THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE APPLICATION OF TAKMILAH THEORY IN THE SELECTION OF ACTORS FOR DA'WAH FILMS

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Abstract*: The Takmilah Theory, introduced by Shafie Abu Bakar, is an approach in Islamic literature that emphasizes perfection in artistic works. In the context of da'wah films, this theory can serve as a foundation for actor selection to ensure that the Islamic message conveyed through the film is effectively delivered. This article aims to analyze how the core principles of the Takmilah Theory can be applied to the selection of actors in da'wah films. This study employs a document analysis approach to examine the seven main principles of the Takmilah Theory. Data were collected through document analysis, content analysis of da'wah films, and a literature review on actor selection. The findings indicate that appropriate criteria for actor selection are based on the principles of divinity (Kamal), prophethood (Kamil), Islamic values (Akmal), knowledge (Takamul), the work (Takmilah), the creator (Istikmal), and the audience (Kamil). Actor selection based on the Takmilah Theory can enhance the quality of da'wah films in conveying Islamic messages authentically, strengthen the credibility of da'wah films, and help shape Islamic icons within the entertainment industry. This is because the selection of actors who embody the principle of uswatul hasanah ensures they serve not only as characters on screen but also as role models for society. The implementation of an actor selection model based on the Takmilah Theory is expected to serve as a more systematic guideline for the Islamic film industry, contributing to the production of high-quality da'wah films that leave a profound impact on audiences.*

Keywords*: Takmilah Theory, Da'wah Film, Actor Selection, Uswatul Hasanah, Islamic Communication*

Introduction

The da'wah film industry in Malaysia has shown rapid growth as an effective medium of Islamic communication, capable of conveying divine messages and moral values in an indirect yet entertaining manner. Da'wah films serve not merely as a form of entertainment but also as instruments of social education and identity formation for the Muslim ummah. According to Ibrahim and Hassan (2020), da'wah films have the potential to shape an Islamic worldview among audiences through narratives that promote virtuous values, Islamic ethics, and critical thinking regarding contemporary issues.

However, one of the growing challenges in this industry is the weakness in selecting actors who are truly suited to the demands of da'wah roles. Islamic values are sometimes compromised in pursuit of commercial profit or popularity. Salleh et al. (2021) emphasized that actors in da'wah films must function as agents of social change, not merely portraying roles, but also internalizing and practicing the Islamic values represented by their characters. When actors fail to reflect Islamic character in their real lives, it may undermine the credibility of the da'wah message being conveyed.

This issue is evident in several controversies involving local da'wah film actors who behave in ways that contradict the Islamic image portrayed in films, such as engaging in inappropriate social activities like frequenting nightclubs or wearing immodest attire (Mstar, 2023; Malaysiakini, 2018). According to a study by Rahman (2022), more than 70% of viewers agree that the moral background and lifestyle of actors have a direct impact on how the Islamic message in da'wah films is received.

Recognizing the importance of selecting actors who are not only skilled in acting but also possess personal integrity and a deep understanding of Islam, there is a pressing need for an actor selection model grounded in Islamic values. In this context, the Takmilah Theory, founded by Shafie Abu Bakar (1992), offers a holistic and systematic approach suitable to serve as a conceptual framework for selecting actors in da'wah films. This theory emphasizes perfection in the production of Islamic arts through seven key principles: Kamal (divinity), Kamil (prophethood), Akmal (Islamicity), Takamul (knowledge), Takmilah (the work), Istikmal (the creator), and Kamil (the audience).

The Takmilah Theory advocates for harmony between form and meaning in the creation of Islamic art, wherein every element including actors must reflect the integration of spiritual, intellectual, and aesthetic values. Therefore, these principles can serve as the foundation for establishing actor selection criteria that not only focus on performance but also uphold the actor's role as a qudwah hasanah (exemplary figure) for society. This is also in line with the Quranic call for a da'wah approach rooted in wisdom, good counsel (al-mauizah al-hasanah), and the best form of discourse (Surah al-Nahl, 16:125).

Hence, the development of a conceptual framework for actor selection based on the Takmilah Theory is seen as a strategic move to strengthen the credibility and effectiveness of da'wah films in Malaysia. This study aims to construct a conceptual model based on Islamic values that can serve as a practical guide for directors and producers in selecting actors who are capable of portraying Islamic roles authentically, sincerely, and credibly.

