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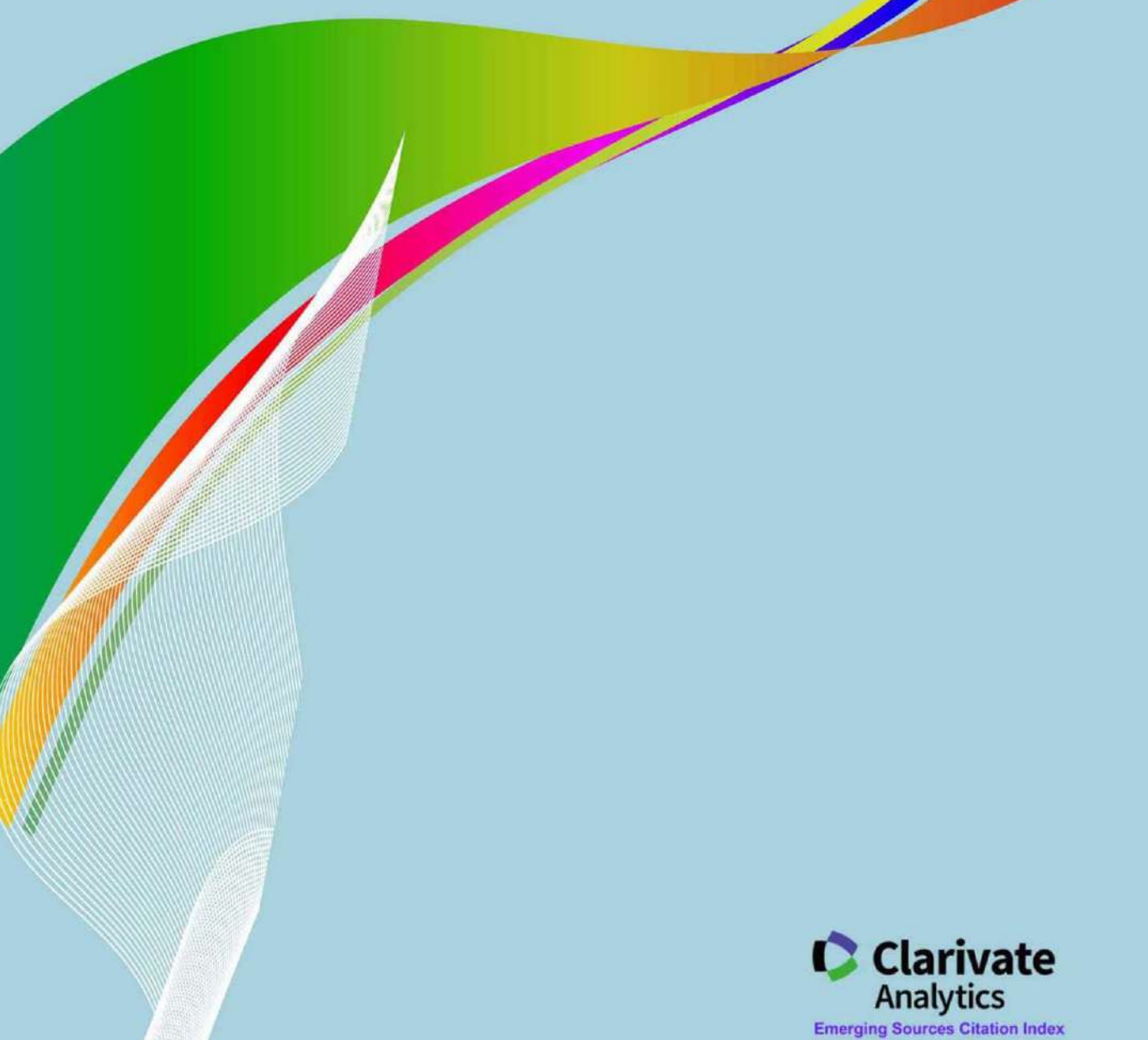
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Enhancing Da'wah and Spread of Knowledge Via Social Media Platforms

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ENHANCING ISLAMIC DA'WAH AND SPREAD OF KNOWLEDGE VIA SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

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Abstract

This research centered on enhancing Islamic Da'wah and Islamic teachings through the usage of social media. The purpose of this research was to examine how Muslims make use of social media to enhance Da'wah and Islamic knowledge among Muslims and non-Muslims, and the various Muslim scholars and groups on social media platforms who utilized the new technology to propagate the message of Islam. The paper adopted qualitative and analytical research methodologies in analyzing the issue in the research article, the paper also conducted an in-depth interview with two respondents at different intervals. Consequently, this paper explored the newest means of tapping the treasures of social media towards augmenting Da'wah activities and spreading the knowledge of Islam. The paper identified various individual Muslim scholars and groups that created pages/channels on Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Telegram, Twitter, and other social media platforms to enhance Islamic da'wah and knowledge. Hence, the paper found out that social media is a workable and genuine tool for the propagation ideals of Islam.

