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A Study of Moral Values in the Film "Sang Kiai" and Its Relevance to Malay Culture

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the moral values represented in the film Sang Kiai and their relevance to Malay culture. Film, as a medium for cultural representation, plays a crucial role in conveying moral messages and shaping social awareness. The approach used in this study is qualitative with a descriptive interpretive method, focusing on the analysis of scenes, dialogue, and characters in the film. The theoretical basis of this research uses the concepts of moral values, virtue ethics, and cultural values that develop in society. The results show that the film Sang Kiai contains various moral values, including religiosity, leadership, responsibility, courage, and exemplary behavior. These values are reflected through the main character who demonstrates moral integrity in facing social and political pressures. Furthermore, the leadership values displayed are not only structural but also moral, emphasizing responsibility towards the community and nation. In the context of Malay culture, the moral values found in the film have a strong relevance to the principle of "adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi Kitabullah," which places religion as the basis for social life and leadership. This demonstrates that the film Sang Kiai not only represents universal moral values but also aligns with the value system within Malay culture. Thus, this study confirms that film can be a relevant medium for moral reflection in local cultural contexts.

Keywords: Malay Culture, Virtuous Ethics, Sang Kiai Film, Moral Values, Religiosity.

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INTRODUCTION

Moral values are the fundamental foundation for regulating human behavior in both individual and social life. Morals are not only concerned with judgments of right and wrong, but also reflect the value system that exists and develops within a society. In the study of ethics, morals are understood as a set of principles that guide human actions in accordance with norms, responsibilities, and human values. Therefore, moral values cannot be separated from their surrounding cultural context, as every society has a value system that guides its actions.

From a virtue ethics perspective, morality is judged not only by actions but also by the individual's underlying character. Values such as honesty, responsibility, courage, and exemplary behavior are key indicators in assessing a person's moral quality. This approach emphasizes that a moral individual is one who is able to demonstrate virtue in everyday life, especially in situations that require ethical decisions. Thus, morality is not abstract but rather manifested in concrete actions and social behavior.

Apart from that, moral values are also deeply rooted in the cultural value system. In the context of Indonesian society, cultural values function as life guidelines that regulate human relationships with each other, the environment, and God. These values are passed down from generation to generation and become the collective identity of a society. One cultural value system that is closely related to morality is Malay culture. In Malay culture, morality is based on the principle of “adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi Kitabullah,” which emphasizes that customary norms must be in line with religious teachings. This principle shows that morals in Malay culture are not only social, but also religious, thus forming individual character and leadership patterns in society.

Film, as a medium for cultural representation, plays a crucial role in conveying moral values to society. Through its storyline, characters, and conflicts, films reflect social realities while simultaneously shaping the audience's understanding of certain values. The film "Sang Kiai" (The Kiai) is a work imbued with moral values, particularly those related to religiosity, leadership, and social responsibility. The main character in this film is depicted as a leader who possesses not only authority but also strong moral integrity in the face of colonial pressures and social conflict.

The moral values portrayed in the film Sang Kiai are not only universal but also relevant to the value system of Malay culture. Morally grounded leadership, responsibility to society, and the connection between religion and social life are values that align with Malay cultural principles. Therefore, examining the moral values in this film is crucial to understanding how moral representations in media can be related to local cultural contexts.

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Based on this background, this study aims to examine the moral values contained in the film Sang Kiai and analyze their relevance to Malay culture. This research is expected to contribute to literary and film studies, particularly in understanding the role of media as a means of shaping moral values in society.

RESEARCH METHODS



Sang Kiai is an Indonesian film that tells the story of the struggles of the great Islamic scholar, KH Hasyim Asy'ari. Directed by Rako Prijanto, the film was released in 2013.

The film is set during the Japanese occupation and the early years of Indonesian independence, focusing primarily on the role of the Tebuireng Islamic boarding school as a center of spiritual and social struggle. The story depicts how KH Hasyim Asy'ari, along with his students and ulama, fought to uphold religious values amidst the pressures of colonialism.

Narratively, the film depicts not only the physical conflict between the colonialists and the Indonesian people, but also ideological conflicts related to faith, morality, and leadership. A key element in the film is the Jihad Resolution, a significant milestone in the history of the Indonesian people's struggle.

