

## EFFECTS OF NEW MEDIA ON RELIGIOUS PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY ON ZAKAT INSTITUTIONS IN MALAYSIA

**Norida Abu Bakar<sup>1\*</sup>, Nor Azizah Mohammad Amin<sup>2</sup>, Abd Halim Mohd Noor<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Ms, Universiti Teknologi MARA Melaka Branch Alor Gajah Campus, MALAYSIA,  
norida107@melaka.uitm.edu.my

<sup>2</sup> Ms, Universiti Teknologi MARA Negeri Sembilan Branch Seremban 3 Campus, MALAYSIA,  
nor\_azizah@ns.uitm.edu.my

<sup>3</sup> Dr., Universiti Teknologi MARA Melaka Branch Alor Gajah Campus, MALAYSIA,  
drabdhalim@bdrmelaka.uitm.edu.my

\*Corresponding author

### Abstract

New media plays an important role in determining the patterns of thought of our community today. We always hear good and bad things about new media in transmitting information. Having a modern lifestyle makes people more rational and motivated for welfare related activities. Zakat on the other hand, is one of the five basic pillars of Islam. In ensuring zakat obligations are fulfilled, zakat institutions are set up to manage zakat efficiently. In Malaysia, matters pertaining to zakat are under the respective state rulers and the state government. It is a duty of the zakat institutions to always remind the zakat payers to perform their duties on time. Nowadays, the new media is expected to become an important promotional tool among the zakat institutions in getting more response from the potential zakat payers. It is believed that campaigning through the internet has great potential and should be utilized by the zakat institutions in order to increase the collection of zakat. Thus, this study aims to determine the effectiveness of new media in disseminating information from the zakat institutions to the zakat payers. Basically, it is to identify how the new media enhances awareness of zakat payers to fulfil their obligations. For that purpose, this study is carried out by distributing questionnaire among randomly selected zakat payers in Malaysia. The primary data in this research is gathered mainly from self-administrated or self-reported questionnaire. The results obtained confirm that the new media definitely plays an important role and has a great influence among the zakat payers. This is because through social media the organizations have the potential to reach more people through Electronic Word of Mouth approach.

**Keywords:** New Media, Religious Practices, Zakat Institutions.

### 1 INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, advanced information technologies such as personal computers, smart phones, wearable devices, wireless broadband communications, and Internet-based social networking applications such as Twitter, Facebook, and Skype, have innovated and empowered online social networks (Liu, Jiang, & Lin,

2015). Having a modern lifestyle makes people more rational and motivated for welfare related activities. Modern technology has brought broad changes in all kinds of life and the utilization of internet is useful for learning sharing (Abbasi, Akram, & Shoab, 2013).

New media on the other hand, is defined as borderless technology and is using computer networking and internet. The term new media generally refers to emerging communication technologies and applications, while simultaneously acknowledging the fact that all media formats at various points in time have been considered new (Marvin, C., 1988; Tomasello, Lee, & Baer, 2010).

In this study, our use of the term 'new media' refers specifically to the internet and related digital technologies (e.g. cell phones, PDAs [Personal Digital Assistants]) and applications (e.g. blogs, file-sharing programs, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Telegram), as these are among the most newly emerged and evolving communication formats at present time. More specifically, although digital computers have existed at least since the mid-1940s with the advent of ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Calculator) (Packer, R. & K. Jordan, 2001), their widespread adoption and use in a communication context among the general world public is a more recent event that occurred in the 1990s, in part, with the internet's public debut in the USA and abroad (Pavlik, J. V., 1998).

The new media plays an important role in determining the patterns of thought of our community today. We always hear good and bad things about the new media in transmitting their information. This, however, is just temporary in nature because there is no proof. As a sound and IT literate community, we have to be positive in supporting the spread of Islam through the Internet and so on. The support and encouragement of new media is very much appreciated and should work together hand in hand in upholding Islam.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Cheung, (2006) claims that individuals are formed by the media where these media have turned into the most persuasive power in molding individuals' perspective and qualities. He found that the use of media in religious lesson is useful. With the ascent of computers and the internet, the propensity to liken technological engagement with religious interests has been further reinforced (Campbell & La Pastina, 2010).

Paizin, (2014) agrees with the statement by saying that the rise of Islam and Muslim public spheres in the internet has made Muslim people energetic in sharing their faith and beliefs at the click of the mouse. His study on the Zakat Collection Centre (PPZ), Federal Territory of Malaysia found that an introduction of websites and portal in PPZ allows the community to receive much faster and easier services. He added that through the websites and portals a lot of information regarding zakat can be disseminated by using social media such as Facebook and Twitter to spread zakat information.

