

**INTERACTIVE PREACHING TO YOUTH THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA:  
THE PERSPECTIVE OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

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**Abstract**

Digital da'wah is now increasingly accepted by all levels of society and is the main model for conveying Islamic teachings today. The use of the internet is also very important, especially among the younger generation who are the future of the country. In fact, this young group is also getting closer to religious knowledge through the cyber world, especially social media applications which are increasingly popular. However, the development of digital technology and the use of social media has invited various challenges to achieve the effectiveness of Islamic da'wah. Social media is seen as having the potential to provide information about the Islamic religion widely because of its fast and direct nature, especially young Muslims in the State of Brunei Darussalam who want to study and explore the teachings of the Islamic religion. Therefore, the effectiveness of interactive da'wah should be emphasized to ensure and create more people who moral and civilized.

**Keywords:** *Interactive Da'wah, Youth, Social Media*

**Abstrak**

Dakwah digital kini semakin diterima oleh semua lapisan masyarakat dan merupakan model utama bagi menyampaikan pengajaran Islam pada masakini. Penggunaan internet juga sebatik khususnya dikalangan generasi belia yang merupakan pelapis masa depan negara. Malah, golongan belia ini turut mendekatkan diri dengan ilmu keagamaan menerusi pendekatan dunia siber khususnya aplikasi media sosial yang kian popular. Namun, perkembangan teknologi digital dan penggunaan media sosial telah mengundang pelbagai cabaran bagi mencapai keberkesanan dakwah 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 Oleh itu, keberkesanan dakwah interaktif wajar ditekankan bagi memastikan dan melahirkan lebih ramai masyarakat yang berakhlak dan bertamadun.

**Kata Kunci:** *Dakwah Interaktif, Belia, Media Sosial*

## INTRODUCTION

The word "dakwah" is an adaptation of (دعا, يدعو, دعوة) Arabic) which means an appeal, invitation, call, propaganda, even a request with full hope or in Indonesian it is usually called praying (Syukir, 1983: 17). According to Pimay (2005: 17), da'wah is an integral part of Islamic teachings that must be carried out by every Muslim. The word da'wah usually appears in the Qur'an, its commentaries, classical Muslim texts, and contemporary theological or ideological texts, written and oral (Edunas, 2024). The term da'wah or may be classified as Islamic da'wah is used to describe how Muslims teach other people about Islamic beliefs and practices which also involve the spread of Islamic knowledge. Islamic da'wah may be spread through mass media and other communication channels.

Islamic da'wah has been defined as a command "to call people to the path of Allah" (Ismail, 2010). In other words, it is an attempt or effort made by Muslims to allow other people to share and take advantage of the highest vision, the religious truth that has been provided by them. The main concept of Islamic da'wah is that all Muslims are responsible for conveying the message of Islam, and it is not the responsibility of just a particular individual or group (Jamil, 2010). It needs attention, every Muslim must convey a pure Islamic message that promotes security and harmony. Therefore, the importance of Islamic da'wah is to positively change the lives of others and assist in the ongoing purification of the soul as a Muslim.

In today's world, it cannot be denied that social media plays an important role as a forum used by Islamic preachers to spread Islam. Several scholars have studied the relationship between religion and the internet because social media has been used by adherents in various religious and cultural traditions (Andrew, 2011). Today, internet users and religious communities shape media technology in line with their religious values. In fact, social media has become a virtual forum that brings people together to exchange ideas, get advice and offer guidance.

Recent studies also find that young people spend a lot of their time engaging with social media such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook (Paul, 2011). It cannot be denied that there is a significant relationship between social media and religious activities among young Muslims. Various types of information are distributed via social media among young people who have different religious and cultural backgrounds. Despite differences in religious and cultural backgrounds, the use of social media applications such as Facebook and Twitter has created strong bonds among young people throughout the world (Peter, 2012).

For young Muslims who often use social media, there are definitely some positive impacts such as they can deepen their knowledge about Islam and can chat with other people easily about any issue(s) related to Islam in a coherent manner, religion as a part of human culture has been exposed to social media (Megan, 2015). The use of social media marks a new phase of technological development and inaugurates a new era of cultural mobilization that has transcended all boundaries of time and place (Wafa, 2016).

