

**The Effects of Islamic *Da'wah*  
through Social Media among Muslim Youth  
in Negara Brunei Darussalam**

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**Abstract**

Social media has impacted various facets of modern lifestyle and it has a profound influence in Islamic *da'wah* globally. Numerous researches had been conducted on Islamic *da'wah*, however, there are only few tangible researches are known about the influence of Islamic *da'wah* through social media on Muslim youth particularly in Negara Brunei Darussalam. Therefore, this article is an attempt to assess and highlight the effects of Islamic *da'wah* through social media among Muslim youth in Negara Brunei Darussalam. The opportunity to gain information on Islam through social media is limitless and open widely to Muslim youth in Negara Brunei Darussalam to learn and gain knowledge about Islam. As a result, young Muslim preachers in Negara Brunei Darussalam are able to attract Muslim youth by using social media besides offline settings such as religious gatherings. It is clear and noticeable that their activities began to attract Muslim youth who wants to deepen their understanding about Islam. In brief, the methodology used is

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library research which will be presented in descriptive and narrative approach. Since this article is based on secondary data without any data collection to further investigate the actual ratio in Negara Brunei Darussalam, hence, this article can be strengthened by giving out a questionnaire to Muslim youth who use social media as their platform to educate each other in becoming righteous Muslims.

**Keywords:** Islamic *Da'wah*, Social media, Negara Brunei Darussalam, Muslim youth

### Abstrak

Media sosial telah mempengaruhi pelbagai aspek gaya kehidupan moden termasuk mempengaruhi cara penyebaran syiar Islam secara global. Sejumlah penyelidikan telah dilakukan mengenai penyebaran syiar Islam, namun hanya sedikit kajian yang diketahui mengenai pengaruh penyebaran syiar Islam melalui media sosial terhadap belia Islam di Negara Brunei Darussalam. Justeru itu, artikel ini membincangkan potensi kesan-kesan daripada penyebaran syiar Islam melalui media sosial dikalangan belia Islam di Negara Brunei Darussalam. Perbincangan adalah berdasarkan senario semasa dalam konteks berkaitan penggunaan media sosial untuk aktiviti penyebaran syiar Islam di Negara Brunei Darussalam khususnya maklumat mengenai agama Islam. Media sosial dilihat berpotensi memberi maklumat mengenai agama Islam secara meluas kerana sifatnya yang pantas dan langsung ke sasaran terutama sekali belia Islam di Negara Brunei Darussalam untuk mempelajari dan menerokai ajaran agama Islam

melalui media sosial. Oleh yang demikian, pendakwah-pendakwah muda dikalangan belia Islam di Negara Brunei Darussalam telah mula menggunakan media sosial sebagai alat dalam penyebaran syiar Islam selain mengadakan aktiviti-aktiviti perkumpulan secara maya atau bersemuka. Aktiviti-aktiviti yang dilakukan oleh pendakwah muda telah mula menarik perhatian belia Islam untuk mempelajari mengenai agama Islam secara lebih komprehensif. Secara ringkas, metodologi yang digunakan ialah kajian perpustakaan yang memaparkan pendekatan secara jelas dan naratif. Oleh kerana artikel ini dihasilkan berdasarkan data sekunder tanpa mengumpulkan data lain untuk mengkaji lebih lanjut akan ratio sebenar di Negara Brunei Darussalam. Jesteru, artikel ini dapat dikukuhkan lagi dengan membuat kajian secara kaji selidik di kalangan belia Islam yang menggunakan media sosial sebagai alat landasan untuk mengetahui dan menimba ilmu pengetahuan agama Islam ke arah pembinaan jati diri sebagai seorang belia Islam.

## **Introduction**

*Da'wah* is an Arabic word which has the literal meaning of "issuing a summons" or "making an invitation"<sup>99</sup>. The word *da'wah* commonly appears in the *Al-Quran*, its commentaries, classical Muslim texts, and contemporary

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<sup>99</sup> Christine Huda Dodge (July, 2018). The Meaning of Da'wah in Islam (accessed May 26, 2019); available from <https://www.learnreligions.com/the-meaning-of-dawah-in-islam-2004196>

theological or ideological texts, written and spoken<sup>100</sup>. The term *da'wah* or can be classified as Islamic proselytization used to describe how Muslims teach others about the beliefs and practices of Islam which also involves in disseminating Islamic knowledge. Islamic *da'wah* can be spread through mass media and other channels of communication<sup>101</sup>.

