 2023, *Hati Suhita* has been seen by 507,167 viewers in cinemas (Cahaya, 2023). A number of previous studies were used as references, including *Islamic Educational Values In Nussa The Movie Animation* which contains an analysis of Islamic educational messages in animated films using content analysis methods (Novialdi & Nugraha, 2023). Apart from that, research entitled *Cinema*,

*Social Disparity and Urban Infrastructure in the Case of the Indonesian Blockbuster Film "Ajari Aku Islam" (Teach Me Islam)* discusses the dynamics of films with Islamic nuances in Indonesia (Hutama & Merdhi, 2023).

The concept of da'wah used in this study relies on the theory of the main values of Islamic teachings, which consists of three things: aqidah, sharia, and akhlak, as the foundation of life which is outlined both through the Al-Quran, the hadith Prophet Muhammad, and the advice of the ulama (Yasin, 2019). In the aspect of the Islamic message, the rationale used comes from Muhammad Quraish Shihab's ideas about the basic teachings of Islam. The basic teachings of Islam are a source of perspective when a Muslim lives his daily life (Shihab, 2017). The basic nature of Islamic teachings is always rational, being a source of knowledge and law, so there is not the slightest doubt in it. Every Muslim believes that Islamic teachings must be the absolute guide in their lives (Huda, Asiah, & Al-Rahim, 2022). The study was conducted using qualitative methods with Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis approach.

On the other hand, the theoretical framework used in this research refers to McLuhan's thinking which states that "the medium is the message" (McLuhan, 1962, 1994). In turn, McLuhan's ideas were developed by subsequent thinkers who were convinced about how mass media has an influence on society in the modern era (Rivers, Peterson, & Jensen, 1971). Mass media content, including films, seems to be a teacher or guide to people's thinking (Wright, 1986). Basic ideas regarding media and society, in the Islamic context, are correlated with views regarding the urgency of using the media as a means of Islamic da'wah. In the current era, da'wah cannot only be done verbally, but requires creative packaging. Islamic da'wah requires competent knowledge so that those who convey discourse in public spaces must have capabilities. Therefore, in-depth research in a film production is absolutely necessary (Basith, 2006).

## 2. Method

This study uses qualitative methods with Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis approach. The discourse seen is the preaching or da'wah message in the film *Hati Suhita*. Discourse is not only about what is written or verbal language, more than that, it can also be messages conveyed in other forms (Fairclough, 1992). In the context of this research, the discourse seen is based on a number of elements contained in audiovisual media products. The text in question includes dialogue, visuals and scenes played by the players. There are three process dimensions formulated by Fairclough regarding critical discourse analysis, namely, production process, interpretation process, and practical socio-cultural. (Fairclough, 1995) The data source in this research is the audiovisual product of the film *Hati Suhita*; videos about the film production process from the YouTube channel with sources from the director and actors; survey/interview with a number of viewers; as well as a number of literary data about da'wah and films.

Analysis of the production process was carried out by observing the statements of the director, producer, scriptwriter and film actors in three YouTube videos, entitled Omar Daniel & Nadya Arina, *Terbebani Karakter Religius! (Omar Daniel & Nadya Arina, Burdened with Religious Characters!)*, *Kenapa Judul Novelnya Hati Suhita Bukan Aisyah? Pesan Film Hati Suhita (Why is the title of the novel Hati Suhita, not Aisyah? Order the film Hati Suhita)*, and *HATI SUHITA - Press Conference*. A survey was conducted on thirty *Hati Suhita* viewers to confirm the content of the da'wah presented. Then, in-depth interviews were conducted with

three viewers, because study derived from the inquiry, the answers given had reached saturation point after the third audience. The da'wah presented in the movie was interpreted by researchers using data from surveys, interviews, and literature reviews in addition to observations.

Triangulation to ensure data validity was carried out through three stages of data collection, namely, witnessing statements from the film making team, conducting surveys and interviews with viewers, and interpreting the overall film content. At least three members of the film-making team had their statements taken, namely, the director, producer and story idea writer. Surveys and interviews were conducted with fifty viewers. Meanwhile, researchers watched this film repeatedly, at least three times.

### 3. Results and Discussion

A cinema product comprises two components according to film studies. Firstly, narrative elements consisting of script, story idea, plot and plot. Secondly, cinematic elements consisting of things that support the story idea are expressed optimally. Scenes, attire, and all other visual components are considered cinematic aspects. Additionally, there is audio, which includes the characters' dialogue. These narrative and cinematic components are developed to generate scenarios that the viewer can learn from (Pratista, 2008).