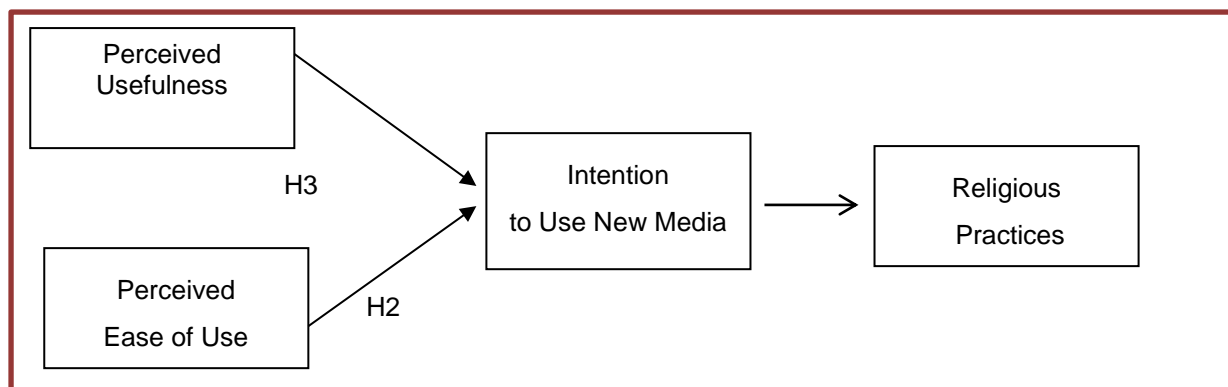
(Abbasi et al., 2013) recommend media channels to allocate a suitable time slot for creating better understanding about religious teachings. Religious scholars are suggested to specify at least one weekly religious religion congregation to create awareness and better understanding about religious values and practices. Antony, Salerno, & Tosto, (2015) support this idea through their research findings that the adolescents in Tamil Nadu have remarkable access to mass media which they believe that mass media could support the religious practices. Moreover, the adolescents are not psychologically compelled by mass media to avoid religious practices.

Corporate reputation is vital in ensuring the success of an organization. In lieu to this, Dijkmans, Kerkhof, & Benkeboom, (2015) argue that consumers' intensity of social media use is positively related to their engagement in social media activities. According to them, engagement in social media activities in turn is positively related to corporate reputation, especially among non-customers. Min Teah, Lwin, & Cheah, (2014) support this argument by stating that the image of charitable organizations has a significant relationship with attitudes towards charities.

## 3 RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

For the purpose of our research we used a modified TAM model in research subsequently done by Ramayah, Ma'ruf, Jantan, & Mohamad, (2002). This research extends the model to serve the purpose of this study. The research model is as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Research Model



- H1: Perceived usefulness has a positive effect on intention to use of New Media
- H2: Perceived ease of use has a positive effect on intention to use of New Media
- H3: Intention to use of New Media has a positive effect on Religious Practices

#### 4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A convenience sampling method was used to gather the sample for this study. An online survey questionnaire was used to conduct this study. The study population includes any zakat payers by personal and professional contacts of the authors, who accessed the link to the Google docs on social networks and a total of 230 questionnaires were answered.

##### 4.1 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was developed based on relevant literatures. It consisted of five parts; Demographic, Perceived of Use (PU), Perceived Ease of Use (PEU), Intention to Use (IU), and Religious Practices (RP). As for the demographic section, the respondents had to choose from the given items. On the other hand, for PU, PEU, IU and RP sections, respondents were given options to choose between 1 to 4 where 1 stands for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for agree and 4 for strongly agree.

#### 5 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

##### 5.1 Reliability and Validity

In this study, hypotheses were tested using Linear and Multiple Regression Analysis. Prior to that, the data was tested for reliability and validity. Reliability test had been conducted and the result is shown in Table 1 below. Cronbach Alpha reliability for all variables indicated a very good internal consistency with readings ranged from 0.826 – 0.887 with the overall reliability of 0.943. The widely accepted cut-off is that alpha should be 0.6 or higher (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Thus, this result indicates that the data obtained in this study are reliable.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis Cronbach Alpha

Scale	No. of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Perceived Usefulness	3	0.887
Perceived Ease of Use	3	0.826
Intention to Use	3	0.860
Religious Practices	4	0.853
Overall Reliability	13	0.943

##### 5.2 Demographic

Respondents' profile is shown in the Table 2 below. In terms of gender dispersion, out of 230 respondents, 72(31.3%) were males and 158(68.7%) were females. There were 58(25.2%) respondents aged between 20 – 29 years. 101(43.9%) were at 30 -39 years old, and 35(15.2%) were at 40 – 49 years old while, 36(15.7%) respondents were 50 years old and above. For monthly income category, 57(24.8%) respondents earned less than RM3000, 116(50.4%) respondents earned between RM3001 – RM6000, while 42(18.3%) and

13(5.7%) respondents earned between RM6001 – RM9000 and between RM9001 – RM12000 respectively. Only 2(0.9%) respondents earned more than RM12000. However, in terms of having experience in paying zakat, 13(5.7%) respondents have the experience for less than a year. 107(46.5%) respondents have experienced it between 1 – 5 years and 54(23.5%) respondents for 6 – 10 years. 56(24.3%) respondents have more than 10 years' experience in paying zakat.