Background of the Problem

The da'wah film industry in Malaysia has emerged as an influential medium for conveying Islamic messages to society in a creative, emotional, and easily comprehensible manner. This medium plays a crucial role in fostering religious awareness, reinforcing moral values, and shaping the identity of the modern Muslim. Da'wah films not only present religious narratives but also reflect the social realities and challenges faced by Muslims in the contemporary era (Abdullah & Noor, 2017). However, the effectiveness of da'wah films in delivering Islamic messages greatly depends on the credibility of their messengers, particularly the actors who portray Islamic characters.

There is growing concern regarding the selection of actors in da'wah films, especially when certain actors cast as preachers or religious figures are involved in moral controversies that trigger negative public reactions. For instance, the case involving popular Malaysian actor Zizan Razak in the film Hantu Bonceng drew widespread criticism due to a line of dialogue deemed offensive to Islam, compelling him to issue a public apology to both the community and religious authorities (Utusan Malaysia, 2011). Incidents like this reveal that selecting actors without considering their religious background and personal values can significantly damage the credibility of the da'wah message being promoted.

A study by Mohamad Rasit and Misrom (2016) found that the majority of da'wah film audiences in Malaysia expect actors who portray Islamic roles to also embody Islamic values in their personal lives. This expectation arises from the audience's tendency to evaluate the consistency between on-screen roles and the actors' real-life identities, which directly influences their reception of the da'wah message. Without the actor's integrity as a message bearer, the impact of the da'wah film can be diminished and even provoke cynicism among viewers.

Moreover, the absence of a comprehensive guideline in the actor selection process has led producers and directors to prioritize popularity and commercial gain over evaluating an actor's Islamic character. This opens the door to conflicts between form and meaning in the production of da'wah content. Zulkifli and Ismail (2023) assert that an actor's negative off-screen image has a significant impact on audience perception and may even erode the intended Islamic message of the character portrayed.

More alarmingly, improper casting may lead to public confusion about the mission of Islamic da'wah. A film that is meant to serve as a medium for spiritual purification and divine empowerment can turn into a source of controversy and slander when Islamic roles are portrayed by individuals who neither understand nor embody Islamic teachings. This contradicts the objectives of maqasid al-da'wah and may weaken public trust in da'wah-oriented media productions altogether.

Scholars and religious leaders have also called for the development of ethical codes or actor selection guidelines grounded in shariah principles and Islamic artistic values. This highlights the urgent need for a structured actor selection system rooted in Islamic values. Without a solid system, the da'wah film industry will continue to face a crisis of authenticity and a lack of credibility in its message delivery.

In this regard, there is an urgent need to construct a conceptual framework for selecting actors in da'wah films that ensures alignment between the Islamic message and its messenger. The Takmilah Theory, introduced by Shafie Abu Bakar (1992), offers a fitting approach by

emphasizing perfection in Islamic art through seven core principles: Kamal (divinity), Kamil (prophethood), Akmal (Islamicity), Takamul (knowledge), Takmilah (the work), Istikmal (the creator), and Kamil (the audience). Applying this theory in the actor selection process ensures coherence between the da'wah message and its execution through authentic, ethical, and integrity-driven performances ultimately elevating the credibility and impact of da'wah films in Malaysia.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to develop a conceptual framework based on the Takmilah Theory for the selection of actors in Malaysian da'wah films. Specifically, this study aims to:

1. Identify the critical factors that must be considered in selecting actors for da'wah films from a shariah perspective, including the actors' moral conduct, religious understanding, and Islamic lifestyle.
2. Develop actor selection indicators guided by the core principles of the Takmilah Theory, namely Kamal (perfection), Kamil (human integrity), Akmal (comprehensiveness of Islam), Takamul (integration of knowledge), and Takmilah (aesthetic excellence).
3. Produce a systematic and practical conceptual model to serve as a guideline for stakeholders in the da'wah film industry, ensuring that the actor selection process is carried out more objectively, transparently, and in alignment with Islamic values.

By achieving these objectives, it is hoped that the proposed model will contribute to enhancing the credibility and positive impact of da'wah films in Malaysia, thereby elevating the role of film as an effective medium for Islamic propagation.

