

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT: EXPLORATORY RESEARCH ON THE INFLUENCE OF ROMANTIC FILM “CINTA SUBUH” ON STUDENTS’ REAL-LIFE RELATIONSHIP

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Abstract: In the digital era, many kinds of information on love are available including romantic films, revered in popular cinema. Romantic films are popular among youth because of their enchanting narratives of love, passion, and the promise of enduring affection and sensation of certain romantic scenes. However, not all aspects of romantic films are appropriate for students to emulate. The notion of love and romance is quite different and unique in Islam because it emphasizes honesty and dignity. This research explores the influence romantic films have on students' real-life relationships, by focusing on an Indonesian film "Cinta Subuh", adapted from the novel "Cinta Subuh" by Ali Farighi. It examines the complex web of romantic ideals and beliefs following the Islamic view of love. Aligned with the Uses and Gratifications theory by Katz and Blumler, this study clarifies how students choose media material that meets their love-affection needs. A focus group discussion was carried out among undergraduate students in USIM. The result showed that the "Cinta Subuh" film has successfully influenced students' expectations and behaviours in influencing their real-life relationships with the person they love. This research found that "Cinta Subuh" had influenced students to follow the *taaruf* process to get to know someone before getting married. Another concept, the *fajr* prayer is highlighted in the "Cinta Subuh" film. The film also depicts the importance of seeking Allah's love and blessing in finding love. Therefore, "Cinta Subuh" is depicted as an excellent romantic film in line with the teachings of Islam.

Keywords: film, romantic, *taaruf*, *fajr*

INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, various types of information about love have been exposed and easily accessible. Among them are romantic films. This study will focus on an Indonesian romantic film produced by Indra Gunawan titled "Cinta Subuh" which was shown on May 19, 2022. This film is adapted from the novel "Cinta Subuh" by Ali Farighi. Romantic films, with their enchanting narratives of love, passion, and the promise of enduring affection, have long held a revered place in the world of popular cinema. The themes and ideals in romantic films can have a considerable impact on students' views, expectations, and behaviors in real-life relationships. This research sets out to explore by investigating the connection between the romantic film "Cinta Subuh" and students' real-life relationships. The research questions are, "What is the influence of "Cinta Subuh" film on students' expectations of their real-life relationships," and "What is the influence of "Cinta Subuh" film on students' behavior on their real-life relationships." The film, "Cinta Subuh" was selected by the researcher because it contains a lot of good values that can be conveyed to the audience. According to Apriliyana (2023) this film's message is represented by three symbols. First, the conduct of an individual driven by a deliberate want to carry out a good deed is covered by the moral teaching message. Second, the rules of God established by the Al-Qur'an and Sunnah are covered by the Shariah compliance message.

Third, the Aqidah message encompasses unwavering confidence or conviction in the core principles of Islamic teachings as revealed by the Al-Qur'an and Hadith. By identifying how the film affects students' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, this research aligned with the Uses and Gratification Theory developed by Katz, and Blumler. The Uses and Gratifications Theory states that audiences are active, and they seek satisfaction when selecting media (1974). By applying this theory, the researcher will perceive the influence of "Cinta Subuh" film on students' expectations of their real-life relationships.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research design and uses a focus group. Focus groups might provide ideas or theoretical justifications for what they saw (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001). Misconceptions might also be cleared up in focus group interviews by having participants restate or rephrase their responses to unclear questions. The target population of this research is the students in USIM. This study focuses on undergraduate programs from the Faculty of Leadership and Management. Based on the consensus (Krueger & Casey, 2000) that six to eight people is sufficient, several research (Fern, 1982; Mendes de Almeida, 1980) have reported as few as four and as many as fifteen participants were selected in focus group research. However, the researcher selected only five respondents. The focus group was conducted at the library in Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia. The researcher used a sound thematic analysis, which is beneficial for summarizing the essential qualities of a considerable data collection, as the researcher is expected to comply with the brief method in handling data and at the same time help to produce and develop an accessible and systematized conclusive report (King, 2004). Continuous reading and rereading of transcripts were carried out by the researcher until a firm understanding of the patterns emerged in the

process of coding, which involves finding themes across qualitative data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first theme identified in this research is *taaruf*. It was mentioned by Informant 1, "In Islam you can't be practicing promiscuity, you must go through *taaruf* process and follow the right way in Islam." Another response from Informant 2 said, "I am eager to go to the next step to pursue love in a halal way, this is because Islam has the best way for a beautiful relationship, which is *taaruf*." "If we like someone, we must be *taaruf* in the right way." In the focus group, the informants discussed that the love that is pleased by Allah is how going through the *taaruf* process is how a man and a woman who want to get to know one another before getting married. Three informants talked about this theme. *Taaruf* is more than just getting to know each other's families and hearts; it's a deeper introduction. An informant explained that *taaruf* is intended so that both a man and a woman are more prepared with all information, behavior regarding their future partner. In addition, another informant says *taaruf* process can build a family that is pleased with Allah SWT. The second theme identified in this research is the relationship between love and religion. Four of the informants talked about love and religion being inseparable. When watching "Cinta Subuh" film, they can grasp the concept of worship to Allah. An informant mentioned how the film emphasized the *fajr* prayer. In her opinion, it is because the *fajr* prayer is one of the most difficult prayers to do. So, in the informant's opinion, a man who prays *fajr* prayer in the mosque is the most excellent one. According to Informant 5, "If you want to find a good partner, look for someone who can go to the *fajr* prayer at the mosque". Then, an informant said, in a particular scene, she was very impressed when Angga had changed himself to perform *fajr* prayer in mosque. The blessings from parents were also emphasized in the film. According to Informant 5, "I was also

impressed where the scene when Dodi asks for his future father-in-law's blessing." The blessing of parents or family became a prominent theme in focus groups conducted with undergraduate students in USIM. Four informants were impressed when Dodi tried to get the father's blessing of the woman he was interested in marrying. The research's findings revealed that students had certain expectations for their partner. Students who have seen the romance film "Cinta Subuh" want their partner to always make the best improvements to their relationship.

CONCLUSIONS

The way that romantic films are portrayed in the media shapes how society views relationships and love. Students' romantic views of belief and ideals in their genuine relationship would alter after watching the love film "Cinta Subuh," which has Islamic components. Furthermore, "Cinta Subuh" film provides a hierarchical and ethically grounded view of love, which is consistent with Islamic beliefs. It also looks at how these findings affect students' expectations and behaviors in real-life relationships by applying the Uses and Gratification Theory. As for future studies, the researcher recommended that researchers should delve into Islamic perspective and cultural aspects in analyzing romantic films. The research will offer an excellent study from the perspectives of *aqli* and *naqli* by exploring more into the elements of Islam and culture. With its findings, it will also influence the community and contribute to the development of an advanced Islamic civilization. The researcher also suggested that in the future, should interview more informants consisting of both men and women. Analyzing the potential benefits and drawbacks of media depiction, it explores the intricate network of romantic ideas and beliefs. The study also delves into the intricate perspective on love in Islam. Aligned with Katz and Blumler's (1974) Uses and Gratifications hypothesis, this study elucidates how actively viewers select media content that satisfies their needs. The results show that the

"Cinta Subuh" film had a positive impact on students' expectations and behaviors, which in turn affected their relationships with the people they love in real life. For instance, from the "Cinta Subuh" film, students get knowledge about the *taaruf* process, *fajr* prayer and the importance of family blessings and other good values.

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