

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter is written around the variables of this study. It was done after searching an academic web database and library research. This chapter explains and clarifies the concept of da'wah in Islam, the historical evolution of da'wah practices, early da'wah practices in Islam, da'wah during Islamic empires and golden ages, da'wah in modern times and the digital era, the role of social media, da'wah in social media and the multifaceted challenges to contemporary da'wah.

#### 2.1 The Concept of Da'wah in Islam

The term “da'wah” originates from the Arabic language, specifically from the noun “*māṣḍār*” which is derived from the verb “*ḍā'a, yād'u*.” This verb signifies the act of calling, inviting, or summoning others (Haryanto, 2014). This description has prompted Muslims to recognize their position as devout servants of Allah, encouraging them to enhance their understanding of Islamic teachings and engage in the dissemination of knowledge to the *māḍ'u*. Furthermore, it is worth noting that da'wah can be adapted to conform with local cultural norms, if it is consistent with religious principles (Mohd. Amirul Akhbar, 2011).

Da'wah refers to the deliberate and systematic endeavour to communicate, extend an invitation, or advocate for the understanding, acceptance, and adoption of Islam among individuals. This process is facilitated through the utilization of specific methodologies, strategies, and techniques (Syahir, 2013). In essence, the term “da'wah” refers to a summons or invitation. Within the framework of da'wah, any action or initiative that promotes the principles of “*Āmr bil Mā'rūf & Nāḥī Ānīl Mūnkār*” can be

considered a form of da'wah. The assertion has been previously mentioned in the Qur'an and the Hadith. Allah SWT said in Surah Ali-Imran verse 104:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ { ١٠٤ }

Translation: "Let there be a group among you who call 'others' to goodness, encourage what is good, and forbid what is evil—it is they who will be successful."

While, scholars have given various definitions of da'wah. One notable aspect is that Ibn Manzur ascribes the definition of da'wah to encompass both the act of summoning individuals to embrace specific principles and the act of prohibiting such goals for all. According to Abd Karim Zaydan, da'wah can be seen as the act of inviting individuals to follow the path of Allah S.W.T. Then Allah SWT said in Surah Yusuf verse 108:

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ عَالِيًا بَصِيرَةً أَنَا وَمَنْ اتَّبَعَنِي ۖ وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ { ١٠٨ }

Translation: Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me. And exalted is Allāh; and I am not of those who associate others with Him."

From this verse, the invitation being extended pertains to the path of Allah, which is seen to be synonymous with the path of Islam, the religious tradition that was divinely revealed to the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W.

In Syalabi's (1976) study, the concept of da'wah is defined as a transformative endeavour aimed at transitioning society from a state of disbelief to one of faith, from obscurity to enlightenment, and from a limited perspective to a more expansive one, both in the present world and in the realm beyond. According to Muhammad al-Ghazali (1981), da'wah encompasses a comprehensive framework that encompasses several

levels, encompassing the dissemination of knowledge necessary for clarifying the purpose and objectives of human existence, as well as providing guidance along the route to be followed.

In addition, Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradawi (1983) provides a definition of da'wah as a concerted effort to guide individuals towards embracing the religion of Allah in accordance with His teachings. This includes the implementation of Allah's commandments on earth, the cultivation of unwavering devotion solely to Him, the rejection of any form of non-divine tyranny (known as *taḡhūt*) that compels obedience, the recognition and protection of the rights established by Allah, the promotion of virtuous deeds, the prevention of wrongdoing, and the pursuit of *ijtihad* in alignment with His principles.

Next, Abul A'la Al Maududiy (1939), has provided a concise overview of the concept and objectives of da'wah, highlighting three primary aspects about its overall goal and intended audience. The initial observation asserts that da'wah is aimed at the entirety of humanity, with a specific emphasis on Muslims, to promote the worship of Allah. It emphasizes the need to refrain from imposing any obligations upon Allah and avoiding the worship of any deity other than Allah.

The second primary argument posits that da'wah is directed towards individuals who are prepared to embrace Islam as their faith, purify their convictions, recognize Allah as their sole deity, rid their souls of the ailment of hypocrisy, and consistently ensure that their actions align with the principles of their chosen religion.

The third key argument pertains to advocating for a universal transformation of oppressive governmental systems, which have been shown to inflict surface-level harm upon the Earth. This transformation involves the transfer of leadership, both in theory and in practice, from the current governing entities to individuals who possess a strong

belief in Allah and the Hereafter, diligently adhere to religious teachings, and refrain from exhibiting arrogance.

Based on the information above, it can be inferred that da'wah serves the purpose of reaching out to all individuals, with a particular emphasis on Muslims, in order to promote the acceptance of Islam as a religious belief and the acknowledgement of Allah as the supreme deity. Furthermore, da'wah encompasses a comprehensive approach that encompasses the Islamic leadership system. It is important to note that da'wah is not restricted solely to Muslims, but extends to non-Muslims as well.

Al-Quran also mentions a lot about the meaning and concept of Islamic da'wah itself. One of the sources that conveys this message is the verse 125 of Surah An-Nahl in the Quran, when Allah S.W.T. said:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ ۚ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ { ١٢٥ }

Translation: "Invite 'all' to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and kind advice, and only debate with them in the best manner. Surely your Lord 'alone' knows best who has strayed from His Way and who is 'rightly' guided."