Islamic *da'wah* has been defined as a commandment “to call men unto the path of Allah”<sup>102</sup>. In other words, it is an attempt or effort done by Muslims to allow other people to share and take advantage of the supreme vision, the religious truth that he has appropriated. The main concept of Islamic *da'wah* is the whole Muslim *ummah* is responsible to convey the message of Islam, and it is not solely the responsibility of individuals or certain groups of people<sup>103</sup>. Noteworthy, every Muslim must convey the pure message of Islam that promotes peace and harmony. Thus, the importance of Islamic *da'wah* is transforming others' lives positively and helps in the constant purification of one's soul as a Muslim.

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<sup>100</sup> Egdunas Raciuis (October, 2004). *The Multiple Nature of the Islamic Da'wa*. Academic dissertation to be publicly discussed, by due permission of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Helsinki in auditorium XII, Unioninkatu 34, pp7.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid

<sup>102</sup> Ismail Faruqi (March, 2010) On the Nature of Islamic Da'wah (accessed May 26, 2019); available from:

<https://ismailfaruqi.com/articles/on-the-nature-of-islamic-dawah/>

<sup>103</sup> Jamil Hashim & Masitoh Ahmad (June, 2012). The Concept of Islamic Da'wah and its Obligation. *Global Journal Al-Thaqafah*, Vol 2, Issue 1, pp83.

In today's world, it is unquestionable that social media plays an important role as a platform used by Muslim preachers to spread Islam. Some scholars have been studying the relationship between religion and the internet due to social media which has been used by believers in diverse religious and cultural traditions<sup>104</sup>. Nowadays, internet users and religious communities shape media technologies in line with their religious values. Thus, social media has become a virtual forum that brings people to exchange ideas, to seek advice and offer guidance.

Recent studies also have found that youth spend a considerable amount of their time engaging with social media such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook<sup>105</sup>. Unmistakably, there is a significant relationship between social media and religious activity among Muslim youth. Different types of information disseminated through social media among youth who have a different religious and cultural background. Despite differences in religious and cultural background, the use of social media applications

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<sup>104</sup> Andrew Campbell & Bridianne O'Dea (January, 2011). Online social networking amongst teens: friend or foe? *Annual Review of Cybertherapy and Telemedicine*, pp133-138, doi: 10.3233/978-1-60750-766-6-133.

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/51231117> Online social net working amongst teens Friend or foe

<sup>105</sup> Paul Best, Roger Manktelow, & Brian Taylor (2014). Online communication, social media and adolescent wellbeing: A systematic narrative review. *Children and Youth Services Review*, Issue 41, pp27-36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2014.03.001>

such as Facebook and Twitter have created a strong bond among youth around the world<sup>106</sup>.

For Muslim youth who frequently use social media, there are inevitably that there are several positive impacts<sup>107</sup> such as they are able to deepen their knowledge about Islam and can easily discuss with others on any issue (s) related to Islam. Coherently, religion as an integral part of human culture has been affected by social media. The usage of social media marked a new phase of technological development and inaugurated a new era of cultural mobilization that has transcended all limitations of time and place<sup>108</sup>.

Having said that, it is clear that nowadays Muslim preachers rely on social media to ensure the influence of Islamic *da'wah* spread effectively. In this paper, the effects of Islamic *da'wah* through social media on Muslim youth are discussed. After the introduction, the article discusses the methodology employed, follows by research objectives and questions. This is followed by the growth of young Muslim preachers in Negara Brunei Darussalam and the effects of Islamic *da'wah* are discussed.

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<sup>106</sup> Peter Reilly (2012). Understanding and teaching generation Y. *English Teaching Forum*, Vol 50, Issue 1, p2-11.

<sup>107</sup> Megan Wood, William Bukowski, Eric Lis (September, 2015). The Digital Self: How Social Media Serves as a Setting that Shapes Youth's Emotional Experiences. *Adolescent Res Rev*, Vol 1, pp163-173. DOI 10.1007/s40894-015-0014-8.

<sup>108</sup> Wafa Abu Hatab (March, 2016). Islam and Social Media: Attitudes and Views. *Asian Social Science*, Vol 12, No 5, pp221.

