

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE ACCEPTANCE OF FATWAS AMONG MALAYSIAN MUSLIMS

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Abstract

Social media plays an important role in the spread of Islam around the world today and has been recognized for its use in the Islamic world. However, the use of social media in disseminating fatwas is still not widespread. Thus, this study aims to highlight previous studies related to the use of social media in the dissemination of fatwas and its impact on the acceptance of fatwas among the community. The results show that the use of social media in disseminating fatwa information and explanation of fatwas can increase the acceptance of fatwas among the Malaysian Muslim community. At the end of the study, the researchers suggested that more empirical studies could be done to confirm the relationship between the use of social media and the acceptance of fatwas among the Malaysian Muslim community.

Keywords: *Social Media, acceptance, fatwa, Malaysia*

INTRODUCTION

In the early Islamic period, the Sahabah and preachers made use of whatever facilities they could find, including riding horses or camels, walking, writing letters, and other methods of disseminating Islamic beliefs. Despite the fact that the facilities available at the time were limited in comparison to what is available now, the Companions and preachers of the past were able to disseminate the teachings of Islam to people all over the world through the favour of Allah. Today, Muslims are encouraged to use all available resources, such as social media, to perceive the signs of God's greatness (Jusoh, & Kamaruzaman, 2009). According to Nassar (2013), the usage of social media has increased year after year across the Muslim world in recent

years. Moreover, in recent years, social media has played a significant role in the global spread of Islam (Adam et al., 2014).

With the advent of mobile network services, information has been put in the hands of people who are technologically savvy. Every person, even if they are just sitting at home, may get knowledge of Islam (Shan-A-Alahi & Huda, 2017). Adam et al. (2014) highlight the importance of Muslims participating in technology and research, as well as other kinds of knowledge, in order to uphold Islam's dignity and to defend the truth. Furthermore, as compared to conventional mass media, social media has the ability to enhance society's perception of Islam and may be the most effective medium for communicating information about Islam to Muslims and non-Muslims in a more timely and cost-effective manner (Khalid & Wan Razali 2011; Saidin, 2012; Qayyum & Mahmood, 2015). Apart from that, the usage of social media offers Muslims a fantastic chance to interact with a greater number of people who are unfamiliar with Islam without having to meet them face to face (Qayyum & Mahmood, 2015). The Muslim community has realised the tremendous potential of social media as a means to spread Islamic teachings across the world (Adam & Salem, 2009). Social media platforms should be utilised as a communication connection platform to coincide with Maqasid al-Shari'ah (Saidin, 2012).

The online media, including Islamic media, are widely acknowledged to play an important role in disseminating information (Mat Akhir, 2006). With its ability to provide a variety of knowledge about Islam, the online media in Malaysia serves as an agent of da'wah transformation and has been used as a reference material and religious learning by the community (Halim & A Rahim, 2010). However, the role of information technology, especially social media, in the dissemination and explanation of fatwas among Malaysian Muslims has yet to be fully explored. As a result, more research is needed, particularly on the impact of information technology on the dissemination of fatwas and the acceptance of Malaysian Muslims.

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE FOR ISLAMIC PURPOSES

In the Islamic world, social media is increasing the number of learning opportunities available to the community. An online lecture given by an Islamic scholar is available to the public through social media, and people are able to interact with the speakers via online platforms. It is also possible to teach the Qur'an and Sunna via voice calls and social

media videos, which enable preachers to engage with Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Several disciplines in Islam, such as the Quran, Hadith, Tafsir, Seerah, Fiqh, Tasawwuf, and so on, have made their content accessible on social media platforms in a variety of formats, including video and audio, to a large audience worldwide. According to Halim and A. Rahim (2010), Muslims are increasingly turning to the Internet for information on Islamic issues such as Islamic guidelines, how to manage Hajj and Umrah, current Islamic issues, history and stories of the prophets, and also for advice on how to behave themselves according to the principles and practices of Islam. As a result, the new interactive and communicative media, particularly social media, have evolved into the most frequently utilised medium for the dissemination of Islamic teachings, even outpacing conventional media in terms of overall use.