Keywords: *Islam; Islamic Da'wah; Knowledge; Social Media*



A. Introduction

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. All praise is due to Allah who created man and bestowed upon him the faculties of learning, speaking, and understanding. May His salutations and benediction be upon the noble Prophet Muhammad (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), members of his family, his companions, and those who follow his footsteps till the Day of Judgment. Allah created man with the basic function to communicate.

In recent years, interactions between humans have completely changed with the appearance and development of computers and networks. Social relationships are going to start at the beginning of the web. People communicate, build relationships using social networks (Bandura, 1986). Today, social media adoption and use in a wide range of in every section of human life.

Muslims are not different from other societies, in the last few years, which has increased the use of social media trends. It has brought changes that can have a significant impact on the individual and group level of Muslim society. Social media is easy to use, easy to learn, and the ability to communicate public universality of speed (Habib, 2020). Social media platforms should become a tool used by the users that correspond with *Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah* (purpose of Sharī'ah), which is *darūriyyāt* means the essential, necessities, and vital in fulfillment of life in this world and hereafter (Aznan Zuhid, 2012). It kept five necessities such as religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. In terms of religious observance, Social media can help in spreading the message and information of Islamic faith and theology more broadly (Aznan Zuhid, 2012).

Accordantly Nur Nazihah, (2017) explains that "social media have the potential to engage and visually communicate in a way that normal gathering cannot. The latest development in visual communication leverages the power and engagement potential of online video with animated info-graphics using motion graphics software and techniques". This is one of the methods of using social media to pass messages across. As mentioned by Nur Nazihah, social media are compatible in making

understandable for the concept and issues which are unclear as using coined or customized Islamic messages. As part of this, customized Islamic messages for the *da'wah* dissemination or in other words, customized Islamic messages become one of the alternative ways to understand the Islamic knowledge in the era of ICT by utilizing the fullest advantages of the technology. This cyber-missionary can be a medium of spreading religious belief, particularly to Muslim and non-Muslim (Nur Nazihah, 2017).

The rise of social media sites as another platform on the internet has gained popularity over the last decade. The sites have attracted millions of users worldwide. Due to this fact, many people are changing the outlets where they search for news, information, business, and entertainment. These social media sites let those who use them create personal profiles, while connecting with other users of the sites. Users can upload photographs and post what they are doing at any given time (Tiffany, Yevdokiya & Sandra, 2009). The social media by their nature have the capabilities of educating and entertaining the audience. Above all, they possess an outreaching influence that conventional media lack. This potential is most likely the most unstoppable power of social media.

B. Method

Exploratory research design is adopted for this paper because the research aims to explore how social media platforms aid the spread of Islamic knowledge. The social media platforms were purposively selected by the researcher based on his knowledge of emerging social media platforms and their utilization in the spread of Islamic knowledge. The researcher purposively employed the use of secondary data to elicit data from the social media platforms of Islamic scholars sampled for the study. Mohajan (2017) posits that secondary data are collected by someone else for his primary research purposes which provide basic research principles. Therefore, the rationale behind using data from the Islamic scholars is to use it for a different purpose from which it was originally collected. Usually, most of the social media applications or pages provide analysis of people following,



watching, subscribes, and like a page, blog, or platform. Authors have applied secondary analysis to data when they have wanted to: pursue interests distinct to those of the original analysis (Hinds *et al.*, 1997); perform additional analysis of an original dataset or additional analysis of a sub-set of the original dataset (Hinds *et al.*, 1997; Heaton 1998).

C. Result and Discussion

1. Result

a. Islamic Da'wah

According to Kashif, (2015) Da'wah is such communication that instills wisdom, good counsel, and manners. On the other side, the practice of Da'wah is not merely a communication in its scope rather it is a great source of learning of being trustworthy, self-evaluation and obeying the guides of Almighty Allah. However, the practice of Da'wah is stressed in the form of the group which is pivotal for social and organizational development. Islamic Da'wah is for people to guide one another to remain fair in their lives. Da'wah (spreading the message of Allah) has various motives as one of the motives is to establish a society based on virtue.