Literature Review

The rapid development of the da'wah film industry in Malaysia has sparked a range of academic discussions and research concerning the effectiveness of its messages and the role of actors in portraying Islamic characters successfully. Previous studies consistently highlight that the credibility of actors plays a significant role in influencing audience reception of the da'wah message delivered through film. Viewers generally expect alignment between the actor's on-screen persona and their real-life character, especially when the actor plays roles such as an ustaz (religious teacher), preacher, or religious figure.

Rosmawati Mohamad Rasit and Azimah Misrom (2016) emphasized that discrepancies between the Islamic character portrayed and the actor's real-life behavior can undermine the effectiveness of the da'wah message and provoke audience skepticism. Their study supports the notion that an actor's real-life identity can influence how audiences perceive the sincerity and content of a da'wah production. This finding is further supported by qualitative research showing that some viewers question the legitimacy of Islamic messages in films when actors involved in such roles are associated with social controversies or are seen living lifestyles contrary to Islamic values (Zulkifli & Ismail, 2023).

In this context, several studies have acknowledged the Islamic elements in film production, including the aspect of actor selection, but most have adopted a descriptive approach and lack focus on the development of a systematic selection framework or model. For instance, Mohamad Shafiei Ayub, Mohamad Fauzi, and Mastura (2016), through their analysis of da'wah films in Malaysia, stressed that the presence of Takmilah elements in Islamic works demands not only a strong storyline and meaningful message but also requires actors' commitment to Islamic values. They noted a tendency in da'wah films to focus more on emotional narratives

while neglecting the coherence between the da'wah message and the actor's personal character making the casting process a critical yet underexplored component in existing research.

Furthermore, a study on Nur Kasih The Movie by Rosmawati and Azimah (2016), which applied the Ar-Risalah Film Theory to assess shariah compliance in narrative and aesthetics, acknowledged the da'wah value in the film but criticized the casting and character presentation as not fully aligned with shariah principles. The study highlighted the urgent need for casting guidelines in da'wah films that not only evaluate acting talent but also consider the actor's personal integrity and religious understanding.

Within the broader discourse on conceptual approaches to Islamic arts, the Takmilah Theory introduced by Shafie Abu Bakar (1992) has been widely applied in analyzing Islamic literature and film. This theory emphasizes perfection in three central elements: the creator (writer or actor), the work (script), and the audience (receiver). It establishes spiritual, intellectual, and aesthetic perfection as the foundation of Islamic artistic creation. The seven core principles outlined in Takmilah Theory Kamal (divinity), Kamil (prophethood), Akmal (Islamicity), Takamul (knowledge integration), Takmilah (aesthetic perfection), Istikmal (perfection of the creator), and Kamil al-Mutakamilin (perfection of the audience) offer a holistic dimension applicable not only in writing and directing but also in actor selection.

In this regard, the principle of Istikmal, which emphasizes self-improvement and the integrity of the creator (including actors), provides a vital foundation for the selection of actors in da'wah films. Actors must not only internalize their roles artistically but also convey the da'wah message authentically, grounded in their understanding and practice of Islam. Shafie (2010) further stated that in the context of Islamic art, the actor functions as a genuine da'wah agent and should exemplify uswah hasanah (exemplary character) for society.

However, a review of the literature also reveals a gap in the development of a conceptual model specifically tailored for actor selection in da'wah films. Most prior studies have focused on narrative content, da'wah messaging, audience responses, and directing approaches, with limited attention given to the preliminary stage of film production casting. The study by Zulkifli and Ismail (2023), for instance, concentrated more on audience perceptions of da'wah films without offering a model or framework for use by industry practitioners.

This study aims to address that gap by developing a conceptual model for actor selection in da'wah films based on Islamic principles and grounded in the Takmilah Theory. The proposed model not only considers the actor's talent and performance abilities but also prioritizes alignment between the Islamic message and the actor's personal values as a messenger of da'wah. This approach is essential to ensure that da'wah films remain relevant and trustworthy as a form of spiritual education capable of shaping the mindset and behavior of the Muslim community in a holistic manner.

Overall, findings from previous studies emphasize the importance of developing a more transparent, principled, and shariah-based actor selection system for da'wah films. Failure to establish such a system may perpetuate the conflict between form and meaning in da'wah films, compromising the authenticity and effectiveness of the Islamic message. Therefore, the construction of a model based on the Takmilah Theory is believed to offer both practical and theoretical guidance to da'wah filmmakers in Malaysia, contributing to the development of an ethical and reputable Islamic arts industry.

