

ad regulations

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TELEVISION ADVERTISING FRAMEWORK IN MALAYSIA AND THE SALIENCE OF IDEALS FROM THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE: A FRAMING PERSPECTIVE FOR NATION BUILDING

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ABSTRACT

Malaysia has the ambition to be a developed country by 2020. The goal of creating a cohesive, united, and ethical community is accentuated in the country's Eleventh Malaysia Plan which is part of the efforts in becoming a developed nation. There are several guidelines and codes issued by governmental organisations that regulate television advertising in Malaysia. The potential for television advertising growth is evident as media organisations reinvent television platforms by embracing the Internet as seen through their over-the-top streaming services (OTT). The research study uses framing theory which refers to the attributes within a particular issue that form a narrative as a result of the selection of some attributes making some subjects more salient than others. Framing theory is often used in studies on news stories. But this research study examines the guidelines and codes for television advertisements to the Muslim market in Malaysia. The study is significant as it contributes to current literature and provides a better understanding of the television regulatory framework in view of nation building in Malaysia. Five frames are generated from the framework examined and the most salient themes are referred to the Qur'an and Sunnah. It appears that the frames represent the balance between the moral and material dimensions of life underscoring the concept of *wasatiyyah* that defines the moderate lifestyle in Islam.

Keywords: *framing theory, nation building, television advertisements, Malaysia, advertising codes, advertising guidelines, wasatiyyah.*

INTRODUCTION

The Malaysian government is moving the country to be developed with the goal of achieving social cohesion, national unity and morality mentioned in the Eleventh Malaysia Plan (2016-2020). The contribution of the television advertising framework meant for Malay Muslims and Malaysians on the whole to nation building in Malaysia is fascinating.

27 The official religion of Malaysia is Islam but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in the country as stated in Article 3 of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia (2010). The Malays in Malaysia are Muslims as mentioned in Article 160 of the Federal

Constitution (2010). The Department of Statistics Malaysia (2017) states there are 32 million people in Malaysia. The majority of Malaysians are Malays and natives of Sabah and Sarawak (68.8 percent). The Chinese comprises 23.3 percent; Indians, seven percent and Other ethnicities make up one percent of the population. The Chinese are predominantly Buddhists and Christians and the Indians are mainly Hindus (Hoffstaedter, 2011). The Malaysian dominant ethnicities (Malays, Chinese and Indians) are not significantly different from each in terms of their perception of the importance of relationships, shame, collectivism, hierarchies, and high context communication but are significantly different in the religious dimension (Abdullah, 2005). For Abdullah, Malays have a more positive attitude towards religion and spiritual fulfilment while the Chinese and Indians pursue materialistic achievements.

This backdrop makes the study intriguing in terms of investigating whose values are emphasised on television advertisements in Malaysia. The various guidelines for stakeholders producing television advertisements for the Malaysian and Muslim audience examined in the study are: the Guidelines for the Screening of Contents Materials Islamic Broadcasting by the Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM), Guidelines for Advertising Broadcasting on TV Alhijrah, the Code of Ethics for Broadcasting issued by the Department of Broadcasting Malaysia of public broadcaster, Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM), the Content Code issued by the Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (CMCF) and the Guidelines on Film Censorship by the Ministry of Home Affairs Malaysia. These organisations are owned by the Government of Malaysia and provide guidelines or codes of ethics for the production of television advertising messages that contribute towards nation building by developing a moral society.

The Guidelines by JAKIM (2015) mentions the role of broadcasting in disseminating Islam to audience members. They are a reference for everyone in the broadcasting industry: the producers of films, advertisements, dramas and other audio visual materials to ensure that they do not go against the principles of *Ahli Sunnah wal-Jamaah* (the people who form the majority of Muslims that follow Prophet Muhammad [peace be upon him]). The guidelines will also be referred to when there is an Islamic issue with media content on television. The Guidelines for Advertising Broadcasting on TV Alhijrah are issued by TV Alhijrah, a government-owned free-to-air television network established in Malaysia in 2009 broadcasting Islamic content for Muslims and non-Muslims (TV Alhijrah, 2018).

The Code of Ethics for Broadcasting issued by the Department of Broadcasting Malaysia of RTM has the objectives of protecting public interest, the country and government from elements that could threaten unity and producing Malaysians who are civilised, cultured and moral (Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM), 2016). The codes mention that RTM is a platform for the government to communicate its policies. The stakeholders who should use the codes as a guide are those who are involved in broadcasting on RTM radio and television. Commitment to the Content Code governed by CMCF demonstrates compliance with the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 (Act 588) (The Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia, 2004). It is a code that promotes self-regulation of content amongst service providers in the communications and multimedia industry in Malaysia. It aims to cultivate cultural representations that facilitate the national identity as one of the national policy objectives of communications and multimedia. The Guidelines of Film Censorship by the Ministry of Home Affairs is used by the Film Censorship Board to guide the production and censorship of films, television advertisement, trailers and film publicity materials in

Malaysia (Film Censorship Control and Enforcement Division, 2011). It aims to protect the public against practising immoral activities and support the principles of nationhood in terms of Rukun Negara, to maintain good relations by representing cultures, characters and national aspirations and preserved national values and culture in support of the national identity.