Similarly, Musa (1994) opined that Da'wah is not directed only towards the non-Muslims alone, he said that Da'wah must be directed to both Muslims and non-Muslims. He went further to say that, if the people being called are Muslims, the primary aim of making the Da'wah is to remind them of the true teachings of Islam.

Da'wah is obligatory to all Muslims without any excuse due to lack of technical know-how, poverty, deep knowledge of Islam or body strengths, after all, the Noble Prophet Muhammad (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) requested his followers to transmit from him even if it is a single verse. Therefore, every Muslim is expected to engage in Da'wah work according to his capacity, this is because Islam is not a religion of celebrity or monkhood, but a religion of the propagation of the teachings of Islam (Aminu, 2014).

Substantially, Ghaloosh (2005), in his work states that, Da'wah is a particular science which become a foundation for whoever want to deliver

message of Islam with an appropriate method while emphasizing it's conveyance between mankind with the scientific policy. Aware of the importance of Da'wah in Islam, Hashim concludes three dimensions of Da'wah: proclaiming, propagating, and motivating people to the faith in Allah and obeying Him alone by executing His command and away from His prohibitions. Da'wah is the launch for the sake of teaching Islam and it is the certain insight observing the spread and transmission of Da'wah to the whole communities (Hashim & Ahmad, 2012).

Similarly, Mubarok (1999), Da'wah will be delivered successfully if the message contained in da'wah is fully explained by the *Da'i*. The success of da'wah can also be seen if *Mad'u* (the audience) does the message of da'wah conveyed by the *da'i*. For instance, when a *da'i* reminds the importance of performing five-time prayer a day in Islam, and the people who listen to his *da'wah* (the *Mad'u*) perform the message, it means the da'wah has been successfully communicated. Tasmara expressed in his book, that Da'wah takes place when the da'wah workers communicate with the da'wah target group to convey the message of da'wah. He further, explains that the da'wah workers must use the type of communication that is suitable for a communicator to influence and steer the acceptance of the message by the recipient based on what is stipulated in the Islamic rules and regulations (Tasmara, 1996).

However, Syamsul, is of the view that, when the da'wah workers choose the suitable type of communication that suits the recipients' state, it is a way to ease the process of providing understanding about the message that is to be conveyed (Syamsul, 2013). Also collaborating further, Zulkefli and Salahudin (2016) said that the type of communication used is not restricted to verbal communication only, but also non-verbal. Added to this are the usage of the written form and the situational language that can ensure that the da'wah message conveyed can be well accepted and understood by the recipients. Qaradawi also devotes his work entitled '*Khitabuna al-Islami fi 'Asr al-'Awlamah'* (Our Islamic Discourse in the Age of Globalization) on the necessity to undertake Islamic da'wah properly in contemporary times, with due respect to changes in time and space.



Qaradawi for instance discusses several new methodologies, skills, and techniques which contribute to the shaping of new Islamic discourse as a sustainable means of Da'wah (Qaradawi, 2004).

b. Conceptualizing Social Media

Social Networks and Media have changed the spread of Islam and the perception of Muslims in the minds of many, said author and professor at DeVry University, Suzy Ismail in an Email interview. The impact of Facebook and Twitter in changing entire nations can be seen in the uprisings of the Arab Spring that were largely dependent on Social Media as a means of communicating and fueling the passions of the people who overthrew their countries' dictators. The same can be said of Islam's relation to Social Media. Social Media presents a huge opportunity for us to reach out to people who may not know about Islam or Muslims. Thousands of Americans have never met a Muslim but they have access to us through social media (Salman, 2016).

Social Media are a recent phenomenon, from their inception, Social Networks have attracted many University students as well as their lecturers. These Social Media may be centered on sharing cultural views and religious beliefs (Sharaf, 2012). The Internet provides a space and medium within which Muslims can share the relationship between their religious identity and their social and political affiliation (Sharaf, 2012). Many of these Social Media like Facebook, provide a platform for Muslim Students in sharing permissible components of data with their fellow Muslim friends and relatives.

