

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

Allah *Subhānahu wa-ta'ālā* created human as the best creation. The main goal of human is to be His vicegerents on the earth. Islam as the one and only religion from Allah SWT, brings the message of *al-amr bi-l-ma'rūf wa-n-nahy 'ani-l-munkar*, which is enjoining what is good, forbidding what is wrong. Islam teaches Muslim and its believers to perform good deed and prevent the bad. The practice of inviting others to Islam is called *da'wah* and this is the responsibility of all Muslims around the world.

*Da'i* as the person who holds responsibility to the *da'wah* works is the main agent that delivers the teachings of Islam to the people (Abdul Karim Zaydan, 1975). Successful *da'i* must be able to attract various people with different way of thinking, status and religion knowledge in order to practice Islam as the way of life. This duty needs to be carried out wholeheartedly and based on their ability (Abdul Karim Zaydan, 1975).

Due to social changes, the practice of *da'wah* is rather changing (Toriman, 2012). Nowadays, the *da'wah* practices are no longer in its traditional ways. The practical of *da'wah* can be done through multiple methods and forms. The development of technology as part of social changes is capable to assist and ease the *da'wah* practice (Toriman, 2012). The current technology has brought a great contribution to the field of *da'wah*. The uses of media has enable the fulfilment of of demands of *da'wah* that is suited to all the generations at all ages. Today, most of the *da'i* are using this great opportunity in order to present the message of Islam. Saodah, Rizalawati, Zakirah, and Siti Sakinah (2012) verify religion as being a part of television programmes with numbers of broadcasted production on different channels. Thus, it shows that the subject of religion has become the important element that educates people towards the principles and teachings of Islam.

## 1.2 Background of the Study

The development of modern technologies influences new generation by using the diverse approaches of *da'wah*. Nowadays, *da'wah* activities are not only limited to the traditional methods such as religious lecture in mosques or schools, but it also applicable through contemporary approaches, which can be seen through the mass media. The message of *da'wah* must be conveyed effectively for it to become reachable to the target group. Talking about reaching out the viewers, mass media have always played its important role in disseminating information to the users. Apart from being the main agent of spreading information, media nowadays has been classified as a main medium to disseminate perception, activities of Islamic *da'wah* and the teaching of Islam (Ahmad Mahmoud, 1995).

With the ever-changing landscape of television programming, reality television has become increasingly popular, especially among the pre-teen and teen audiences (Mullings, 2012). The content of reality shows is changing over the decades as the viewers want to know more about the participants and the participants are also exposed themselves more to the world. The global popularity of reality television shows started with the success of Big Brother and Survivor until they became leaders in television ratings in the year of 2001 to 2002. The most popular reality television comes in the form of entertainment, diversely as games docs or talent contents. These successful programmes then lead to the concept of reality television to be fully adopted throughout the worldwide (Ikoro, Omessah and Ekevere, 2015).

Malaysia has been invited to accept this influence from western cultures, and the turning point in the Malaysian television industry burst with the broadcasting of *Akademi Fantasia*, which was an adaptation from Mexico reality programmes (Zarina and Faisal, 2010). The growing numbers of reality television in Malaysia may goes with the concept of talent search and documentary approach that had been adapted from various programmes. With the adaptation of western reality television programmes, Malaysia then had created the Islamic version of reality television by producing the religious reality competition as the new and demanded version of current society (Zarina and Faisal, 2010).

Islamic reality television programmes in Malaysia play their important role as part of *da'wah* medium. The programme such as *Pencetus Ummah*, *Imam Muda*, and *Da'i: Pendakwah Nusantara* brings the new landscape of Muslim socialisation process and implements the value of the *da'wah*. This genre of programmes helps *da'i* to spread *da'wah* by nonverbal communication through the media (Ainurliza, Mohd Azmir, Norazirawati, & Nur Kareelawati, 2012). Undoubtedly, audiences are attracted to follow and get to know more about this programme. Besides giving information about Islam, it educates people to practice Islamic lifestyle. The way of *da'i* interpreting law or *hukum* regarding current issues in interesting method has led the openness of audiences to follow them as their reference (Rosli Mohammed, 2017).