Table 2: Respondents 'profile

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	72	31.3
Female	158	68.7
Total	230	100.0
<i>Age</i>		
Below 20 years	-	-
20 – 29 years	58	25.2
30 – 39 years	101	43.9
40 – 49 years	35	15.2
50 years and above	36	15.7
Total	230	100.0
<i>Monthly Income</i>		
Less than RM3000	57	24.8
RM3001 – RM6000	116	50.4
RM6001 – RM9000	42	18.3
RM9001 – RM12000	13	5.7
More than RM12000	2	0.9
Total	230	100.0
<i>Experience in Paying Zakat</i>		
Less than 1 year	13	5.7
1 – 5 years	107	46.5
6 – 10 years	54	23.5
More than 10 years	56	24.3
Total	230	100.0

### 5.3 Data Analysis and Findings

Based on several literatures, the study identifies three items pertaining to Perceived of Use (PU), three items for Perceived Ease of Use (PEU), three items for Intention to Use (IU) and four items for Religious Practices (RP) among zakat payers in paying zakat. As illustrates in the Table 3 below, for Perceived of Use (PU), 102 (44.3%) respondents strongly agreed and 125(54.3%) respondents agreed that it is more convenient to get information regarding zakat through social media (PU1). Only 3(1.3%) were disagreed with the statement. For PU2, 102(44.3%) respondents strongly agreed and 126(54.8%) respondents agreed, with only 2(0.9%) disagreed that it is more efficient and time saving to get information regarding zakat through social media. 114(49.6%) respondents strongly agreed and 115(50.0%) agreed, while only 1(0.4%) respondent disagreed with the statement that it is easier to download information regarding zakat through social media as compare to visiting the zakat institutions itself (PU3).

Table 3: Distributions of Respondents by Their Opinions Regarding Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, Intention to Use and Religious Practices

	Scale	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	<i>Perceived of Use (PU):</i>				
(PU1)	more convenient to get information through social media	-	3(1.3%)	125(54.3%)	102(44.3%)
(PU2)	more efficient and save time to get information through social media	-	2(0.9%)	126(54.8%)	102(44.3%)
(PU3)	easier to download information through social media compare to visiting the institutions	-	1(0.4%)	115(50.0%)	114(49.6%)
	<i>Perceived Ease of Use (PEU):</i>				
(PEU1)	get information through social media can be done at any time and any place	-	2(0.9%)	110(47.8%)	118(51.3%)
(PEU2)	easier and faster to get information through the websites of the zakat institutions	-	4(1.7%)	125(54.3%)	101(43.9%)
(PEU3)	easier to do zakat transactions through social media applications	1(0.4%)	4(1.7%)	146(63.5%)	79(34.3%)
	<i>Intention to Use (IU):</i>				
(IU1)	willing to use websites to download information regarding zakat	1(0.4%)	1(0.4%)	128(55.7%)	100(43.5%)
(IU2)	want to use social media in getting information regarding zakat	1(0.4%)	2(0.9%)	131(57.0%)	96(41.7%)
(IU3)	want to use applications in the websites to pay zakat	1(0.4%)	2(0.9%)	146(63.5%)	81(35.2%)
	<i>Religious Practices (RP):</i>				
(RP1)	Computer and internet are important today and in future	-	1(0.4%)	66(28.7%)	163(70.9%)
(RP2)	Using social media is the best way to get information regarding the roles of zakat institutions	-	3(1.3%)	122(53.0%)	105(45.7%)
(RP3)	Using social media is the fastest way to get information regarding the roles of zakat institutions	-	3(1.3%)	113(49.1%)	114(49.6%)
(RP4)	Zakat institutions should use social media to create awareness on the importance of zakat among the Muslim	1(0.4%)	-	110(47.8%)	119(51.7%)

In terms of Perceived Ease of Use (PEU), for PEU1 118(51.3%) and 110(47.8%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the statement that to get information regarding zakat through social media can be done at any time and any place, while 2(0.9%) respondent disagreed. 101(43.9%) respondents strongly agreed and 125(54.3%) respondents agreed it is an easier and faster way to get information regarding zakat through the websites of the zakat institutions (PEU2). 4(1.7%) respondents disagreed with the statement. For PEU3, 79(34.3%) respondents strongly agreed and 146(63.5%) agreed that it is easier to do zakat transactions through social media applications, while 4(1.7%) disagreed and only 1(0.4%) respondent strongly disagreed.