Therefore, it is clear that nowadays Islamic preachers depend on social media to ensure the influence of Islamic preaching is spread effectively. In this paper, the impressions of Islamic da'wah through social media on Islamic teenagers are discussed. After the introduction, the article discusses the methodology used, followed by the objectives and study issues. This was followed by the growth of young Islamic preachers in the State of Brunei Darussalam and the impressions of Islamic preaching were discussed.

Even though physically the State of Brunei Darussalam is a small country, the influence of Islamic preaching through social media can be seen among young Islamic preachers. Islamic da'wah through social media is generally recognized by the community and the government itself which has set aside Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB) as the state philosophy, in moving towards Wawasan Brunei 2035 and becoming a State of Remembrance.

As Bart Barendregt points out, there are two ways to study the combination of Islam and modern technology (Brad, 2012). One way is to focus on how digital media has been shaped to fulfill Islamic practices and culture. Another way is to look at how Islamic practice has been expanded and changed by new technology. Thus, this article takes the second direction, because it assesses the spread of Islamic da'wah through social media among young Muslims in the State of Brunei Darussalam. In the country of Brunei Darussalam, Islamic da'wah through social media has had a big impact on young Muslims as a whole. It cannot be denied that the contemporary mode of the Islamic da'wah scene has been colored by the active presence of young Islamic preachers on social media such as Instagram and YouTube. Their activities began to attract the interest of young Muslims who wanted to deepen Islamic understanding.

In the State of Brunei Darussalam, there are several social media accounts belonging to Bruneian Muslim youth, especially on Instagram, such as @Khalifah.tech, @Belia Masjid ashShaliheen, @bikmmgadong, @Belia Da'ie Brunei and @syababul\_iman. These social media accounts tend to spread Islamic da'wah both online and offline. The creator of this social media account believes that by creatively using social media as a platform to carry out Islamic da'wah, in fact, it will help them convey the contents of their Islamic religion in line with youth culture and the latest trends. Apart from that, by creating Islamic preaching posts using verses from the Koran or Hadith as an approach to attracting interest in buying Islam. Indeed, the inclusion of social media in their daily lifestyle influences how Muslim teenagers understand Islam.

As a result, in the past five years, many young Islamic preachers have emerged such as Ustaz Muhammad Khairul Nazif Bin Haji Awang Damit, a famous lecturer at the Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University (UNISSA) for giving Islamic lectures that are full of inspiration and motivation. At the start of his career as a religious preacher, he began giving religious lectures at the Mata-Mata Village Worship Hall (Hazwan, 2012). Another young Muslim, namely the preacher Ustaz Abdul Rahman bin Haji Ajak, Belia Daie lectured at the Ministry of Religious Affairs NBD who is very active in delivering religious lectures in various mosques and ministry offices. It is important to note that

all their religious activities are useful for sensitizing the Muslim community, especially young people, about Islam and will help them exchange ideas, perspectives and information about Islam. These young Islamic preachers are well known among Islamic youth who often look up to them for knowledge and advice. Apart from that, these young Islamic preachers often appear on the national TV station channel (Radio Televisyen Brunei) apart from spreading Islamic preaching through their social media accounts such as Instagram and Facebook.

Nowadays, members of Muslim groups connect with their Islamic leaders through social media such as Instagram and Facebook for discussion and sharing of information about Islam (Martin, 2012). In significant terms, social media has become a platform used by Muslims where it is able to maintain and strengthen the membership of religious groups beyond the limits of physical presence and can be done virtually. As a result, participants in majlis or religious lectures and preachers use social media as a platform for carrying out Islamic da'wah. In particular, technology-savvy young Muslims often communicate via social media such as Instagram, WhatsApp and Telegram which has led to the formation of groups that always involve Islamic preachers. Therefore, by using social media, participants can negotiate with Islamic preachers regarding any issue related to Islamic laws and regulations. Apart from that, participants can also hold meetings or offline settings such as congregational prayers and religious activities.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### **The Impact of Cyber Da'wah on Islamic Youth in the State of Brunei Darussalam**

Now, Islamic knowledge is not limited to textbooks and can instead be found virtually on social media. With the internet and communication revolution, social media can be accessed easily everywhere, in fact, Islamic knowledge can reach Muslim youth quickly. As a result, information about Islam can be spread widely and reach Islamic countries throughout the world. However, it is up to Islamic youth themselves

to utilize information about Islam for their benefit on social media. As a result, social media has indirectly helped give birth to a new generation of young virtual preachers in spreading Islamic da'wah.