Ishak and Solihin (2012) found that the media was very successful in conveying religion to people, not just to Muslims, but also to those who are not Muslims, by reducing the diversity amongst Muslims and increasing the values they have in common across the world. At the same time, Atiqah et al. (2020) came to the conclusion that social media is a highly successful medium for disseminating information since it can reach a huge number of people in a very short period of time and is inexpensive. As a result, the majority of social media users depend on social media as their primary source of information in order to stay up to date with the newest developments in Da'wah (Atiqah et al. 2020).

It is acknowledged by Zebiri (2008) that the usage of the Internet and social media has had a significant effect on the lives of Muslim converts in the United Kingdom and across the world. Salim (2018) discovered that Facebook has a greater impact on spreading da'wah than television because its platform is more amazing and interactive. Salim (2018) conducted his research on the role of the media in spreading da'wah through the work of a converted preacher, Webb, who is from America and who preached Islam on Malaysian television and through his social media account. According to Hosseini and Ramchahi (2014), a beneficial effect on Islamic education may be seen in the usage of the internet and the web for knowledge

sharing of tajwid al-Quran, hadith, tafsir, and other related subjects. Modern communication tools such as interactive media and online resources are used to increase general knowledge about Islam, and thus allow people to have a better understanding of the religion (Hosseini & Ramchahi, 2014).

According to the findings of an empirical study conducted by Ibahrine (2014), which examined the ways in which social media assists in the dissemination of Islamic teachings, there is a positive relationship between the level of social media use and the influence of social media on users' routine Islamic behaviour. In addition, Omar et al. (2015) performed research on the impact of social media on dakwah activities in Malaysia, and they came to the conclusion that the usage of social media is essential in Islamic dakwah efforts. Agboola (2014), on the other hand, discovered that social media technology is still underutilised for Da'wah purposes due to the fact that just a limited number of individuals have contributed to its usage for Islamic purposes.

The use of social media in da'wah is seen positively and is acknowledged by preachers as a crucial medium for the dissemination of da'wah today. Other Muslim communities also use social media to communicate and share the Quran and hadith texts. Due to the fact that social media is more accessible than traditional media, the propagation of da'wah is easier, resulting in more Muslims utilising their social media to disseminate information about Islam (Miczek, 2013; Mustafa et al, 2013; Qayyum & Mahmood, 2015). Today, Muslims use social media to spread the word about Islam in a variety of ways, including uploading photos of Muslims engaging in hajj and fasting programmes and other similar activities (Qayyum & Mahmood, 2015).

Having the misconception that the duty of disseminating the message of Islamic da'wah is reserved for Islamic scholars who specialise in fields of Islamic studies such as Hadith, Tafseer, Fiqh, Tasawwuf, Aqeedah, and Islamic law is incorrect. The reality is that every Muslim, whether born a Muslim or a convert, has been entrusted with the responsibility of representing and disseminating

Islam (Salam, 1996). According to Zulkiple (2001), every Muslim is a representative of Islam, and their role is to spread the word of Islam and provide da'wah in accordance with their abilities, either individually or collectively.

In order to reach every corner of the world, Da'is and all Muslims should not restrict the da'wah platform to a few specific mediums, but rather instead make use of the numerous facilities, technology, and media that are available (Shahir, 2013). Due to the ease with which da'wah activities may be conducted through social media platforms, preachers like Dr. Zakir Naik, Shaykh Sani Rijiyar Lemu, Mufti Ismail Menk, Prof. Mansur Sokoto, and Bilal Philips utilise social media to disseminate Islamic Da'wah (Shan-A-Alahi & Huda, 2017). Da'wa activities are widely disseminated via the three most prominent social media sites: YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter (David, 2020). With more than two million Facebook followers, Nouman Ali-Khan of the Bayyinah Institute is well-known for his Arabic and Quran teaching. A well-known preacher of the Epic Mosque in Texas, Yasir Qadhi, has more than fifty million people on its YouTube channel, while Yasmin Mogahed has more than 450,000 followers on Twitter, is an Egyptian American speaker and a well-known female voice (David, 2020).