Research Methodology

This study applies an interpretive qualitative approach, which aligns with the primary objective of developing a conceptual framework for selecting actors in da'wah films based on the principles of Takmilah Theory. This approach enables the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of expert perspectives, experiences, and insights related to the selection of da'wah actors who are credible and ethically aligned with Islamic values. Interpretive qualitative research emphasizes the subjective meanings shaped by individual experiences within specific social contexts, thus allowing for the exploration of Islamic values and principles in the context of filmmaking (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Research Design

This is an exploratory study using a multi-method qualitative design, conducted in three main phases:
1.   Document analysis and literature review
2.   Expert interviews using the Delphi method
3.   Focus group discussions (FGD).

This design was chosen to achieve data triangulation and to enhance the credibility, reliability, and practical applicability of the research findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The first phase focuses on secondary data collection through literature review and content analysis of selected local da'wah films. The second and third phases involve primary qualitative methods through engagement with industry and academic experts. The findings from all three phases are thematically analyzed and synthesized to build a comprehensive conceptual framework grounded in Takmilah Theory.

Data Collection Procedures

Phase 1: Literature Review and Document Analysis

In this phase, the researcher analyzed academic materials such as journal articles, theses, books related to Takmilah Theory, articles on da'wah filmmaking, and documents related to the management of Islamic film production in Malaysia. Additionally, content analysis was conducted on five selected da'wah films to identify trends in actor selection, portrayal of Islamic characters, and the presence of Islamic values in performances. This process aimed to identify knowledge gaps in prior studies and to establish both theoretical and practical foundations for the development of a new framework.

Phase 2: Expert Interviews – Delphi Method

The second phase involved semi-structured, multi-round interviews using the Delphi technique, which is particularly suitable for generating expert consensus (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). Eight experts were purposively selected, including da'wah film directors, lecturers in Islamic communication and performing arts, and religious scholars who have been involved in da'wah media production. The interviews were conducted in two rounds. The first round aimed to identify initial elements and core issues in the actor selection process for da'wah films. The second round used the findings from the first round as a basis to assess consensus among participants on the essential elements forming the selection framework.

Phase 3: Focus Group Discussions (FGD)
The third phase involved FGD sessions with five other participants who were not involved in the Delphi rounds. The purpose was to assess the preliminary usability of the conceptual model developed and to obtain feedback and suggestions for improvement. The FGDs also served as an early verification mechanism for the practicality and effectiveness of the proposed model elements. Each FGD session was recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using thematic analysis.

Data Analysis Techniques
Data were analyzed thematically using a combination of inductive and deductive approaches. The analysis steps included:
1. Initial coding based on interview and FGD transcripts
2. Development of categories and themes
3. Mapping of thematic findings to the seven core principles of Takmilah Theory (Shafie Abu Bakar, 1992).

The process was supported by qualitative analysis software such as NVivo to organize and manage the data systematically. Data validity was enhanced through member checking, where preliminary findings were shared with participants for confirmation, and peer debriefing to ensure the accuracy of interpretations.

Triangulation was conducted by comparing findings from the three phases: literature and document review, Delphi interviews, and FGDs. This method ensured that the research findings did not rely on a single source, thus strengthening credibility through multiple data sources and approaches.
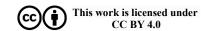
Justification for Methodological Choice
The interpretive qualitative approach was selected to address the need for deep exploration of values, meanings, and Islamic principles in the selection of actors for da'wah films. This approach is more appropriate than quantitative methods because it allows the researcher to deeply understand the experiences, opinions, and subjective considerations of experts in the fields of film and religion (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

The Delphi method enabled the systematic gathering of expert consensus, while the FGDs provided a platform for collective exploration and ideological interaction, enriching the final findings. These two methods complement each other, ensuring that the resulting conceptual model is practical, transparent, and relevant to the needs of Malaysia's da'wah film industry.

Findings
This study aims to develop a conceptual framework for actor selection in da'wah films based on the Takmilah Theory. Data were collected through literature review, expert interviews using the Delphi technique, and focus group discussions (FGD). Thematic analysis of these three sources yielded three major themes: The need for actor selection based on Islamic principles, the application of Takmilah Theory principles in actor selection, and proposals for a conceptual framework.

