Islamic Television Programs : Content and Format Revisited

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Abstract

This paper is based on a Ph.D. study of the content of Islamic television broadcasting. Even though there are attempts in the Muslim world to produce Islamic television programs, most of the programs do not comply with Islamic rules either because of some content that includes some scenes that are not Islamic or because of the format that is usually rudimentary and unattractive. This paper focuses on Islamic television programs. It identifies important characteristics of Islamic television content such as reality and objectivity, comprehensiveness, moderation and application of Islamic distinctive features. It also identifies four characteristics of Islamic television programs' format; which are artistic production, delivering indirect messages, adapting the message to audience, and simplicity and frequency.

Keywords: Islamic television program, content, format

INTRODUCTION

Islamic television programs in the Muslim world do not fulfill the expected impact that should take place on audience despite the fact that true Islam always attains its impact on different kinds of audiences. Presumably, Islamic television programs that reflect the image of Islam fulfill the same impact attained by Islam. As a contribution to improving Islamic television programs, this paper identifies important characteristics of Islamic television content and format. The main objective of this paper is to identify a theoretical perspective for Islamic television content and format to be followed by producers of Islamic content.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAMIC TELEVISION CONTENT

The study of Islamic television content has shown that there are no specific policies for Islamic programs (Buyong & Ismail, 2012). Importance of television content lies in the mission it fulfills. Television content is loaded with values that are presented to the masses. Highly-valued television content promulgates valuable messages that aim at spreading all kinds of welfare to human kinds, but junk messages waste audience's time and promote unethical

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messages. To promote valuable and ethical messages, the content of Islamic television has specific characteristics. Among the important characteristics of television content are reality and objectivity, comprehensiveness, moderation and utilization of Islamic distinctive features.

Reality and Objectivity

Reality according to Cambridge dictionary (2003) is "the state of things as they are, rather than as they are imagined to be". Objective as an adjective in the same dictionary means based on real facts and not influenced by personal beliefs or feelings. Many theories on the media's role in society have been formulated, some of which have reflected a "realistic approach" of telling how the world is. This is based on the assumption of an existing set of events, which can be reported objectively and balanced by competent, fair and unbiased journalists. According to this realistic approach, journalism's role in society is seen to mirror reality. Reporters believe that objectivity and fairness means telling both sides of a story (Williams, 2003), but real objectivity, to some writers, is not an easy task.

According to Tumber and Prentoulis (2003: 216) the structuring of information in an appropriate sequence and the criterion of common sense in assessing news content, whilst enabling the claim to objectivity (which functions as a shield from criticism), do not guarantee objectivity. In daily practice objectivity may not be achieved, and may not be a guiding principle. A reason of absence of objectivity is explained by Siddiqui (1991: 485) who states "while a media producer can try as faithfully as possible to represent a reality, he/she can only present it as he/she sees it (i.e., it is subjective)." Other researchers go further to argue that not only affiliation to a specific nationality affects objectivity, but also the personality of the journalist has it role in determining reality and objectivity. The realistic approach' is very much a normative stance, highlighting how journalists ought to report the world by appealing to the ethos of objectivity as a self-regulatory professional standard. Lack of objectivity also appears in presenting incidents out of context by focusing on a point and ignoring the total truth. Availability of hindrances to achieve objectivity and reality requires following a better concept that has no shortcomings. *Amanah* is a bigger and wider Islamic term because it interferes in all aspects of life of human beings including news and television broadcasting.
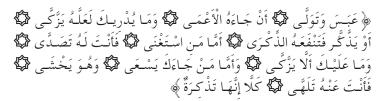
According to Siddiqui (1991) broadcasting is controlled by business and industrial sector, but the fact that they should be based on a system of belief, attitudes and behaviours. *Amanah* is an Islamic term that is used to ensure the wellbeing of television content. According to Mowlana (2007) the term *amanah* signifies great responsibility which Allah SWT imposes on human

beings to maintain uprightness of their deeds. *Amanah* does not mean at all revealing the truth as it is because reveling truth sometimes is *haram* if the truth is *ghibah* (backbiting), *namimah* (tale bearing), spy or revealing secrets. Thus, the term *amanah* purifies objectivity and reality by protecting people's privacy. Protection of privacy of the person and home granted by Islam means that it can be argued that such matters should not only be shown, but should not even be discussed. Content of Islamic television is *amanah* because it is devoted to reveal the message of Islam which Allah SWT entrusts His Prophet Muhammad PBUH to convey to *al-'alamin* (the worlds). In turn, presenters of this entrusted content are not authorized to interfere or amend the Islamic message because they are not but entrusted personalities to convey impartial content. Delivering the Islamic entrusted message objectively denies inviting people to Islam by force or temptation. Kahil (1985) points out that revealing true Islam is not similar to missionary organizations that offer gifts and money impressing people to convert to a specific religion.