Social media is a medium that can allow Muslims to engage in the discussion online that clarifies, expands, and provides autonomy over content, without the added challenge and immediacy comprehension. The ever-expanding use of social media, especially mobile media devices, enables potential publics to be engaged with organizations and businesses almost continually, and decision-makers within these organizations must exercise behavioral soft skills that connect at the right level (Robert, 2013).

In the past, seeking knowledge about Islam was mainly restricted to the *Masjids*, educational institutions, and learning from imams and sheiks. These traditional learning opportunities remain intact. However, now Muslims are also able to learn, question, teach, and network through social media sites. There are more avenues by which to learn about Islam. The Internet has given the public access to all kinds of information and made Islamic literature so much more accessible. On YouTube, for example, you can listen to a lecture in any language you want, whenever you want. Blogging sites such MuslimMatters.org and SuhaibWebb.com have become extremely popular with both Muslims and non-Muslims as a way to gain information and learn about Islam (Salman, 2016).

Twitter and Facebook, though, have undoubtedly been the two networking sites with the most active Muslim users. These sites have allowed us to connect with *Imams* and *sheiks*, political leaders, scholars, and journalists. Furthermore, they have enabled us, at a moment's notice, to share news and information that matter to us (Salman, 2016). Nevertheless, Fozi points out that "unfortunately there's a flip side to being in the limelight. Those who want to cast a negative light on Islam are just as active online and easily perpetuate stereotypes about Muslims through their posts, tweets, and videos. It can be overwhelming to contend with, but we need to remember that social media has also empowered us and given us that same platform to express ourselves. Social media presents a huge opportunity for us to reach out to people who may not know about Islam or Muslims, we can increase the positive impact of media/social media on the portrayal of Islam by being more active and vocal about our faith" (Salman, 2016).

Furthermore, Social media has been playing a vital role in the propagation of Islam. Propagation means conveying a message using suitable and effective tools. Throughout history, all schools of thought and people trying to deliver their message to others have used different methods and tools. In today's world-extensive propagation is carried out by various schools to attract people to different thoughts and beliefs and the leaders of those schools are trying to familiarize people with their



opinions and beliefs and to recruit new followers using suitable propagation tools and techniques. Social media are tools for rejuvenating the ethos of Islam in terms of its political virtues, moral principle, and spiritual ethics. In recent times the social media have turned the most vital tool in projecting ideas to every nook and crannies of every society. It is important to note that if we are desirous of blending with this modern trend, we must develop our conceptual framework to guide the Muslims in the proper and lawful use of social media facilities (Yusuf, 2015).

Accordingly, if we sit back and watch, then the rest of the world will move on while we remain static. We should in earnest make use of Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, WhatsApp, Blackberry messenger, etc. in promoting, projecting, and disseminating the teachings of Islam among Muslim students and students of other faiths (Yusuf, 2015). As it is known that social media is changing the way we communicate, but there is little evidence to prove that it changes people's religiosity. In a 2011 scholarly article titled "Religion and Social Media: Got Web?" author Pauline Cheong explains that her research on religion and new media have revealed ways in which blogging and microblogging - for example, tweeting - can function as religious practices. Cheong says that for some, social media is a platform to teach and inform about their faith, and to engage people in meaningful dialogue. It's also used, she said, as a form of social and prayer support (Cheong, 2011).

There are plenty of social media accounts created to inform, remind, and engaging with followers of various religions. For example, @IslamicThinking has over one million followers on Twitter. The account tweets inspirational quotes, friendly reminders such as "speak kindly of others," verses from the Qur'an, and short prayers. Sabrean Quraan, a 24-year-old speech pathology student at Cleveland State University, said that while these accounts are good reminders, social media doesn't make her a more religious person. "I would feel the same with or without social media," Quraan said. 21-year-old Summer Matar, a biochemistry student at The University of Akron, feels she may be a little less religious without social media. "Seeing religious posts regularly will cause you to

think more about your spirituality, therefore strengthening it when you are reminded of something you forgot or when you learn something new," Matar said. "On social media, I am friends with family members all over the world and each one will post something religious that I may have never seen before (Cheong, 2011).

