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The Significance of Sound from the Perspectives of
Islam and Multimedia

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Abstract: Sound is the most sensuous element in human life. It is the only main form of communication besides body languages. For instance, in learning environment, it is highlighted that audible materials used in classrooms can enhance student's listening skills, as sound can inspire them to retain the information longer. Besides, in marketing, sound is also critical in developing brand and multimedia titles to promote products by providing a creative content in a distinctive way. Here, there have been promising advantages in utilizing sound in our productions and contents development, however, most of the research highlights primarily on the usage of this element in only several areas, such as education, advertising, entertainment and theraphy. Unfortunately less consideration has been given to the use of sound from the religious perspectives. Thus, in this paper we will explore the significance of sound in the religious perspectives, specifically in the religious activities, and identify the similarities with the multimedia usage. In our work, we use Islam as the religious context. We will look into the importance of incorporating sound reffering to the Holy Qur'an, as many verses have been mentioned hearing and the ears that related to sound are more important than the eyes and the heart. In this study, besides reviewing the literatures, we arranged interviews with prominent Islamic scholars from Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies (ACIS), Universiti Teknologi Mara Cawangan Pahang (Kampus Raub). Based on the inputs, we will compare and make a contribution to a better understanding of the powerful aspects of sound element from both perspectives; Islam and multimedia.

Keywords: Islam, Multimedia, Sound

1.   Introduction

> *'Sound is a very powerful element in the media matrix, rarely fully exploiteduntil recently.'*
>
>   (Cotton & Oliver, 1997)

We are constantly exposed to sound in our daily life, in information and warning purpose but also regular naturally occurring sounds such as closing the door which also serves an information sound. Ideally, sound is one of the basic fundamentals that can influence and change the human lifestyle. For instance, in learning environment, sounds can support learning by facilitating cognitive processing in a variety of ways; given that sound may support learner's selection, analysis, and synthesis of new information (Bishop, 2012). Besides, in marketing, sounds are often used in radio and television advertising to trigger moods and appeal to consumers nonverbally (Lewis, Fretwell, & Ryan, 2011). Interestingly, some of the biggest products and companies in the world are successful not just because of customer satisfaction, but because customers like a particular jingle in an advertisement. A good jingle catches the customer's attention and makes him (or her) think twice about a product; a bad jingle might make a company famous for the wrong reasons, or dissuade people from looking at a certain

brand. Here, there has been a promising advantages in utilizing sound in our productions and contents development , however, most of the research highlights primarily on the usage of this element in only several areas, such as education, training, advertising, and entertainment. Unfortunately, the use of sound from Islamic perspectives has not been reported in the current literature. Thus, the goal of this paper is to better understand and explore the significance of sound from the religious perspectives, specifically in the religious activities, and identify the similarity and familiarity with the multimedia usage. In this paper we posit that religious perspectives are of high importance of which the utilization of sound might affect the effectiveness of religious matters.

The paper is organized as follows. We begin by reviewing the uses of sound in several areas; business, education and sound as theraphy. We then give a particular focus on the significance of sound from the Islamic perspectives. This ensues with our methods and analysis, reporting inputs and insights from the key informants from the interview data. findings of this study enable us to draw a new understanding and finding on the use of sound from different context.

2.   Literature Review

2.1   Sound as Marketing tool

Music or sound has been used since 1923 which aired via the first network radio broadcast and later known as "theme music" or "singing commercial" elements in advertising and marketing products. (Kellaris, Cox and Cox, 1993). Since then, music, rhyme and sound of the products' brand name play an important role in promoting products as it gives impact to listeners' feelings towards the ads. (Krishna, 2012). Numerous literatures also discuss on how background music in shopping mall or stores can influence the degree of pleasure and positive feelings experienced by customers. A study conducted by Garlin and Owen in 2006 indicates three groups of elements to assess how music can influence the customer; value, duration and affect. The value group considering the criteria such as tempo, volume, complexity, genre familiarity and the presence of the music. The duration describes the time spent in a location while the affect group discuss on the customer's satisfaction; pleasure, arousal and dominance effects. By embedding appropriate background music in shopping malls or stores, it progressively gives positive perceptions to the products and help to grow the business by increasing the sales value, repeat and mass quantity purchase by customers.