The Need for Actor Selection Based on Islamic Principles

In the context of da'wah films that aim to deliver Islamic messages creatively and effectively to audiences, actor selection plays a vital role in ensuring the credibility and effectiveness of the da'wah message. Based on in-depth interviews with several da'wah film directors, Islamic film lecturers, and Islamic media activists, a consistent pattern emerged: actor selection in da'wah films is still largely influenced by commercial factors such as popularity and acting skills, without adequate consideration of the actor's moral background and Islamic personality.

The majority of respondents agreed that while talent and screen appeal are important in attracting viewers, in the context of religious-themed films, actors should reflect Islamic values in their daily lives. This ensures that the da'wah message is received not only intellectually but also emotionally and spiritually. One da'wah film director stated: "If an actor plays the role of an ustaz on screen but lives contrary to Islamic teachings in real life, the film's message will appear hypocritical to the audience."

This view is supported by the findings of Rosmawati Mohamad Rasit and Azimah Misrom (2016), which showed that Malaysian da'wah film audiences tend to question the authenticity of the da'wah message when the main actor does not exhibit a lifestyle consistent with the Islamic character portrayed. This indicates that audience perception of religious content in films heavily relies on the credibility and personal image of the actor.

Furthermore, Mustaffa and Mahadi (2013) emphasized that an actor's personality significantly shapes public perception of Islam through media. They argued that the media plays a crucial role in constructing the image of Islam, with actors serving as key intermediaries in conveying that meaning. Therefore, actors who do not live in accordance with Islamic values inadvertently weaken the moral messages promoted by da'wah films.

In the FGD sessions conducted with five experts in Islamic media and performing arts, several concrete examples were presented. One such case was the actor in Mentega Terbang, who was criticized for participating in a film promoting controversial narratives involving religious pluralism and deviant teachings—thus tarnishing the Islamic image when viewed in a da'wah film context (Malaysiakini, 2023). Similarly, the drama Bidaah received reprimands from religious authorities due to an actor's public criticism of traditional Islamic practices on social media (Astro Awani, 2024). These cases clearly demonstrate how actors' off-screen actions shape audience reception of da'wah film content.

This issue also relates to the concept of uswatun hasanah emphasized in the Qur'an (Surah al-Ahzab, verse 21), which calls on Muslims to emulate the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in all aspects of life. In da'wah films, actors play the role of messengers of Islam and should embody the qualities of qudwah or exemplary conduct. When actors portraying Islamic roles fail to exhibit noble character and Islamic lifestyles, the intended qudwah value of the film loses credibility.

Moreover, many respondents voiced the urgent need for a structured guideline for selecting actors in da'wah films based on Islamic principles. This guideline should not only assess acting skills and techniques but also evaluate religious education background, moral integrity, and involvement in activities that could tarnish Islam's image. A lecturer in Islamic arts stated: "It is time for the Malaysian da'wah film industry to adopt actor selection standards that are not only professional but also shariah-compliant."

From the perspective of Islamic da'wah theory, the mission of da'wah should be delivered by individuals whose integrity and understanding of Islam are trusted. This aligns with the dakwah bil-hal approach, which emphasizes that the most effective da'wah is delivered through good behavior and character (Al-Qaradawi, 1998). Hence, actors who do not embody Islamic principles in real life risk undermining the da'wah mission of the film.

The findings also highlight the need to strengthen training modules and actor development in the da'wah film industry. Actors must not only understand the script and character context but also be exposed to Islamic values and da'wah ethics. Such modules can be developed collaboratively by academic institutions, Islamic art practitioners, and da'wah organizations.

Overall, these findings indicate that actor selection based on Islamic principles is not merely an option but a strategic necessity that must be seriously considered by all parties involved in da'wah film production. Without actors who holistically reflect Islamic character, the mission of da'wah films as agents of societal transformation may be compromised and lose the trust of audiences.

Application of Takmilah Theory Principles in Actor Selection

The Takmilah Theory, founded by Shafie Abu Bakar (1992), presents a holistic approach to understanding and applying the concept of perfection in Islamic arts. It emphasizes harmony between form, meaning, and spiritual values in the creation of Islamic artistic works. In the context of actor selection for da'wah films, the principles of Takmilah Theory offer a normative foundation for evaluating actor suitability not only in terms of acting ability but also in personality, thought, and social impact.