Prophet Muhammad PBUH practices *amanah* in dissemination of the message of Islam by telling all revelations exactly as they are even if they include a friendly reproach to the prophet himself. Such reproaches are not out of a mistake, but Allah SWT wants his prophet to be the complete human due to his high position. The beginning of *Abasa* chapter is an example of friendly reproach. Allah SWT says:

﴿عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى ۞ أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى ۞ وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَّكَّى ۞ أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَى ۞ أَمَّا مَنِ اسْتَغْنَى ۞ فَأَنْتَ لَهُ تَصَدَّى ۞ وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَزَّكَّى ۞ وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَى ۞ وَهُوَ يَخْشَى ۞ فَأَنْتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهَّى ۞ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ﴾

Which means: He [i.e., the Prophet] frowned and turned away. Because there came to him the blind man [interrupting]. But what would make you perceive, [O Muhammad], that perhaps he might be purified. Or be reminded and the remembrance would benefit him? As for he who thinks himself without need. To him you give attention. And not upon you [is any blame] if he will not be purified. But as for he who came to you striving [for knowledge]. While he fears [Allah]. From him you are distracted. No! Indeed, they [i.e., these verses] are a reminder.

(Abasa : 1-11)

Amanah is not only applied to the prophet himself PBUH, but all Muslims have to apply *amanah* to their interaction and communicating.

Every Muslim is required to tell truth even it is against himself or his thought. Allah SWT clarifies this in the noble Quran by saying:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ ﴾

Which means: O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives.

(An-Nisa' : 135)

Therefore, *amanah* in Islam refines and promote reality and objectivity because it purifies them by protecting the rights of others through prevention of *ghibah, namimah,* spy and revealing secrets. This can be achieved through consistence and capability of following Allah's revelation (Siddiqui, 1991). *Amanah* of television content is to present truth as it is, whether in news or any other program, even truth is against one's belief or attitude, but ensuring that this truth does not have the elements of *haram* or *makruh*.

Comprehensiveness
Programs output must be comprehensive and encompass Islam in its entirety as no secularization is recognized by Islam. The content of Islamic television is supposed to be comprehensive and complete, and try to tackle all matters related both to this life and the hereafter because Islamic television represents Islam which is a complete religion. Allah SWT says in the noble Quran:

﴿ الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا ﴾

Which means: This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion.

(al-Maidah : 3)

Islam is not enclosed on itself like Judaism, nor prefers a specific race upon another like Nazism. Instead the message of Islam is comprehensive not confined to a specific class, group or race (al-Zuhaili, 1995). According to Kanakir (2003), comprehensiveness of Islamic message in the noble Quran manifests in four manners: place, time, dissemination and people.

Comprehensiveness of place indicates that Islam is a message to *al-'alamin* (the worlds). It is not a geographically-bound entity. The message of Islam is not limited to a specific geographical area. Allah SWT refers to this idea in the noble Quran when he says:

$$﴿ وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ مُصَدِّقُ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَلِتُنْذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَى وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا ﴾$$

Which means: {And this is a Book which We have sent down, blessed and confirming what was before it, that you may warn the Mother of Cities [i.e., Makkah] and those around it}

(al-An'am : 92)

The center of Islamic message at the time is Mecca. Therefore Allah SWT mentions Mecca with cities next to it which refers to the entire world (Mutawi', 2002). Thus, a net of satellite television channels that broadcasts in different languages is imperative to deliver the message of Islam all over the world.