The Malaysian government has established an official website dedicated to Islam, which is managed by specialised organisations, in order to support in the dissemination of Islamic information via the internet (Adam et al., 2014). JAKIM has utilised social media as part of its dakwah efforts, owing to the fact that Malaysia's social media usage is so widespread.

LOWER ACCEPTANCE OF FATWA AMONG COMMUNITY

The study begins with Othman Ishak's (1981) interview with several individuals, including muftis, qadhis, and intellectuals, who found that fatwas were not widely accepted in Malaysian society, especially among government officials. Some people accept the fatwa fully, while others accept part of it but oppose the rest (Abdullah, 2004: Hasnan, 2008). Worse, some people challenge the mufti's views on a variety of issues, including the fatwa on Pokemon Go, the Penang

Fatwa, the DAP's status as a "kafir harbi," GST, the prohibition of sisters in Islam, beauty pageants, and even attempting to challenge the fatwa in court (Kamarudin et al., 2017; Rahman et al., 2018). Even though the decision to reject the fatwa only affects a small portion of society, it creates the impression that society in Malaysia has a desire to reject fatwas provided by fatwa institutions (Ashaari et al., 2019). As a result, some groups would rather consult their religious teachers, Imams, families, friends, and the print media than accept fatwas or mufti opinions (Abdullah, 2004). This is due to inefficient fatwa dissemination, insufficient fatwa explanation and unpublished fatwa full paper work (Rosidi, 2021).

i. Dissemination of Fatwa

Fatwa information does not come to the community's knowledge, which is one of the factors that contributes to the low level of fatwa acceptance (Kasan, 2008). People who disagree with the fatwa decision often say that they were unaware that such a fatwa existed (Kasan, 2008). The failure of the fatwa to reach them has also been used by sharia criminals to justify themselves in a sharia court. In the case of *Syarie Officer v. Fahyu Hanim Ahmad, Noni Mohammad, and Sharina Shaari* (1997), the judge rejected the accused's argument that they were unaware of a fatwa prohibiting them from competing in the Selangor state beauty pageant. Former Selangor Chief Minister Datuk Abu Hassan Omar has also expressed interest in the case, urging that the fatwa prohibiting participation in the competition should be widely disseminated and understood throughout the state (New Straits Times, 20 July 1997). Despite the fact that this case has been going on for a long time, recent studies indicate that many people are still unaware of the existence of a fatwa that has been issued at the state level and at the national level. According to a study by Rahman et al. (2016), the majority of respondents do not know or are not interested in knowing about the implementation of fatwas once they've been gazetted by state fatwa institutions. Similarly, according to a survey conducted by Irwan et al. (2017), 70% of 1200 respondents do not know or are unsure about some of the fatwas that have been decided.

The fatwa issued in Malaysia is not just a statement of opinion on a topic; it is also legally binding and becomes part of the state's Islamic law. In this regard, the fatwa decision by the state should be disseminated to the Muslim community so that it is followed and complied with at all times. Weak and inefficient fatwa distribution

instruments caused the fatwa announcement to fail, and as a result, the public was unaware of the fatwa's presence. Although state fatwa departments have attempted to print and disseminate fatwa results for public viewing, reading, and knowledge, fatwa printing is restricted to state mosques, colleges, universities, government agencies, and private organisations (Ismail, 2010). Only the states of Perak, Terengganu, and Perlis have documented fatwas released in the form of pamphlets or brochures to be circulated to the public on a regular basis, according to Nawi (2014). Meanwhile, the state fatwa department's website and the e-fatwa platform only managed to attract a small number of people to read the fatwas (Ismail, 2010). In light of this, Raihanah Abdullah's (2004) study found that 88.6 percent of 4345 respondents accepted that fatwa distribution in the community is still poor.

