

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**AN AXIOLOGICAL STUDY ON ISLAMIC
VISUAL ART IN MALAYSIA FROM 1957 TO 1999**

VOL. I

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ABSTRACT

The Islamic values were determined from Allah SWT through the Al-Quran and the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The aims of this study were to determine the axiological aspect of the Contemporary Malaysian Islamic Visual Art, to explore the historical events and the development of the Malaysian Islamic Art from the year of 1957 to 1999, and to provide a comprehensive document on the history of the Contemporary Malaysian Islamic Visual Art based on history, tradition and culture of Islam. This research was conducted by using mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative research method. The quantitative research utilized questionnaire to solicit the data. The information gathered through data collection inclusive of three major issues, the concept, the national policies and the events or exhibitions gathered from various sources, including academic books, journal, proceedings as well as exhibition catalogues cum books of painting, retrospectives, biographies, competition booklets and website. The important events on Islamic art were also gathered through the articles presented at seminars and symposiums as well as newspaper cuttings and magazines. The study also analysed ninety five (95) pieces of artworks consist of artwork from painting, printmaking, sculpture and mix media such as collages, assemblages, digital print, fabric works and two-dimensional construction that were exhibited in Islamic Art exhibitions held in Malaysia from the years 1957 to 1999 and were selected from those created by the Muslim artists with the Islamic Art themes only. As for the survey, 407 questionnaires were distributed to the UiTM communities through out Malaysia focusing on the view and exposure of Islamic Art, the understanding of the axiology philosophy, the awareness of visual art and the artist artwork. The soliciting process has enabled the researcher to record and organize all important details of each selected sample of artworks, including the name of the artist, the venue of the exhibition, and the date according to the Islamic theme exhibition. Other details of the sample artworks also have been put into consideration and recorded accordingly, such as the artwork's title, dimension or size of the artwork, media and techniques used in producing the artwork. The researcher followed the integrative approach and applied the technique of the descriptive quantitative approach and report the summary database on the percentage, to describe, explain and validate the findings. In the assessment of the awareness of the respondents pertaining to visual art, finding reveals that the majority of the respondents has taken art education before were aware of visual art because they have been to an art exhibition and like any exhibited artwork. However, most of the respondents have never heard about the National Cultural Congress (1971). The finding also shows that most Malaysian have never heard of the term 'axiological study' before and does not know about the development of Islamic Art in Malaysia. 71% the respondents believed that the image of the pictures produced by the artists was not an Islamic art and only 29% believed they were Islamic art. This is a clear indication that the Malaysian are lacking in the knowledge pertaining to the Islamic visual art. Hence, it is recommended that further research should review the axiological aspects of visual art in Malaysia and Southeast Asia. The studies on Islamic art and its spiritual message in Malaysian visual art should also be conducted.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Malaysia gained its independence on August 31, 1957, and it has been largely assumed that for a long time after independence, Malaysia was a secular state on the basis that it applied English Common law. Malaysia inherited a Westminster style of government, with a parliamentary democracy in which the executive branch derives its democratic legitimacy from, and is accountable to, the legislature or parliament. This system practiced the monarchy system of governance, which is the command scenario of most Commonwealth nations.

On the other hand, Islam had spread in Asia since the 13th century and had reached Malaysia a century later. Before the advent of Islam in Malaysia, the Malays followed customary law. When the Malay rulers and their subjects embraced Islam, attempts were made to adopt Islamic Law and to modify the Malay customs to make them conform to Islam. Before the coming of the Colonial powers, the law, which was applied in the Malay States, was Islamic Law.

The Federal Constitution of Malaysia provides that Islam is the religion of the Federation; however, other religions may be allowed to be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation. Its federal laws are oriented towards English Common law. However, its state laws are mainly Islamic laws. This is because Malaysia has a parallel legal system of Civil and Islamic laws. State laws are Islamic laws, while Federal law is a Civil law.

The concept of Islam leads humankind to Tawheed that is the oneness of Allah SWT and submission to Allah the Almighty. Islam encompasses all aspects of human life, where one's characteristics will be incomplete without religious awareness.

There is no discrimination in Islam, or division based on colour, class, tribal affiliation, race, homeland and birthplace, all of which can create conflict and problems among individuals. Equal rights seem to be the correct human solution, which in practice means the acceptance of rights and obligation as a member of the

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section of this chapter traces the interfaith understanding about the philosophy of science and responses to the research study, which aims to acquaint with real answers, digging for the truth in terms of *syari'a* and fact, as well as tracing the existence of something either intangible or abstract. Many of the questions in this research study focus on fewer dimensions, including ontology, epistemology and axiology.

Ontology is the philosophical study related to the assumption of how we look at humans and the world surrounding us. Meanwhile, epistemology is an understanding of how to study, develop and utilise the knowledge for the benefit of humankind. Axiology, on the other hand, is to be used as a method or a strategy to identify the development of human life. Nevertheless, the literature review in this study will discuss more on the meaning of axiology as a tool of evaluation by looking at the scenario faced along the evolution of Islamic art in Malaysia. Generally, there are three main factors that influence the development of local art at the early stage, which are British colonisation, the migration of trade nations and education status. Therefore, this section will analyse the Western philosophy in understanding the meaning of value.

Subsequently, the second section of this chapter will provide an overview of the development of art and Islamic art in Malaysia from 1957 1990 and at the same time identifies the artists who have been considered representatives of a particular period in this era of development. Modern art is deemed as a very different artwork compared with conventional and traditional art. In terms of its character, it is more individualistic than a comprehensive manifestation of the value of culture in a particular society. The role of Malay nationalism has given a special boost in the formation of this country. While after the incident of the race riots, which happened in 1969, the National Cultural Congress was recognised as a basic factor to the national culture and “spirit” of the Malays and Islamic tradition.