As a communication medium, films have messages conveyed to the audience. The message is a set of meaningful symbols conveyed by the communicator or filmmaker to the communicant or audience (Cangara, 2006). Meanwhile, da'wah is an invitation to realize Islamic teachings in everyday life for the benefit of oneself and society. Publicly accessible films with Islamic undertones frequently present a da'wah message (Amin, 2009). In the context of films, there is the art of conveying messages through the storyline that is shown. On the other hand, it is a reflection of reality (Pranajaya, 1999).

In this section, da'wah messages containing Islamic values are presented: aqidah, sharia, and morals contained in the cinematic elements and narrative elements of the film *Hati Suhita*. Discussions are based on observations of the production process, audience response, and interpretation. Discourse analysis examines the text, the setting, and the sociocultural background of the society in which the film is set and watched.

In contrast to a number of studies regarding the representation of Islam in Hollywood films which present stereotypes (Qamar, Irtaza, & Raza, 2024), the appearance of Islam in the film *Hati Suhita* presents Islam as a teaching that is adhered to by people with various backgrounds. In general, this film shows that Islam is a good religion. However, its adherents are not necessarily as proportional to the religion they follow. There is no distortion of the meaning of Islam in this film. There are also adherents, like humans in general, who always have different characters in understanding religion.

One of the things that attracts attention in this film is the Islamic boarding school setting. On the one hand, it depicts a rigid representation of Islamic boarding schools, as some people understand them. On the other hand, it was also stated that there are aspects of flexibility in Islamic boarding schools. A woman, in this case the character *Suhita*, is not underestimated and can actually make new breakthroughs in Islamic boarding schools. This kind of portrait shows two facts that may not be the same as a number of theories known so far; first, Islamic boarding schools are dogmatic places; secondly, women are considered second class human beings in religious teachings.

### ***a. Strengthening Islamic Messages through the Production Process***

*Hati Suhita* uses the setting of a Islamic boarding school and iconic locations for Muslims, for example: mosques and the graves of ulama. The main character is Rayhan Al-Birruni, called Gus Birru, who is the son of Kiai (Islamic boarding school caretaker) Hannan. Apart from Gus Birru, the other main character is Alina Suhita who is Kiai Jabbar's daughter who studies at the Kiai Hannan Islamic boarding school. Gus Birru is played by actor Omar Daniel while Alina Suhita is played by Nadya Irana. Gus Birru and Suhita were arranged to be couple by their parents when they were young. In the film there are many scenes of people studying religion, performing prayers, and dressing to cover their private parts. In other words, the cinematic elements of the film show Islamic values that are sharia or religious teachings.

Gus Birru and Suhita's marriage experiences dynamics because the husband still has feelings for another woman named Ratna Rengganis, played by Anggika Bolsterli. During the wedding, Suhita was shown as a great woman who could bring progress to her in-laws' Islamic boarding school. She was also able to maintain the household and made Gus Birru believe that she was the right choice as a wife. In this context, Islamic values regarding the equality of women and men are displayed, considering that Suhita can be a central figure both in the household and in the public sphere, in this case the Islamic boarding school as an Islamic educational institution. It must also be understood that in Islamic teachings there is a concept of equality between men and women (Mazaya, 2014). The setting that focuses on the cultural characteristics of Islamic boarding schools and the strong characters is an important point in this film. The audience was not only given an entertaining treat but also given insight into Islam. *Hati Suhita* carries out the function of film as a medium for Islamic propagation proportionally (Mubasyaroh, 2015).

The film *Hati Suhita* is adapted from the novel with the same title. The shooting process took around 53 days to shoot in 10 cities. The determination of the 10 cities is in accordance with the cities described in the novel. The cities in question are Jakarta, Bogor, Ponorogo, Mojokerto, Trenggalek, Boyolali, Salatiga, Jogja, Klaten and Kediri. Finding a religious ambiance in areas of the city with an Islamic feel was the goal when selecting the shooting location. The plot portrays the tranquil daily routine of the Islamic boarding school, emphasizing gender parity and striking a balance between imparting general education and religious knowledge to help students get ready for the workforce.

Apart from conveying a message about gender equality, in the context of women's resilience, this film also provides audiences with an overview of Islamic boarding school life. For those who have never experienced life in an Islamic boarding school environment, watching this film will provide a new experience. This audio-visual media describes events that typically take place in Islamic boarding schools, such as how to treat older people with respect, how to teach religion effectively, and how relationships between students and residents of Islamic boarding school operate.