Thus, it emphasized the significance of da'wah as a fundamental obligation for Muslims, encompassing the responsibility to fulfil the prophetic tasks of disseminating Allah's message to humanity, to guide individuals towards the righteous path. Also, a method of teaching individuals to practice Islam by observing all Allah's commands and adhering to the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, which is based on the Quran and Hadith.

As in the words of Prophet Muhammad SAW narrated by Imam Muslim:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: "مَنْ رَأَى مِنْكُمْ مُنْكَرًا فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ، وَذَلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الْإِيمَانِ."

Translation: I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, "Whosoever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then [let him change it] with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart — and that is the weakest of faith."

[Sahih Muslim: 184, Riyad as-Salihin]

The act of da'wah is seen obligatory for all Muslim individuals, including Muslim women. However, the attitude and methods used in this attempt must be approached with prudence and mindfulness. Da'wah in a violent manner or in a manner that contradicts religious principles is prohibited and included in secularism (Faisal Ashaari, 2021).

When it comes to moral and ethical behaviour, it is crucial to consistently promote positive actions, referred to as *Amr Bilmā'rūf*, in alignment with social norms and values. Similarly, the discouragement of immoral actions, referred to as prohibition of evil, should likewise be approached in a manner that aligns with accepted standards of conduct. To effectively convey the message of da'wah without engendering conflicts within the social fabric of the society.

## 2.2 Historical Evolution of Da'wah Practices

Da'wah, or the act of welcoming others to Islam and communicating its principles, has been a part of Islamic tradition from its foundation. The concept of da'wah has become increasingly familiar within the Muslim world. However, it is crucial to undertake this duty with the highest level of seriousness and diligence. Nowadays, the advent of internet and communication technology has contributed to the progression and broadening of perspectives on da'wah among individuals (Habibullah, 2021).

Throughout history, the techniques, methodologies, and approaches utilized for da'wah activities have transformed to adapt to one-way societal, cultural, and technical environments. Da'wah is no more merely offering lectures or *tabligh akbar*, or giving speeches from a person to another at mosque or in class. Da'wah is understood and delivered in a variety of ways today. Da'wah can be done through music, films, *salawat*, arts, and even sports (Sharifuddin, 2006).

In the past, when a teacher delivered a sermon at a mosque, the intended audience were limited to the congregation present within the mosque premises and its immediate surroundings. However, with the advancements in information and communication technology, the da'wah delivered by religious scholars, or in Malay better known as “*ustaz*”, able to reach a much wider audience without any constraints or limitations. Audience or the “*māḍ'ū*,” or listeners, possesses the capability to conduct live broadcasts utilizing various social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and others. Consequently, the audience for these broadcasts is not limited solely to those present in the mosque's vicinity, but has the potential to transcend beyond territorial and geographic borders.

The unquestionable benefit of social media is that it is visually appealing, quick, and simple, and it only takes a few seconds for the *ḍā'ī* to deliver Islamic teachings to the community. It also encourages two-way contact between the *ḍā'ī* and the community through forums and written feedback in various corners of social media. This section explores the historical development of da'wah practices, tracking their progression from the early stages of Islam to the present digital era.

### 2.2.1 Early Da'wah Practices in Islam

The origins of the practice of da'wah in Islam began in the early years of the faith when Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) began his prophetic mission in 610 CE. During this era, the methodology employed for da'wah was distinguished by the utilisation of direct interpersonal engagement, oral discourse, and the demonstration of exemplary behaviour. The Prophet's own behaviour and teachings laid the foundation for the compassionate and empathetic approach that has become synonymous with the reach of Islam (Saifur Rahman, 1996).

Prophet Muhammad's da'wah journey began with the intimate circle of his family and friends. He engages in thoughtful conversation, answering their questions and concerns with patience and wisdom. The adoption of a personalised strategy enables him to cultivate significant relationships, thereby promoting an atmosphere characterised by trust and comprehension. As the dissemination of the Islamic message gained momentum, the Prophet directed his efforts towards the establishment of a cohesive Muslim society distinguished by its adherence to ethical principles and a collective sense of accountability. The notion of "*ummah*," denoting a cohesive Muslim community, surfaced as a significant element within the context of early da'wah. The Prophet advocated for individuals to exemplify the ideals of Islam via their conduct, so extending an invitation to others to accept the religion by witnessing its beneficial impact on society.

During his tenure in Medina, the Prophet observed the imperative of fortifying the Muslim community by establishing fundamental pillars of communal existence. According to Yahya Othman (2012), these included the construction of a mosque, fostering a sense of brotherhood between the *Muhajirin* (migrants) and the *Ansar* (local inhabitants), and forging reciprocal assistance agreements among Muslims and non-Muslims. Subsequently, the Prophet devised the Madinah charter, which included the

Muslim and Jewish communities. The charter ultimately evolved into the fundamental legislation of the State and the inaugural Islamic administration. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) established a State that was founded around the ideals of equality, freedom, and brotherhood. The Arab people, the Jewish nation, and all inhabitants of the Islamic commonwealth are granted equal and unrestricted participation in the formation of a novel socio-political framework.

