

Contemporary Issues in

ISLAMIC COMMUNICATION

Editor

Mohd Yusof Hussain



IIUM Press

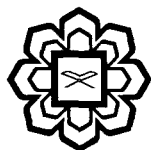
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Influence of American Family Life Television Programs on the Muslim Audience in Malaysia

NORBAIDURI RUSLAN

Introduction

Malaysian broadcast networks have matured through the number of years they have been operating. A developing country such as Malaysia is continuously developing the shape of its broadcasting system within the parameters and visions of the government. In the Malaysian context, this is guided and manifested in the National Culture Policy known as the 'Rukunegara' that serves as the pillars of the 'National Culture,' of which Islamic and Malay values are the central core (Karthigesu, 1991, Kua, 1987). These values are said to dictate Malaysian media content.

There is much skepticism around the issue of cross-cultural adoption of values by means of TV exposure (e.g. Richstad, 1998; Salwen, 1991). In the Malaysian context, the main concern of the government is to curb the overflow of foreign values that are transmitted through the mass media that could be in conflict with domestic values (Karthigesu, 1994) and to protect those citizens who are apprehensive of Western culture (Deng, Jivan & Hassan, 1994). There are now many developments and improvements in the productions of local TV programs. As most broadcast television networks operate 24 hours a day, audiences are being entertained with many genres and types of TV programs including drama, mini-series, soap operas, situational comedies, reality TV, game shows, variety shows, and talk shows, amongst others. Given the recent landscape of Malaysian television which is very different from programs that it offered a decade ago, it is pertinent to chart the different effects of the programs on audiences, particularly their social reality perceptions.