Expert interviews and document analysis in this study identified that the seven core principles of Takmilah Theory can serve as guidelines for developing actor selection indicators for da'wah films. These principles are Kamal (Divinity), Kamil (Prophethood), Akmal (Islamicity), Takamul (Knowledge Integration), Takmilah (Aesthetic Perfection), Istikmal (Artist Formation), and Kamil al-Mutakamilin (Impact on the Audience) (Shafie Abu Bakar, 1992).

I.   Kamal and Akmal: The Foundations of Divinity and Islamicity

The principle of Kamal, which refers to the perfection of Allah's attributes, asserts that all artistic works including acting must be grounded in divine values. For actors, this means they must understand and embody tauhid (monotheism) in their behavior and character portrayal. Meanwhile, Akmal refers to the comprehensiveness of Islam, emphasizing that da'wah film actors should demonstrate an understanding of shariah principles and Islamic ethics.

In terms of actor selection, these principles imply the need to assess an actor's religious understanding not dogmatically, but by evaluating their educational background, public perception of their personality, and alignment with Islamic values. For instance, an actor involved in a da'wah film who publicly supports a lifestyle that contradicts Islam clearly violates these principles.

II.   Kamil and Istikmal: Personality and Ethics of the Artist

The principle of Kamil relates to the perfection of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the ideal human model. In Islamic arts, actors, as part of the creative force, should emulate the Prophet's character in delivering messages to society. In other words, da'wah actors must serve as qudwah hasanah a good example as outlined in Surah al-Ahzab, verse 21.

Istikmal, on the other hand, refers to the artist's process of self-improvement. It emphasizes that actors should not only possess talent but also be committed to personal spiritual, moral, and professional development as Islamic message bearers. Thus, actor selection systems must include mechanisms to evaluate the actor's dedication to self-betterment and commitment to da'wah values.

III. Takamul and Takmilah: Integration of Knowledge and Aesthetic Da'wah

The principle of Takamul calls for the integration of knowledge, ethics, and art. Actors must combine an understanding of Islamic messages with their acting skills. This goes beyond memorizing scripts to include deep appreciation of the dialogue's meaning, the context of the scenes, and the intended impact on viewers.

Takmilah, the core principle of this theory, refers to the perfection of a work in both form and meaning. In the context of actor selection, this translates into assessing the actor's ability to express Islamic aesthetic values through meaningful performances that do not transgress shariah boundaries whether in dialogue, physical expression, or on-screen attire.

IV. Kamil al-Mutakamilin: Impact on the Audience

The final principle, Kamil al-Mutakamilin, concerns the spiritual and moral impact of the work on its audience. A da'wah actor does not merely deliver lines from a script but creates a lasting impression on the minds and souls of viewers. In FGD sessions, several experts stated that audiences are more receptive to da'wah film messages when they see consistency between the character on screen and the actor's real-life conduct.

Thus, selecting da'wah actors requires careful consideration of their long-term influence on society. Any disconnect between the message conveyed and the actor's real character may cause confusion and undermine the trust in the da'wah content itself.

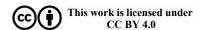### Practical Indicators Based on Takmilah Principles

One of the key contributions from the FGD findings is the recommendation to translate the principles of Takmilah Theory into practical indicators for systematic application in the actor selection process. Suggested indicators include:

I.   Background in religious education, whether formal or informal.
II.   Moral record and lifestyle, including engagement in social activities consistent with Islamic teachings.
III.   Social media content and behavior as a reflection of the actor's thoughts and values.
IV.   Acceptance within the Muslim community based on public image and professional history.
V.   Willingness to undergo da'wah training as evidence of commitment to the Islamic mission of the film.

These indicators are not only useful for producers and directors but can also be utilized by broadcasting institutions or content rating bodies to ensure actor selection standards are aligned with maqasid shariah and the expectations of the Muslim audience.

Support From Previous Studies

The study by Mohamad Shafiei Ayub et al. (2016) also supports the application of Takmilah elements in Islamic acting. They emphasized that actors function as Islamic creators, not just

script deliverers. This means actors must internalize Islamic values in their performance and use film as an authentic da'wah medium.

The implementation of Takmilah principles in actor selection is further supported by other scholars who stress the importance of integrity and consistency between Islamic values and artistic performance as a foundation for effective da'wah through media (Yusoff & Jalil, 2019).

Conceptual Framework for Actor Selection in Da'wah Films

The findings of this study form the basis for proposing a systematic, Islamic value-based conceptual framework for selecting actors in da'wah films, grounded in Takmilah Theory. This framework consists of four main components:

I.   Foundations in Faith and Islamic Understanding Actors must possess a strong religious foundation, including an understanding of tauhid and Islamic ethics. This is assessed through educational background, experience, and observed behavior.