2.2   Sound in Education

In education, regardless of being formal or informal, multimedia role is highly practical and useful mechanism to improve quality of education especially in learning session. Multimedia technology began to replace most of the traditional teaching method without neglecting the 'chalk and talk' system (Zin et al., 2013). The transformation is supported by the evolution of information literacy and computer literacy among people who started to use computer and multimedia technology as additional instrument to increase their teaching and learning process (Chitanana et al., 2011). The new transformation refer to comprehensive multimedia elements that emphasized on current audio and audio visual technology. Hence, the educator neither teacher nor parents need to create suitable and attractive environment by using audio to influence the kids to stay inline without having boredom. The education aids can be categorized in three different groups which are printed, visual and audio visual; and they found that the audio visual group scored with highest group in their observation test. The audio visual group (equipped with sense of touch, hear and see) is a wise application whereby kids can develop their learning skill and perceive quickly compared by using printed material and visual materials (audio) only. Hence, the more sense of aid included in learning session, the more eternal and qualified learning session will be enhanced (Yazar and Arifoglu, 2012).

Another element for applying audio in education especially in learning certain language, audio is crucial part to utilize. Language learning need to be equipped with comprehensive audio technology along with attractive presentation mode for more effective session. Students need to hear properly the language first before he or she can pronounce the correct word. With the assistance of video technology, students are able to hear and visualize the pronunciation of the vocabulary appropriately (Bal-Gezegin, 2014). Other than that, applying audio element in teaching materials for instance; by using power point presentation also will increase student's reaction toward learning session in classroom. By using traditional power point presentation (text only) for groups of students and redesigned power point presentation method (equipped with all multimedia elements). In their finding, most respondents chose the redesigned method since the implementation are improvised with latest technology, less text, interactive and more fun (Pate et al., 2016). Whereby the integration multimedia technology in education is a essential to build a good cognitive characteristics among students. Without over excess the multimedia elements in learning session, the education will be developed pleasantly and efficiently. (Qingsong, 2012) and (Karime et al.,2008).

2.3   Sound as Therapy

> *'One reason sound heals on a physical level is because it so deeply touches and transforms us on the emotional and spiritual planes.'*
>
> (Dr. Mitchell Gaynor)

Sound has been utilized in various cultures for thousands of years as a tool for healing. During the 1950s and 1960s, sound wave therapy developed in Europe. The British osteopath Sir Peter Guy Manners developed a machine that treated patients with healing vibrations. Sounds help to facilitate shifts in our brainwave state by using entrainment. The use of sound in alternative medicine is much more broad and deep than conventional uses. Sound healing refers to the more general field of therapeutic sound use, including signing, drumming, rattling, toning, etc., whereas sound therapy refers to aspects of the practice that are more clinical and structured. Sound theraphy combined with education and counselling is generally helpful to patients. However with the clarification of clinicians to patients whether they are willing to use sound extensively or intermittently (Hoare et al.,2014). Using sound as therapy can provide results for a variety of issues including sleep disorders, anxiety, depression, stress management and pain management. A research conducted at the Center for Neurobiology of Learning and Memory in Irvine, had tested the undergraduated students before and after listening to ten minutes of Mozart's Sonata for two pianos in D major. They showed improved scores of eight to nine points for spatial IQ after hearing the music (Campbell, 2001). Researcher also found that music improves the body's immune system function and reduces stress. Furthermore, listening to music was also found to be more effective than prescription drugs in reducing anxiety before surgery. An experiment of sound healing also had conducted with breast cancer patients. As a result the tumor of the cancer patients was vanished completely. Scientists disclosed that level of interleukin-1(an immune-cell messenger molecule that helps to regulate the activity of other immune cells) increased by 12.5 to 14% when subjects listened to music for only 15 minutes. Thus, the effects of sound and music therapy run the gamut of health conditions, from increasing cancer survival rates to reducing pain in chronic sufferers. (Novotney, 2013)