2. Discussion

This paper aims to present and discusses the findings of the study because it is not an empirical study. Therefore, instead, this section provides the thematic issues regarding the utilization of social media to enhance Islamic Da'wah and spread of knowledge via social media platforms, and below are the issues. There is no conventional discussion of the major findings as it is obtainable or found in virtually all empirical studies.

a. Remodeling Da'wah and *Ta'aleem*: Tapping the Un-Tapped Resources of Social Media

The positivity of social media outlets in facilitating and easing our daily endeavors cannot be over-stressed. This could be seen from the developments recorded due to technological advancement in the areas of education and research, economy and banking industry, health sector, politics, religion, and social strata. It is pertinent therefore to analyze how the innovative technology could be positively channeled in enhancing Da'wah activities and dissemination and diffusion of Islamic knowledge in the most effective ways. Most importantly, however, this paper would place its weight on the electronic agents of the media for they greatly portray the contemporaneous essence of social media.

Murtadha (2017) in his article "Islam and Social media" opined that today Muslims find themselves with technology advancing in leaps and bounds and if Muslims in Nigeria are not going to use the social media technology positively then it will be used destructively to promote that which is incorrect. That which is invalid and that which will earn the wrath of Allah the Highest perhaps snatch away the peace from our lives.



However, Fadzli, *et-al* state that the use of social media for Islamic Da'wah dissemination is one of the alternative ways to uphold the knowledge of Islam through a creative approach. Nowadays, Islamic da'wah needs to be changed according to the current situation. Da'wah through the digital media (social networking) needs to "change in space and time as well as the appearance of new values in the society" (Fadzli, Marhana, and Ab. Hamid 2014). This is one way to attract more Muslims and non-Muslims to learn more about Islam through the new media. He further states that using new media as a medium of religious preaching has been widely practiced by various religions such as Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam (Fadzli, Marhana, & Ab. Hamid 2014). Furthermore, religious propagation in today's world tends to use cyberspace as a medium to convey the understanding of each religion. This is no exception of the Muslim to deliver the message of Islam as a way to uphold this sacred religion as well as the command of Allah. It is based on the command of Allah who calls Muslims doing the Da'wah (Fadzli, Marhana, & Ab. Hamid 2014).

Abd. Aziz (2011) opined that technology is just a tool to achieve and complete the mission or specific goals, but if a man is wise in using the technology it should become a tool to reach out and get the pleasure of Allah. Allah's pleasure is the ultimate goal of purpose in life. Even technology was sophisticated and impressive, people must realize that the greatest absolute power belongs only to Allah, the Lord of the World.

According to Asim, (2016), social media would tremendously benefit Islam by conveying the positive and beautiful message it teaches. For instance, we can now learn about our faith and the language of the Glorious Qur'an as well as its recitation within the comfort of our homes. We can also potentially share Islamic messages with billions of people around the globe through the use of social media platforms. In terms of da'wah, a five-minute video on the activities of a mosque, featuring a friendly-faced scholar giving a virtual tour of the place could work wonders (Asim, 2016). Similarly, Sharaf, (2012) posited that social media

are tools that rejuvenate the ethos of Islam in terms of its political virtues, moral principle, and spiritual ethics. In recent times the social media has turned the most vital tool in projecting ideas to every nook and crannies of every society. It is important to note that if we are desirous of blending with this modern trend, we must develop our conceptual framework to guide the Muslims in the proper and lawful use of social media facilities.

Accordingly, Ibahrine suggests that if the Muslim world sits back and watch, then the rest of the world will move on while we remain static. We should in earnest make use of Facebook, Twitter, My Space, WhatsApp, Blackberry messenger, etc. in promoting, projecting, and disseminating the teachings of Islam among Muslims and non-Muslims (Ibahrine, 2014). In related work, Haque, (2016) opines that, for a Muslim to use Information Communication Technology (ICT) for Islamic Da'wah, it means the *Da'i* must be competent in information and communication technologies to be able to perform his task. He went further to state that, the knowledge of ICT by Muslim scholars will go a long way in countering the propaganda of the non-Muslims against Islam and Muslims (Haque, 2016).

Banbura posited that using these social media tools for proselytization is a welcome development to the Muslim world. This is because many Muslim scholars have thousands of followers on most of these social media platforms. Therefore, extending the message of Islam to them through this medium will be very effective (Banbura, 2017). Also Najidah & Abu Dardaa, (2013) discussed that one of the religious importance of social media is to disseminate information specifically related to Islamic message by gathering information and providing feedback following the teachings of Islam. Also, Sule and Aliyu (2019) point out that social media has advanced and raises the levels of Muslim student's religious, educational, and social awareness in northern Nigeria.