Furthermore, time comprehensiveness of the Islamic message begins since creation of human beings till their end because Islam does not secluded itself from previous prophets. Instead, they are all one nation and the religion is Islam (surrender) to Allah SWT (Kamel, 1970). The message of Islam is sent to the worlds unlike previous heavenly messages that are limited to a specific era (Mutawi', 2002). Allah SWT clarifies this idea in the noble Quran by saying:

$$﴿ وَأُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ لِأُنْذِرَكُمْ بِهِ وَمَنْ بَلَغَ ﴾$$

Which means: And this Quran was revealed to me that I may warn you thereby and whomever it reaches.

(al-An'am : 19)

Whomever it reaches implies the meaning as long as the noble Quran exists (Kanakir, 2003). Allah SWT promises to protect and preserve the noble Quran. Therefore, the noble Quran never vanishes because it is under the protection of Allah SWT. This verse means that disseminating the Islamic message is not at the time of the prophet PBUH only, but Muslims in all ages are required to disseminate it.

Moreover, comprehensiveness of the Islamic message in the noble Quran is clarified through its dissemination. The order of dissemination of Islam in the noble Quran is boundless. Allah SWT says:

$$﴿ قِيَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ ۞ قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ ﴾$$

Which means: O you who covers himself [with a garment]. Arise and warn.

(al-Muddatthir, 74: 1-2)

Allah SWT asserts on comprehensiveness of dissemination in the noble Quran through addressing repeatedly all human beings, not Muslims or believers only, to indicate that Islam is to them all because Allah SWT wants His creatures to be in a good situation even they do not believe in Him. See for example, verse al- Baqarah: 21, An-Nisa' : 170 and al- Hajj : 1.

In addition, comprehensiveness of people or audience is also clarified in the noble Quran. *Al-Nas* (the people) are the object audience of knowledge and information (Davies, 1987). The message of Islam is to all. Allah SWT specifies the mission of prophet Muhammad PBUH by saying:

$$﴿ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴾$$

Which means: And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds.

(al-Anbiya': 107)

Similar to the Islamic message, content of Islamic television should be suitable to all kinds of audiences, children, youth, the elderly, Muslim, non-Muslim etc. Achieving this element through television involves long time of hard work because it involves revealing the message in different languages and forms that suit each kind of audience like cartoon for children, films for youth, and talk shows for the elderly.

Thus, dissemination of the message of Islam is not confined to a place, time or people. Abu Haibah, the manager of the al-Resalah television channel in Cairo states that The Islamic message itself is not limited to narration of the noble Quran or religious talk shows (Wise, 2005). All useful and sinless messages and information are considered Islamic unless they include *haram* or *makruh* (disliked). Thereby, the only two limitations of the Islamic message are *haram* and *makruh*. Similarly, content of Islamic television is limited only to *haram* and *makruh*. Attempts should be made to achieve the

comprehensiveness presented in the noble Quran once possible because at the time being it is hard to apply them due to lack of variety of Islamic television content. Sharaf (1993) points out that at the time of achieving such inclusiveness, Islamic television becomes not only international channel but a humanitarian one which call not to Muslim unity but to human union.

Islamic television channels lack comprehensiveness. Surveying the web for Islamic television channels, you can find more than forty channels where each of them has its own model of broadcasting. These different models of broadcasting cannot be rejected even their content is not comprehensive. Lack of comprehensiveness of Islamic television content seems to be due to lack of financial support, expertise and cooperation among existing television channels. This lack ensures the need for creating an international network of Islamic television channels that broadcasts in different languages to improve the messages of Islamic television channels and guarantee their outcome.

Moderation

Moderate means "neither too much nor too little" (Longman dictionary, 1999: 283). Since it is not too much nor too little, it also means in the middle, and usually the middle of everything is the best of it because it is far from its two extreme ends (al-Buti, 2003). Al-Buti also argues that this can be applied to both concrete materials and abstract issues. For example, generosity is a center between miserliness and lavishness. Bravery is also a center amid cowardliness and heedlessness (Kanakir, 2008). Allah SWT describes the Muslim nation in the noble Quran by saying:

$$ ﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا ﴿ $$

Which means: And thus We have made you a median [i.e., just] community

(al-Baqarah : 143)

According to al-Termithi (1991, vol 5: 49) the word *wasata* in the verse means *adlan* (just). Justice of delivering Islamic messages is to present median and moderate content. Therefore, moderation of delivering Islamic messages through television is an essential demand because if it is not achieved, moderation will be replaced by extremism.