## **Methodology**

This article used a descriptive method to explain the influence of Islamic *da'wah* through social media. Furthermore, descriptive studies can be characterized as an attempt to determine, describe and identify<sup>109</sup>. Descriptive is aimed to shed light on current issues or problems through the process of data collection that enables them to describe the situation in a complete manner<sup>110</sup>. In brief, this article is library research which is presented in a descriptive and narrative approach.

## **Research Objectives**

This article is an attempt to assess and highlight the effects of Islamic *da'wah* through social media among Muslim youth in Negara Brunei Darussalam. This article is set to achieve the following objectives:

1. To assess the proliferation of Islamic *da'wah* through social media among Muslim youth in Negara Brunei Darussalam.
2. To analyze the effects of Islamic *da'wah* through social media on Muslim youth in Negara Brunei Darussalam.

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<sup>109</sup> Chandra Khotari (2004). *Research Methodology: Method and Techniques (second revise edition)*. New Delhi: New Age International (P) Limited Publisher, pp2.

<sup>110</sup> William Fox & Mohamad Saheed Bayat (2008). *A guide to managing research*. Cape Town: Juta & Co. Ltd, p8.

## The proliferation of Islamic *da'wah* among young Muslim preachers

Despite the fact that Negara Brunei Darussalam is physically a small country, the influence of Islamic *da'wah* through social media can be seen among young Muslim preachers. Islamic *da'wah* through social media is commonly acknowledged by the society and government itself who withhold Malay Islamic Monarchy (MIB) as the country's national philosophy, in moving towards Brunei Vision 2035 and to become a *Zikir* Nation.

As Bart Barendregt has pointed out, there are two ways of studying the fusion of Islam with modern technologies<sup>111</sup>. One way would be to focus on how digital media have been shaped to meet Islamic practices and cultures. Another way would be to look at how Islamic practices have been extended and transformed by new technologies. Hence, this article takes the second direction, as it assesses the proliferation of Islamic *da'wah* through social media among Muslim youth in Negara Brunei Darussalam. In Negara Brunei Darussalam, Islamic *da'wah* through social media had given great impacts to Muslim youth as a whole. Undeniably, the contemporary method of Islamic *da'wah* scenes has been colored by the active presence of young Muslim preachers on social media such as Instagram and

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<sup>111</sup> Bart Barendregt (2012). *Diverse Digital Worlds*. In: Heather Horst & Daniel Miller (Eds), *Digital Anthropology*. New York: Berg Publisher, pp203-224.



YouTube. Their activities began to attract Muslim youth who wants to deepen their understanding of Islam.

In Negara Brunei Darussalam, there are few social media accounts belong to Bruneian Muslim youth particularly on Instagram such as @Khalifah.tech, @Belia Masjid ash-Shaliheen, @bikmmgadong, @Belia Da'ie Brunei dan @syababul\_iman. These social media accounts tend to spread Islamic *da'wah* either online or offline settings. These social media accounts' creators believe by creatively using social media as a platform to perform Islamic *da'wah*, thus, it will help them to present their Islamic religious content in line with youth culture and up to date trends. Additionally, by creating Islamic *da'wah* posts using verses from *Al-Quran* or *Hadith* as an approach to attract Muslim youth's interest towards Islam. Certainly, the infusion of social media in everyday lifestyle affects how Muslim youth understand Islam.

As a consequence, in the last five years, a tremendous number of young Muslim preachers have emerged such as Ustaz Muhammad Khairul Nazif Bin Haji Awang Damit, a renowned lecturer from University Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA) for giving inspirational and motivational Islamic talks. At the beginning of his career as a religious preacher, he started giving religious talks in *Balai Ibadat Kampung Mata-Mata*<sup>112</sup>. Another distinguished young Muslim

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<sup>112</sup> Hazwan (April, 2018). Pahlawan Islam: Ustaz Muhammad Khairul Nazif Haji Awang Damit, Pahlawan Islam (accessed March 19, 2019);

preacher is Ustaz Abdul Rahman bin Haji Ajak, *Belia Daie* accredited by the Ministry of Religious Affair (MORA) of NBD who is very active in delivering religious talks at various mosques and ministerial departments<sup>113</sup>. It is important to note that all of their religious activities are beneficial to enlighten Muslim society especially youth about Islam and will help them to exchange ideas, perspectives and information about Islam. These young Muslim preachers are well-known among the Muslim youth who often look up to them for knowledge and advice. In addition, these young Muslim preachers often appear on the national TV station's channel (Radio Television Brunei) besides disseminating Islamic *da'wah* through their social media accounts such as Instagram and Facebook.