The Prophet's engagements with different factions within the heterogeneous population of Mecca exemplify his empathetic methodology in the dissemination of da'wah. The individual acknowledges the significance of interacting with individuals at their current level of understanding, fostering open and constructive conversations, and addressing their uncertainties and apprehensions with a patient approach. This method places significant emphasis on comprehending the specific context of individuals and customising the message to effectively resonate with the intended audience. In his sermons, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) employed various strategies, including the exploration of the concept of love. It was once narrated in a story how the Prophet's attitude in serving an Arab Bedouin who had urinated in a mosque, then the crowd got up to beat him, then the Messenger of Allah S.W.T said:

دَعُوهُ، وَأَهْرِيفُوا عَلَى بَوْلِهِ دُنُوبًا مِنْ مَاءٍ - أَوْ سَجَلًا مِنْ مَاءٍ - فَإِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُمْ  
مُيسِّرِينَ، وَلَمْ تُبْعَثُوا مُعَسِّرِينَ

Translation: "You have been sent to make things easy (for the people) and you have not been sent to make things difficult for them."

[Sahih al-Bukhari: 6128]

Through this story it is clear the nature of gentleness and love shown by the Prophet SAW in da'wah.

### 2.2.2 Da'wah During Islamic Empires and Golden Ages

The Islamic Empire throughout its golden period experienced significant advancements in science, culture, and the dissemination of religious beliefs. During this era, the practise of da'wah had a significant transformation, which was shaped by the intellectual, political, and social circumstances prevailing at that time. The convergence of academia, commerce, and geographical development provided a conducive environment for the dissemination of Islamic doctrines.

The Golden Age of Islam, which included various empires and dynasties, was marked by the development of knowledge and the establishment of intellectual centres. Scholars, theologians, philosophers, and jurists engage in vigorous debate and discussion on religious matters. The significance of these discusses lies in their ability to enhance comprehension of Islamic teachings and augment the intellectual profundity of da'wah.

One significant advancement that occurred during the golden age was the translation movement, which played a pivotal role in enabling the translation of various works from Greek, Persian, Indian, and other languages into Arabic (Megawati, 2019). The movement facilitated the expansion of intellectual perspectives within the Islamic context, fostering a platform for the interchange of ideas across diverse cultural boundaries. Missionaries and academics, equipped with translated religious materials, embarked on expeditions to remote regions, disseminating the principles of Islam and its teachings to a variety of populations.

The mosque not only functioned as a place of worship but also a centre of study and da'wah during the Islamic empire. These structures often include spaces for lectures, discussions, and the dissemination of Islamic knowledge. Educational institutions, commonly referred to as madrasahs, have arisen as prominent centres for

intellectual discourse, providing a wide range of courses encompassing theology, law, philosophy, and various other academic fields.

The information produced during this period disseminated through trade routes and scholastic networks, extending its influence to far regions such as Malaysia. The comprehension of Islamic teachings in different regions of the Islamic world, such as Southeast Asia, was shaped by the influence of Islamic academics hailing from the centres of imperial learning. The propagation and establishment of Islam in the Malay World can be attributed to the influential contributions and proselytization efforts of merchants and traders hailing from the Arabian Peninsula and India (Zulkiflee Haron et. al. 2015). They serve as agents of da'wah, also known as agents of change, with the aim of converting local non-believers to embrace the Islamic faith.

Furthermore, the traders and merchants not only participate in religious discussions, but also display a visually pleasant behaviour and possess virtuous attributes such as reliability, integrity, consideration, and responsibility. As a result, they earn the favour and admiration of the local community. Like the occurrence of da'wah in the Malay world, it also transpired in the region of Sarawak. Sarawak, initially under the colonial rule of the Sultanate of Brunei, had a process of da'wah influenced by the Sultanate of Brunei. Subsequently, the progress of the missionary endeavours was impeded due to the dismissal of James Brooke, who assumed the position of the Rajah of Sarawak and spearheaded the Christian mission in the region. The propagation of da'wah in Sarawak is perpetuated by indigenous religious individuals over generations, while encountering many challenges.

Malaysia is one of the independent countries that lived as an Islamic kingdom before being colonized by Western countries. According to Zainah Anwar (1990) in her book "*Kebangkitan Islam di Malaysia*," since long ago almost in the entire Malay

peninsula or Western Malaysia there have been sultanates with Islamic laws. The influence of Islam on the native population of Malaysia or Malays has been deeply rooted after they discarded their belief in animism and embraced Islam. During the 15th century, within the Malacca kingdom, it is evident that the Malays exhibited a steadfast adherence to their religious beliefs without undergoing any significant religious conversions. While not all individuals within this group exhibit religious adherence to Islam, their commitment to Islamic ideals, beliefs, and sentiments is very strong.

Furthermore, the resurgence of Islam in Malaysia was spearheaded by students and young professionals who established small study groups. Religion is a subject of research not just within the realm of politics, but also within the domain of social sciences. Systematic initiatives are undertaken to enhance the overall well-being of the Malay populace, who constitute the bulk of the Muslim community, through the establishment and operation of Islamic da'wah institutions. According to Ishak Saat (2022), the resurgence of Islam through Islamic movements in the Islamic world has revitalised the efforts of this religious group in Malaysia.

In accordance with the scholarly work titled "Islam and Development" authored by John L. Esposito in 1979, it is stated that there exist seven currently operational da'wah organisations in Peninsular Malaysia. These groups are specifically identified as follows: 1. The Institute of Islamic Da'wah, which is supported by the Prime Minister's Department. 2. Yayasan Da'wah Islam is supported by Yayasan Islam both domestically in Malaysia and internationally. 3. ABIM, also known as Angkatan Belia Malaysia, is a non-governmental organisation that relies on external financial support. 4. The organisation known as PERKIM (Perkumpulan Islam Muallaf) is supported and headed by Tengku Abdul Rahman, with contributions from both domestic and international governmental entities. 5. Darul Arkam is a collective of religious experts

who are oriented towards a communal lifestyle. 6. Jamiya Tabligh Islamiyah is an assembly of religious scholars. 7. The Jama'atul Tabligh Islamiyah in India is a radical organisation. This group has been responsible for the mobilisation of Islamic da'wah in Malaysia, primarily consisting of students and young professionals hailing from universities within or outside the nation.