Among the five guidelines examined, two appear to be the ones that should be referred to by stakeholders when targeting the Muslim market. One set of guidelines focuses on guiding media content from the Islamic perspective as exemplified by the guidelines provided by JAKIM and TV Alhijrah. Another set focuses on national identity, culture and the general standards of morality such as that found in the Film Censorship Guidelines and RTM codes whereas the Content Code focuses on cultural representation. The generation of frames and examination of their relationship to the Qur'an and the Sunnah is important as television advertisements contribute to the development of the community of audience members in the pursuit of nation building and Muslims make up the majority of the Malaysian community.

Advertising expenditure in Malaysia has decreased for free-to-air television from June 2016 to June 2017 by 2.3 percent (Dhesi, 2017). Nevertheless, media organisations that provide television content are reinventing themselves to stay sustainable by embracing the Internet. Pay television, MEASAT Broadcast Network Systems Sdn Bhd (ASTRO) and terrestrial television, Media Prima have provided alternatives through their over-the-top (OTT) streaming service (Dhesi and Inn, 2017). ASTRO embraces digital technology for millennials and offers content on mobile devices (More Malaysians are watching Astro on TV and on mobile, 2016). With television broadcasters embracing the Internet, it should be more attractive for audience members who are able to access advertising in different platforms.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The television advertising framework in Malaysia exists against the milieu of the government's plan for a moral and integrated society in 2020 as part of its nation building efforts. The situation is intricate and delicate in retrospect of the racial riots of 1969 between Malays and Chinese. As the religion of Malaysia is Islam and the biggest ethnic group is the Malays who are Muslims, there is intrigue with regards to how their needs are addressed alongside the needs of other ethnic groups such as the Chinese, Indians in Malaysia who believe in different religions. What frames are found in the television advertising framework for advertisements targeted to the Malays? How is the television advertising regulatory framework for Malay and Malaysian target audiences comparable and dissimilar? How are the frames related to Islam as the official religion of Malaysia? The purpose of the research study is to identify the frames in the five guidelines and codes issued by governmental organisations in terms of how they address Malays and Malaysian culture through the values that are imbued.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The research study is significant as it contributes to current research studies on framing from a different dimension by scrutinising the television advertising framework in Malaysia other than examining news stories which is the norm. The framework guides the production of television advertisements in Malaysia. Hence, it is important to examine its values because of the potential effects that television advertisements bring with its repetitive nature as supported by social learning theory and cultivation theory. By identifying the frames in the Malaysian

television advertising framework, we could examine how they reflect Malaysian values or Islamic values. It is interesting to note from a glance how government organisations use different frames that have an outwardly Islamic orientation and how some are not prominently embracing this.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What frames are generated by the Malaysian television advertising framework?
2. How is Islam framed by the Malaysian television advertising framework?
3. How are Malaysian standards framed by the Malaysian television advertising framework?

LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been a number of studies on framing and news stories but there appears to be an absence of studies on framing theory and advertising regulations. There is the need to generate frames from the regulatory framework that is a combination of guidelines and codes for guiding the production of television advertisements to Malaysians and Malays. The inductive approach that looks at the emergence of frames from the framework without using pre-determined frames of a deductive study is adopted for the research study. The reason for this is that no similar study has been carried out previously for pre-determined frames to be used at the onset. Of concern to the study is how Islam is embraced by the television advertising regulatory framework.

There are several research studies conducted on framing, Islam and media content but there appears to be the absence of research studies that investigate the regulatory framework, framing and Islam which this research study hopes to address. A research study demonstrated that the religious affiliation of the perceiver and the perceived religious affiliation of the target are important factors in building social perception. The explicit and implicit negative and positive attitudes of Christian and Atheist Danes to Muslim and immigrant frames were examined in a study (Anderson and Antalíková, 2014). The study shows that Christians harbour greater negative implicit attitudes to immigrants than Muslims; and Atheists are more negative in their implicit attitudes to Muslims than Atheists.

A few studies by Ahlin and Carler (2011), Powell (2011), Yusof et al. (2013) and Ahmed and Matthes (2017) have examined Islam, terrorism and framing in media content. The depiction of Muslims in the media is found to be mostly negative. This is supported by a meta-analysis that finds Muslims and Islam to be negatively framed and Islam is depicted as a violent religion in many studies (Ahmed and Matthes, 2017). More negative frames than positive frames are found by a study that examined the most common frames utilised by two international news magazines (*The Economist* and *Time*) for two months after the passing of Osama bin Laden (Yusof et al., 2013). The study analysed how these frames associated Islam or Muslims with terrorism and determined whether they were positive or negative frames. It finds three common negative frames and one common positive frame. The negative frames were: 'Islam causes violence', 'Muslims are terrorists', and 'leadership in Muslim countries is a catastrophe'. The positive frame is 'peace and reconciliation efforts between Palestine and Israel'. Another study also finds a negative relationship between Islam and terrorism through content analysis identifying media frames of terrorism two weeks after each terrorist event

except the Beltway Sniper and the Anthrax attacks in *Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *CNN*, *MSNBC* and *FOX News* (Powell, 2011). The themes uncover that in the United States terrorism is framed predominantly as a problem caused by Islam, and local terrorism in America is regarded as less intimidating. Jacobsen, Jensen et al. (2012) generated inductive categories in their study. They find a relatively large portion of news stories dealing with Muslims and Islam that is negatively framed and associated with topics such as extremism, terror and Shariah law, whereas positive actions and critical topics like racism and discrimination against Muslims are almost absent in the media. A coding frame was used with the categories 'Islam', 'Muslims', 'Islamic', 'the Muhammad cartoons', which were the result of a coding exercise.