ii. Explanation of Fatwa

In Malaysia, the non-uniformity of fatwas between states causes uncertainty about what constitutes a fatwa (Ishak, 1981; Abdullah, 2004; Yong et al., 2009; Asuhaimi et al., 2017). Different fatwas in each Malaysian state can lead to misunderstandings in the context of their implementation, causing difficulties for the community (Asuhaimi et al., 2017; Rahman et al., 2018). Furthermore, fatwas on issues affecting the Muslim community's interests in Malaysia are inconsistent. For example, the Fatwa Committee of the National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs Malaysia's 80th Muzakarah, which took place from 1 to 3 February 2008, decided that investment in unit trusts (ASB) and national unit trusts (ASN) should be permitted, as well as dividends and bonuses. The Fatwa Departments of Selangor and Penang, on the other hand, reached the opposite conclusion in their fatwa decisions. As a result, the inconsistency in this fatwa has sparked debate among Muslim investors who follow the Islamic principles of halal and haram, prompting them to withdraw from investment schemes coordinated by Permodalan Nasional Berhad (PNB). However, the issue of fatwa non-uniformity was resolved when the Fatwa Departments of Selangor and Penang, on April 27, 2017 and August 15, 2017, respectively, reconsidered the previous fatwa decision by requiring the investment scheme (Berita Harian, 16 October 2020). Besides that, fatwa contradictions arise in the ESQ Leadership Training fatwa. On the other hand, the Federal Territory Islamic Religious Council banned the motivational programme module organised by ESQ because it stated that its teachings deviated from Islamic beliefs and Syariah by mixing non-Muslim spirits (Mstar, 16

October 2020). On the other hand, the National Fatwa Committee decided on 16 June 2010 that ESQ is not contrary to the beliefs and beliefs of Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah (Mstar, 16 October 2020). (Malaysiakini, 16 October 2020). In this regard, on 10 June 2010, Dato' Haji Wan Zahidi, the 6th Federal Territory Mufti, signed a gazette prohibiting the use of the motivational programme module in compliance with subsection 34 (1) of the Administration of Islamic Law (Federal Territories) Act 1993. At the same time, any ESQ-related activity is forbidden in the state of Perlis (Jakim, 16 October 2020). As a consequence, society becomes perplexed by the discrepancy, and society would be more likely to disregard the contradictory fatwas (Abdullah, 2004; Buang, 2012; Rosele et al., 2013; Buang, 2016; Asuhaimi et al., 2017; Rahman et al., 2018).

In general, the literature review reveals gaps or contradictions in fatwas between states, which lead to a fatwa being rejected and ignored. Various studies have been conducted in Malaysia to solve the issue of fatwa inconsistency for a long time, but the aim of consolidating fatwa decisions from the federal level to the states has yet to be achieved. The problem is caused by enactment barriers in the states, local uruf, different educational backgrounds among the muftis, and the weakness of JAKIM's guidelines (Miziazam et al., 2018). As a result, in order to overcome the issue of efforts to improve the fatwa, the fatwa institution must consider other aspects of the issue, such as cultivating a culture of knowledge by prudently improving the explanation of fatwas until the community understands and explains the fatwa decisions made. Meanwhile, attempts to provide an explanation by the Malaysian fatwa institution are still insufficient (Salwa, 2003; Kasan, 2008). Even if there is a different fatwa at the state level, a good explanation would be able to clear up the misunderstanding in society.

iii. Methodology of fatwa writing

Fatwa resolutions and fatwa statements should also be published in scholarly works, so the rulings can be made available to the public. This has the potential to boost community trust in the fatwa that has been issued (Buang, 2012; Buang, 2016). Any fatwa must be supplemented by a justification and backed up by arguments from Islamic legal sources. The method of issuing a fatwa must involve the argument of propositions and arguments (illah) (Al-Qaradhawi, 1988). If the fatwa is issued in a very basic way, it may cause scepticism among some parties, especially in a community that desperately

requires a clear understanding of important issues (Salwa, 2003; Nawawi, 2014). Furthermore, fatwas given without the debate's arguments and explicit references could lead some people to condemn them (Kasan, 2008; Buang, 2012).