The dominating da'wah organisation that garnered significant attention from both the media and religious and political leaders was ABIM, founded in 1971. The initial leadership of this organisation was assumed by Anwar Ibrahim, a highly charismatic activist and skilled leader. The primary objective is to cultivate a more profound understanding of Islamic ideology within the Malay community. The ABIM organisation is a non-profit organisation that focuses on da'wah activities aimed at fostering the development and education of the Muslim community, with the goal of enhancing the overall well-being and welfare of Muslims. Norhisyam (1999), provides a description of the many kinds of ABIM da'wah, encompassing da'wah *bīl liṣān*, *bīl kīṭābāh* and *bīl ḥāl*. Da'wah activities in the field of da'wah *bīl liṣān* include: delivering lectures to various study groups on a regular basis, including daily, weekly, and monthly intervals. ABIM, in addition to the classification of da'wah *bīl liṣān* and da'wah *bīl kīṭābāh*, also refers to them as da'wah *bīl ḥāl*. Da'wah *bīl ḥāl* activities are prioritized for the development and construction of mosques and madrasahs. Funds for these activities are obtained from the government. ABIM's task is to manage and make production reports that have been used every year to the government.

### **2.2.3 Da'wah in the Digital Era**

The advent of modernity and the consequent rise of the digital age have significantly transformed the practise of da'wah, leading to a substantial influence on the dissemination of Islamic teachings and the engagement of various demographics. The

intersection of these two eras has brought new opportunities and challenges, fostering an evolution in the way Islam is presented and understood (Zanirah, 2018).

In an era of rapid development in Malaysia, social problems among Malaysians cannot be denied anymore. Incidents such as baby dumping, rape and murder, drug use, robbery, as well as various other crimes are increasing day by day. This gives a bad image to Islam when the average perpetrator of the crime is from among Muslims. The existence of da'wah activists in the field of society gives a new light in the process of reforming Malaysian society. Da'wah activists have played their role as change agents in curbing social problems in Malaysian society. They do their best to bring the Malaysian community that is far from the teachings of Islam to return to practicing the values contained in Islam. Complete preparation is very important for a da'wah activist when jumping into the field of society so that they are solid and always committed in carrying out the task of "*Āmr bīl Ma'rūf & Nāhi' Anīl Mūnkār*" in the middle of the Muslim community that is getting further away from the teachings of Islam.

The nature of da'wah activities likewise undergoes transformation in accordance with societal advancements. Commencing with verbal presentations such as lectures, *tazkirah*, Friday sermons, and holiday sermons. This approach entails the direct and personal transmission of religious teachings, sometimes referred to as face-to-face interaction or human contact. Furthermore, the act of da'wah has been facilitated through the utilisation of certain media platforms as intermediaries, first with the transcription of teachings into written form within books, which are subsequently disseminated through publication. This composition incorporates both scientific (academic) discourse and non-scientific discourse.

According to Atiqah (2020), the advent of mass media has significantly impacted the practise of da'wah, with electronic mass media becoming as a prominent

platform for disseminating Islamic teachings. Malaysia, as a growing nation, is actively utilising media platforms to disseminate religious messages throughout its population. In accordance with the progress of the nation, a multitude of media platforms emerged to disseminate information among the populace of Malaysia, encompassing both conventional mediums such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, books, and the like, as well as contemporary forms including the internet, websites, and social media platforms. Apart from channels to convey information and entertainment, the media is also a powerful vehicle to preach to the public. The flood of new media today, in no way undermines the function of the traditional media in conveying the message of “*Amr bīl Mā’rūf & Nāhi’ Āni’l Mūnkār*” (asking to do good and prevent evil). In fact, Rosmawati (2011) said that new media is seen as a complement to traditional media in delivering da’wah messages.

Currently, the method of disseminating Islamic da’wah is experiencing a renewed shift to align with contemporary technology advancements. The utilisation of social media as an alternative platform for the dissemination of Islamic da’wah, particularly targeting the younger demographic, has been observed among *dā’i* (Faradillah, 2014; Ahmad Zahiruddin & Faisal, 2014; & Muhammad Faisal & Nur Adhwa, 2012). The utilisation of this medium holds significance due to Islam’s promotion of maximising opportunities for enhancing the efficacy of Islamic da’wah (Norlain & Dindang, 1998; Ruzain, 2011; Nursyazrin, 2012; Nik Roskiman, 2013 & Khodijah, Rafiza, & Mohd Nufran, 2015). This is in accordance with the purpose of delivering Islamic da’wah, which is to give clear explanations and presentations about the religion of Islam (Md Rozalafri & Rosmawati, 2011).

The emergence of contemporary transport and communication technology has brought about a notable transformation in the outreach capacities of da’wah. The

utilisation of print media, radio broadcasts, and television programmes enables the dissemination of Islamic teachings beyond geographical limitations, thereby extending their accessibility to people that were previously inaccessible. These platforms facilitate the dissemination of religious knowledge and provide a forum for public discourse on Islamic topics.