It should be noted that a problem arises among the ulama, whether these cyber preachers who spread Islamic da'wah through social media have in-depth knowledge of Islam, or whether they come from an Islamic educational background. One writer emphasized, "the role of the internet in democratizing Islamic knowledge by breaking the monopoly of ulama in accessing and interpreting the main religious sources of the Koran and Hadith as well as the main fiqh works and fatwa collections". In other words, ulama are no longer the main authority in interpreting the contents of the Koran and Hadith, instead they are discussed openly by Muslims on social media. Unlike pre-cyber times, Islamic preaching comes from clerics or religious authorities who provide authentic information about Islam either in person or broadcast via television and radio. As a result, conveying information about Islam rather than traditional rules to the contemporary world has occurred through social media as a platform for spreading Islamic da'wah which is monopolized by young people (Jon, 2003).

In Brunei Darussalam, with the existence of social media such as Instagram and Facebook, young Muslims are starting to choose visual platforms rather than videos or short messages. Images play an important role as a form of communication in conveying messages or information on social media which is a major attraction among young Muslims.

The tendency to get information about Islam through social media. Nowadays, Islamic da'wah through social media can be seen from various Instagram accounts @syababul\_iman, @Khalifah.tech and @alhuffazbn where these accounts function as a platform to develop better Islamic youth in the State of Brunei Darussalam. These creators will post images and captions on social media that focus on introducing ethical guidelines and continually reminding their followers about the importance of Islamic knowledge and education.

Islamic Da'wah is not only about Islamic knowledge that offers visually attractive content to its digitally connected followers. He also discussed the use of social media to spread information about Islam based on the Koran and Hadith. The owners of these social media accounts believe that broadcasting and sharing Islamic preaching on their social media fulfills the needs of those who want to become better Muslims. This social media account is intended for online followers who use social media as an important way of preaching Islam every day. They emphasize the importance of authentic information about Islam based on the Al-Quran and Hadith which are broadcast and shared on social media, in addition to providing information approved by the relevant Islamic authorities in the State of Brunei Darussalam for their followers. Additionally, the images and captions broadcast on social media emphasize the trustworthiness of their information by citing information whether they are based on the Al-Quran and Hadith. This concludes how young Muslims are starting to use social media in the right way by ensuring the validity of the information they broadcast or upload on social media.

Apart from that, young Muslims also share their knowledge in an offline setting as well as virtually. In fact, nowadays, religious activities among Islamic teenagers are increasing, whether in mosques or university campuses in the State of Brunei Darussalam, involving family, religious friends and villagers under the guidance of religious preachers such as ustadz or imams. Young Muslims take active participation in social media where they can raise their voices to express their opinions and views on Islam. The increase in virtual Islamic preaching among Islamic teenagers is considered a merit of social media.

## **METHODS**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method with a documentation approach. Data were collected through the review and analysis of existing materials related to interactive preaching to youth via social media in Brunei Darussalam. Sources

include official government publications, reports from Islamic organizations, social media content (such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok posts from recognized preachers), academic articles, and relevant news media.

The collected documents were systematically selected based on relevance, authenticity, and credibility to ensure the accuracy of the findings. Data analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques, focusing on identifying key patterns, strategies, and perspectives regarding the use of social media for religious engagement among youth in Brunei Darussalam.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Government support

In the State of Brunei Darussalam, the kingdom of His Majesty Majesty Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah Ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan Negara of Brunei Darussalam has implemented Islam continuously as the core of every aspect of the government's strategy and initiatives in developing the State of Brunei Darussalam to become a great Islamic country in the eyes of world. One of the most significant achievements of Islam as the main focus for every social, political and economic aspect is the promulgation of state philosophy; Malay Islam Beraja (MIB) in 1984 (Asbol, 2019). In other words, Malay Islam Beraja (MIB) is a combination of three elements but Islam is the main core that needs to be adhered to by the kingdom and its people. At this time, there is a trend where invalid proclamations about Islam are spread easily in the Koran and Hadith as mentioned by His Majesty in his decree below.