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Structurally, the film heavily emphasizes dialogue as the primary means of conveying moral and religious values. The dialogue between the characters, particularly that involving KH Hasyim Asy'ari, directly reflects the Islamic principles, leadership, and cultural values held by the community.

Thus, this film not only functions as an entertainment medium, but also as an educational medium that represents moral values, religiosity, and the spirit of struggle in the context of Indonesian culture that is related to Malay cultural values.

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive interpretative method. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aimed to deeply understand and interpret the moral values contained in the film "Sang Kiai." The descriptive interpretative method was used to describe and interpret the meaning contained in the scenes, dialogue, and characters that represent the moral values in the film (Moleong, 2017).

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. The primary data comes from the film Sang Kiai, which was analyzed based on scenes, dialogue, and character actions that reflect moral values. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from various relevant literature, such as books, scientific journals, and studies on moral values, virtue ethics, and Malay culture (Sugiyono, 2019).

Data collection techniques were conducted through observation and documentation. Observations were conducted by repeatedly watching the film to identify scenes containing moral values. Furthermore, documentation techniques were used to record dialogue, character actions, and the context of scenes relevant to the research focus. This technique was used to obtain systematic and structured data (Arikunto, 2013).

The data analysis technique in this study uses qualitative analysis, which includes several stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. These stages refer to the data analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994). In the data reduction stage, the researcher selects and groups data based on moral value categories, such as religiosity, leadership, responsibility, and role models. In the data presentation stage, the classified data is presented in descriptive form. Next, in the conclusion drawing stage, the researcher interprets the data by referring to the theory of moral values, virtue ethics, and Malay cultural values.

To maintain data validity, this study employed theoretical triangulation, comparing research findings with various relevant theoretical perspectives (Sugiyono, 2019). Thus, the research results are expected to have a high level of validity and provide a comprehensive understanding of the moral values in the film Sang Kiai and their relevance to Malay culture.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Correct Values of Taqwa and Jihad

The most dominant religious value in the film Sang Kiai is the concept of piety which is realized through true jihad, as shown in the climactic scene leading up to Indonesian independence.

NO	DIALOG	MINUTE
	I can't sign, I was not involved in the cutting incident at all, and my secretary would never do it. *There is nothing worse than pawning your faith to seek safety* *These infidels can stone me after I perform my prayers, they force us to worship their sun god, now will they forbid us from worshipping our god?*	22.30-26.10

NO	DIALOG	MINUTE
	Yesterday we received a delegation from Bung Karno, who asked what the law was for defending the homeland, the law for defending the country and fighting the invaders. It is fardu ain for every mukalah who is within the radius of masafah assfar, war against the invaders is jihad fissabillah, therefore Muslims who die in war are martyrs, those who betray Muslims by dividing unity and becoming accomplices of the invaders are obligated to be killed.	1.31.42 – 1.33.02

In the film Sang Kiai, religious values are seen through a pious attitude and a correct understanding of the concept of jihad. In the scene from 22:30–26:10 minutes, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari refuses to perform seikerei and refuses to sign the Japanese agreement because it is considered contrary to Islamic faith. He asserts that only Allah is worthy of worship and there is nothing worse than pawning one's faith for one's safety. This scene demonstrates the value of

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piety through steadfast faith, courage to uphold monotheism, and adherence to religious teachings despite being under threat and torture by the colonialists.

Meanwhile, in the scene at 1:31:42–1:33:02, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari explains that defending the homeland and fighting against invaders is a fardu ain obligation for Muslims in wartime. The dialogue represents the true concept of jihad as a struggle in the path of Allah to maintain independence, maintain unity, and protect the nation from colonialism. This film presents jihad not as an act of aimless violence, but as a form of sacrifice, defense of religion and state, and a struggle for the welfare of the people.

2. The Values of Simplicity and Asceticism

The values of simplicity and asceticism are strongly reflected in life at the Sang Kiai Islamic boarding school. KH. Hasyim Asy'ari is seen helping farmers in the rice fields alongside his students. Despite being a renowned scholar, he maintains a simple lifestyle and is close to the community. This demonstrates the values of hard work, social awareness, and moderation in worldly affairs.