Furthermore, with the present state of the academic climate, the community is more inclined to the race for knowledge and has a need to understand the reasons used by the fatwa organisation in deciding a fatwa (Surateman et al., 2015). In order for the fatwa to fulfil its function of providing a response to a query about Islamic law and an interpretation of an Islamic proposition, it must be properly clarified so that the community understands its true meaning (Al-Qaradhawi, 1988). Moreover, the development of fatwas will be made more fascinating and effective if the interpretation of wisdom and *illah*, which are the foundation for deciding a fatwa rule, are combined. This would improve the fatwa's judgement and make it easier for it to be accepted by today's society, which stresses the rationality of justification in approving anything (Bakar, 1997; Rahman, 2003). Unfortunately, some fatwa organisations only quote prior *fiqh* opinions without including explanations or justifications, and some quotes do not correspond to the fatwa question at hand (Shah, 2013). As a result, fatwa institutions in Malaysia have received criticism from academics. Academic critique of official fatwas may not be interpreted as a clear denial of the fatwa judgement, but rather as a means of empowering and improving the quality of fatwas from a scholarly perspective (Majid, 2004). However, the community's critique, particularly from academics with an Islamic studies background, is directed at the method and procedure used to decide the fatwa, which they believe is insufficient (Buang, 2016). Despite the results of Rahman et al. (2016), which showed that highly educated individuals had greater awareness of fatwas than less educated individuals, this indirectly justifies Kasan's (2008) findings that individuals with low education and residing in rural areas are shown to receive more fatwas than individuals with higher education and living in urban areas.

Excerpts from previous polls suggest that fatwas given without simple discussion of reasons and references are more likely to be rejected (Kasan, 2008; Buang 2012). Furthermore, writing a straightforward fatwa without the necessary arguments and dialogue would contribute to the community's scepticism about a fatwa decision's credibility (Salwa, 2004; Buang 2012; Nawawi, 2014; Buang, 2016). To be more complete and persuasive, fatwa organisations ought

to develop their fatwa writing techniques. There is no doubt that publishing simple fatwa rulings in simple words in the government gazette, as has been practiced before, is intended to make it easy for the general population to understand the current Islamic rules. While the simple form of fatwa determination is for the sole purpose of fatwa gazetting documentation, the writing of a fatwa along with discussion and comparison should also be pursued on other fatwa dissemination websites so that people who respect arguments may respond to and compare various fatwas. Fatwa organisations must develop their fatwa writing methodology in order to become more structured and comprehensive in their documentation (Salwa, 2003; Kasan, 2008).

Former Federal Territory Mufti Datuk Dr. Zulkifli al-Bakri's methodology of producing and delivering fatwas, which included explaining the arguments of Islamic propositions and detailed references, as well as discussing an issue freely, fairly, and without controversy, has earned him a place among the respected muftis and views, and his fatwa was later accepted by the community (Ashaari et al., 2020). He uses a variety of methodologies for writing fatwas, including submitting the opinions of experts, whether they accept or reject the fatwa, as well as citing books as a point of reference. Following that, both main and secondary sources are used to support their propositions and claims. After that, take a peek at the scholars' *istidlal* and *istinbat*. Then, if necessary, consult the fatwas, even the most recent ones. It also gives weight to different points of view depending on the strength of propositions and statements based on the Syafie sect's beliefs and laws. Finally, it emphasises more rewards and is more universal in nature, honouring *waqi'* and real-life realities thus adhering to the *Maqasid al-Syariah* values (Mohamad al-Bakri, 2019).

TECHNOLOGY USAGE: RESPONSE TOWARD THE ISSUES

Recent media-based surveys on society's understanding and acceptance of fatwas suggest that fatwa acceptance is increasing among Malaysia's Muslim population (Rahman et al., 2016; Buang & Che Rosli, 2017; Shamsudin et al., 2018). The most critical aspect identified by these researchers is that fast and efficient dissemination of fatwa knowledge will improve social awareness and acceptance of fatwas (Rahman et al., 2016; Buang & Che Rosli, 2017; Shamsudin et al., 2018). Fatwa departments in Malaysia have made some improvements in response to the lower acceptance of fatwas among