We will not go astray as long as we stick to the Al-Quran and Sunnah. Because the Al-Quran is a great miracle left by our Great Lord Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam to become a guide, especially in this modern era which is full of twists and turns and challenges. Among the challenges that burden us, there is one trend, people like to talk or theorize things that are contrary to the Koran or Al-Hadith.

It cannot be denied that the religious authorities will face enduring challenges in combating the invalid statements about Islam from spreading and affecting Bruneian society, especially among the youth. Such actions may lead to the proliferation of transgressors among the people and possibly to proclaim that they are holier than anyone else alive today. Simple teaching of the Islamic religion needs to be emphasized and implemented at a young age, in fact the king ordered the authorities to make the Al-Quran, Hadith and Islamic History as part of the educational curriculum taught at every level of education.

As ordered by His Majesty in his decree during the final night of the Al-Quran Musabaqah where the study of the Al-Quran and other Islamic sciences is very important to be taught at every level of education in the State of Brunei Darussalam. In other words, Islamic education needs to be taught from early childhood to progress to secondary level and taught at university level. Therefore, this shows that the importance of Islamic education is applied to society and ensures that simple Islamic knowledge can be achieved by Islamic youth. Even though the fact that the existence of such invalid edicts can be found on social media, Muslim teenagers are quite familiar with Islam and can distinguish these edicts if they engage with social media.

Islam practices Islamic teachings as a way of life as stated in his dialogue below. This further shows that the government of Negara Brunei Darussalam has provided full support in ensuring that the Islamic community is equipped with Islamic knowledge and education in various aspects of life as a Muslim.

KHEU is responsible for ensuring that Islam becomes the basis of life for the people in this country and for developing strategies to achieve this vision. KHEU has set its course basically by making 'maqasid sharia' a guideline in maintaining the religion and faith of Muslims in this country through strategies and foundations that summarize the fields of education; da'wah and broadcasting; Hajj and Umrah arrangements; managing zakat, waqf and baitul mal; mosque matters; reformulation of laws and strengthening of power; matters relating to sharia and administration. Likewise, strengthening the

grip of the faith for mosque youth and daie youth through lectures and activities at mosques and the Islamic Da'wah Center (Wan, 2018).

Moreover, it is the kingdom's responsibility to realize a dynamic commitment to the science of the Koran and Hadith which needs to be deeply embedded in the social fabric of Bruneian society. The Kingdom of Brunei Darussalam needs to ensure that Islamic da'wah or any information about Islam that is broadcast via social media is accurate and valid Islamic knowledge before it is distributed among the Islamic community.

### **Community Support**

Apart from royal support, there is also the involvement of the public in ensuring that people practice Islamic teachings as a way of life. Since recently, various groups have been formed which are controlled and managed by young Muslims with the aim of gathering with each other and deepening the knowledge of the Islamic religion either online using social media as the main platform or in offline environments such as gathering at a mosque in the State of Brunei Darussalam.

One of the leading Islamic youth groups is the Al-Huffaz Management. Al-Huffaz Management is an Islamic-based service and education platform that was founded on April 30 2016. Their main activity is to match Al-Quran educators with students who want to study the Al-Quran. All educators under the Al-Huffaz Management received recognition from the Brunei Islamic Council (MUIB). Since its inception 3 years ago, there have been more than 500 students taught by authoritative educators<sup>127</sup>. It cannot be denied that Islamic institutions in the State of Brunei Darussalam produce a steady stream of graduates who have knowledge of the Koran every year, especially from the Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Tahfiz Al-Quran Institute (ITQSHHB). As a result, the Al-Huffaz management has seized this opportunity and has provided an avenue for these graduates to use their skills and abilities.