NO	DIALOG	MINUTE
	Why did Yai farm and trade? But why did he personally harvest the rice fields? He could have just asked his kulo or other students to help. *By helping farmers, we can feel their hard work, that way we can appreciate the rice we eat.*	2.54 – 3.19

The scene from 2:54–3:19 demonstrates the values of simplicity and asceticism through the actions of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, who helps farmers in the rice fields with his students. Despite his high position as a cleric and leader of a pesantren, he remains modest and does not differentiate himself from the common people. The dialogue about the importance of feeling the hard work of farmers demonstrates his humility, social concern, and the view that nobility is not measured by wealth or worldly position. This scene represents asceticism as an attitude of moderation towards worldly affairs and prioritizing the values of devotion and humanity.

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3. Values of Social Justice and Community Unity

The next religious value is social justice and the unity of the people, which is demonstrated through the people's struggle to defend their rights to the produce of the land and the call to unite against colonialism.

NO	DIALOG	MINUTE
	The rice that we harvest, brothers and sisters, is our right, ours, not only do we not have to deposit our crops but we also have to liberate the entire island of Java, Allahuakbar!	1.07.25-1.07.45

At 1:07:25–1:07:45, the dialogue in the speech emphasizes that agricultural products are the people's right and should not be controlled by colonialists. This scene demonstrates the value of social justice through the struggle to defend people's rights against economic oppression. Furthermore, the call to liberate Java reflects the importance of communal unity and togetherness in facing colonialism to achieve collective independence.

4. Religious Heritage Values and Exemplary Behavior

The final value that emerged was the religious heritage and exemplary behavior that was passed down through advice, struggles, and attitudes of figures to society and future generations.

NO	DIALOG	MINUTE
	Everyone who fought against the invaders was a hero! Even if some people forget their services, that's okay, because Allah promises the best place for the martyrs.	2.09.47-2.10.03

In the scene from 2:09:47–2:10:03, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari conveys that everyone who fights against the colonialists is a hero and that martyrs will receive the best reward from God. This dialogue demonstrates the value of religious heritage through the delivery of teachings of faith, the spirit of struggle, and belief in the afterlife. Furthermore, this scene also reflects exemplary values because KH. Hasyim Asy'ari became a moral and spiritual role model for the community in facing colonialism.

The Relevance of Film Moral Values to Malay Culture

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The moral values in the film Sang Kiai are in strong harmony with the Malay cultural value system. The principle of "customs with syarak, syarak with Kitabullah" is reflected in the attitude of the main character who uses religion as the basis for his actions.

Religious values, leadership, responsibility, courage, and exemplary behavior are part of the ideal character in Malay society. This film demonstrates that these values remain relevant in various situations, including in the face of colonialism and social pressure.

Summary of Results

The research results show that the film Sang Kiai contains core moral values such as religiosity, leadership, social responsibility, moral courage, and exemplary behavior. These values reflect the moral system in Malay culture, which is based on religion and social norms. Therefore, this film is not only a form of entertainment but also a means of moral education for the community.

Morals as a value system are not only individual, but also social and cultural, which are formed through interactions in society (Putra, 2019).

CONCLUSION

This study found that the film Sang Kiai is rich in core moral values such as piety and righteous jihad, simplicity and asceticism, social justice, and exemplary religious heritage, all of which are reflected through scenes, dialogues, and the actions of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari amidst the pressure of Japanese colonialism. These values are not only religious and individual, but also collective, in line with the Malay cultural principle of "adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi Kitabullah" which makes religion the foundation of everyday morality. However, the limitation of this study lies in its single focus on one film as the primary data source, so generalization to the contemporary Malay cultural context requires further validation from empirical sources such as community interviews or analysis of other films.

Practical implications: This film can be used as a moral education medium in Islamic boarding schools, schools, or Malay communities to build leadership character and value resilience in the digital age. Suggestions for further research include comparisons with other Islamic historical films, quantitative approaches to measure audience impact, or empirical studies on the application of these values in modern Malay society, to enrich our understanding of cultural representation through film.

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