Islamic reality television programmes also play an important role in developing teenagers with religious educational background to fully prepare in the journey of becoming the contemporary young *da'i*. This young generation needs to learn about the way to develop social harmony and establish good rapport with communities (Toriman, 2012). This important knowledge will help the message of *da'wah* to be instilled in audience's soul. Therefore, this study analyses the importance and contribution of the Malaysian Islamic reality television programmes in developing young *da'i* in the modern era with the advancement of technology.

### **1.3 Research Problems**

Educating society on religious knowledge and moral values is a challenge to the religious authorities due to the rapid growth of moral corruption and degradation. Disseminating the message of *da'wah* through television programmes is seen as a serious effort to promote the religious knowledge and educate society. It is part of the channel to reach out the bigger population, while sharing, informing, and teaching the public with Islamic knowledge. Traditional media and technological innovations should agree with the endeavour to educate the mass through *da'wah* messages (Haidir and Fauziah, 2016).

Islamic reality television programme is a programme that utilises the elements of popular culture to tackle the religious concerns of Muslim in a fresh and relevant manner. Combining a reality television format with Islamic teachings, Islamic reality television programmes are mostly conducted in the form of competition. However, through Islamic reality television programmes, the recent practices of *da'wah* which have been improvised with music and song required the *da'i* to have the ability of making humour and singing, thus brought the negative perception towards the image of the young *da'i* (Harussani Zakaria, 2015). The trends of current *da'i* also been labelled as celebrity rather than religious people due to their popularity. They tend to be judged by the society based on these elements rather than their knowledge on religious matters (Hasrizal Abd Jamil, 2014). The act of participating in the Islamic reality television programmes was purposely done in a way to gain publicity and popularity through the television programme (Sharizan Daud, 2018). Thus, these current issues in the practices of *da'wah* through Islamic reality programmes need to be discovered and investigated as the issues would be tarnished the image of *da'wah* in the electronic media as important mechanism in contemporary *da'wah*.

Most of the participants of these Islamic reality television programmes are involved by young teenagers of university students, and they have huge probability to make mistakes. Sometimes, they do not carefully interpret the Qur'an, or do not aware or concern in narrating the hadith according to the authentic hadith (Ridhuan, 2014). The credibility of the *da'i* as product of Islamic reality television has been questioned in terms of either they are competent with the skills, knowledge, and truthfulness as experts in the field of *da'wah* (Mujahid Yusof, 2018). Therefore, it is important to analyse the process to be participants as well as a good young *da'i* in the reality television programmes from the perspectives of producers and participants as equal with the al-Ghazzali concept of *da'i* in Islam.

In terms of the contents of the programmes, there is the need to broadcast educational contents due to the importance of educating the audience's behaviour or *akhlak*. This is because the audience could easily influence by the programmes and time that they spend through watching television. The verbal content that conveyed through the Islamic reality television programme need to be analysed in order to ensure the

content delivered is following the Philosophy of Islamic Education (Mohamad Muhidin and Zaharah, 2014). Other than that, Islamic reality television programmes in this country must portray the values of Islam and the Malay culture as knowledge content in Islamic Education. Moreover, even though the guidelines of the content materials of Islamic Broadcasting by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) has been endorsed, there is the need to analyse the contents of Islamic reality television programmes in order to be complied with JAKIM's guidelines as well as in accordance with the perspectives of Muslim scholars such as al-Ghazzali.

To sum up, this study explored the current practices of *da'wah* through Islamic reality programmes as important mechanism in contemporary *da'wah*. Besides, this study was conducted to discuss the requirement of becoming the good young *da'i* in the reality television programmes. Lastly, this study analysed the content of the Islamic reality television programmes if it is really compliance with the JAKIM's guidelines.

#### 1.4 Research Questions

This study was conducted to answer the following questions:

- 1.4.1 What are the current practices of *da'wah* through Islamic reality television programmes?
- 1.4.2 What is the process to become good young *da'i* as well as participant in the contemporary Islamic reality television programmes in Malaysia?
- 1.4.3 Does the content of Islamic reality television programmes in Malaysia comply with the guidelines of Islamic broadcasting provided by JAKIM?

## 1.5 Research Objectives

This study was conducted to achieve the following objectives:

- 15.1 To analyse the current practices of *da'wah* through Islamic reality television programmes.
- 15.2 To discuss the process to become good young *da'i* as well as participant in the contemporary Islamic reality television programmes in Malaysia.
- 15.3 To analyse the contents of Islamic reality television programmes in Malaysia comply with the guidelines of Islamic broadcasting provided by JAKIM.