3.   Method

The purpose of conducting the expert interviews was to develop an understanding and evaluating sound from the Islamic perspectives; where it requires scholars to constantly carry rationales from the human and religious context (Amana Raquib, 2015). Hence, to elicit the

varied insights on the significance of sound element from the Islamic perspectives, we arranged a series of interviews with three prominent Islamic scholars from Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies of Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Kampus Raub. Their formal role and knowledge background on religious matters have exposed them to the information that we required and have made them the ideal key experts for this study (Marshall, 1996). Each expert is asked on the use and impact of sound in Islam:

3.1   Expert 1

A lecturer of Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies (ACIS) from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Kampus Raub was our first expert for this study. His knowledge in Islamic studies, thought and understanding has made him qualified to answer our questions

3.1.1   The Prayer Call (Adhan)

According to Expert 1, the most remarkable and signifant use of sound in Islam is through the prayer call, the Adhan. Adhan is the call for prayer within its appointed prayer times with certain prescribed phrases. The Adhan is a powerful sound that able to call, capture the attention and encourage people towards obligatory prayers, at the same time to remind Muslims about carrying their utmost religious duty. Further, it is also believed that the magic of Adhan sound can invoke the spiritual feeling and nourish the soul of the listeners.

3.1.2   Source of Healing

Besides the sound of adhan, Expert 1 further added, the sound of Al-Quran can cure for any disease whether psychological or physical; in fact there are specific verses in Holy Quran used for specific illnesses or spiritual maladies, it is preferred to read the verses in a loud voice so to make your body cells get affected by the sound of the Quran recitations. These verses referred to as Ayatul Syifa' (the healing verses) which are commonly used for healing, because the healing power of the Quran is mentioned in them. This is supported by:

> *"O mankind! There has come to you a good advice from your Lord (i.e. the Quran), and a healing for that (disease) which is in your hearts."*
>
> (Yunus 10:57)

> *"And We send down the Quran which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe..."*
>
> (Al-Isra 17:82)

3.2   Expert 2

Our interview continued by probing the use and importance of sound element in Islam. Our second expert is Pegawai Hal Ehwal Islam in Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Kampus Raub. His knowledge in religious matters made him relevant to this topic.

3.2.1   Source of Inner Peace

According to Expert 2, without any doubt, listening to the sound of Quran verses with heart touching recitation will bring happiness and peace to both mind and soul. Also, reading the words of Allah reveals many secrets upon the recite. Therefore, if you are in quest for happiness, start listening and reading the the sound of recitation of Holy Quran. This will enable us to attain a level of satisfaction and happiness we desire.

3.2.2   Support Preaching Activity (*Da'wah*)

Expert 2 further elaborated on the significance of sound from the act of preaching. With voice, any individual to spread a word of uprightness and try to stop others from unlawful activity, but for a Muslim, it is not only its task from ethical point of view, but also a must do action from a sacred standpoint as well. Sound via human voice or audio enable the preacher to convey its message of religious convictions to Muslims or non Muslims through convincing dialogue. Besides, he added, it can be utilized for the purpose of reminding the present Muslim Ummah about their duties and responsibilities as per commands of Quran and Prophet's (PBUH) Sunnah.

3.3   Expert 3

Expert 3's formal role as a lecturer of Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies (ACIS) from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Kampus Raub has made him credible to resolve our doubt on the importance of sound element according to Islam.

3.3.1   Recite Aloud (*Qauli Pillars*) in Muslim Prayer

For Expert 3, the significance of sound in Islam is highlighted through one of the pillars of Muslim Prayer, Qauli Pillars where the prayers need to recite particular words or phrases aloud and can be heard, or else the prayer is void.

4.   Discussion and Conclusion

This paper has highlighted the importance of incorporating sound from the religious perspectives. From the study conducted, it was found that sound is a powerful tool, not only for leisure (business, education and theraphy) context; yet this element provides a great significance to the religious perspectives and activities in (i) capturing the worshippers attention via the Adhan, (ii) as a source of healing via Quran verses, (iii) source of inner peace, (iv) support the preaching activity and (v) part of pillars in Muslim prayer. In summary, with regards to both perspectives, Islamic and multimedia, sound plays the same role such as capturing attention, teaching and learning purposes and for healing, however in different context. Based on the insights gathered, we can see the sound element capable to invoke and address spiritual dimension from the Islamic perspectives. Here, the findings of this study will shed light upon the utilization of sound element, both in multimedia and Islamic context.

5.   Acknowledgements

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