II. Islamic Morality and Personality This includes lifestyle, social conduct, appearance, and moral record, in line with the principle of uswatul hasanah emphasized in da'wah (al-Ahzab: 21).

III. Social Credibility and Public Influence Actors must have a positive societal impact, measured through public image, social media interaction and reception by the Muslim audience.

IV. Alignment Between Character and Personality Actors must exhibit both internal and external compatibility with the Islamic roles they portray, ensuring the da'wah message does not contradict their real-life persona.

This model received consensus support from the expert panel in the Delphi technique. They agreed that da'wah film actors must fully represent da'wah values not merely perform them.
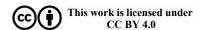
Implications of Findings

The findings of this study have significant implications in three main domains: the strengthening of theory in Islamic communication and performing arts discourse; practical development within the da'wah film industry; and contributions to policy and professional actor training within an Islamic framework. By building a conceptual framework for actor selection grounded in the principles of Takmilah Theory, this study not only adds a new dimension to existing theory but also directly contributes to improving the quality and credibility of da'wah film productions in Malaysia.

Academic Implications

In the academic field, these findings reinforce the relevance of Takmilah Theory as an epistemological and methodological framework suitable for Islamic performing arts research. While the theory has predominantly been applied in literary analysis (Shafie Abu Bakar, 1992), this study demonstrates that its principles can also be adapted for visual communication and acting. The application of principles such as Kamal (divinity), Akmal (Islamicity), and Takmilah (aesthetic da'wah) in actor selection opens avenues for further research in da'wah communication, Islamic semiotics, and the development of Islamic media narratives.

Furthermore, the multidisciplinary approach combining Islamic art theory, qualitative methodology, and expert perception and consensus analysis (via the Delphi technique and FGDs) offers a strong and replicable research model for other scholars. This paves the way for

introducing academic courses or modules such as "Islamic Actor Ethics" or "Takmilah Thought in Islamic Visual Communication" at institutions of higher learning.

Practical Implications for The Da'wah Film Industry

Practically, the conceptual framework developed in this study can serve as a systematic guide for stakeholders in Malaysia's Islamic film industry when making casting decisions. Based on the principles of Takmilah Theory, actors should not be evaluated solely on their acting skills or social media popularity, but must meet criteria involving moral integrity, foundational Islamic understanding, and a lifestyle aligned with the objectives of da'wah (maqasid al-da'wah).

This framework allows producers and directors to make more objective decisions that are aligned with Islamic principles, helping to avoid the conflict between form and meaning in delivering the da'wah message. This is important, as the dissonance between excellent acting and the actor's personal life often triggers controversy and undermines the credibility of da'wah messages in the eyes of Muslim audiences (Rosmawati & Azimah, 2016; Mustaffa & Mahadi, 2013).

For instance, controversies surrounding the film Mentega Terbang and the drama Bidaah demonstrate that the public does not only judge a film's content but also considers the actor's background as a key factor in accepting or rejecting a da'wah work (Malaysiakini, 2023; Astro Awani, 2024). Thus, developing Takmilah-based guidelines may be a first step towards establishing a more transparent and integrity-driven system for selecting da'wah film actors.

Implications For Policy and Professional Training

Beyond industry stakeholders, the findings also hold strategic value for government bodies, Islamic NGOs, and broadcasting agencies in formulating policies and regulations related to ethics and standards in Islamic content production. In the Malaysian context, agencies such as FINAS, JAKIM, and the Department of Broadcasting Malaysia can use this framework as a foundation for establishing actor selection standards or recommending the approval of da'wah content.

Moreover, this study opens opportunities for developing a training module for da'wah film actors. The module may include elements such as:
I.   Introduction to Takmilah principles
II.   Character immersion training within a shariah context
III.   Ethics for Islamic actors in real life and on social mediai
IV.   Basic understanding of aqidah, worship, and Islamic morals

Such a module would not only train current actors but also nurture a new generation of da'wah actors prepared to serve as agents of social transformation. These actors could become public intellectuals or Islamic influencers who deliver da'wah messages not just through film scripts, but also through their daily social interactions off-screen.