## 1.6 The Significance of the Study

Presently, the debates on Islamic reality television programmes have been discussed by the scholars from different point of view. Islamic reality television programmes have been described in the negative aspects relating to the issues, where *da'wah* had become part of the entertainment, the tendency of young *da'i* making mistakes while performing their *da'wah* works, and the content of the Islamic reality television programmes. From this study, the following outcomes could be anticipated.

Firstly, this study is important to clarify and refute the negative issues relating to the Islamic reality television programmes and its participants. The emergence of Islamic reality television programmes can be described as the phenomenon of the Islamic *da'wah* through media that leads to the development of *da'wah* process particularly in Malaysia. Thus, this study contributed to the development and body of knowledge in Islamic *da'wah* and Islamic media industry in Malaysia. The discussion of the study had emphasised on the combination of *da'wah*, *da'i* and the Islamic reality television as the mechanism of *da'wah* used in the electronic media. It is an opportunity to this study to discuss about the Islamic reality television from the perspectives of

producer, participants, and audience. The combination of Islamic element and entertainment in the Islamic reality television programme has been analysed thoroughly to understand how the content of Islam is delivered to the society. The al-Ghazzali 's concept of *da'wah* and *da'i* provides the foundation to the explanation of how contemporary practices and process in Islamic reality television programs contributes to the field of *da'wah* in Malaysia.

Secondly, this study has identified the process to become good young *da'i* as well as participants in the Islamic reality television programmes. This is a medium for the young *da'i* to demonstrate their ability and creativity in performing their presentations in front of the audiences, at the same time spreading the message of Islam. The talent and skills developed during the performance at the stage help them to become professional *da'i* in Malaysia. The appearance of young *da'i* becomes the successor for the delegation of *da'i*. They are indeed a great help to fulfil the demand of *da'wah* in Malaysia. The findings from this study can be used as a guideline that suggests about the process and criteria to become contemporary young *da'i*. Thus, it can be used as reference that help the process of spreading *da'wah* in any different platform. Therefore, the study has contributed to both theoretical framework and practical knowledge of presenting *da'wah* in the contemporary media through Islamic reality television programmes.

Thirdly, this study was highlighting the Islamic reality television programmes that comply to the JAKIM's guidelines. Apart from the objective to gain higher ratings of viewer, this type of programme is one of the programmes that provide the informal form of religious education to the community. With the implementation of new *da'wah* approach, the Islamic reality television programs present the religious knowledge accompanied with the Islamic entertainment within the limits that permissible in Islam alongside while comply with the sharia compliance evaluation instruments by JAKIM. Thus, this experience of conducting the programme and its contribution in the Islamic *da'wah* media industry could contribute to the practical foundation on the study of media and *da'wah* in Malaysia.

Finally, this study has suggested few recommendations to the production team of Islamic reality television programmes and television stations on how to improve their shortcomings from the past season. They can develop the deficient and create more innovation to achieve the needs and the demands of the society. The suggestions to improvement would help the audience to have the greatest satisfaction while watching their programmes. The themes of the programme need to be cleared and avoided from the element of controversy that could trigger issues on its credibility as medium of *da'wah* and its contents. Thus, the findings of this study could contribute to the theoretical foundation and practical application on the body of knowledge about the content of media dealing with *da'wah* and Islamic principles.

### **1.7 The Scope of the Study**

This study has been conducted to analyse the issues in the practices of Islamic reality television in Malaysia. This study also covers the process to become a good young *da'i* in the contemporary *da'wah* fields. Finally, this study also discusses concerns about the content of Islamic reality television programmes in Malaysia and their compliance with the guidelines of Islamic broadcasting provided by JAKIM.

This study has applied the qualitative approach by using the methods of interview and content analysis of the programmes. For the interview, this study has gathered detailed information from the in-depth interview method by using semi-structured interview questions or protocols. The participants of the interview sessions were selected through purposive sampling based on certain criteria. They represent the participants of Islamic reality television programmes, Muslims experts and module developer of Islamic reality television programmes, and producers or media practitioner that are directly involved in the programmes.