This group also uses social media applications such as Twitter and Instagram @alhuffazbn as their platforms to connect and interact with the Islamic community, especially young people. It cannot be denied that there are new developments and

events carried out by the Al-Huffaz Management in carrying out their activities which are made easier by social media as their main platform to approach young Muslims in the State of Brunei Darussalam.

Recently, on May 5 2019, Al-Huffaz Management has successfully launched a financing platform aimed at making Al-Quran classes more accessible to less fortunate groups. The fund is known as Baiti Baitul Quran which was established under the collaboration of AlHuffaz, Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam (BIBD) and Jabatan Pembangunan Masyarakat (JAPEM). Their goal is to use all the proceeds to cover fees for studying the Koran and Islamic religious knowledge for those who are interested in learning but do not have the ability. Those eligible to receive donations through this initiative include individuals with special needs and other underprivileged people registered under JAPEM130.

The founder of Al-Huffaz Management, Haji Mohammad Loqman Al-Hakim Bin Haji Hamdan has high hopes that in the near future, the entire Islamic community will be able to recite and study the Koran in line with His Majesty's decision to see the State of Brunei Darussalam as a fulfilling country. with Muslims who are familiar with the Koran. (Illiterate Al-Quran Zero and Islamic Financial Zero)131 .

Another interesting group of young Muslims is known as Syababul Iman. Recently, founder Dr Hajah Umami Fa'izah Binti Haji Abdul Rahman who is a lecturer at the Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University (UNISSA) was awarded the Youth Khidmat Award for her community and youth development program during the 14th National Youth Day celebration on August 8. , 2019 (Wardi, 2019). As one of the pioneering youth mosque clubs in Brunei, Syababul Iman which is based at the Sultan Sharif Ali Mosque, Kampung Sengkurong has engaged with more than 1,000 young people through self-development programs (Biz, 2019).

Previously, he wanted to create a creative approach in spreading Islamic da'wah among young people in Brunei Darussalam. Seeing that he believed that young people were not interested in attending religious lectures alone, he began to apply elements of

Islam through programs provided to young people such as leadership, ice-breakers and games. Just like AlHuffaz Management, Syababul Iman also uses social media such as Facebook and Instagram (@syabaul\_iman) to interact and inform their members about their upcoming events, in addition to uploading posts that foster Islamic knowledge to their online followers. Both groups have indirectly spread Islamic da'wah online through their social media accounts.

Currently, the Syababul Iman program is to provide a conducive environment for young Muslims in the State of Brunei Darussalam. One of Syababul Iman's programs, known as Be Proactive, aims to address the issue of unemployment among young people.

In this program, learning skills are provided to young people in terms of leadership skills, writing a good curriculum vitae and guidelines for attending interview sessions. Founder Dr. Hajah Ummi Fa'izah said, today's youth face new challenges where they must be pro-active to remain relevant in an increasingly competitive society. The key to success, as he believes, is to go beyond academics or the existing curriculum implemented by the government to deal with the issue of unemployment among young people in the State of Brunei Darussalam.

Therefore, these two established local Islamic groups have shown that there is an opportunity to achieve great success among young Muslims in the State of Brunei Darussalam. They never stop playing a bigger role as a forum for carrying out Islamic da'wah and implementing simple Islamic knowledge through social media.

## CONCLUSION

Social media is a powerful platform for Islamic da'wah where spreading information about Islam to others is a religious obligation upon every Muslim. Although there are challenges in obtaining valid information about Islam on social media, social media has emerged as the easiest platform to disseminate information about Islam to Islamic communities and has the potential to foster a truly international Islamic community.

Furthermore, Muslims should take this opportunity to make the best use of it for the benefit of Islam and Muslims as a whole.

Positive use of social media can be very useful for increasing Islamic da'wah and advancing beyond the local Islamic community. Young Muslims in the State of Brunei Darussalam have shown a sincere desire to share their thoughts, emotions and ideals with others. With the spread of Islamic da'wah through social media among Islamic youth, it has become a challenge for Islamic scholars, parents, educators and activists to share ethical codes and guidelines for appropriate behavior and written expressions in harmony with the Al-Quran. and Hadith. It is the right combination needed for virtual Islamic da'wah through social media in the State of Brunei Darussalam.

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