Nowadays, members of a Muslim group connect and their Islamic leaders through social media such as Instagram and Facebook for discussion and sharing information about Islam<sup>114</sup>. Noticeably, social media become a platform utilize by Muslims where it is able to sustain and strengthen members of religious groups beyond the limitation of physical co-presence and can be done virtually. Consequently, the participants of religious gatherings or talks and the Muslim preachers use social media as their platform to do Islamic *da'wah*. Particularly, the techno-

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available from <https://sutera.co/ustaz-muhammad-khairul-nazif-haji-awang-damit-pahlawan-islam/>

<sup>113</sup> Al-Minhaaj Centre (2019). Al-Minhaaj Centre (accessed March 19, 2019); available from <https://www.facebook.com/alMinhaajCentre/>

<sup>114</sup> Martin Slama & Bart Barendregt (February, 2018). Online Publics in Muslim Southeast Asia: In Between Religious Politics and Popular Pious Practices. *Asiascape: Digital Asia* 5, pp9.

savvy Muslim youth who often connected through social media such as Instagram, WhatsApp and Telegram which led to the formation of a group in which Muslim preachers are always involved. Thus, by using social media, participants can easily consult Muslim preacher(s) about any issues related to Islamic jurisprudence and decree. Besides, participants can also do offline meet-ups or setting such as *Jemaah* prayer and religious activities.

### **The effects of Islamic *da'wah* to Muslim youth in Negara Brunei Darussalam**

Nowadays, Islamic knowledge is not limited to the textbook but also can be found virtually on social media. With the revolution of the internet and communication, social media can be access easily everywhere, thus, Islamic knowledge can reach Muslim youth swiftly. Consequently, information on Islam can be spread widely and reach Muslim countries worldwide. However, it is depends on the Muslim youth themselves to utilize information on Islam to their benefits which are available on social media. As a result, social media indirectly has helped to create a new generation of young virtual preacher-alike in disseminating Islamic *da'wah*<sup>115</sup>.

Noteworthy, a question arises among the scholars, does this virtual preacher-alike who spread Islamic *da'wah* on social media has profoundly knowledgeable about Islam, or do

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<sup>115</sup> Martin Slama (February, 2018). Practising Islam through social media in Indonesia. *Indonesia and the Malay World*, Vol 46, Issue No 134, pp2. DOI: 10.1080/13639811.2018.1416798

they come from Islamic educational background. An author pointed out, “the role of the internet in democratizing Islamic knowledge by breaking the monopoly of the *ulama* in accessing and interpreting the main religious sources of *Al-Quran* and *Hadith* as well as the major *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) works and fatwa collections”<sup>116</sup>. In other words, *ulama* is no longer the main authority who interpret the content of *Al-Quran* and *Hadith* but rather openly deliberate by Muslims on social media. Unlike during the pre-virtual era, Islamic *da'wah* comes from *ulama* or religious authority who provided authentic information on Islam either face to face or broadcasted over the television and radio. As a result, a transmission of information on Islam from traditional to contemporary methods has occurred through social media as a platform to spread Islamic *da'wah* which monopolized by these young Muslim interpreters of Islam<sup>117</sup>.

In Negara Brunei Darussalam, with the availability of social media such as Instagram and Facebook, Muslim youth began to prefer a visual platform rather than videos or short messages. The image plays an important role as a form of communication in conveying messages or information on social media which has become a main attraction among the Muslim youth. These images have effected Muslim youth's

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<sup>116</sup> Martin Van Bruinessen (January, 2013). *Introduction: Contemporary developments in Indonesian Islam and the "conservative turn" of the early twenty-first century*. Singapore: ISEAS, pp1-20.

