

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Indie books have emerged in the book writing scene especially around 2010 which has seen its acceptance among young people in line with the development of technology. The extraordinary response given to the writing of this genre has given rise to a variety of great discussion polemics especially about the identity of the book. Its emergence has succeeded in rekindling interest in reading among the community, especially the young. However, some see the existence of this book will have a negative impact on society (Muhamad Faisal Ashaari, et al., 2018).

In general, the concept of publishing these indie or alternative books has been introduced by young artists who have no name in the world of homeland literature. However, they are said to have succeeded in offering freshness and variety to the world of writing and book lovers in Malaysia.

According to Rafidah Eksan (2016) who is a writer of *Dewan Sastera* says that indie literature in Malaysia is a work written by a relatively new young writer for creative publishing. Among the hypotheses surrounding indie literature is “an alternative space for publishing casual writing that is not bound by strict and restrictive publishing rules or censorship.”

The word indie comes from the English word, which is an abbreviation of independent which means free, independent and not dependent on others. While the definition of indie in terminology, it has never been submitted by any authority in Malaysia clearly and in detail. This is because the word indie is a new term that has never been known before by the local community. The term indie can generally be understood as a stream or culture that desires freedom from any shackles of authority as well as the mainstream (majority of the mainstream) (Ortner, 2012). This desire for freedom is usually closely related to the philosophical influence of a stream or ideology that has successfully shaped their thinking to produce an action.

In this times, there are various activities carried out by supporters of the indie stream such as through music, literature or writing (books and web portal), painting, games, media and so on. However, the most prominent type of indie in Malaysia and even around the world is based on music and literature, the majority of which is supported by the younger generation. This is due to the nature of young people themselves who prefer freedom, so of course the presence of indie is highly anticipated and welcomed by them. However, one thing that needs to be emphasized

is that if these indie activities are not controlled or supervised effectively, especially in terms of content, it is feared that indie will be infiltrated by elements of liberalism that is, by looking at freedom of thought and freedom of speech through writing that also fight for freedom rights that go beyond the limits. The freedom to interpret Islam and the stagnation of the Muslim community in achieving the modernization practiced by the West need to be re-examined (Zarkasyi, 2009).

The publication of an indie books can be considered as an alternative publication, an independent media publication, not tied to any premier or government publication but shall be guided by established guidelines and not inconsistent with government policy, syariah and publication law.

Mainstream published books are dominated by well-known authors or well-known publishers, yet differ from indie publications. The production of indie books is dominated by individuals who have no background of involvement with the field of literature and book publishing (Rebecca, 2013). When this group enters the publishing world, they become writers, organizers, editors, graphic designers of books and publish their own books. In the new era, they can market the book in a short time without the help of any party. They find themselves readers without feeling awkward and easily friendly. This means, if they succeed in influencing a community such as the youth community, then their work will get response from that community group. In fact there are some indie writers who have their own publishing companies also

help other fellow writers by accepting their works to be published by their companies (Muhamad Faisal Ashaari, et al., 2018).

Indie books also do not have to go through a very strict work censorship system by the authorities. Indie writers are free to create and are not constrained and bound by rules that stifle their ideas and creativity. This has resulted in a wide open space for freedom of speech without obstruction from the authorities. Therefore, the spirit of this new media has also spurred the development of the indie genre resulting from the development of the virtual world which removes communication barriers and loosens control from the authorities. The effect of that is that many works are published without following a certain standard because it does not go through the screening or censorship of the authorities.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to Jube (2008) the use of the term Indie was first known in the field of music in the 1970s and later applied to other fields, including film, sports, games, clothing industry and lifestyle. Indie moves based on anything they have, with the slogan do-it-yourself (DIY); rather than creating a work, promoting the work, and selling it on their own. By its independent nature, Indie is seen as the opposite of the mainstream monopoly (Muhamad Faisal Ashaari, et al., 2018).

The term 'Indie' can be understood as a stream or culture that wants freedom from any shackles of authority and the mainstream (Muhammad Rashidi & Siti Nur Hidayah, 2016). Similarly, a report from JAIS (Selangor Islamic Religious Department) mentions the existence of several Indie Novel containing destructive perverse thinking and identified as being out of the teachings of Ahli Sunnah wal Jamaah (Muhammad Rashidi & Siti Nur Hidayah 2016). However, Indie Novel have found a place in the hearts of young people, especially for those who want freedom to think and act without any restrictions (Zarina & Zaiton 2006).