According to Kanakir (2003) *ghulu* (extremism) can be both in action and belief. Extremism of belief affects *aqidah*, and extremism of action affects worship and obedience. All kinds of extremism lead to wretchedness in this life and the hereafter. Harm of extremism does not affect extremists only, but transcends to society (al-Zuhaili, 1992). Moderation is a center between

extremism and incompliance, but extremism is more dangerous than incompliance because the former disunite the Muslim *ummah* (nation) and the latter leads to *bid'a* (heresy) (al-Kanhan and al-Fifi, 2012).

Al-Kanhan and al-Fifi (2012) also argue that extremists think that they are doing right, therefore they are persistent. Unlike disobedient who know that they are wrong, and they may repent at the end. Therefore, Allah SWT forbids extremism in the noble Quran by saying:

﴿ قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَضَلُّوا عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ ﴾

Which means: Say, "O People of the Scripture, do not exceed limits in your religion beyond the truth and do not follow the inclinations of a people who had gone astray before and misled many and have strayed from the soundness of the way."

(al-Maidah : 77).

In fact, the messages presented in content of Islamic television have to be moderate, i.e. do not focus on *aza'im* (firm wills) because it is intended for a large number of different audiences where not all of them can achieve long time worship or practice worships that require extra efforts due to illness or weakness of the body or *Iman*. The wife of Prophet Muhammad PBUH describes him as:

« مَا خُيِّرَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَيْنَ أَمْرَيْنِ إِلَّا اخْتَارَ أَيْسَرَهُمَا مَا لَمْ يَأْثَمْ »

Which means: Whenever the Prophet was given an option between two things, he used to select the easier of the tow as long as it was not sinful

(Hadith. al-Bukhari. Kitab al-Hudud. Bab Iqamat al-Hudud Wa al-Intiqam Li Hurumati Allah: Juz' 8).

Following the prophet example, who is the model for all Muslim communicators (Kanakir, 2008), requires that content of Islamic television channels should be moderate in order to make it easier for the audience to follow what is presented taking into consideration the fact that freedom of practicing Islam in Muslim countries is different from non-Muslim ones, and capability of youth is different from the elderly. Also, people of weak *iman* (belief) do not accept the Islamic rules like those of strong *iman*.

Looking at Muslim history, it is noticeable that the problem of giving a practical expression to moderation is one of the difficulties that Muslim intellectuals had to wrestle with. He further argues that it is quite easy to see how this disagreement affects the field of Islamic work today because in spite of a widespread theoretical acceptance of moderation, attempts at giving it a practical expression sometimes lead to conflicting goals and actions. In fact, many Muslims fail to understand the concept of moderation correctly. Therefore, the concept of moderation has to be explained in details by specifying clear rules especially regarding disputed issues such as the unsettled problem of entertainment in television.

Application of Islamic Distinctive Features
According to Kanakir (2003) each community applies its distinctive features to its media. Communist media, for example, serve communism; and Christian media serves Christianity. Similarly, media in Muslim communities should serve Islam and follow the Islamic principles to produce Islamic communication. It is not meant by Islamic communication a newly-invented field, but it means applying Islamic distinctive features to normal communication to be suitable to the Muslim audience (Kahil, 1985). Islamic television content is not limited to *shari'ah* (Islamic law) such as reciting noble Quran and delivering sermons even these are parts of real Islam. Kanakir (2003) discusses that Islamic communication is limited to *haram and makruh* (forbidden and detested) content. All kinds of useful television content are considered Islamic unless they include forbidden or detested scenes. For example children care programs, useful fun, first aids, education, economic and documentaries are considered to be parts of Islamic television.

Moreover, Islamic communication is founded on principles, basics and comprehensive divine constitution that deals with all activities of human life which forms ethics, thoughts, behaviors and actions of Muslim personality (Kanakir, 2003). Islam urges producers of television to present content that strengthens belief and offers any kind of benefit to humanity and rejects the opposite. When Islamic television content abides by these principles and basics, all immoral scenes that leave behind bad ramifications on audience should be omitted. Prevention of bad scenes is not enough, but there should be concentration on good ones which offer indirect highly-valued messages which teach audience unconsciously. Therefore, the Islamic identity has to be clear in television of Muslim communities. The Islamic salutation at the beginning and end of a program is not enough to make a program Islamic, but there should be a clear link between Islam and what is presented in the program. A program about natural disasters like floods, earthquakes or tsunamis produced by Muslims rarely relate them to Islam by admitting that it is a punishment from Allah SWT and Muslims have to repent.