<sup>117</sup> Jon Anderson (2003). *The Internet and Islam's New Interpreters*. In: D.F. Eickelman & J.W. Anderson (Eds.), *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp41.

inclination in obtaining information on Islam through social media. Nowadays, Islamic *da'wah* through social media can be seen from various Instagram accounts of @syababul\_iman, @Khalifah.tech and @alhuffazbn where these accounts serves as a site for constructing better Muslim youth in Negara Brunei Darussalam. These creators will post images and captions on social media which focus on introducing ethical guidance and continue reminding their followers on the importance of Islamic knowledge and education.

Islamic *da'wah* is not only about Islamic knowledge that offers visually appealing content to its digitally connected followers. It is also about using social media to disseminate information on Islam based on *Al-Quran* and *Hadith*. The creators of these social media accounts believed that Islamic *da'wah* posted and share on their social media are cater to the needs of those who want to become better Muslims. These social media accounts are based for online followers who use social media as an important means of Islamic *da'wah* on a daily basis. They emphasize the importance of authentic information on Islam based on *Al-Quran* and *Hadith* posted and share on social media, besides providing information endorsed by relevant Islamic authority in Negara Brunei Darussalam for their followers. Furthermore, these images and captions post on social media emphasized the reliability of their information by citing information either derive from *Al-Quran* and *Hadith*. This infers how Muslim youth began to utilize social media in the right

manner by ensuring the authenticity of information that they post or upload on social media.

Furthermore, Muslim youth also reciprocate their knowledge in offline settings aside from a virtual manner. Noticeably, nowadays, there is an increasing number of religious activities among the Muslim youth either in mosque or university campus in Negara Brunei Darussalam involving family, friends and village people under the guidance of religious preachers such as *ustadz* or *imam*. Muslim youth takes active participation in social media where they can raise their voices to express their opinions and views about Islam. This elevation of virtual Islamic *da'wah* among Muslim youth regarded as the merits of social media.

### **Government support**

In Negara Brunei Darussalam, the government of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah Ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan dan Yang Di-Pertuan Negara Brunei Darussalam has continuously implement Islam as the core to every aspect of government's strategies and initiatives in building Negara Brunei Darussalam to become one of a great Muslim country in the eyes of the world. One of the most significant achievements about Islam as the main core to every aspect of social, political and the economy is the proclamation of national

philosophy; Malay Islamic Monarchy (MIB) in 1984<sup>118</sup>. In other words, the Malay Islamic Monarchy (MIB) is a fusion of all three elements but Islam as the main core to be held by the government and its people.

Currently, there is a trend where non-authentic information about Islam spread easily against *Al-Quran* and *Hadith* as mentioned by His Majesty in his *titah* below<sup>119</sup>.

*Kita tidak akan sesat selagi mana berpegang teguh kepada Al-Quran dan As-Sunnah. Kerana Al-Quran adalah mukjizat agung yang ditinggalkan oleh Junjungan Besar kita Nabi Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam untuk menjadi pemandu jalan, khususnya di zaman mutakhir yang penuh liku dan cabaran ini. Di antara cabaran yang membebani kita, terdapat satu trend, orang suka bercakap atau berteori perkara-perkara*

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<sup>118</sup> Haji Awg Asbol bin Haji Mail (April, 2019). *Melayu Islam Beraja' the Malay Islamic Monarchy in Negara Brunei Darussalam Prior to 1906: A Historical Study*. Brunei Darussalam: Qasrun Nafis Publishing House, pp1.

<sup>119</sup> His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah Ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan Dan Yang Di-Pertuan Negara Brunei Darussalam, titah during National Level Nuzul Al-Quran Celebration for 1440 Hijrah / 2019 Masihi, Sunday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 (accessed March 25, 2019); available from <http://www.pmo.gov.bn/Lists/TITAH/NewDispform.aspx?ID=333&ContentTypeId=0x0100422E821587FC974C9DFFAF38C117CE34>

*yang bertentangan dengan Al-Quran atau Al-Hadis.*

The above *titah* was related to one recent event which occurred after a national broadcast of RTB *Rampai Pagi* showed in Mid-May 2019, a short video of Haji Adi Asmat bin Lamat (former Religious officer, Darussalam Holdings Sdn Bhd) spread tactlessly through social media specifically WhatsApp among Bruneian. To an extent, society has begun to question the authenticity of his dream and himself as one of the local young Muslim preachers. The link for the short video spread in the speed of light among the Bruneian society through WhatsApp and other social media applications including local website<sup>120</sup>. This has brought to His Majesty concerned and attention about a national broadcast which features a local Muslim preacher who broadly spoke about his dream on Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) against *Al-Quran* and *Hadith*. As a result, His Majesty warned Brunei Islamic Council (MUIB) to be vigilant in providing such verification and accreditation for any Muslim preacher in Negara Brunei Darussalam.