The way this Indie Book is presented is rebellious, aggressive and radical which has elements of pornography, liberalism, agnostic, narcissism (excessive self-love), destroying religious, moral and cultural values (Muhammad Rashidi & Siti Nur Hidayah 2016).

Each writer has a specific message they want to convey to the reader. The delivery of this message can be done symbolically through the images depicted in his works to have a profound effect on the soul of the reader. Its implications and influence on readers need to be taken seriously, especially on teenagers.

Through this, it can be understood that readers will receive good printed materials, if it brings good to them. In other words, if the material received is bad, of course a great effect will be obtained on those who make the print media, especially books, as a medium to receive da'wah to themselves. It is the responsibility of

religious agencies to play a big role in conveying the message to the public either in the form of organizing religious programs or disseminating Islamic understanding through the reading of religious books and so on.

A.Hasjmy (1994) said that da'wah activities are related to a complete curriculum and description. It is an invitational activity performed in oral, written and behavioral forms that are done consciously and planned to influence others (Nor Raudah Hj Siren, 2013). According to Ab Aziz Mohd Zin (2001), the content of da'wah is very broad because it covers the whole of Islam in which there are various parts and angles whether related to faith (*aqīdah*), syariāh and morality (*akhlaq*).

According to Fauzi Hassan et al. (2019), Faisal Tehrani is one of the most popular local authors in literature. He has produced 24 novels with his own unique style and authorship as well as the importance of quality in his novels. There are important thoughts and similar thoughts become the focus in his novels. Therefore, these thoughts become ideological, philosophical and build individualism in the authorship of Faisal Tehrani because it is expressed continuously in his novels.

Faisal Tehrani is one of the country's most active and talented writers because he has succeeded in producing quality works. The issues he often brings up in his works include domestic, foreign and world problems, as well as including his inclination towards political issues which allows Faisal Tehrani to discuss various major issues and problems that often plague the world (Umami Ammar, 2004).

He is increasingly showing maturity in his work by changing the thoughts, themes, problems and storytelling techniques in his novels. The social problems expressed are related to moral, ethical and personality problems in society regardless of age, race, gender, position and religion. (Fauzi Hassan et al., 2019).

Through the publication of a book written by Faisal Tehrani, on 6 May 2015, the Ministry of Home Affairs decided to ban four of his books entitled *Karbala* (2008), *Ingin Jadi Nasrallah* (2010), *Tiga Kali Seminggu* (2010) and *Sebongkah Batu di Kuala Berang* (2011). Faisal Tehrani then challenged the ban on the four books on 29 June 2015 and asked for a review of the judgment in court for four of his books.

According to a Malaysiakini newspaper report on May 6, 2017, based on the federal government gazette, the ban was issued based on Subsection 7 (1) of the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984. The publication may be detrimental to public order, shock the minds of the public and may be detrimental to the public interest.

Out of this matter, Johor State Fatwa Committee which convened for the 313rd time number 7/2020 on 17 Rabiulawal 1442 Hijrah equivalent to 3 November 2020 has agreed to appoint the Johor College of Islamic Studies (MARSAH) as the reviewer and researcher of the book entitled '*Profesor*' written by Faisal Tehrani. '*Profesor*' novels belong to a group of indie novels. The selection of this novel as

research compared to novels that were once banned by the Ministry of Home Affairs is due to significant confusion through the content of this book compared to previous books because it uses the title 'Professor' to attract readers. Therefore, the researchers agreed to choose this novel for discussion.

In this novel, the problem of inverse relationships that is raised as the subject is incestuous relationships between women and women or known as 'lesbian'. This act is done by all walks of life regardless of race, religion, educational level, career and in the city or in the countryside. This social symptom is conveyed through the character of a woman who is highly educated, respected and has a career, namely the character of Prof. Suliza. The character adopts an inverted lifestyle by having an affair with several women, namely Hashimah and Wan Ros.