A number of the actors in this film have just studied intensively about Islamic teachings and Islamic boarding schools through the production process. As a result, it is certain that this movie will give both the production crew and the audience fresh perspectives. In order to formulate good work, the entire production team explored information about Islamic boarding schools in depth.

In the realm of da'wah theory, there is the term da'wah material (*maddah ad-da'wah*), which means Islamic da'wah messages or everything that must be conveyed by the subject to the object of da'wah (Anshari, 1993). It contains substance in the form of Islamic teachings

with various packages according to the conditions of the communicator and communicant. There is also the term *wasilah* which means preaching media. The semantic understanding of media means anything that can be used as a tool (intermediary) to achieve a certain goal. Thus, da'wah media is anything that can be used as a tool to achieve da'wah goals (Syukur, 1983). Islamic films are a medium for da'wah, while the material for da'wah is the basic values of Islamic teachings packaged in cinematic and narrative elements.

### ***b. Impressive Da'wah Message Packaging***

Based on the survey, forty of the fifty people who saw this film responded favorably to the propaganda package, according to a study conducted. The production team did a good job of presenting the didactic lessons on *aqidah*, *sharia*, and *akhlak*—the three basic tenets of Islamic values. The scenes that are shown are quite moving. Because her husband doesn't truly love her, the film's main character is ill, and the audience can relate to her feelings. It features a patient battle, a well-written plot, skilled performers and actresses, and packaging that evokes strong feelings.

One of the viewers, Intan Warda, said that this film was educational. The Islamic values presented can be easily absorbed by the audience. The sound and photography portions of the production process are packaged neatly. The actors in the movies put forth a lot of work to create great situations. It teaches the public lessons about Javanese culture that are consistent with religious ideals in addition to being rich of Islamic moral lessons. As a work of art, this film adaptation of the novel written by Khilma Anis conveys the message directly and through figures of speech. For one of the viewers named Putri Amaliyah, this kind of packaging model strengthens the aesthetic aspect of the film.

Some viewers thought the cinematic adaptation of *Hati Suhita* is less emotive after reading the novel. According to director Archie Hekagery, these viewpoints are typical. But it's important to realize that movies and novels are two entirely distinct kinds of media. Each, of course, has pros and cons of its own. After reading the novel, one of the moviegoers, Rizqi Amalia, first acknowledged that the movie did not completely satisfy her fantasy. However, after seeing the novel's cinematic adaptation, he realizes that this is unavoidably going to occur. However, she could still feel the important points regarding Islamic values in the film.

Islamic values regarding the morals of Islamic boarding school residents, *tawakkal*, patience and consistency in worship are the fundamental pillars of this film. One of the viewers named Abdul Malik confirmed that the film was full of nuances of Islamic preaching. Meanwhile, another viewer named Febi Choiriyah felt that *Suhita's* character really stood out in this film. Thus, the strongest message displayed is about the courage and greatness of women.

*Hati Suhita* is a widely watched movie with a market share that spans all demographics and is replete with mildly didactic themes. Islamic principles are presented in an easy-to-understand manner (Rachman, 2016). The religious teachings that are presented will center on ordinary human behavior rather than contentious topics like the distinctions between Sufism and the *khilafiyah* streams of jurisprudence. The main values of Islam (*aqidah*, *sharia* and morals) presented are expected to inspire the audience. Since this is the central idea of religion in connection to monotheistic, *aqidah* is significant. *Sharia* is a set of regulations for living that includes things like marriage, debts and receivables, *muamalah*, practicing *mahdloh* worship, and *ghoiru mahdloh*, among other things. On the other hand, *akhlak* are

guidelines for proper conduct in daily life. It is intended that religious film will serve as a life lesson as well as a spectacle for their audience (El Ishaq, 2011).

### *c. Islamic Values in Scenes*

The message of preaching or da'wah regarding Islamic values in the film *Suhita* covers aspects of aqidah, sharia and morals. The message of aqidah is one of faith or submission to God. The message about tawakal can be seen on the 01.06.53 duration; 01.57.42; 02.06.13; 02.13.04. The character Alina *Suhita* always tries to surrender to God for everything that happens to her. In particular, regarding the dynamics of domestic problems that she experienced during her marriage to Gus Birru.

There are many verses in the Quran that explain the urgency of surrendering to God, including in Surah Al-Imran verse 159: *So put your trust in Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who put their trust in Him*; and surah Al-Mulk verse 29: *Say: "He is Allah, the Most Merciful. We believe in Him and in Him we put our trust. Later you will know who is in clear error.* *Suhita's* attitude of surrendering to God's destiny is in line with the concept of tawakal conveyed by Imam Ghazali. Tawakal is the concept of faith in the form of belief in God's decrees, as well as handing over all solutions to problems to God, after making optimal efforts (Al-Ghazali, 1995).