This study also proposes the establishment of an ethical oversight body for da'wah film actors, functioning like a professional board, responsible for monitoring and evaluating actor conduct before and after their involvement in da'wah productions. This body could include representatives from religious scholars, Islamic film directors, academics, and civil society activists.

Overall, these findings have broad implications that extend beyond academia. They propose a new, more systematic approach to actor selection in da'wah films while strengthening the discourse of Islamic arts as an effective and authoritative medium for da'wah. Comprehensive implementation of this framework across production, training, and policy levels is expected to enhance the credibility of da'wah films and preserve their authenticity as a leading form of Islamic communication in the contemporary era.

Conclusion

This study has successfully developed a conceptual framework for the selection of actors in da'wah films based on the principles of Takmilah Theory introduced by Shafie Abu Bakar (1992). In the context of the growing prominence of da'wah films in Malaysia as an effective medium of Islamic communication, the need for selecting actors who are both morally upright and Islamic in character has become increasingly urgent. The findings indicate that selecting actors solely based on popularity and talent has resulted in negative impacts on the credibility of the da'wah message, even raising doubts among audiences regarding the sincerity of religious-themed films.

The application of the seven core principles of Takmilah Theory Kamal (divinity), Kamil (prophethood), Akmal (Islamicity), Takamul (integration of knowledge and art), Takmilah (perfection of the work), Istikmal (the creator), and Kamil al-Mutakamilin (impact on the audience) has enabled the construction of a framework that not only addresses the technical aspects of acting but also incorporates assessments of religious understanding, personal ethics, and the actor's social influence. This framework provides both theoretical and practical foundations for a more comprehensive, balanced, and Maqasid aligned approach to actor selection in da'wah filmmaking.

The implications of this study are extensive. Academically, it expands the application of Takmilah Theory into the fields of visual communication and Islamic filmmaking. In terms of industry impact, it offers a systematic guide for directors, producers, and content regulators when making casting decisions. Furthermore, the findings support the need for the development of training modules for da'wah actors and structured ethical policies for Islamic film production, guided by Islamic values.

Overall, this study calls on all stakeholders in da'wah film production including actors, directors, producers, and policymakers to view the role of actors not merely as performers, but as representatives of the Islamic da'wah mission itself. Selecting actors in alignment with the Takmilah principles will help ensure that da'wah films are not only aesthetically appealing but also authentic and effective in conveying meaningful messages. This, in turn, will sustain the originality and strength of da'wah films as a medium for shaping the morality, thought, and spirituality of the contemporary Muslim community.

Recommendations For Future Research

This study has successfully constructed a conceptual framework for selecting da'wah film actors based on the principles of Takmilah Theory. Although it makes significant contributions to the fields of Islamic communication and performing arts, there remain several areas that future research can explore to enhance and expand on these findings.

First, this study employed a qualitative approach and focused on the perspectives of experts in the da'wah film industry, including directors, lecturers, and religious scholars. Therefore, future

research could strengthen these findings by using a quantitative approach to assess audience acceptance and perceptions of the elements within this conceptual framework. Research instruments such as surveys could be developed based on the identified Takmilah indicators and administered to Muslim viewers from diverse demographic backgrounds in Malaysia. Such studies could evaluate to what extent the actor's personal character truly influences the credibility of da'wah messages among general audiences.
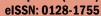
Second, follow up research could involve case studies of specific da'wah film actors to examine how closely they align with Takmilah principles, and how consistency between on-screen roles and real-life behavior affects public reception. These case studies may include observations, structured interviews, and social media content analysis as supplementary data.

Third, there is a need to develop a standardized assessment instrument that can be used by industry stakeholders or regulatory bodies to evaluate actor suitability for da'wah roles. Future research could focus on designing and validating such instruments using methodologies such as the Rasch model or exploratory factor analysis (EFA). This would offer practical contributions to the Islamic film making industry in Malaysia.

Fourth, as this study is limited to the Malaysian context, comparative studies involving countries such as Indonesia, Brunei, or Middle Eastern nations are also recommended. These studies could assess how Islamic principles in actor selection are applied across different cultural and industry settings. This comparative approach could contribute to the development of a more universal and cross-cultural theory of Islamic performing arts.

Finally, this study recommends collaboration among higher education institutions, government agencies, and industry practitioners to develop training modules for da'wah actors based on Takmilah principles. Future action research could be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of such training in improving actor attitudes, understanding and appreciation of da'wah values.

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