The development of this technology is also more evident in the world of animation. The process of drawing frame by frame 12 to 25 times for every second has been simplified with the use of a computer. Fariz Azmir and Marzuki Abdullah (2021) said that once the local animation companies began to establish themselves, the spirit to preach or produce works that directly benefited the religion arose. During the early 2010s, the animation sector experienced growth, primarily influenced by a cohort of emerging individuals who had recently transitioned into parenthood.

There exists a tremendous inclination to offer Islamic forms of entertainment. The nursery rhymes commonly imparted to young children are perceived as less suitable. Among the employees and animation artists have begun to express their desire and generate ideas to produce more Islamic animation works with songs that praise the Almighty. Also in 2010, the first free to air TV broadcast based on the Islamic concept, TV Al Hijrah was launched. People's acceptance is very encouraging. This has catalysed animation employees to try to publish animation with an Islamic concept. In 2011, the animated series "Haiya BidDoa" was published and "Haiya BidDoa" is a collaborative venture between CIC Malaysia and Tulus Fikir Sdn Bhd, resulting in the production of a series of 3D animation capsules. This series aims to educate young children on the significance of daily prayer.

The emergence of the digital era, marked by the proliferation of the internet and advanced communication technology, brought about a significant transformation in the

practise of da'wah. The internet is increasingly transforming into an expansive reservoir of Islamic materials, hence facilitating the widespread availability of knowledge pertaining to the faith for a global audience. The advent of websites, forums, and online publications has given rise to platforms for the dissemination of Islamic knowledge, hence fostering the creation of a virtual community including individuals engaged in learning and exploration.

In the 21st century, the addition of social media platforms has redefined the dynamics of da'wah engagement. Social media, with its interactive nature and global reach, has become an important tool for Islamic outreach. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube have facilitated the practise of da'wah by providing opportunities to engage with individuals on a personal level, fostering conversations and enabling real-time exchanges. The utilisation of live streaming, videos, posts, and hashtags has emerged as effective tools for disseminating Islamic teachings and promoting core values.

Contemporary da'wah methodologies place significant emphasis on employing a diverse range of strategies that effectively respond to the tastes of diverse digital audiences. Various forms of media, such as written articles, multimedia presentations, films, podcasts, infographics, and webinars, have emerged as significant elements within the realm of modern da'wah. The presence of several formats enables the practise to effectively engage individuals with different learning styles and effectively adapt to the rapid speed of the digital era.

In the study conducted by Ab Aziz Mohd Zain (2001), it was found that da'wah channels and media serve as instrumental means for the dissemination of material or messages to certain target audiences. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) employed several channels and media for the purpose of da'wah. These included

personal connections, hadiths (narrations of the Prophet’s sayings and actions), the Qur’an, the Prophet’s speeches, publications, and his overall da’wah efforts.

The widespread adoption of digital media has also had an impact on various stakeholders involved in da’wah operations. One notable example is the integration of social media platforms by Islamic religious departments.

Table 2. 1 List of Islamic Agencies Website

Islamic Agencies	Social Media / Website
Department of Islamic Development Malaysia or <i>Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia</i> (JAKIM)	<a href="https://www.islam.gov.my/ms/">https://www.islam.gov.my/ms/</a>
Department of Syariah Judiciary Malaysia or <i>Jabatan Kehakiman Syariah Malaysia</i> (JKSM)	<a href="http://www.jksm.gov.my/">http://www.jksm.gov.my/</a>
Department of Waqaf, Zakat and Hajj or <i>Jabatan Wakaf, Zakat Dan Haji</i> (JAWHAR)	<a href="https://www.jawhar.gov.my/">https://www.jawhar.gov.my/</a>
Federal Territory Islamic Religious Council or <i>Majlis Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan</i> (MAIWP)	<a href="https://www.maiwp.gov.my/i/index.php/en/">https://www.maiwp.gov.my/i/index.php/en/</a>
Islamic Religious Department of the Federal Territory or <i>Jabatan Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan</i> (JAWI)	<a href="https://www.jawi.gov.my/">https://www.jawi.gov.my/</a>
TH Foundation or <i>Lembaga Tabung Haji</i> (Tabung Haji, TH)	<a href="https://www.tabunghaji.gov.my/">https://www.tabunghaji.gov.my/</a>
Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia or <i>Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia</i> (IKIM)	<a href="https://www.ikim.gov.my/">https://www.ikim.gov.my/</a>
Islamic Da’wah Foundation Malaysia or <i>Yayasan Dakwah Islamiah Malaysia</i> (YADIM)	<a href="https://www.yadim.com.my/v2/">https://www.yadim.com.my/v2/</a>

In conclusion, the act of da’wah in contemporary times, particularly within the context of the digital era has experienced a profound transformation. The convergence of modernity and technology has broadened the reach of Islamic teachings and created opportunities for meaningful engagement on a global scale. Nonetheless, professionals

in the field are confronted with the difficulties arising from an excessive amount of information, the presence of false or misleading material, and the need to maintain cultural integrity while still adhering to the principles of Islamic outreach, which include empathy, recognising privilege, and commitment to fostering understanding and dialogue.

### **2.3 The Role of Social Media Platforms**

Social media is an online platform that offers many functionalities to facilitate social interactions among its users. One of the primary functions of social media platforms is facilitating communication and interaction among users, enabling the exchange of information and content through various mediums such as text, images, and videos. The segmented material offers unrestricted access to a wide range of information, which remains available to all users of social media platforms over a 24-hour period. Social media itself is basically part of the development of the internet. The presence of the past few decades has made social media able to develop and grow as widely and quickly as it is today.