Undeniably, a resilient challenge will be faced by the religious authorities in combating non-authentic information on Islam from spreading and influencing Bruneian society especially among youth. Such action can lead to the breeding of extremists among the people and a possibility in

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<sup>120</sup> Reddit (2019). Why Pehin Badaruddin was not in Ustaz Adi Asmat (accessed March 25, 2019); available from: [https://www.reddit.com/r/Brunei/comments/brzkmz/why\\_pehin\\_badaruddin\\_was\\_not\\_in\\_ustaz\\_adi\\_asmats/](https://www.reddit.com/r/Brunei/comments/brzkmz/why_pehin_badaruddin_was_not_in_ustaz_adi_asmats/)



proclaiming that they are holier than anyone else alive today. The teaching of Islam in moderation needs to be emphasized and implemented at a young age, hence, His Majesty urged the authority to make *Al-Quran*, *Hadith* and Islamic History as part of the education curriculum taught at every level of education<sup>121</sup>.

As stated by His Majesty in his *titah* during the final night of *Musabaqah Al-Quran* where learning of *Al-Quran* and other Islamic knowledge is very important to be taught at every level of education in Negara Brunei Darussalam<sup>122</sup>. In other words, Islamic education needs to be taught from early childhood to move towards the secondary level and taught at University level. Hence, this indicates that the importance of Islamic education embedded to the society and to ensure moderate Islamic knowledge is well-attained by the Muslim youth. Despite the fact that such existence of non-authentic

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<sup>121</sup> His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah Ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan Dan Yang Di-Pertuan Negara Brunei Darussalam, *titah* during final night of *Musabaqah Al-Quran* reading for adult category, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018 (accessed March 25, 2019); available from <http://www.pmo.gov.bn/Lists/TITAH/NewDispform.aspx?ID=302&ContentTypeId=0x0100422E821587FC974C9DFFAF38C117CE34>

<sup>122</sup> His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah Ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan Dan Yang Di-Pertuan Negara Brunei Darussalam, *titah* during final night of *Musabaqah Al-Quran* reading for adult category, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018 (accessed March 25, 2019); available from <http://www.pmo.gov.bn/Lists/TITAH/NewDispform.aspx?ID=302&ContentTypeId=0x0100422E821587FC974C9DFFAF38C117CE34>

information is available on social media, the Muslim youth is well-embedded enough about Islam and are able to differentiate such information when they are engaged with social media

On 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017, during a session between Minister of Religious Affair (MORA), Yang Berhormat Pehin Udana Khatib Dato Paduka Seri Setia Ustaz Haji Awang Badaruddin bin Pengarah Dato Paduka Haji Othman with members of Legislative Council. He mentioned that it is in the main interest of MORA to ensure the Muslim society is practicing the teaching of Islam as a way of life as stated in his dialogue below. This further shows that Negara Brunei Darussalam government has given full support in ensuring the Muslim society is well-prepared with Islamic knowledge and education in various aspects of life as a Muslim.

*KHEU bertanggungjawab memastikan Islam itu menjadi pegangan hidup masyarakat di Negara ini dan mengatur strategi-strategi bagi mencapai visi tersebut. KHEU telah menetapkan haluan dasarnya dengan menjadikan 'maqasid syariah' sebagai pegangan dalam memelihara ugama dan akidah umat Islam di negara ini melalui strategi dan dasar yang mencakupi bidang-bidang pendidikan; dakwah dan syiar; pengurusan haji dan umrah; pengurusan zakat, wakaf dan baitul mal; hal ehwal masjid; penggubalan undang-undang dan penguatkuasaan; hal ehwal syariah dan*

*pentadbiran. Begitu juga pemantapan pegangan akidah bagi belia-belia masjid dan belia-belia daie melalui ceramah dan aktiviti masjid dan Pusat Da'wah Islamiah*<sup>123</sup>.