Another study by Narayana and Kapur (2011) aims to understand how the media reported on Muslims who represent the largest minority group in India. The frames were categorised into progressive frames (defended the rights of Muslims to live in India, depicted Muslims as victims of communal riots and refrained from having terms such as 'Muslim fundamentalists') and stereotypical frames (Muslims as fundamentalists, terrorists and intolerant). Out of the 473 stories selected on this basis for the study from five newspapers, it was found that only two newspapers, the *Indian Express* and *The Hindu* depicted Muslims in a favourable way.

The framing of controversial caricatures of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in two Malaysian mainstream newspapers was also examined in another study (Dafrizal et al., 2011). The study was with the purpose of examining how the Malaysian mainstream media framed the controversial issue of the caricature of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). A qualitative content analysis was carried out using the framing analysis technique by Entman that comprises four operational concepts of framing analysis: defining the problem, diagnose causes, make moral judgments and suggest remedies. The framing category diagnoses the causes as explained by the reprinting of controversial caricatures of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In terms of moral judgments, it is considered as an irresponsible act that is detrimental to religious sensitivities, and, violates the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984. Recommendations made by the study are by holding protests and dialogues, giving temporary suspension, revoking the issue of permits to the press and investigating the newspapers involved.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Framing theory has been selected as the theory for this research study because it focuses on the attributes within a specific area of values in the nation's television advertising framework that are impressed by the government as being necessary for a developed Malaysia. The theory is usually used for news stories but there is some adaptation made in this research study as it is carried out by examining the content of selected codes and guidelines of the Malaysian television advertising framework. The purpose of the study is on generating frames from the television advertising framework that could be regarded as the values to be included in television advertisements as recommended by the government.

Framing theory is popular among researchers and experts of media and communication (Chang and Lee, 2009). The first level of agenda setting is the communication of the salience of objects whilst the second level of agenda setting is the transmission of the salience of attributes or framing (McCombs et al., 1997). The development of agenda setting has moved it from focusing on the salience of issues to the attributes of issues in terms of how issues are

reported and emphasised by the media represented by framing theory (Weaver, McCombs et al., 2004). Frame in news stories affect audiences. Through framing as a communication strategy, messages influence consumer perceptions, judgements and decisions in specific ways (Chang and Lee, 2009). For the writers, the framing of media messages could affect one's opinions, attitudes and behaviours that usually takes place through imposition from the elites onto the citizens. Texts can make information more prominent through placement in a dominant position, repetition or by associating them with cultural symbols (Entman, 1993). The cultural symbols in terms of the values of Malaysians on the whole and Malay Muslims in particular are examined in the study.

RESEARCH METHODS

This is a qualitative research study that adopts the inductive approach in generating frames from selected codes and guidelines of the television advertising framework in Malaysia. They were selected because of their prominent use in guiding the production of television advertisements for the Muslim audience. The study is supported by the idea that framing can be generated by content analysis or textual analysis through discourse analysis on many different types and aspects of messages from audience to media frames (Weaver, 2007). The codes and themes were derived first across the different advertising guidelines and codes using Braun and Clarke's (2006) technique of thematising and together they were categorised into different frames marked by the different levels of nodes generated by the qualitative data analysis software NVIVO 11. The inductive approach of generating frames was adopted due to the qualitative nature of the study and the lack of predetermined frames.

FINDINGS

Five frames are generated from the guidelines and code examined. They are: 'Use of People on Television Advertising Must be Dignified', 'Unacceptable Products and Scenes on Malaysian TV Advertisements', 'Practice of Fair Competition is Required on Television Advertisements', 'Truthful and Honest Messages are Imperative on Television Advertising' and 'Standards Guide Television Advertising in Malaysia'.

Frame 1: Use of People in Television Advertising Must be Dignified

The frame 'Use of People in Television Advertising Must be Dignified' has four themes: 'Women and Men Must be Portrayed in a Proper Manner', 'Special Care Must be Given to Children on Television Advertisements' and 'Women Must be Depicted in a Dignified Manner' and 'Portrayals of (Men And Women) Professionals in Advertising Must be According to the Regulations of Professional Institutions', in order of salience (see Table 1). The theme with the most codes is 'Women and Men Must be Portrayed in a Proper Manner' (first 14 codes) that is further categorised into two sets of codes: the first set of codes is prominently Islamic (five codes) generated from both JAKIM and TV Alhijrah (three codes) and only TV Alhijrah advertising guidelines (two codes). These codes are meant for the Muslim audience due to their specific reference to principles that are supported by the Qur'an and Sunnah. The most prominent codes that relate to Malaysian standards in general (remaining nine codes) has general references to the portrayal of women and men in television advertising for all Malaysians.

In the first set of prominently Islamic codes, TV Alhijrah and JAKIM guidelines mention three common codes under the theme ‘Women and Men Must be Portrayed in a Proper Manner’ which are: *no legally married actors can act scenes or utter dialogues on marriage laws, Muslims cannot act as non-Muslims, and, a male actor cannot play a woman vice versa* (see Table 1). The code mentioning that *no legally married actors can act scenes or utter dialogues on marriage laws* is supported by the following Prophetic tradition:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ "ثَلَاثٌ جِدُّهُنَّ جِدٌّ وَهَزْلُهُنَّ جِدُّ النِّكَاحِ وَالطَّلَاقُ وَالرَّجْعَةُ" ²

¹² Narrated Abu Hurayrah: The Prophet ﷺ said: There are three things which, whether undertaken seriously or in jest, are treated as serious: Marriage, divorce and taking back a wife (after a divorce which is not final) (Sunan Abi Dawud, Book 13, Hadith Number 2194, Grade: Hasan [Al-Albani]).