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), there exist six distinct categories of social media platforms. These categories include Social Network Sites such as Facebook, Community Content such as YouTube, Blogs, and Microblogs such as Twitter, Joint Venture Projects such as Wikipedia, Virtual World Games such as World of Warcraft where users like world games virtual and make users addicted to using it and Social Virtual Worlds like Second Life. Social networking websites, like Facebook, are experiencing a significant increase in popularity. Facebook has emerged as the most widely used platform, with a staggering 350 million registered members globally (Facebook Company Profile, n.d).

Malaysia is also no exception to this phenomenon. Based on statistics released by Data Reportal, the expected number of social media users in Malaysia as of January 2023 is at 26.8 million. Among these users, the YouTube application has garnered the greatest user base, with approximately 25.9 million individuals said to be actively surfing the platform. According to data published on the Pew Research Centre website in 2015, the age group of 18-29 years exhibits the highest level of engagement among users. This trend is similarly observed in Malaysia, as indicated by studies conducted by Nizlan (2011), Kee (2013), Che Hasniza (2013), and Mohammad Faizal, Mohd Razali, Nik Mohd Saiful, and Amir Asraf (2013). Based on an article published in The Star on November 17, 2012, it was reported that individuals who utilise the internet dedicate approximately 20 hours per week to online activities. In addition, it is noteworthy that a significant proportion of internet users in Malaysia, over 80%, engage in the monthly practise of downloading videos.

Aware of the advantages of new media, *Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia* (JAKIM), for example, has used the latest technology in its da'wah activities, including the use of the internet. *Yayasan Dakwah Islamiah Malaysia* (YADIM) is actively engaged in disseminating religious teachings through several online platforms, including its official website, Facebook, and Twitter. In addition, several Islamic organisations in Malaysia, such as *Yayasan Pembangunan Ekonomi Islam Malaysia* (YAPEIM), *Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia* (PERKIM), *Majlis Agama Islam Melaka* (MAIM), *Majlis Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan* (MAIWP), and *Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia* (IKIM), utilise new media platforms.

The advent of social media platforms has significantly transformed the practise of da'wah in contemporary times, exerting a profound impact on its whole environment.

The utilisation of this platform has brought about a significant transformation in the

dissemination of Islamic teachings, facilitation of discussions, and establishment of communal bonds. The multifaceted nature of social media enables practitioners to establish unprecedented connections with audiences in the context of da'wah. The proliferation of social media usage throughout the community has presented novel prospects for Islamic da'wah endeavours. This emerging opportunity opens a new alternative to the delivery method of Islamic da'wah among *dā'īe* with the ability to give a better effect because it is more interactive, fast, and diverse in its functions (Faradillah, 2014; & Adlene & Fauziah, 2016). Meanwhile, the community can get information related to religion more easily (Pardianto, 2013).

One of the main strengths of social media platforms is their global reach and accessibility. *Dā'īe* can connect with persons residing in diverse regions across the globe, thereby surpassing the limitations imposed by geographical boundaries. The accessibility of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube facilitate the dissemination of the da'wah message to a broad and diverse range of individuals. Social media platforms facilitate interactive engagement, facilitating direct interaction between the *dā'īe* and their viewers. The utilisation of live streaming sessions, live chats, and comment sections facilitates immediate and interactive dialogues, question-and-answer exchanges, and deliberations pertaining to diverse subjects associated with Islam. This interactivity creates a sense of community and inclusion, fostering a two-way dialogue that cannot be done through traditional media.

Through the use of social media, various current needs of Muslims can be expressed according to contemporary demands that are in accordance with Islamic teachings and which are always an alternative for Muslims today. The use of media in Islam should emphasize the concept of monotheism and make Islam the model of their

lives. The media's position in Islam should emphasise ideals that align with the teachings prescribed by the Islamic faith. Within the realm of Islamic communication, which encompasses a broad range of media, it is stipulated that Islamic media should align with the fundamental principles and objectives of the Islamic faith. It is contained in al-Quran Surah al-Hujurat verse 6:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصِحُّوا  
 عَلَيَّ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ تَلَٰمِينَ { ٦ }

Translation: "O believers, if an evildoer brings you any news, verify 'it' so you do not harm people unknowingly, becoming regretful for what you have done."

It is clear here that the media's role should be based and modelled on the principle of truth supported by clear facts and evidence. Without clear evidence and facts, it will damage unity and even result in division between Muslims. News that is disseminated relying on speculation, hearsay, or deliberate deception need to be categorically dismissed.

Social media platforms facilitate the rapid and widespread distribution of information. During significant occurrences like as events, holidays, or religious celebrations, da'wah practitioners can disseminate messages, reminders, and reflections promptly. The proximity between religious teachings and current events enables timely interaction and opportunity to establish connections between religious principles and daily life.

### 2.3.1 Da'wah in Social Media in Malaysia

In the 1990s, the use of the internet for Islamic proselytising activities began to increase in Malaysia. Online da'wah is known as e-da'wah. Meanwhile, the group that uses technology as a da'wah medium is known as "*tekno daie*" after it was first introduced

by the Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (IKIM) through a series of workshops and seminars organized around the 1990s (Shaikh Saifuddin, 2009). The incorporation of technology in da'wah endeavours is driven by the technologists' recognition of the significance and potential that arise within the realm of new media. According to Azizan (2014), the utilisation of the internet for disseminating Islamic da'wah is limited among government organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), except for religious entities like *Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia* (JAKIM). Rohani (2015) said that religion and media cannot be separated because both need each other.