After all, it is the responsibility of the government to create a dynamic commitment towards knowledge of *Al-Quran* and *Hadith* which must be deeply embedded in the social fabric of Bruneian society. Negara Brunei Darussalam's government needs to ensure Islamic *da'wah* or any information on Islam posted through social media is accurate and authentic Islamic knowledge before disseminating them among the Muslim masses.

### **Public support**

In addition to the government's support, there is also public involvement in ensuring the society is practicing the teaching of Islam as a way of life. Recently, numerous groups are established which are run and managed by Muslim youth in the aim to gather each other and to deepen their knowledge about Islam either through on-line by using social media as their main platform or off-line setting such as gathering at a mosque in Negara Brunei Darussalam.

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<sup>123</sup> Wan Mohamad Sahran Wan Ahmadi (February, 2018). Kementerian Hal Ehwal Ugama: Mantapkan akidah golongan belia (accessed March 25, 2019); available from: <http://www.pelitabrunei.gov.bn/Lists/Berita/NewDisplayForm.aspx?ID=13074>

One of the prominent Muslim youth group is Al-Huffaz Management<sup>124</sup>. Al-Huffaz Management is a platform of Islamic based services and education which was established on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016<sup>125</sup>. Their main core activity is to match *Al-Quran* educators with students who wish to learn *Al-Quran*. All educators under Al-Huffaz Management are accredited by Brunei Islamic Council (MUIB)<sup>126</sup>. Since their establishment for the past 3 years, there are more than 500 students are taught by their competent educators<sup>127</sup>. Without a doubt, the Islamic institutions in Negara Brunei Darussalam produce a steady flow of graduates knowledgeable in the *Al-Quran* every year especially from Institut Tahfiz Al-Quran Sultan Haji Hassanah Bolkhiah (ITQSHHB). As a result, Al-Huffaz management took this opportunity and has provided pavement for these graduates to utilize their abilities and capabilities.

Every progress and development done by Al-Huffaz Management can be found from their website at <http://www.alhuffaz.com/>. This group also uses social media applications such as twitter and Instagram @alhuffazbn as their platform to connect and interact with the Muslim society especially youth<sup>128</sup>. Undeniably, any new

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<sup>124</sup> Al-Huffaz Management (2019). Nurturing Al-Quran Literate Generation (accessed May 1, 2019); available from <http://www.alhuffaz.com/>

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Al-Huffaz Management (2019). Nurturing Al-Quran Literate Generation (accessed May 1, 2019); available from <http://www.alhuffaz.com/>

development and events done by Al-Huffaz Management in running their activities are facilitated by social media as their main platform to reach out to the Muslim youth in Negara Brunei Darussalam.

Recently, on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Al-Huffaz Management successfully launched a funding platform aimed at making *Al-Quran* classes more accessible to the underprivileged people<sup>129</sup>. The fund is known as the *Baiti Baitul Quran* which was established under a partnership between Al-Huffaz, Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam (BIBD) and Community Development Department (JAPEM). Their aims are to use all proceeds to cover *Al-Quran* and Islamic religious knowledge lesson fees for those who are keen to learn but could not afford the classes. Those qualified to receive donations through this initiative includes individuals with special needs and other underprivileged persons registered under JAPEM<sup>130</sup>.

Al-Huffaz Management's founder, Haji Mohammad Loqman Al-Hakim Bin Haji Hamdan puts high expectation where in the near future, all Muslim society able to recite and learn *Al-Quran* in line with His Majesty's resolution to see Negara Brunei Darussalam as a country fills with Muslim who is *Al-Quran* literate and a nation of *Zikir*. In

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<sup>129</sup>Aaron Wong (March, 2017). Al-Huffaz Management wins TAIB entrepreneurship programme (accessed May 1, 2019); available from <https://www.bizbrunei.com/2017/03/al-huffaz-management-wins-taib-entrepreneurship-programme/>

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

moving towards his vision, he firmly believed in his slogan of '*Melahirkan Generasi Al-Quran dan didukung oleh visinya ke arah tidak ada yang buta Al-Quran dan buta kewangan Islam*' (Zero Al-Quran Illiterate and Zero Islamic Finance Illiterate)<sup>131</sup>.