According to Ali & Mohd Safar (2011), new media provide a vast space of freedom of speech without barriers from the authorities. Indie books also don't need to go through the system very strict censorship of works by the authorities. Indie writers are free to work and are not constrained as well as bound by the regulations stifle their ideas and creativity. It is through that the novel '*Profesor*' is placed under this category.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVE

Research Question and Objective from this research will provide a clearer picture with respect to the issues to be researched by the researcher. Here are the questions and objectives for this research.

1.3.1 Research Question

1. What is the role of the Johor State Fatwa Committee in deciding to ban the book?
2. Why does the Johor State Fatwa Committee take action in deciding to ban indie book?
3. How did the Johor State Fatwa Committee implement the decision to ban the Professor's novel by Faisal Tehrani?

1.3.2 Research Objective

This research, aim;

1. To identify the role of the Johor State Fatwa Committee in deciding to ban the book.
2. To understand The Johor State Fatwa Committee takes action in addressing indie book.
3. To analyze The Johor State Fatwa Committee implemented the decision to ban the Professor's novel by Faisal Tehrani.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The researcher choose Faisal Tehrani's novel as the study sample because he saw the influence that exists on the individual beside he also has a great influence in indie novel publishing in Malaysia because indie publishing contains urban, contemporary, abusive language, thriller, forbidden love. Apart from having a background in Islamic studies, Faisal often appears as an award recipient in literary ceremonies and is appointed as a panel of judges in the Selangor Literary Prize (*Hadiah Sastera Selangor*). With this recognition shows that this figure plays a very important role to become a reference to the younger generation in the production of books and novels in this country. As such, of course, this study provides a benchmark to indie publications published by book companies that have similar characteristics and roles in this field.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study will focus on the role played by the Johor State Fatwa Committee in deciding to evaluate the content of the *Profesor's* novel written by Faisal Tehrani through review and research so as not to be disseminated to the public with respect to this book. The novel has also been published in English, however the study will focus on discussion through Malay books only. This study will also look at the content of

the *Profesor's* novel which is seen to be in conflict with the āqīdah Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah in terms of āqīdah, syariāh and ākhlāk (morality).

Apart from that, the selection of MARSAH as a researcher for this study is due to two committee member from the Johor State Fatwa Committee are MARSAH lecturers in addition to the expertise that exists in the MARSAH Research and Publication Management Centre in the field of Malay Literature which will certainly facilitate the Johor State Fatwa to receive reports with complete and perfect results from the findings and studies carried out.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

The researcher has made a study on several previous writings and studies that are considered related to the researcher's study, namely "Indie Novel Phenomenon in Malaysia". Among the writings that study indie novels are as follows:

An article entitled "*Laporan Awal Tentang Fenomena Buku Indie di Malaysia*" written by Muhammad Rashidi Wahab and Siti Nur Hidayah Kusnin published by the Selangor Islamic Religious Department in March 2016 and then "*Fenomena Buku Indie di Malaysia*" published in 2017. Summary made is an indie book that has the potential to damage the integrity of the teachings of Islam whether from the aspect of faith, sharia and morality.

In addition, Muhammad Faisal Ashaari, Mohd Firdaus Hamzah, Lily Yaakub and Rosmawati Mohamad Rasit (2018) conducted a study "The Attraction of Indie Books Among Young Readers in Malaysia". Indie books are considered to have their own uniqueness and appeal compared to other mainstream books. This uniqueness makes it a major attraction to its fans from among Generation Z born between 1994 to 2010 (11 years to 27 years).

In the similar study, they are using survey design through the distribution of questionnaires as data collection on 100 university students in Malaysia in the field of Islamic studies, pure science studies and social science studies found that there are five factors that attract them to buy and read indie books. titles, book covers, content processing, messages and graphics as well as the role of new media. Fixi Books Publisher and Dubook Press are listed as the most popular indie book publishers. Nearly half of the respondents admitted to having experience reading indie genre books for more than two years, 18% of whom had been reading for more than 5 years. Most of them have read between 1 to 11 indie books. In addition, 16% admitted to having attended programs related to indie publishing.