Nevertheless, the utilisation of social media platforms, particularly Facebook, for the dissemination of Islamic da'wah does not imply a complete substitution of traditional mediums. Rather, it serves as an additional and alternative channel for communication. The continued relevance and necessity of the existing medium in contemporary Islamic da'wah activities can be attributed to various factors. Social media serves as an additional asset to the preexisting media platforms, contributing to the diversification of the dissemination methods employed in Islamic da'wah.

In fact, the idea that was pioneered by Fidler (1997) and referred to as “*mediamorphosis*” (change in media communication) lends credence to this particular concern. This approach facilitates a comprehensive integration of new media and conventional media, resulting in a mutually reinforcing form of media communication. Social media has been selected as a supplementary and alternative medium due to its heightened interactivity compared to traditional media platforms. According to Nur Aina, Nor Fatin, Mohd Shauqi, and Md Rozalafri (2013), the inclusion of this element enhances effective two-way interaction with the intended audience and is expected to

significantly influence their cognitive processing and comprehension of the transmitted message.

Furthermore, the utilisation of social media platforms to disseminate Islamic da'wah is driven by the evolving information-seeking behaviour observed within contemporary culture. This group is more at ease utilising new platforms, which are social media that are closest to them in terms of information accessibility. This factor causes the community to be more impressed by the delivered sermon. According to the findings of a study conducted by Kee (2013), one of the reasons young people choose social media is because of its capacity to disseminate and facilitate the sharing of information.

Additionally, among other social media that can be used as a medium in the delivery of da'wah is Instagram. Adlene and Fauziah (2016) have conducted research pertaining to the dissemination of Islamic da'wah messages through the Instagram profiles of two prominent Malaysian celebrities. The findings of the study indicate that both celebrities possess distinct strengths and shortcomings in effectively conveying the message of Islamic da'wah. The study's findings also demonstrate that each have their own fan bases and followers, therefore the professor emphasised the need of celebrities and *dā'īe* being prepared and knowledgeable when it comes to Islamic da'wah. In the meantime, Mr. Hamid, Fadzli, and Wan Solihin (2014) investigated the acceptability of blogs in Malaysian IPTA classrooms. The research findings indicate that the acceptance of blogs as a medium for da'wah is due, in part, to their simplicity of use, the credibility of the source, and prior religious knowledge.

To enhance the efficacy of their da'wah efforts, social media *dā'īe* must possess a comprehensive understanding of the distinct characteristics exhibited by netizens, who inherently differ from individuals in conventional society. According to the findings of

a study conducted by Zulkiple Abdul Ghani (2014), the dominant demographic of ICT users in the Klang Valley region consisted of males below the age of 40, constituting 75% of the sample. Furthermore, a significant majority of these users, approximately 83%, possessed at least a bachelor's degree. The study also revealed that a substantial proportion of these individuals, accounting for 76%, were employed in academic, professional, managerial, or administrative positions. Additionally, most ICT users in this demographic reported a monthly income ranging between RM1000-10,000, with approximately 83% falling within this income bracket.

Furthermore, the population of ICT users, namely students in higher education institutions, is experiencing significant growth due to the widespread availability of internet connection in both educational and professional settings. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that individuals who engage in online activities, commonly referred to as netizens, exhibit a consistent pattern of utilising the World Wide Web (WWW) browser daily. This frequency ranges from as little as once a day to as high as nine times a day, with a subset of users dedicating up to 40 hours per week to browsing activities. These activities encompass a wide range of reasons, including educational pursuits, perusing online news publications, establishing connections with fellow users, professional endeavours, engaging in e-commerce, and seeking pleasure.

This relates to a trait that must exist within the spirit of a *dā'īe* who wishes to engage in social media da'wah, namely sensitivity and adaptability. According to Abdullah Muhammad Zin (2000), to guarantee the future success of da'wah, *dā'īe* should be sensitive to the ever-changing nature of society. If da'wah is not adapted to the shifting environment, then da'wah activities will inevitably regress. *Dā'īe* should therefore be educated and knowledgeable, honest, and disciplined, as well as dependable and effective.

## 2.4 Multifaceted Challenges for Contemporary Da'wah

The contemporary landscape of da'wah is marked by various challenges that practitioners must overcome in their efforts to share the teachings of Islam and promote a better understanding of the faith. These challenges arise from various sources and require thoughtful strategies and adaptability to maintain the integrity and effectiveness of da'wah efforts.

One of the disadvantages of the use of media for da'wah purposes is among students and university students. For instance, extremist Islamic organisations like *Hizbut Tahrir* exploit social media platforms to disseminate their ideas and attract young individuals to join the movement in campaigning for the establishment of a *Khilāfah* state. Other examples that happened in the neighbouring country, Indonesia is the establishment of DakwahKampus.com, an Indonesian da'wah organization that has links with the *Hizbut Tahrir* group. The da'wah website DK.com is visited by approximately 1,000 visitors a day and presents itself as a da'wah organization that aims to strengthen the relationship between university students in Indonesia (Saluz 2011). However, the *Hizbut Tahrir* organization also moves abroad such as in the United Kingdom by using the internet to connect with members and groups that sympathize with them and inform them of the time, date, and place of their meetings (Whine 1999). Apart from Indonesia, there are also links between the *Hizbut Tahrir* group and students in the United Kingdom, such as the University of Birmingham Muslim student website containing *Hizbut Tahrir* leaflets, although the link cannot be proven (Whine 1999).