Another intriguing Muslim youth group is well known as *Syababul Iman*. Recently, the founder Dr Hajah Ummi Fa'izah Binti Haji Abdul Rahman who is a lecturer from University Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA) was awarded the Youth Service Award for her community and youth building programs during the 14th National Youth Day celebration on August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019<sup>132</sup>. As one of the pioneering youth mosque clubs in Brunei, *Syababul Iman* based in *Masjid Sultan Sharif Ali, Kampung Sengkurong* has engaged with more than 1,000 youths through its self-development programmes<sup>133</sup>.

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<sup>131</sup> Noriah Bin Haji Abdul Hamid (July, 2016). Al-Huffaz Management sahut azam Kebawah DYMM rakyat celik Al-Quran (accessed May 1, 2019); available from <http://www.pelitabrunei.gov.bn/Lists/Rencana/NewDisplayForm.aspx?ID=137&ContentTypeId=0x0100AB69AA555002494AB2FB40905279B027>

<sup>132</sup> Wardi Wasil (August, 2019). Gov't sets up steering committee to support youth entrepreneurship: Move comes on the back of efforts to restructure business ecosystem (accessed August 8, 2019); available from <https://thescoop.co/2019/08/04/govt-sets-up-steering-committee-to-support-youth-entrepreneurship/>

<sup>133</sup> Biz Brunei (August, 2019). Youth awardees developing platforms for employment and entrepreneurship (accessed August 8, 2019); available from <https://www.bizbrunei.com/2019/08/brunei-youth-awardees-developing-platforms-for-employment-and-entrepreneurship/>

Foremost, she intends to create a creative approach in disseminating Islamic *da'wah* among youth in Negara Brunei Darussalam. As she believed the youth are not eager in attending religious talk solely, hence, she began to instill Islamic elements through programmes provided to youth such as leadership, ice-breaking and games<sup>134</sup>. Similar to Al-Huffaz Management, *Syababul Iman* also use social media such as Facebook and Instagram (@syabaul\_iman) to interact and inform their members on their upcoming events, besides uploading posts which instill Islamic knowledge for their on-line followers<sup>135</sup>. Both groups have indirectly spread Islamic *da'wah* in virtual manner through their social media accounts.

Currently, *Syababul Iman*'s program is to provide a conducive environment for Muslim youth in Negara Brunei Darussalam. One of *Syababul Iman*'s program is known as Be Proactive in aim to tackle issue of unemployment among youth. In this program, learning skills are provided to youth in terms of leadership skills, writing a good curriculum vitae and guidelines in attending an interview session<sup>136</sup>. Founder Dr. Hajah Ummi Fa'izah said that today's youth are facing a new set of challenges where they must be pro-active to stay

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Biz Brunei (August, 2019). Youth awardees developing platforms for employment and entrepreneurship, August, 2019 (accessed August 8, 2019); available from <https://www.bizbrunei.com/2019/08/brunei-youth-awardees-developing-platforms-for-employment-and-entrepreneurship/>

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

relevant in an increasingly competitive society. The key to success, as she believed is to go beyond just the academic or existing curriculum instill by the government in order to tackle the issue of unemployment among youth in Negara Brunei Darussalam<sup>137</sup>.

Therefore, these two well-established local Muslim groups have shown that there is a chance for a great achievement among the Muslim youth in Negara Brunei Darussalam. Relentlessly, they play a greater role as a platform in doing Islamic *da'wah* and implementing moderate Islamic knowledge through social media.

## Conclusion

Social media is a powerful platform for Islamic *da'wah* where disseminating information on Islam to others is a religious duty incumbent upon every Muslim. Despite the fact that there are challenges in obtaining authentic information on Islam available on social media, social media has emerged as the most convenient platform to disseminate information on Islam to the Muslim society and has the potential for fostering a truly international Muslim community. Henceforth, the Muslims should take this as an opportunity to make the best use of it for the cause of Islam and Muslims as a whole.

Positively using social media can be very useful for improving Islamic *da'wah* and thrive beyond the local

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid.



Muslim community. The Muslim youth in Negara Brunei Darussalam have shown a genuine desire to share their thoughts, emotions, and ambitions with others. With the proliferation of Islamic *da'wah* through social media among Muslim youth, it becomes a challenge for Muslim scholars, parents, educators, and activists to share a code of ethics and guidelines for appropriate behaviour and written word expression in line with *Al-Quran* and *Hadith*. It is just the right combination needed for virtual Islamic *da'wah* through social media in Negara Brunei Darussalam to tap into the international arena view by Muslims worldwide.

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