FORMAT OF ISLAMIC TELEVISION CONTENT

The study of message and meaning of Muslim communication shows that not only content that matters in Islamic television, but format is important too. Siddiqi (2005: 83) states, "Muslims have to strengthen both the "Form and Contents" for communicating their message". The Islamic message in television has its independent form. Television programs should be attractive and presented in a variety of genres in order to get a large number of audience. The greatest example of attractive format is the noble Quran. Its format is not only attractive, but miraculous too. The noble Quran includes stories that portray incidents miraculously where reciters and listeners can visualize the whole story. These stories form an abundant source for television production nowadays to communicate the message of Islam. Each story can be transformed into serials, films or cartoons. Format of Islamic television content is distinguished by its artistic production, indirect messages, adapting the message to audience, and simplicity and frequency.

Artistic Production

According to Hasan (1990) art in Islam is founded on Islamic principles that involve both heart and mind. Islam makes a strong connection between ethics and art. If art contradicts Islamic ethics, it is considered rejected. Therefore, he stresses that the western art in the modern age is not accepted by many Muslims, and was described as *haram*. As a result, it is circulated among Muslims that art is religiously forbidden to the degree that seems Islam prohibits art. However, the circle of Islamic art is broad. It forbids what harms society and circulates corruption (Kanakir, 2003). The Islamic art includes all kinds of attraction as clarified in the following hadith. Prophet Muhammad PBUH said:

«إن الله جميلٌ يحبُّ الجمال»

Which means: (verily, Allah is Graceful and He loves Grace)
(Hadith. Muslim. Kitab al-Iman. Bab Tahrim al-Kibr Wabaianih: Juz' 1: #147).

The word *al-jamal* in the above mentioned hadith also means beauty which is a noun. The usage of a noun not an adjective is to imply that all kinds of beauty and art are required unless they include *haram*.

Beauty, art and entertainment are required to produce attractive format of television, but unfortunately this issue is not settled because Muslim scholars have different views regarding it. It has to be admitted that the most crucial problem of establishing Islamic media is to face the different opinions among Muslim scholars on entertainment's issues. The legality of music, singing,

drama, film and other aesthetic pleasures is always hotly debated but without any clear conclusion.

Antagonists of art and entertainment hold their view because of moral decadence portrayed by artists particularly on television through films, series, drama or variety shows. As a result, some Muslims try to isolate themselves and their families form those forms of art, but the result of isolation as al-Faruqi notices is not effective. She (1986) states "with the prevalence of modern communication technology in every town and village, such attempted isolation is rarely if ever successful. Others meet the challenge by trying to prohibit all the sound arts, regardless of their characteristics. In such cases, the resulting artistic vacuum is inevitably filled by non-Islamic forms of music, which invade the minds of the less thoroughly Islamized members of community – its youth." Thereby, it is imperative to employ elements of beauty and art in the production of television and apply it to its format in a way that does not contradict Islamic teachings.

In fact, Islam accepts all forms of innovation and art except that contradict its law. Television production is not but art, and its main aim is to attract viewers. Islamic television content is a production of cooperation among artists, producers, directors, linguists, religious men who are required to have an artistic sense of their own specialization (Kanakir, 2003). Artistic format of television programs should be applied to both visual and audio portions. Language proficiency i.e. audio is fundamental for Da'wah workers (Chowdhury, 2005). Thereby television content should be eloquent, simple and easy to understand by public audience even if the topic of the program is about, for example, space, economy or technology which requires professional audience to understand. Attraction of words and language is explained by the prophet himself PBUH by saying:

$$\text{«إِنَّ مِنَ البَيَانِ سِحْراً».}$$

Which means: some eloquent speech has the influence of magic
(Hadith. al-Bukhari. Kitab al-Nikah. Bab al-Khutbah: Juz' 7. P.19)

Eloquence is considered an important art at the time of Prophet Muhammad PBUH because it is common among people of the time, and the noble Quran which is sent to these people is very much distinguished of its eloquence.