The da'wah message about akhlak can be seen in the scene with duration 00.03.43; 00.43.14; and 01.34.22. The morals shown are patience and resilience in living life. These two things are explained in the scenes and narratives conveyed by the character *Suhita*. He even harmonized these two attitudes with the Javanese spirit, first, *mikul dhuwur mendem jero* or raising the dignity of parents and burying their weaknesses. The context of the expression is filial piety to parents, considering that *Suhita* was betrothed to Gus Birru by their parents. On the one hand, *Suhita* is patient with her parents' wishes, on the other hand, she is also patient with the conditions of her household. Second, *Suhita* is committed to becoming a strong woman like the leader of the popular Majapahit kingdom on the island of Java. The leader was named Dewi *Suhita*.

She wants to be a great woman like Dewi *Suhita*, so she strengthens herself while living in the household, while at the same time taking part optimally in the place where she works, her in-laws' Islamic boarding school. The nature of patience has its own position in God's sight. There are many verses about patience in the holy Al-Quran, including, Surah Ali Imran verse 146: *And Allah loves those who are patient*, and Surah Al-Baqarah verse 153: *O you who believe, be patient and pray as your helper, indeed Allah is with those who are patient.* Patience is the attitude of "accepting with full willingness the inevitable decrees of God". Patience demands steadfastness in facing something difficult, heavy and bitter, which must be accepted and faced with full responsibility. The word "patience" and its derivations are mentioned as many times as 103 times in the Al-Quran (Shihab, 2012).

Apart from being patience and toughness in life, this film also represents a message about an attitude of gratitude. This can be seen in the duration of 01.04.01; 01.40.00; 01.53.55; 02.11.35; and 02.13.25. The changes that occur in her household, for the better, make *Suhita's* character thank God. The urgency of gratitude is one of the main topics in Islamic teachings, as stated in Surah Ibrahim verse 7: *Therefore, remember Me, I will remember (also) you, and*

*give thanks to Me, and do not deny My blessings.* Being thankful and patient are moral virtues. These two mindsets are suitable for a muslims to have all of their life (Ubaid, 2018).

Da'wah messages regarding sharia can be found in many scenes in the film. In general, in this film there are many scenes of Muslim and Muslim women's clothing, as a form of implementation of the order to cover the private parts for Muslims. Apart from that, there are many learning scenes which are mandatory worship for Muslims (Al-Zarnûji, 1981). There are also sayings of *thoyyibah* sentences, such as *alhamdulillah*, *allahuakbar*, even *assalamualaikum*, etc; in dialogue and even prayer. Apart from that, there are many scenes showing the characters praying. Prayer is a person's means of communicating with God, according to Islamic traditions. Praying is the most important worship activity. The implementation of Islamic sharia in the film can be seen at the 00.17.52 duration; 00.47.24; 00.54.36; 01.01.09; 01.28.57; 01.30.36; 01.51.27; 01.57.42; and 02.11.35. Praying is God's command as in Surah Al-Mu'min verse 60: *And your Lord said: Pray to Me, I will surely grant it to you.* There are also prayer commands, including those listed in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 238: *Maintain all (your) prayers, and (maintain) wusthaa prayers. Stand for Allah (in your prayers) solemnly.*

#### 4. Conclusion

The film *Hati Suhita* has become a medium for preaching Islamic values, which is an adaptation of the novel by Khilma Anis. The discourse of the da'wah message regarding Islamic values in the film *Hati Suhita* is formed by text in the form of audiovisual content, the spatial and temporal context surrounding the storyline, as well as socio-cultural conditions that influence the production team and the audience. Preparations for conveying Islamic messages were carried out before the production process was carried out. The audience is given an understanding of Islam through the content presented. Based on surveys and interviews conducted with viewers, the message of da'wah regarding Islamic values with the themes: aqidah, sharia and morals, was well received and became an important point of the film. Even though it is packed with stories about household dynamics, this film still provides insight into Islam, Islamic boarding schools and religious teachings. The film *Hati Suhita* shows thorough preparation in making a religious film. This is not trapped in the presentation of religious dogmas. More than that, this film combines the substance of religious values and the pluralistic society of its adherents. Thus, the representation of Islam shown does not cause distortion, because a separation has been made between religion and its followers. It is appropriate for producers of films with Islamic nuances to pay attention to things like those.

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