Next, Mohd Khairul Adenan, Florence Gilliam Kayad, Muhammad Zaid Daud (2018) through a study entitled "*Stylistic Analysis Through the Use of Language in Indie Literary Novel: The Work of Azwar Kamaruzaman*" entitled Nasi Kangkang focuses on the use of personal language style of the novelist who uses a lot slang, Northern dialects and fond of using hyperbolic and simile language styles. From a

religious point of view, the author has used Arabic such as the terms *husnuzon*, *ikhtilat*, *usrah* and so on to be adopted by the character of Badrina. Therefore, in the novel *Nasi Kangkang*, the image of a Muslim woman, the head of the *naqibah* or *ustazah* in a college and a scholar about religion is created.

Muhammad Atiullah Othman, Nadarajan Thambu & Siti Noranizahhafizah Boyman (2018) in a study entitled "*Elements in Indie Books: A Grounded Theory Study on Sultan Idris Educations University's Undergraduate Students*" found that indie books contain key elements that attract adolescents namely freedom, realistic and relaxed. This main element is actually born of the genre of postmodernist writing and the desire to stand out called existentialism. The way the book is presented is rebellious, aggressive and radical with elements of pornography, liberalism, agnosticism, narcissism (excessive self-love), undermining religious, moral and cultural values.

Nurain bte Khoo Kian Hua and Sim Chee Cheang (2019) in "*The research Structuralists Against Literary Indie selected*" based on the novel *Nazi Goreng, Perempuan Politikus Melayu*, summed up the style of writing literary indie rebellious nature, aggressive, unusual literary mainstream bound with the ethics of writing and publishing. The openness of writers in producing indie literature caused them to start writing in a way that did not hide behind language toys or use symbolism. Anything that comes out of their minds is so tangible and firm to express.

Nor Hashimah Ismail and Melor Fauzita Md Yusoff (2016) in *"Indie Books: The Revolution of New Generation Writers"* look at the goals and objectives of indie writing produced as well as new writing techniques or trends now. The study found that the issues or plots of novel *Kelabu* consisted of advice, travel notes, diary entries, rebellion, sarcasm, jokes, swearing, and resistance. The novel *Kelabu* was also found to highlight the question of identity crisis that occurs in adolescents.

Meanwhile, Mohd Syuhaidi Abu Bakar and Nor Syafizza Ahmad Tarmizi (2019) in *"The Use and Acceptance of Slang Language in Indie Novel in Malaysia"* said that majority of informants does not see the use as damaging. This study has eventually contributed to the works of literature of slang within the production of creative works in Malaysia. Indie novel works are more independent because they are not tied to the structure of novel writing as before. In fact, the storytelling plots of writing in the form of advice, travel notes, diary entries, rebellious, sarcastic, jokes, swearing, opposing and others are written without any hindrance. This makes the language also affect the writing of indie novels.

Another research article written by Mohd Syuhaidi Abu Bakar and Norsyahirah Ngah @ Muhammad (2018) entitled *"Level of Motivation and Response of Mature Readers to Fixi Book Publications"* also made research through the analysis of positive perceptions of Fixi book readers and they have a good motivation high to continue reading the publisher's published copy. In a study conducted on 129

respondents selected using purposive sampling, the data found that the phenomenon of indie novel work is a positive thing today.

In addition, in a study Mohd. Hisham Mohd. Kamal (2017) entitled *“Protecting the Purity of Muslims’ Belief and Deeds: The Role and Challenges of the Institution of Mufti in the Era of Globalization”*, author discusses the role of the institution of mufti in Malaysia in ensuring the sanctity of Muslims’ belief and the rightfulness of their deeds in this challenging era of globalization. This role is closely related to the function of mufti in issuing fatwa.

The role of the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) was discussed in a journal published in 2014 entitled *"Censorship and Control of Islamic Print Media by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (Jakim): A Preliminary Observation."* This article aims to discuss the screening and control of print media Islamic elements performed by JAKIM. JAKIM through the Media Control Section, Planning and Research Division takes responsibility for reviewing, filtering, analyzing and controlling the materials.

Meanwhile, in the book ‘Compilation of Legal Views, Muzakarah Jawatankuasa Fatwa Majlis Kebangsaan Bagi Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Malaysia’ published in 2015, explained that Dr. Rashad Khalifah (1985) and Buku Aurad Muhammadiyah (1986) were stopped from disseminating because they contained

teachings and beliefs that were contrary to Islamic law and misled the Muslim community.