The following Prophetic tradition conveys that men should not imitate women and vice versa. This supports the advertising code that a male actor cannot play a woman or vice versa.

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، قَالَ لَعَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْمُتَشَبِّهَاتِ بِالرِّجَالِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْمُتَشَبِّهِينَ بِالنِّسَاءِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ . ³⁰

³⁷ Narrated Ibn 'Abbas: “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ cursed the women who imitate men and the men who imitate women” (Jami’ At Tirmidzi, Book 41, Hadith Number 2784, Grade: Sahih [Al-Albani]).

The hadith below relates to Muslims who cannot act as non-Muslims.

عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ، قَالَ، قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ "مَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ" ²⁸

³⁵ Narrated Abdullah ibn Umar, The Prophet ﷺ said: “He who imitates any people (in their actions) is considered to be one of them” (Sunan Abi Dawud, Book 31, Hadith Number 4031, Grade: Hasan Sahih [Al-Albani]).

With regards to the set of codes that refers to the general Malaysian public, there is a common code, mentioned by the Content Code and RTM Code of Ethics that focuses on the importance of incorporating genuine testimonials from men and women (see Table 1). Testimonials could be used in advertising to provide the audience with a level of credibility in terms of expert advice or experience with the use of the advertised products. Testimonials could come from a typical person representing the target audience, celebrity and expert endorsements (Martin et al., 2008). This code overlaps with telling the truth as an important ideal in the form of being genuine akin to the codes of the fourth frame, ‘Truthful and Honest Messages are Imperative on Television Advertisements’. In relation to testimonials and truthfulness, it is evident that being truthful is imperative in Islam as mentioned by Surah Al-Hajj (22: 30).

قال الله تعالى: "...وَأَجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ"

Allah says: "... and refrain from a word of falsehood.”

The codes that target Malaysians on the whole illustrate the ideals that there should not be detrimental behaviour such as gender exploitation in promoting products, abuse by using threats or through oppression and stereotyping of ethnic group or gender. These codes appears to reflect the Malaysian government’s efforts in ensuring a fair depiction of both genders on television advertisements and their ideal models of behaviour for the Malaysian society to emulate. Although the codes abide by Malaysian standards, there are Islamic values

incorporated such as the abuse of women by men and vice versa is not allowed in Islam. This is supported by the verse that states,

24
قال الله تعالى: وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ بَغَيْرِ مَا كَتَبْنَا لَهُمْ فَعَدَا حَتَمَلُوا بُهْتَانًا وَإِنَّمَا مُبِينًا

Allah says: "As for those who hurt believing men and believing women without their having done anything (wrong), they shall bear the burden of slander and a manifest sin" Surah Al-Ahzaab (33: 58).

The second most salient theme is 'Special Care Must be Given to Children on Television Advertisements' in the first frame 'Use of People in Television Advertising Must be Dignified'. The most salient codes are: *children targeted by advertisements only if products are for them, children must be shown to be safe, advertisements on activities for children in clubs or societies must have children supervised and advertisements addressed to children should not show any form of harming of children either physically, mentally or morally.*

The evidence that supports our need to provide good treatment of children is:

19
أَنَّ بَنَ مَالِكٍ، يَقُولُ جَاءَ شَيْخٌ يُرِيدُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَبْطَأَ الْقَوْمُ عَنْهُ أَنْ يُوسِعُوا لَهُ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ "الَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْ صَغِيرَنَا وَيُوقِرْ كَبِيرَنَا"

8
Anas bin Malik narrated that: "An older man came to talk to the Prophet, and the people were hesitant to make room for him. The Prophet said: He is not one of us who does not have mercy on our young and does not respect our elders" (Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Book 25, Hadith Number 1919, Grade: Sahih [Al-Albani]).

The third theme in the first frame is 'Women Must be Depicted in a Dignified Manner' and the most mentioned code is *women are not sex objects* by the Film Censorship Board Guidelines, the Content Code and RTM Code of Ethics. The Hadith that supports the need for the good treatment of women is:

6
عَنْ يَنبُلَا نَع، عَرِيْزُهُ يَبَا نَع، مِرْزَادِي بَا نَع، عَرَسِيْم نَع، هَدِيَار نَع، بِي لَع نَع، بِنُ سُدْ اَنْكَنْد، مَبِيْشِي يَبَا نَع رَكْبُو بَا اَنْكَنْدُو نَا فَا مَسْتَلَابِ اَوْسُوْتَسَاوُ تَكْتَسِيْلُ وَا رِيْجِدُ مَلِكْتِيْلُ اَرْمًا تَهْتَدُ اَذِيْفَ رَحْلَا جُوِيْلَاوُ لَمَابِ نَمُوْدِي نَا كَرْنَم " لَأَقْ جَلَسُوْ بِعِلَاةِ اللّٰهِ يَلْصَدُ عَامْسَلَابِ اَوْسُوْتَسَا جَوْعًا لَرِيْمًا مَتَكَرَدَتْ اَوْ مَتَرَسَكُ مَهِيْقَتِ تَبَهْدَنْ اِهْلَاعًا عِلْصَلَا فِيْ عَيْشِ شَجَوْعًا نَاوُ عِلْصَدَنْ مَتَقَلْدُ اَزْ مَلَا اَرْجِدُ "

He who believes in Allah and the Hereafter, if he witnesses any matter he should talk in good terms about it or keep quiet. Act kindly towards woman, for woman is created from a rib, and the most crooked part of the rib is its top. If you attempt to straighten it, you will break it, and if you leave it, its crookedness will remain there. So act kindly towards women (Sahih Muslim, Book 17, Hadith Number 1468).