Furthermore, television is an image in the first place that is combined harmoniously with sound to produce an art. Training of workers in the art and science of communication is a must (Siddiqi, 2005). Therefore, attention should be paid to scenes, settings, décor and accessories where nature can be

a helpful source for creating artistic video where fine colors and comfortable scenes for the eye are available. Décor and accessories are important for producing television programs. The former is responsible for adequacy of location to topic, and the function of latter is to add extra artistic elements that improve the scene. As a result, artistic format of Islamic television is imperative to catch the attention of audience in the age where high definition content that attracts audience is widely spread. Kanakir (2003) discusses that preliminary efforts have been done to improve Islamic television content, but still there is a lack for much more improvements.

Delivering Indirect Messages
According to Chowdhury (2005) communicating the message of Islam may materialize in different frontiers including non-verbal communication i.e. through Islamic character adopting innumerous avenues ranging from print media to online media and audiovisual channels. Kahil (1985) discusses that Islamic *da'wah* must not be in any form of propaganda or embarrassing people to convert to Islam. Instead, virtues of Islam have to be presented and endeared to non-Muslims because the function of television is to impart not to impose (Chowdhury, 2005). Television is an appropriate medium for presenting Islam indirectly. A documentary, for example that present the greatness of the Creator SWT through presentation of his creation is an indirect *da'wah* to Islam where audience feels the greatness of Allah SWT and surrenders to Him, even audience loves and adore the Creator SWT by watching such programs (Kanakir, 2003). Presenting new ideas especially that are related to faith requires much attention. Therefore, when Prophet Muhammad PBUH wants to correct a mistake or deliver a public sermon, which is similar to television that broadcasts publicly; he usually delivers it indirectly by preventing himself from mentioning names of people who commit a mistake. He makes general statements to benefit and respect all his audience and ensures acceptance of his sermon.

Likewise, this form of delivering the Islamic message used by the prophet can be applied to television. Presenting indirect messages through television generally speaking means to present Islam through films, serials, cartoons, competitions, etc where sermons and messages are presented in the actions of the hero and other characters (Kanakir, 2003). Religious television programs should include the elements of information, drama, film, arts and discussions that portray positive values of the Islamic teaching itself (Sabran, 2010). The main target of Islamic television content is *da'wah*, and *da'wah* through television can attain its aims by applying circuitous form of teaching no need for confronting other religions or asking people directly to convert to Islam ('Azuzi, 2001). It is enough to present the magnificent and miraculous aspects of Islam. Knowing the impressive features of Islam, audiences start
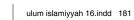
investigating and asking about it, and finally they accept Islam. Kanakir (2003) points out that indirect presentation of Islamic television messages is suitable for non-Muslims, new Muslims and Muslims whose belief is weak, whereas direct presentation is more suitable for Muslims who have strong belief which can be accomplished through talks, sermons and preaching. Indirect messages of teaching Islam can be achieved through the terms "edutainment" and "infotainment".

According to Carlson (2012) edutainment is an approach to educating a person using entertainment as a pedagogical tool. Infotainment is also an approach to inform using entertainment. However, others put infotainment as the use of information as a tool in the trade of entertainment (Carlson, 2012: 15). Carlson further stress that infotainment is different from edutainment where the primary thrust would be to inform the audience using entertainment elements. This argument meets with Islam which discourages wasting time where each action even entertainment should have a positive end not merely for fun. Okan (2003) stresses that the purpose of edutainment is to attract and hold the attention of the learners by engaging their emotions through vividly colored animations. Edutainment can be achieved through employing technologies not originally intended for learning (Wheeler, 2009). Television is a medium for edutainment and infotainment. Carlson (2012) argues that edutainment does and have drawn primarily from drama, documentaries, and reality television, though the tactics of comedy are certainly employed and soap operas were a home for edutainment content though the format itself is rarely invoked to create original material. Thus, attractive formats of television programs are the programs employed in edutainment and infotainment. Therefore, it is imperative to exploit them in the dissemination of the Islamic message in television.