the population, especially in the dissemination and explanation of fatwas. In 2001, the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) fulfilled its position as an authorised agency that manages and advises on Islamic matters by launching the JAKIM's e-Fatwa e-fatwa portal. This e-fatwa platform, which was officially introduced in 2003, has marked a new chapter in the propagation of fatwas in Malaysia (Suratem et al., 2015). Jakim also set up an e-SMAF database, which compiled all fatwas released at the state and national levels (Khairuldin et al., 2018). In addition, each of Malaysia's 14 states had their own official websites where the released fatwas could be found. Just two states, the Federal Territory Mufti's Office and the Pulau Pinang Mufti's Department, have official mobile applications (apps) that compile fatwas from fatwa departments (Khairuldin et al., 2018). Furthermore, not all Mufti's departments use Facebook to disseminate fatwas, and the findings of Ashaari et al. (2020) reveal that only the Mufti Departments of Perlis, Negeri Sembilan, and Wilayah are heavy users of Facebook. Nonetheless, some Mufti disseminates their lectures through channels other than the department's official Facebook page. For example, the former Federal State Mufti, Datuk Dr. Zulkifli al-Bakri and Datuk Dr Mohd Asri Zainal Abidin, the Mufti of Perlis, both have personal Facebook and Instagram accounts that cover their lectures and are broadcast live by other parties. Even if the website is not the official page of the mufti institutions, the community regards both as muftis and the personal views they issue as their stance as muftis (Ashaari et al., 2020). In response to this improvement, 92% of respondents in research by Buang & Che Rosli (2017) agreed with the dissemination of fatwas through the latest technology, such as SMS (a short message service), email and social media.

A conference aimed at upholding the fatwa institution in Malaysia was held for the first time in Malaysia. The Multaqa of the Fatwa Councils of Malaysia, which was attended by 120 members of the State Fatwa Committee and members of the Muzakarah Committee of the National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs Malaysia (MKI), was held on the 21st to 23rd of September 2020 as a platform for discussion and brainstorming among members of the State Fatwa Committee and members of the Muzakarah Committee of the National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs Malaysia (MKI). It is also aimed at improving the country's State Fatwa Committee members' cooperation and agreements (Jakim, 25 October 2020).

His Majesty the Sultan of Perak Darul Ridzuan, Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah Ibni Almarhum Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin Shah, officiated at the opening ceremony of the Multaqa of the Fatwa Councils of Malaysia. His Majesty the Sultan of Perak had previously completed the Royal Decree Towards Dignifying the Fatwa Institution, in which he hoped that the institution of fatwa would diversify its methods and approaches to addressing the challenges of today's world in order to maintain its respect as a reliable source of religious reference. He also hoped that Muftis and religious scholars would be able to assist the King of the Government in his position as the Head of the Islamic Religion in their respective countries (Jakim, 25 October 2020).

Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah (2020) has stressed several points in the issuance of a fatwa in the Royal Decree: the Fatwa Committee must be aware that Muslims today have access to more accessible educational services, that they are highly intelligent, interested, engage in critical thought, conduct comparative analysis and comparison, and that they do not accept something without being persuaded. Furthermore, developments in communication technology have altered the function, response, and acceptance of fatwas in modern society. Many websites containing various fatwas have emerged in the online world, which can be considered an alternative source (to obtain a fatwa). The matter of fatwa does not end at the stage of issuing the fatwa – instead, the mechanism of dissemination and explanation must be implemented via an effective communication plan so that the fatwa can be understood, accepted and appreciated (Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah, 2020). Ten resolutions were outlined as a result of the conference in order to uphold fatwa institutions in the country, with one of them addressing the use of the latest technology in the development and distribution of fatwa services (Berita RTM, 25 October 2020).

MEDIA USAGE AND ACCEPTANCE IN FATWA DISSEMINATION

Previously, fatwas were archived and disseminated via print media, like newsletters, flyers, and newspapers. There are states, organisations, and individuals that assemble them into a magazine or book. Nowadays, fatwas are kept electronically in a database (Muhammad & Muhammad, 2003). During the evolution of technology, broadcast media like television and radio were important in the dissemination of fatwas to the Muslim community. Fatwa information is readily accessible and acquired.