The fourth theme is 'Portrayals of (Men and Women) Professionals in Advertising Must be According to the Regulations of Professional Institutions'. There is one code in relation to this theme that is *no testimonials given by (men and women) professionals should transgress any regulations of professional institutions*. It is important for professionals to comply with codes of ethics because of their influence or potential influence on behaviour to make it more ethical. Compliance to ethical codes of conduct by business professionals dictates their unacceptance of unethical behaviour to stakeholders (McKinney, Emerson et al., 2010).

The 'Use of People in Television Advertising must be Dignified' frame has 'Women and Men Must be Portrayed in a Proper Manner' as the most salient theme as it has 14 codes which is the largest number of codes followed by the portrayal of children (seven

codes), women (two codes) and professionals (one code) in this order of salience. This demonstrates the Malaysian governments emphasis on the fair and equal treatment of women on television advertisements.

Frame 2: Unacceptable Products and Scenes on Malaysian TV Advertisements

The second frame is ‘Unacceptable Products and Scenes on Malaysian TV Advertisements’. There are four themes and 25 codes in this frame (see Table 2). The themes are in order of salience according to the most number of codes are: ‘Selected Goods are Not Allowed or should be Carefully Depicted on Television Advertisements’, ‘Selected Scenes are Not Allowed on Television Advertisements’, ‘Selected Services are Not Allowed on Television Advertisements’ and ‘Private Messages are Not Allowed on Television Advertisements’.

The theme ‘Private Messages are Not Allowed on Television Advertisements’ has the most mentioned code *no death notices* in the Content Code, the RTM guidelines and Film Censorship guidelines. The theme ‘Selected Goods are Not Allowed on or should be Carefully Depicted on Television Advertisements’ has 10 codes. The codes mentioned most by RTM Codes of Ethics, Content Code and Film Censorship Board Guidelines are: *no slimming products, no pork; no items banned in the Postal Services Act 1991; no cigarettes, tobacco and their accessories allowed, and, no alcoholic drinks and liquor allowed*. The prohibition of including pork in advertisements appears to be directed to Muslim audience members although mentioned by the three codes and guidelines that are generally meant for Malaysians. The evidence of the prohibition for Muslims to consume pork is mentioned in the Qur’an:

قال الله تعالى: حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكَ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالْدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخَنزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلِيَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ

Allah says: Prohibited for you are: carrion, blood, the flesh of swine, and those upon which (a name) other than that of Allah has been invoked (at the time of slaughter) (Al Maa'idah, 5: 3).

Television advertising of cigarettes, tobacco and their accessories are not allowed in Malaysia. This reflects the government’s stance in prohibiting the harmful effects of smoking to one’s health. Smoking could result in heart disease and stroke (World Health Organisation, 2017) . According to the Qur’an, putting one’s health in harm’s way (in any way including smoking) is detrimental and is thus not allowed as mentioned in the verse,

قال الله تعالى: وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

Allah says: “Spend in the way of Allah and do not put yourselves into destruction, and do good. Of course, Allah loves those who do good” (Al Baqarah, 2:195).

The third theme is ‘Selected Services are Not Allowed on Television Advertisements’. This theme has five codes and the RTM Code of Ethics, Content Code, and, Film Censorship Board Guidelines together incorporate some similar codes: *no unlicensed employment agencies, no marriages agencies and friendship clubs, no gambling and no financial speculation*.

Gambling and alcohol are not allowed to be featured on television advertisements in Malaysia. Gambling and alcohol are forbidden in Islam and this is supported by the Qur'an:

قال الله تعالى: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رَجْسٌ مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ¹⁰

Allah says: O you who believe! Wine, gambling, altars and divining arrows are filth, made up by Satan. Therefore, refrain from it, so that you may be successful (Al Maidah, 5: 90).

The final theme 'Selected Scenes are Not Allowed on Television' has eight codes and the those most mentioned by RTM code of ethics, Content Code and Film Censorship Board Guidelines are: *no sexual scenes, no magic and divination, no fireworks, no disco scenes and no inappropriate clothing with bad messages*. Sexual scenes are not allowed on television advertisements in Malaysia. The Qur'an mentions the following verse on fornication which underline the importance of not demonstrating scenes related to this on television advertisements:

قال الله تعالى: وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزَّانَا إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا⁴⁴

Allah says: Do not even go close to fornication. It is indeed a shameful act, and an evil way to follow (Al-Israa', 17: 32).

The evidence that supports the idea that affection should not be publicly displayed between husband and wife can also be used to support the code *no sexual scenes*:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ "الإيمانُ بِضْعٌ وَسِتُّونَ شُعْبَةً وَالْحَيَاءُ شُعْبَةٌ مِنَ الإِيمَانِ"²⁴
It is narrated on the authority of Abu Huraira that the Prophet ﷺ said: Iman has over seventy branches, and modesty is a branch of Iman (Sahih Muslim, Book 1, Hadith Number 35).

The hadith demonstrates that Islam is a religion of modesty hence, the husband and wife should express their love for one another in private and not in public.