Adapting the Message to Audience
According to Chowdhury (2005) it is incumbent on *da'wah* workers to gain an in-depth understanding of the target audience's outlook on life in general and religion in particular prior to proselytization. The noble Quran was descended in a period of twenty three years. It is common that revelation of the noble Quran sometimes comes to answer a question, to comment on an issue, to give a verdict about an incident or to correct news. As a result, an independent field of knowledge called *asbab al-nuzul* (reasons of revelation) is developed (Kanakir, 2003). Prohibition of wine is an example presented in the noble Quran that considers adaption of time and audience for delivering this verdict. At early stage it is not suitable to ban drinking alcohol. Allah SWT prepares it gradually and He bans alcohol completely when time is suitable. Prophet Muhammad PBUH takes after the noble Quran. He sometimes ascends his pulpit at unusual times to comment on a current issue,

and present the Islamic view regarding it.

Similarly, time, message and audience should be taken into account in producing television content because life keeps changing. There are differences between the age of Prophet Muhammad PBUH and modern age. Therefore, some Muslim scholars before delivering a *fatwa* (Islamic legal opinion) regarding a specific incident ask whether it takes place. If it does not, they leave it to the scholar of the time (Kanakir, 2003). Considering audience differences is an important issue. For instance, television content that suits American Muslim audience may not suit Arab audiences, and programs for mature audience do not suit children. Likewise television content that suits people of strong faith is not suitable for newly converted and so on. Accordingly the content of Islamic television should be produced wisely to achieve the expected impact. Content should be chosen after specifying time of broadcasting and target audience not the vice versa in order to ensure adaption of content to viewers.
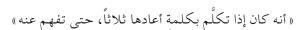
Simplicity and Frequency
According to Kanakir (2003) Islamic message is simple to understand. It is distinguished by its easiness and clarity of principles, rules, sources, aims, methods, ethics and rituals. Unlike other distorted religions, Islam is based on a simple and easily-understood testimony, there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger, (Mutawi', 2002) which can be understood by educated, illiterate, young, old, males and females. Similarly, the content of Islamic television should be simple and apart from complexity to be understood by audience. Presenting Islam in a simple way contributes endearing it to audience which is a method in line with the following verse of the noble Quran. Allah SWT says:

$$\text{﴿ وَلَكِنَّ اللهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ ﴾}$$

Which means: Allah has endeared to you the faith and has made it pleasing in your hearts

(al-Hujurat : 7)

Presenting the Islamic message in an attractive form that shows actual examples make the Islamic message easier to understand and consequently more audience to adopt it.

In addition, repetition is a form of *da'wah* used by Prophet Muhammad PBUH and presented in the noble Quran in order to confirm understanding of the message and stress its importance. It is narrated by al-Bukhari describing the prophet PBUH:

﴿ أنه كان إذا تكلَّم بكلمةٍ أعادها ثلاثاً، حتى تفهم عنه ﴾

Which means: (Whenever the Prophet spoke a sentence (said a thing), he used to repeat it thrice so that the people could understand it properly from him)

(Hadith. Al-Bukhari. Kitab al-Ilm. Bab Man A'ada al-Hadith Thalathan Liyufhama Anh: Juz' 1. P.30).

This form is used by the prophet PBUH when he wants to propagate an important message like what happens when he headed toward Mecca before *Hudaibiah* reconciliation where the prophet PBUH declares over and over that he is going for performing *Umrah* (minor pilgrimage) not for war. The noble Quran uses a word better that repetition or frequency which is reminding. Allah SWT says:

﴿ وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَى تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴾

Which means: And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers

(az-Dzariyat : 55)

Reminding or frequency is important for rejecting prohibitions and confirming commandments of Islam. Frequency of television content does not necessarily means repeating the same program until it is boring, rather repetition of a message should be performed in a variety of formats. For example, an attractive talk show about fasting, a film that sheds light upon importance of fasting and a serial that presents the benefits of fasting and the advantages of fasters have a deeper impact on audience more than speeches only. Likewise, these programs can be applied to all other messages of television.

CONCLUSION

In short, the theoretical framework identified in this paper stresses that Islamic television programs should reflect the image of pure Islam. The content should be produced with *amanah*, comprehensiveness and moderation. Islamic distinctive features should also be applied to content. The format of Islamic television programs has to be artistic, indirect, simple and frequent and adapted to the audience.

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