Additionally, many individuals and researchers may get knowledge of fatwas through the digital media, often referred to as the Internet. Utilizing technology, or more precisely, publishing and disseminating the fatwa via the media, will assist Muslims in obtaining genuine references from trustworthy sources and with increased access. Sheikh Dr. Yusof Al-Qaradhawi, a famous Islamic scholar, once said that the internet is an important instrument for disseminating Islamic teaching and may serve as a platform for uniting the Muslim community (Muhammad & Muhammad, 2003). Sheikh Dr. Yusof Al-Qaradhawi is a frequent guest on the satellite station al-Jazeera and founded the successful Islamic online portal Islam Online in 1997, in addition to his own popular personal website. Attractive content, on the other hand, plays a role in persuading readers or viewers to visit websites. Additionally, fatwas on satellite programmes can be very important in helping viewers better understand their religion (Miladi & Athambawa, 2017).

In Malaysia, the development of information and communication technology (ICT) can be an effective instrument for disseminating knowledge and improving Muslims' understanding of fiqh and fatwa (Muhammad & Muhammad, 2003; Mohd Alwi & Azizan, 2018). According to Mohd Alwi and Azizan (2018), the main uses of ICT in fatwa management are for storage (future references), output (dissemination), and input (update the new fatwa). For the purpose of effectively managing and delivering fatwa information to society, the method utilised to distribute knowledge in this area must be strategically planned and started. This is especially important for the valuable resources of fiqh and the valuable collection of fatwas (Muhammad & Muhammad, 2003).

The departments of fatwas in Malaysia are recommended to use ICT to disseminate the fatwa in addition to printed media. They should also create a website to serve as a medium of interaction and communication for muftis and Muslims throughout Malaysia (Mohd Alwi & Azizan, 2018). Therefore, all 15 Islamic religious institutions in Malaysia provided official websites for perusing the fatwa, while only two institutions provided smartphone applications (apps) for the same purpose (Wan Khairuldin et al., 2018). Interviews conducted by Md Zain et al. (2018) with experts from the Mufti Department in the Federal Territory to identify the forms of social media used in disseminating fatwa writing to the community found that the Federal Territory Mufti Department has made extensive use of social media to disseminate fatwas through social networking (Facebook),

collaborative working (web portal and e-fatwa), textual communication (Twitter and RSS), and listening and watching (YouTube). Besides that, people with a religious education background adopt social media in the process of disseminating Fatwas because it is easy to use (Md Zain, et al., 2018).

A. Rahman et al. (2016) conducted a survey of 500 respondents randomly selected from the Muslim public in Kuala Lumpur and the state of Selangor to prove that the media is one of the most effective mediums for disseminating fatwas. They discovered that news reporting on Islam, specifically on Fatwa in Malaysia, has always had an impact, as new Fatwas have been issued periodically by the Malaysian Fatwa Council through the mass media. At the same time, Ahmad Hidayat Buang and Che Rozaihan Che Rosli (2018) discovered a change in society's attitude toward fatwa acceptance, particularly among university students. According to quantitative research, this change is related to the improvement of the Mufti's department's management as well as the impact of the internet on disseminating fatwa information. Finally, the use of mobile devices that allow users to quickly access the internet and social media has the potential to serve as a platform for increasing public understanding of a fatwa that has been issued (Mohd Nawawi & Hamzah, 2014).

CONCLUSION

Last but not least, muftis and members of governmental fatwa committees, as well as Islamic scholars, must be aware of the widespread use of social media in modern society for the purpose of disseminating and explaining fatwas, given the large number of people who already make use of this platform for such purposes. Furthermore, the issues that lead to low fatwa acceptance within the community, such as unreachable fatwas, confusion about fatwas, and insufficient discussion and reference of fatwas issued, may be addressed in further depth. In conclusion, a rise in fatwa acceptability in society will be able to be achieved as a consequence of using social media to propagate fatwas and to educate people about fatwas. In order to better understand the relationship between the usage of social media and the degree of social media acceptability within Malaysian society, it is anticipated that more research, particularly empirical studies, may be conducted.

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Penafian

Pandangan yang dinyatakan dalam artikel ini adalah pandangan penulis. Jurnal Pengurusan dan Penyelidikan Fatwa tidak akan bertanggungjawab atas apa-apa kerugian, kerosakan atau lain-lain liabiliti yang disebabkan oleh / timbul daripada penggunaan kandungan artikel ini.