Frame 3: Practice of Fair Competition is Required on Television Advertisements

The third frame is 'Practice of Fair Competition is Required on Television Advertisements'. There are four themes and six codes for this frame (see Table 3). The themes with the most codes are 'No Deriding Other Companies Directly or Indirectly' and 'Truthful information Important when Competing' as mentioned by the Content Code. The codes for 'No Deriding Other Companies' are: *ridiculing other companies or products although indirectly is prohibited and no attacking or discrediting other businesses*. And the codes for 'Truthful information Important to Give when Competing' are: *fair competition should not mislead customers and giving artificial advantage to products is not allowed*. Giving an artificial advantage to advertisers by artificially inflating prices is forbidden in Islam as supported by the following hadith:

عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نَهَى عَنِ النَّجْشِ²

It was narrated from Ibn 'Umar that: the Prophet forbade artificially inflating prices (Sunan an-Nasa'I, Book 44, Hadith Number 4505, Grade: Sahih [Al-Albani]).

The advertisements should not be carried out in a way that would be detrimental to the competitor by using false ways in their messages supporting the code *fair competition should not mislead customers* in the theme 'Turthful Information Important to Give when Competing'.

قال الله تعالى: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُم بَيْنَكُم بِالْبَاطِلِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِنْكُمْ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا

Allah says: O you who believe, do not devour each other's property by false means, unless it is trade conducted with your mutual consent. Do not kill one another. Indeed, Allah has been Very-Merciful to you (An Nisa, 4: 29).

عَنْ عَقْبَةَ بْنِ عَامِرٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - يَقُولُ " الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ وَلَا يَجِلُّ لِمُسْلِمٍ بَاعَ مِنْ أَخِيهِ شَيْئًا فِيهِ عَيْبٌ إِلَّا بَيَّنَّهُ لَهُ "

It was narrated that 'Uqbah bin 'Amir said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: 'The Muslim is the brother of another Muslim, and it is not permissible for a Muslim to sell his brother goods in which there is a defect, without pointing that out to him'" (Sunan Ibn Majah, Book 12, Hadith Number 2246, Grade: Sahih [Al-Albani]).

Evidence from the Qur'an that states that we should not ridicule others can be applied to the code that prohibits competitors ridiculing one another is mentioned below:

قال الله تعالى: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِنْ نِسَاءٍ عَسَى أَنْ يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْأَسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

Allah says: O you who believe, no men should ever scoff at other men. May be, the latter are better than the former. Nor should women (ever scoff) at other women. May be, the latter women are better than the former ones. And do not find fault with one another, nor call one another with bad nicknames. Bad is the name of sinfulness after embracing Faith. If anyone does not repent, then such people are the wrongdoers (Al-Hujuraat, 49: 11).

Frame 4: Truthful and Honest Messages are Imperative on Television Advertisements

The fourth frame 'Truthful and Honest Messages are Imperative on Television Advertisements' has 10 themes and 24 codes (see Table 4). The highest number of codes (three) are found under the themes: 'Truthful and Honest Information Should be used on Television Advertisements', 'Guarantee Information Must be Clear on Television Advertisements', 'Information on Free Gifts Must be Clearly Advertised', 'No Exaggeration on Television Advertisements' and 'Television Advertisements Must Reflect Product Supply' and 'Identification of Television Advertisements Should be Clear'.

Some codes were mentioned in more than one guideline or codes. Overall, the codes with the most sources are: *no advertisements should be misleading* illustrated by both RTM Codes of Ethics and the Content Code in the theme 'Truthful and Honest Information Should

be used on Television Advertisements' and *no imitating other ads as it would create confusion* in the theme 'Similar Advertisements will Confuse People' is mentioned by RTM Code of Ethics and Content Code. Other themes focus on information that must be conveyed clearly with regards to price, safety, guarantees and free gifts. Misleading advertisements are untruthful and immoral and are conducted in the absence of Allah's blessings. It is clearly conveyed in the following hadith that there should be honesty and clarity in business transactions. This is illustrated in the codes and guidelines that mention the need for clear information on free gifts, information on guarantees, product supply, identification of advertisements, no exaggerations without evidence and truthful and honest information.

عَنْ حَكِيمِ بْنِ حِزَامٍ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ "الْبَيْعَانِ بِالْخِيَارِ مَا لَمْ يَفْتَرِقَا فَإِنْ صَنَقَا وَبَيَّنَّا بُورِكَ فِي بَيْعِهِمَا وَإِنْ كُنَّوَا وَكُنَّمَا مُحِقَّ بَرَكَتُهُ بَيْعَهُمَا "

It was narrated that Hakim bin Hizam said: "The Messenger of Allah said: 'The two parties to a transaction have the choice so long as they have not separated. If they are honest and open, their transaction will be blessed, but if they tell lies and conceal anything, the blessing of their transaction will be lost'" (Sunan an-Nasa'I, Book 44, Hadith Number 4457, Grade: Sahih [Al-Albani]).