Not significantly in any article written by the author focuses on aspects of religion, values, morals, beliefs, syariah and morals that are important elements in this study except "Preliminary Report on the Phenomenon of Indie Books in Malaysia" written by Muhammad Rashidi Wahab and Siti Nur Hidayah Kusnin only. Therefore, the researcher will examine from the aspect of the use of dialogue in the book that is the discussion in this study that will affect the reader towards indie novels.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Patton (1980) stated that there are three types of interview techniques, namely formal interview, informal interview and open interview. Fontana and Frey (1994) Merriem (1998) also stated that there are three types of interviews, namely structured interviews, semi - structured interviews and unstructured interviews.

In this study, interviews will be conducted with the Johor State Mufti, Dato 'Yahya bin Ahmad and members of the Johor State Fatwa Committee who are involved in reviewing and researching the content of *Profesor Faisal Tehrani's* novel.

Interview method was used to obtain primary data and information. Formal and structured interviews and interviews conducted with experts in the field of literature will be obtained through this method. In addition, the field interview approach is a

practical qualitative method of finding out how individuals think. According to Che Su Mustaffa (2019), field interviews are a qualitative research method that indirectly takes the form of conversation or discourse with the aim of obtaining participants' point of view. As such, field interviews are something more in -depth to get facts.

The research methodology also used in this research is in the form of a library study that involves reading and collecting materials related to the title of the study. The 'Profesor' novels were studied using closed reading techniques, content analysis and identifying conflicting aspects in matters related to faith, *syāri'ah* and morality.

This research also uses several methods or methods to undergo the process of obtaining the required data, analyze the data and make a decision so that the study obtained meets the scientific and scholarly quality. In this study, researchers use several methods namely:

1.6.1 Data Collection Methods

There are several types of methods used to obtain the required research data, such as:

- i. Data collection method is a method to obtain information that gives an overview of a matter and question as a whole. The data obtained help the researcher answer the questions raised and make decisions to solve the research problems. In

general, in this study, the authors have used two methods in collecting research data namely library method and content analysis.

Library method: All printed materials were collected to help the authors understand the problems of the study, trace past studies and build a discussion platform in this study. This method uses secondary data to view past studies and printed materials related to the study. Library studies based on the documentation referenced in this study are books, journals, websites, dictionaries, research theses, dissertations, and seminar papers.

This library method is used to understand the study of books and problems that occur related to the study as well as to understand how scholars talk about matters related to the study. Therefore, the library method only presents data logically based on the analyzed sources.

Content Analysis: Text and content study is one of the text -based studies. The text analyzed is the Professor's novel. According to Burn, content analysis is an analysis that is often used in qualitative research. Content analysis requires a system of approaches that are relevant to the goals of a study. This method is used in accordance with the focus of this study which is to analyze the findings and findings that will be found by the Johor State Fatwa Committee in the content of the

Professor's novel.



1.6.2 Data Analysis Methods

The data that has been collected based on the methods that have been mentioned above, the information and data will be collected and then will be analyzed, evaluated and screened using several methods. The rules are as follows:

(i) The data obtained in the Profesor's novel is read in depth to identify dialogues, matters that are contrary to faith, sharia and morality.

(ii) Subsequent data were extracted by looking for the factors that caused the violation of the text content based on the Publication Guidelines under the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984 (Act 301).

(iii) The findings of this data are compiled based on seven items that are inconsistent with the act. Then the analysis will present arguments from the verses of the Qur'an or Hadith that are appropriate based on the views of Ahl Sunnah wa al-Jamaah.



1.7 CONCLUSION

Indie novel writing is one of the new forms of writing used by authors. Recognizing this, researchers see that the need to review, screen, ensure indie novel content is not something that should be taken lightly. Writing an indie novel that is guided by the style of literary writing alone without placing the value of da'wah will cause the reader to easily accept and use the material and give great implications to the world of novel publishing in the future. The importance of this study is not seen from the aspect of error alone, however, looking at the phenomenon of this publication will produce authors who tend to produce novels that are not guided by the principles of Islamic sharia itself. This needs to be given serious attention so that the indie novels that have become a phenomenon can be controlled and researched in depth not only to this indie novel, but other indie novels as well.