This study was limited to the selection of the participants from three different programmes of Islamic reality television programmes, which are *Imam Muda*, *Pencetus Ummah*, and *Da'i: Pendakwah Nusantara*. These selections are based on their high popularity and seasonal programmes, as well as ratings provided in the past research

(Yoong and Sean, 2010; Shamsun Bahrin, 2016). For the content analysis of the programmes, this study used the Guidelines of The Content Materials of Islamic Broadcasting by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), which has been published in the year of 2015. Out of the three listed Islamic reality television programmes, *Da'i: Pendakwah Nusantara* was chosen for the content analysis due to its seasonal programme that was available until the present year of this study.

## **1.8 Operational Definitions**

### **1.8.1 Reality Television**

Reality television programmes are the programmes that film real people as they live out the events (contrived or otherwise) in their lives, as these events occur. The programme is characterised by several elements: (a) people portraying themselves (i.e., not actors or public figures performing roles), (b) filmed at least in part in their living or working environment rather than on a set, (c) without a script, (d) with events placed in a narrative context, (e) for the primary purpose of viewer entertainment (Nabi et al., 2003).

### **1.8.2 Islamic Reality Television Programmes**

The Islamic reality television programme is a programme that utilises elements of popular culture to tackle the religious concerns of Muslim in a fresh and relevant manner. Combining a reality television format with Islamic teachings, Islamic reality television programmes are mostly conducted in form of competition. In terms of content, the religious reality shows include religious knowledge about Islamic figures and places, Qur'anic verses and hadith are presented to the audience (Saodah et al., 2012).

### 1.8.3 *Da'wah*

*Da'wah* is a call to the one and only Allah's religion-Islam that came through the Prophet Muhammad *ṣallā -llāhu 'alayhī wa-sallam*, and has been revealed in the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* (Abdul Karim Zaydan, 1975).

### 1.8.4 *Da'i*

*Da'i* is the person that hold responsibility to the *da'wah* works. *Da'i* is a great obligation and requires great number of helps to perform his duties. They need to facilitate full commitment towards this great task to achieve success and display the certain standard of Islamic ethics more than other people (Abdul Karim Zaydan, 1975).

## 1.9 Organisation of the Chapters

This study has been designed and involves five chapters. Chapter One describes the background of the study. It is an introduction regarding the topic and definition of the key definition to give the understanding for the readers. This first chapter also gives the reader a thoughtful idea regarding the area of study. The subtopics are including the introduction, background of the study, research problem, research questions, researcher objectives, significance of the study, organizations of the chapter, operational definitions, and conclusion.

Chapter two discussed the related literature review to the topic. Starting with the history of reality television, the study narrowed down the discussion to the Islamic broadcasting and current Islamic reality television in Malaysia. The researcher also studies the general process of *da'wah* and it's changing within the media adaptation. The discussion also included the process of reality program and the related theory and conceptual framework that applicable to this study. The chapter also involves the conceptual framework for this study has thoroughly been explained as the last subtopic of this chapter.

Chapter three covered the research methodology for this study. An in-depth interview has been conducted in this study to get feedbacks and detail information from the informant. The interview has been conducted with the producer of Islamic reality television programs to gain more knowledge about this reality television program. This study also involves few informants that had become the participant of these programs from the different channels of television to be interviewed by to complete this study. The chosen participants came from the program *Imam Muda*, *Pencetus Ummah* and *Da'i: Pendakwah Nusantara*. Besides, the content analysis of *Da'i: Pendakwah Nusantara* also had been conducted to analyse if the programs comply with JAKIM guidelines or not. The subtopics cover the research design, data collection methods, sampling strategy, and data collection procedures.

For chapter four, an analysis has been done after the data collection to discuss the development of the contemporary method of *da'wah* and how Islamic reality television contributed to the field of *da'wah*. Based on the data, researcher came out with the findings and discussion.

Chapter five discussed few recommendations from this study to be completed in the next research. The researcher discussed the limitations from this study to be enhanced.

### **1.10 Conclusion**

This chapter had discussed the introduction of the study including background of the study and statements of problems, objectives of the study, significance of study, the scope of the study, the operational definitions, and the organisations of the chapters. As in the statements of problems, several issue and problems have been identified that derived the developing of research questions and research objectives. Therefore, these items are fundamental in leading this research to be conducted. The research methodology and its fundamental have been discussed thoroughly to lead the understanding of the readers.