Frame 5: Standards Guide Television Advertising in Malaysia

The fifth frame is 'Standards Guide Television Advertising in Malaysia'. This frame has two sets of codes: one that is prominently Islamic and another set that is specifically catered to Malaysian standards. The first set of codes is generated from guidelines by TV Alhijrah and JAKIM (see Table 5). This set is more obviously Islamic in orientation with eight themes and 16 codes. The themes in this frame are: 'Proper use of language from the Islamic perspective'; 'Image of Islam cannot be violated'; 'Good treatment of Qur'an and Hadith important'; 'Deviation and inaccuracies through advertisements are not allowed'; 'Islam must be spread through advertisements'; 'No scenes against *Akhlāq*'; 'Instill peace through advertisements'; and, 'Protection of sacred beings important'. The theme that has the most codes is 'Deviation and inaccuracies through advertisements are not allowed' with six codes. Four of the codes are mentioned by both the TV Alhijrah and JAKIM guidelines. The codes are supported by Qur'anic verses and hadith. The teaching through the code *no spreading of deviated Aqidah, rulings and teachings* is supported by Surah Al Imran (3: 85); and *no spreading of incorrect historical facts of Islam* is supported by Surah Al Hujurat (49: 6). The code *no contradicting fatwas or views of majority of scholars* is supported by the following hadith:

حَدَّثَنِي يَحْيَى بْنُ أَبِي الْمُطَاعِ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ الْعِرْبَانَ بْنَ سَارِيَةَ، يَقُولُ قَامَ فِينَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ فَوَعظَنَا مَوْعِظَةً بَلِيغَةً وَجَلَّتْ مِنْهَا الْقُلُوبُ وَدَرَفَتْ مِنْهَا الْعُيُونُ فَقِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَعَظْتَنَا مَوْعِظَةً مُودِعَ فَاغْهَدُ إِلَيْنَا بَعْدَهُ فَقَالَ " عَلَيْكُمْ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ وَالسَّمْعِ وَالطَّاعَةِ وَإِنْ عَبْدًا حَبِشِيًّا وَسْتَرَوْنَ مِنْ بَعْدِي اخْتَلَفًا شَدِيدًا فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِسُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمُهَدِّبِينَ عَضُوا عَلَيْهَا بِالنَّوَاجِدِ وَإِنَّاكُمْ وَالْأُمُورَ الْمُخْتَلَفَاتِ فَإِنْ كُلَّ بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ "

Yahya bin Abu Muta' said:

I heard 'Irbad bin Sariyah say: 'One day, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ stood up among us and delivered a deeply moving speech to us that melted our hearts and caused our eyes to overflow with tears. It was said to him: 'O Messenger of Allah, you have delivered a speech of farewell, so enjoin something upon us.' He said: 'I urge you to fear Allah, and to listen and obey, even if (your leader) is an Abyssinian slave. After I am gone, you will see great conflict. I urge you to adhere to my Sunnah and the path of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, and cling stubbornly to it. And beware of newly-invented matters, for every innovation is a going astray.'" (Sunan Ibn Majah, Book 1, Hadith Number 42, Grade: Sahih [Al-Albani])

Another code, *no propaganda of deviated Israelite stories, superstitions and false customs* is

supported by a hadith:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: الطَّيْرَةُ شِرْكٌ، الطَّيْرَةُ شِرْكٌ، ثَلَاثًا، وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُذْهِبُهُ بِالتَّوَكُّلِ

²¹
Narrated Abdullah ibn Mas'ud: The Prophet ﷺ said: "Taking omens is polytheism; taking omens is polytheism. He said it three times. Every one of us has some, but Allah removes it by trust (in Him)" (Sunan Abi Dawud, Book 27, Hadith Number 3910, Grade: Sahih [Al-Albani]).

The second set of codes that refers mainly to Malaysian standards for the frame 'Standards Guide Television Advertising in Malaysia' has five themes (see Table 5): 'Uphold Courtesy of Malaysians'; 'Sensitive to beliefs of target audience members'; 'Respect pluralistic Malaysia'; 'Privacy must be protected' and 'Indecent scenes and statements to target audience are not allowed'. The theme that is most prominently mentioned is 'Uphold Courtesy of Malaysians' that has three codes mentioned by both the RTM Code of Ethics and the Content Code. The theme and codes abide by Malaysian standards and are supported by the Qur'an making them not only appropriate for Malaysians but the Muslim Malay audience too. The codes that come under the theme 'Uphold courtesy of Malaysians' that relates to standards for Malaysians are also supported by the Qur'an: *no offense to Malaysian courtesy through oral or visual means* (Al-Hujurat, 49:13), *no immoral and inappropriate scenes to Malaysians* (Al-Noor, 24:30-31) and *no offence on people of different race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disabilities* (Al-Hujurat, 49:13).

DISCUSSION

The Malaysian government is propelling the nation towards becoming a developed nation by the year 2020. It is a country with a fragile social fabric due to its immensely diverse composition and history in the form of riots between the Malays and Chinese on May 13 1969. The government's goal is to promote integration on a social level and use ethics to produce a society that is both moral and united as underscored in the Eleventh Malaysia Plan (2016-2020). The purpose of the research study is to generate frames from selected codes and guidelines of the television advertising framework in Malaysia. Five frames were generated from the framework examined. The first frame 'Use of People on Television Advertising Must be Dignified' encompasses the importance of having a fair depiction of men and women in television advertisements, the importance of the promoting children in a safe manner, the essential act of having a dignified depiction of women in advertisements and the significance of adhering to the rules of professional organisations with regards to the advertising of professionals. The second frame is 'Unacceptable Products and Scenes on Malaysian TV Advertisements'. The products and scenes that are not acceptable on television advertisements in Malaysia are: pork, alcohol, gambling, sexual scenes and fireworks. They are prohibited from being consumed or seen by Muslims and Malaysians due to their detrimental effects. The third frame 'Practice of Fair Competition is Required on Television Advertisements' focuses on fair play when advertisers compete with one another. Competing advertisers are prohibited from ridiculing each other or from using artificial means of putting themselves at an advantage. The fourth frame 'Truthful and Honest Messages are Imperative on Television Advertising' emphasises on the need for truthful information and clear information on prices, guarantees, safety and free gifts, marking the need for great transparency of products promoted through advertisements. The fifth frame is 'Standards Guide Television Advertising in Malaysia' and there are two sets of standards: one Islamic-oriented and another seemingly meant for Malaysians yet could also be associated with Islamic values.