In addition, there are also some left-wing organizations such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) who preach using elements of electronic media in order to achieve their goal of establishing an Islamic state in Iraq and the Levant. The tactic used

by them is to approach people who do not really understand the true teachings of Islam to the point that they are deceived by the heretical teachings to achieve wrong goals.

One additional challenge encountered when engaging in online da'wah is the swift dissemination of inaccurate information, particularly within the context of the contemporary digital era. Rosmawati (2021) stated that the proliferation of false narratives, misinterpretations, and falsehoods on social media and internet platforms has the potential to lead to misunderstandings regarding Islam and its teachings. It is important for individuals engaged in da'wah to dedicate sufficient effort towards refuting erroneous information by providing precise and substantiated content. This approach is crucial in safeguarding the authentic teachings of Islam from being overshadowed by the dissemination of misleading facts.

Next, the delivery of news in Islam has basically been made carefully and passed from one generation to the next generation based on authoritative books that were revealed *mūtawāṭīr* (Musthafa al-Sibaie, 1993). The Muslim community holds in high regard the significance of the substance of religious knowledge, resulting in the perpetual preservation of Islamic information in its most authentic form, as emphasised in the Qur'an, specifically in Surah Al-Hujuraat, verse 6. In the pursuit of da'wah, the dissemination of religious material on the internet is perceived as excessively unrestricted and unregulated, allowing for its accessibility to individuals through unrestricted downloading of news content. The present scenario poses a significant challenge to the notion of *mūtawāṭīr* and the veracity of information within the context of Islam.

For example, by only being guided by the internet to make references regarding Quranic verses, it is possible that there will be factual errors such as verses from the “*Īsrāeliyāf*” version (Syed Muhammad Dawilah & Mohd Lutfi, 2009). Therefore, in

such circumstances, it is vital to refer to the original source to verify the facts and mitigate any potential ambiguity. Faizal and Mazni (2010) reached the conclusion that certain websites lack credibility. Approximately 20 percent of websites are sources of information yet its originality are unidentified. The dissemination of information through modern media might potentially perplex Muslims due to the proliferation of incorrect teachings, religious aberrations, and the promotion of a negative culture of life that contradicts Islamic principles.

The unrestricted accessibility of an online platform that facilitates the effortless discovery of religious explanations engenders an overabundance of religious knowledge, hence giving rise to the issue of information flooding. The issue of information flooding might give rise to a disorderly environment when seeking trustworthy information. Mohd Sani (2009), posits that indicators of information overload encompass many psychological states such as worry, annoyance, wrath, poor spirits, disorientation, and lack of self-control in the context of information processing. Therefore, new media such as wikis and blogs need accurate measurements and metrics to determine the credibility of information and responsibility (trustworthy). Islamic teaching information is also seen to have experienced this phase where users are increasingly squeezed by piles of religious information online in an uncontrollable manner which causes the occurrence of confusion about religious information which leads to the implication of phobia towards the content of the information which will only lead to confusion in life.

Another issue related to the use of new media as a place for religious learning is the problem that users themselves consist of various educational backgrounds. For users who have enough basic knowledge of religion, of course they can read, compare, make judgments, and analyse the information based on the religious knowledge they have to

practice. But the situation is different with users who have a minimal religious education background. This group is seen to face certain difficulties in evaluating religious information through this new media, especially in evaluating meaningful information. Thus, Zulkiple (2002) said that new media users who do not have sufficient knowledge about Islam may face problems in determining the validity of information sources.

The worldwide scope of da'wah necessitates the active involvement of practitioners in a wide range of cultural and language environments. The process of effectively understanding and interpreting Islamic teachings in many cultural contexts might present inherent complexities. Adapting the message without compromising the core principles of Islam is a challenge that requires cultural sensitivity and nuanced communication. Contemporary society often emphasizes secular values and worldviews, which can create barriers to effective da'wah. Addressing concerns related to secularism, ethics, and individualism while presenting an Islamic perspective requires careful navigation. Da'wah practitioners must express the concepts of Islam effectively, ensuring compatibility with individuals who may adhere to divergent belief systems.

In recent times, Malaysia has witnessed a series of incidents pertaining to the misuse of new media platforms in relation to Islamic religious matters. Certain persons have engaged in the dissemination of YouTube films via social media platforms, whereby remarks intended to disrespect the Islamic faith are displayed. Nevertheless, there is a contentious debate regarding whether these challenges pertain to Muslims residing in Malaysia or specifically to the Malay ethnic group. From an alternative perspective, this observation highlights the perceived shortcomings of religious leaders in Malaysia, potentially leading to a negative perception of Islam. The weakness of *dā'īe* can pertain to their limited proficiency in multimedia knowledge, which, to a certain

extent, leads to the lack of Islamic religious teachings being presented in the realm of new media.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

This chapter brings together various past studies related to the topic of the study conducted. These studies are to provide an overview and guidance to the researcher to achieve the study's objectives. It will help the researcher in terms of information selection of research methods and give a full picture of the journey of a researcher. With guidance from various methods, the researcher can make choices that are appropriate to the study and, in turn, can help the researcher achieve the study's objectives. The next chapter will discuss the research methodology.