b. Social Media: A Viable Tool for Da'wah and Sharing of Islamic Knowledge

Besides, the social media sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram, YouTube, Twitter, and the likes provide a borderless



opportunity for the propagation of Islamic teachings (Da'wah) and the cross-fertilization of valuable ideas and understandings of the precious knowledge of Islam (Ustaz Jamil, 2020). Facebook, for instance, is one of the social media sites that allow scholars of local, national, and international repute to reach out to the public to disseminate true Islamic teachings via created groups and individual pages. Among the beneficial groups populated by Muslims from Northern Nigeria includes Minbarin Malamai, Darul Fikr, JIBWIS Social Media, JIBWIS Gwagwalada, Al-Umdah, Makarantar Sheikh Muhammad Sani Umar Rijiyah-Lemo, Darul Da'wah Sokoto, karatuttukan Maluman Sunnah, Markazul Albani Zaria, Hasken Sunnah, Kira Zuwa Tafarkin Sunnah, etc.

However, some individual pages have the peoples' patronage which includes pages and channels on Facebook, Telegram, WhatsApp YouTube, and Twitter. These pages and channels of the individual scholars are, Prof. Mansur Sokoto, Shaykh Musa Yusuf Asadus-Sunnah, Dr. Bashir Aliyu Umar, Shaykh Muhammad Bin Uthman, Dr. Isa Ali Ibrahim (Pantami), Shaykh Umar Dada Paiko, Associate Prof. Muhammad Tanko Aliyu, Dr. Mansur Isa Yelwa, Shaykh Dr. Ibrahim Jalo Jalingo, Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Alhaji Abubakar, Dr. Muhammad Sani Abdullahi Jos, Zauren Dr. Abdallah Usman Umar Gadon-Kaya, Shaykh Abdur-Razaq Yahaya Haipan and Sheikh Bashir Ahmad Sani Sokoto among others.

The benefits derived by the followers of these groups are immeasurable ranging from the updates on happenings around the Islamic world, access to Islamic teachings on different Islamic topics via several social media sites. According to Umar Yahaya (2020), a more efficient, secured, easy to manage and user-friendly social media sites that proved to be ultra-effective in the course of Da'wah and speedy dissemination of Islamic knowledge is WhatsApp, Telegram, and Facebook. This is a recently invented social media tool with an instant messaging facility. These instant messaging tools seem to be the most patronized ones in recent times.

In light of the above submission, we tend to agree that WhatsApp, Telegram, and Facebook remain the cheapest, quickest, and most effective

means of Da'wah and spreading Islamic knowledge across to one's associates and acquaintances. The needed information could be sent across information of picture messages, text, audio, video, and recently even voice call. Interestingly, *Du'at* and some other Islamic scholars have taken the overwhelming advantage provided by this newest multi-faceted technological applications and utilized them in the propagation of the message of Islam.

Nonetheless, these efforts can still be complemented by devotedly keeping the bearers of their contacts abreast with the true teachings of Prophet Muhammad (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as in 'Hadith of the day' with convincing clarifications and making an explanation of the verses of the Glorious Qur'an. Besides, since WhatsApp, Telegram and Facebook are group-enabled social media sites, Da'wah and knowledge dissemination can also be carried out as easily as possible to reach out to a large audience. In this direction, the Friday Congregational Prayer (*Jumm'at*) Sermons (*Khuqbah*), *Muhadarat*, *Ta'aleem*, and other *Dirasat al-Islamiyyah* could be commonly and effectively circulated via the dedicated groups in video and audio mp3 formats for the benefit of the public. Reminders on various Islamic festivities, occasional supererogatory Fasting, felicitations, and meetings could be extended and convened as well.

D. Conclusion

In summation of the issues raised and points discussed in the paper, the paper concluded that the term Da'wah is more closely centered on calling Muslims and non-Muslims to Islam and teaching the same to them. But due to the comprehensiveness and all-encompassing nature of the term, it could be flexibly used to cover both. Also, engaging in Da'wah and dissemination of Islamic knowledge could either be an individual or collective obligation upon the Muslim *Ummah* depending on the prevailing circumstances. It was equally realized that social media technology presents the best avenue for Da'wah and teaching of Islamic knowledge in the contemporary world. This is while acknowledging the



fact that social media platforms and its components are not evil or detrimental to Islam in themselves but evils could only be perpetuated through them. It is encouraging that Muslims and Muslim scholars should make use of modern technology to enhance the teachings of Islam via social media platforms as they provide an avenue for virtual teaching and the sharing and posting of video and audio lectures that would improve the understanding of Muslims of the various tenets of Islam.

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