

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Da'wah is a very important subject and critical issue in the Islamic world. It has its own concept, meanings and practices that keeps the Islamic faith remain alive and relevant at all time and place. Without *da'wah*, the teachings of Islam will not spread to the whole world as what we have witnessed. With the work of *da'wah*, today Islam is the fastest growing religion in Europe, Canada, USA and globally in entire world.

In the modern days that we are living now, Islam do allow the work of *da'wah* be conducted in many different styles and approaches, or using different kinds of platforms while maintaining its important message of truth and Islam as the way of life which spreads rahmah to the whole world ; regardless of time, place and space.

Traditionally, the work of *da'wah* has been conducted through interaction. It may involved person to person, person to a group or vice-versa. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Malaysian authority has imposed lockdown, phases of Movement Control order (MCO) and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that need to be followed all over the country since Mac 2020 in order to manage the pandemic period. This has great impact in many aspects of livelihood which involved education, social interaction, security, economy and many others including *da'wah* activities which existed in the community.

1.2 Problem of the Study

In March 16 2020, Malaysia Prime Minister, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin make an official announcement of Movement Control order (MCO) which started in 18 March 2020 after the spike of COVID-19 cases in several places in Malaysia (Ashley Tang, 2020). According to Hazlin Hassan (2020), the total lockdown forbid any outside and physical activities such as schools and businesses. This total lockdown not only happened locally in Malaysia but also at the worldwide.

The usage of social media increased drastically during the lockdown caused by COVID-19 according to report released by Department of Statistics Malaysia. There also an increase toward usage of internet for learning, business, entertainment and many more. In online order or service through telephone, Whatsapp and Facebook, the increment is about 31.9 percent between 2019 and 2020 (Mohd Husni, 2021).

Due to the MCO and related SOP enforced by the Malaysian authority in managing COVID-19 pandemic, many Islamic *da'wah* activities were affected. Beside restrictions on movement, social distancing also has high impact on *da'wah* activities, both restricts individual interaction and group interaction. The ban of any activities in mosque is in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as mentioned by Datuk Dr Zulkifli Mohamad Al-Bakri, served as Minister in the Prime Minister's Department in charge of Religious Affairs after discussed with The National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs Malaysia (Suraya Roslan, 2020).

As such, *da'wah* effort which involved person to person activities and group activities cannot be conducted in the normal physical way. An interesting question arises, does the existence of social media, which is always available before the pandemic period emerged, being used as an alternative platform for *da'wah* activities to be conducted.

Does *da'wah* workers and activists take advantage of its presence, do they utilised them accordingly to ensure that the Islamic *da'wah* momentum will keep continue and will never stop. Is there any indicator that shows that *da'wah* work using social media has increased significantly during the pandemic period? Which platform being used, what content are being shared and who are involved? What other factors contributed to these phenomena? Thus, this study is to explore and to investigate the utilization of social media for *da'wah* work during COVID-19 pandemic period.

1.3 Research Questions

The central issue of this study is to explore about the usage of social media in *da'wah* during pandemic crisis. As highlighted in the problem statement, this study is to find out how social media were utilized as platforms for communication and information sharing in conducting Islamic *da'wah* in the era of COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia. To do that systematically, it is critical to understand the nature of *da'wah*, social media and COVID-19 pandemic before examining the related phenomena. The detail research questions for this purpose are as follows:

1. What is the usage of social media in *da'wah* in Malaysia?
2. What is the effectiveness of social media as a tool for *da'wah* in Malaysia?
3. What is the challenges and opportunities associated with using social media for *da'wah* during the COVID-19 pandemic?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Based on the research questions, the objectives of this study were set to achieve the following aspects:

1. To investigate the usage of social media in *da'wah* in Malaysia.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of social media as a tool for *da'wah* in Malaysia.
3. To identify the challenges and opportunities associated with using social media for *da'wah* during the COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia.

1.5 The Significant of the Study

This study will reveal the nature of *da'wah* that takes place currently in our Muslim community. Analysis on the usage of social media for *da'wah* in the era of pandemic reveals the strength and opportunity available. Simultaneously, the weaknesses and threat will be revealed too. This will allow other steps to be taken, that is planning the suitable line of actions based on the identified situation. The overall outcome of this study will also allow new efforts to be strategized and reconstructed so that a better approach in *da'wah* efforts can be implemented.

1.6 Scope of the Study

Issues related to *da'wah* using social media during COVID-19 pandemic covers a long period of time. However, for this study will focus on a selected period of time, that is from Mac 2020 until September 2021 when the total lockdown happened. Also, this study restrict among muslim community in Malaysia.

1.7 Research Methodology

The nature of this study is explorative, and it adheres to the quantitative research methodology. It is a combination of data collection, analysis of data, interpretive and explanatory in its approach. The statistical analysis approach will be used as a tool to examine the given phenomena in order to understand it systematically. Raw data for this study will be obtained from survey questions, open-source documents, official publications and online sources.

1.8 Definition of Terms

In this study, the following terms are defined as follows:

1. **COVID-19 pandemic:** COVID-19 pandemic refers to the global outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and has resulted in widespread health, social, and economic impacts worldwide.
2. **Da'wah:** *Da'wah* refers to the Islamic practice of conveying the message of Islam to others, inviting them to embrace the faith, and promoting the teachings of the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).
3. **Da'i:** *Da'i* refers to a muslim who actively engages in *da'wah*, which involves conveying the message of Islam to others, inviting them to embrace the faith, and promoting the teachings of the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

1.9 Organisation of Chapters

The write-up for this research study will be divided into 5 chapters as follows:

1. Chapter 1 - Introduction

This chapter will first explain the overall background of the study before elaborating the problem statement, research questions and study objectives. Later on there will be elaboration about the methodology of this study, evaluation tool used and limit of the study.

2. Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This chapter covers the literature review about the nature of *da'wah*, social media and COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia. It is important to know and understand the basic nature of these three issues before exploring their relationship particularly in the period of pandemic.

3. Chapter 3 – Methodology

This chapter will first elaborate about the method used to collect data on usage of social media in *da'wah* work during COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia. Then it elaborates how the data will be examined and analysed using statistical tool.

4. Chapter 4 – Findings and Data Analysis

This chapter will explain how real data is analysed using statistical tool available. Findings of this research study will then be shared.

5. Chapter 5 - Conclusion

This chapter discussed and summarised the whole finding of this research. Lessons learnt and recommendation will be covered accordingly.

1.10 Conclusion

In the first chapter, the researcher explained the background study, the problem statement, the research objectives, the research questions and the significance of the study. It is necessary to highlight the problems that linger around the subject and, as a result, the purpose of the research can be clearly established, and a good outcome can be achieved. The rest of this dissertation provides a thorough overview of the study.