There are more elaborate and specific Islamic themes and codes that are generated from the JAKIM and TV Alhijrah guidelines for guiding the production of Islamic advertising content compared to the Content Code, Guidelines for Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) and Film Censorship Board guidelines that focus on general standards targeted to Malaysians. This supports the idea that the target audience who are Malays identify with their religion, Islam, more than other ethnicities such as the Chinese and Indian ethnic groups in Malaysia who underscore materialistic achievements (Abdullah, 2005).

The research study also finds that the framework appears to promote the idea of incorporating the ideal moderate lifestyle through television advertisements. Moderation is a moral value alongside humility, patience and tolerance. These values are found in the Qur'an and are not limited to guiding Muslims (Kamali, 2003). It is clear that the frames, themes and codes dispel the reference to advertising that is commercially driven solely by materialism as they depict the balance of moral and commercial goals through the value of *wasatiyyah* rather than the paradox of opposing values. The intertwining of moral and commercial goals is reflected by the television advertising framework. Moderation or *wasatiyyah* means 'the avoidance of excess or extremes, especially in one's behaviour or political opinions' and is often considered an excellent, praiseworthy quality (Ahmad 2011, pp. 29-30). The framework could be said to reflect the moderate lifestyle defined as a combination of the physical, moral and spiritual wellbeing of the individual that is at odds with 'coronary capitalism.' This entails excessive food industries, advertisements and marketing that instil excessive consumerism and promote an unhealthy lifestyle (Kamali, 2014). The goods and scenes for television advertising should adhere to Islamic standards.

The moral value of *wasatiyyah* ensures the implementation of ideals that should not be merely utopian. The balance between the ideal and reality and traditional and modern social values showcases the spirit of *wasatiyyah*, thus making ideals implementable (Kamali, 2008). The Qur'an mentions about economic and moral balance as mankind are the vicegerents of God on earth (Al Baqarah, 2:30) and they are encouraged to use economic opportunities to make their lives better and satisfy material requirements while still enjoying a contented moral life (Uddin, 2003).

The concept of *wasatiyyah* is further promoted by the Malaysian government's efforts in nurturing harmony among the diverse ethnic groups in Malaysia through the spirit of moderation that is entrenched in Malays through their values, thoughts and actions and practised since the Malay kingdom was born till the present day (Husin, 2013). The different ethnic groups in Malaysia need to co-exist, underlining the need for the acceptance of diverse ethnic groups by one another for the nation's aspiration to be a united society in order for moral values to be inculcated. The Malay spirit of moderation could be compared to the Muslim community that is described as *ummatan wasatan*; a community that is well-balanced that eschews extremism and over-indulgence even in deeds that are praiseworthy (Kamali 2008). This is mentioned in the Qur'an:

قال الله تعالى: وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ³⁴

Allah says: In the same way We made you a moderate Ummah (community), so that you should be witnesses over the people, and the Messenger a witness to you (Al Baqarah, 2: 143).

With the television advertising framework's encouragement of *wasatiyyah* in the promotion of products, this could be said to be at odds with Pollay's (1986) argument that

advertisements carry negative connotations as cultural values are selectively featured in advertisements. For him, this abstains them from values that deserve to be included in the advertisements and these make advertisements materialistically driven. Television advertising in Malaysia has to incorporate the moderate lifestyle which is denoted by a balanced set of values from commercial and moral aspects.

The balance between the material and spiritual is found in the practice of moderation which is one of the pillars of the economy beside social justice, equitable distribution, cooperation, preservation of public interest above individual or group interests and gratefulness to Allah for His resources (Hassan, 2011). Muslims should take the middle ground in their beliefs and viewpoints on life and maintain a good balance between spiritualism and materialism (Qutb, 1986). The balanced life is reflected in leaders who work for the pleasure of Allah, themselves and the welfare of the people (Hassan, 2011). The Islamic Economic System encompasses worshipping of the Creator and man's obligation to develop life on earth (El-Ghazali, 1994); this underscores the important balance of the temporal life and spiritual life in Islamic economics. Moderation in Islam means that one is to conduct him or herself within moral parameters and nurture better purity and proximity with Allah through voluntary salah, sawm, zakah, hajj, umrah, dhikr and by treating other people well (Lemu, 1993).

CONCLUSION

Nation building attempts to bring together Malaysians of diverse ethnicities in an ethical manner and promote the moderate lifestyle or *wasatiyyah* and is found in the television advertising framework in Malaysia. From the five frames generated, it is found that commercial goals are instilled by conforming to Islamic parameters. The vision to develop have a stable national identity and moral compass as one of the country's aspirations is obvious through the television advertising framework examined. It represents the Malaysia value of acceptance as the nation instils harmony between ethnic groups, underlining the balanced lifestyle encouraged by Islam.

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