For Intention to Use (IU), 100(43.5%) respondents strongly agreed and 128(55.7%) agreed with the statement that they are willing to use websites to download information regarding zakat (IU1) with 1(0.4%) respondent disagreed and strongly disagreed. 96(41.7%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement that they want to use social media in getting information regarding zakat (IU2). It has been supported by

131(57.0%) respondents which agreed to do so. Only 4(0.9%) disagreed and 1(0.4%) respondent strongly disagreed. A total of 81(35.2%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement that they want to use applications in the websites to pay zakat (IU3) with 146(63.5%) respondents agreed. Only 2(0.9%) and 1(0.4%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively.

In terms of Religious Practices (RP), 163(70.9%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement that computer and internet are important for today and in future (RP1). It was supported by 66(28.7%) respondents agreed with the statement despite, 1(0.4%) disagreed. 105(45.7%) respondents strongly agreed and 122(53.0%) agreed that using social media is the best way to get information regarding the roles of zakat institutions (RP2), while 3(1.3%) respondents disagreed. For (RP3) on the other hand, 114(49.6%) strongly agreed and 113(49.1%) agreed that using social media is the fastest way to get information regarding the roles of zakat institutions with only 3(1.3%) respondents disagreed with the statement. For the last statement (RP4), 119(51.7%) respondents strongly agreed and 110(47.8%) respondents agreed with the statement that zakat institutions should use social media to create awareness on the importance of zakat among the Muslims (RP4). Only 1(0.4%) respondent strongly disagreed with the statement.

Linear and Multiple Regression Analysis were used to test the research hypotheses and to examine the effects of independent variables perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use on the dependent variable intention to use new media and subsequently the effect on religious practices.

H1: Perceived usefulness has a positive effect on intention to use of New Media

As shown in table 4 below, ( $R^2 = 0.480$ ) is significant at 0.000, and ( $\beta = 0.693$ ) is significant at 0.000. Hence, there is a significant and a positive effect of perceived usefulness on intention to use of new media. Thus, H1 is accepted. In addition, (48.0%) of the variation in intention to use of new media can be explained by the perceived usefulness.

Table 4: Regression summary for H1

R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.	H1 Result
.693 <sup>a</sup>	.480	.473	.38731	69.546	.000 <sup>b</sup>	Accepted
Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Coefficient			
B	Std. Error	B	T	Sig.		
.725	.191		3.800	.000		
.492	.078	.474	6.293	.000		

H2: Perceived Ease of Use has a positive effect on intention to use of New Media

As shown in table 5 below, ( $R^2 = 0.476$ ) is significant at 0.000, and ( $\beta = 0.690$ ) is significant at 0.000. Hence, there is a significant and a positive effect of perceived ease of use on intention to use of new media. Thus, H2 is accepted. In addition, (47.6%) of the variation in intention to use of new media can be explained by the perceived ease of use.

Table 5: Regression summary for H2

R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.	H2 Result
.690 <sup>a</sup>	.476	.469	3.8548	68.439	.000 <sup>b</sup>	Accepted
Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Coefficient			
B	Std. Error	B	T	Sig.		
.640	.196		3.260	.000		
.386	.065	.372	5.898	.000		

H3: Intention to use of New Media has a positive effect on Religious Practices

As shown in table 6 below, ( $R^2 = 0.327$ ) is significant at 0.000, and ( $\beta = 0.572$ ) is significant at 0.000. Hence, there is a significant and a positive effect of intention to use of new media on religious practices. Thus, H3 is accepted. In addition, (32.7%) of the variation in religious practices can be explained by intention to use of new media.

Table 6: Regression summary for H3

R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.	H3 Result
.572 <sup>a</sup>	.327	.318	.43456	36.628	.000 <sup>p</sup>	Accepted
Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients				
B	Std. Error	B	T	Sig.		
1.399	.211		6.627	.000		
.333	.083	.334	4.029	.000		

## 6 CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

The objective of this study is to identify the effects of using new media on religious practices with special emphasis on the roles of zakat institutions in Malaysia. The findings reveal that new media has a strong effects on the religious practices particularly concerning the practice of zakat. Hence, zakat institutions are encouraged and should continuously updating information in their websites and make full use of social media because it has a significant potential in influencing zakat payers to pay zakat. Nevertheless, the results obtained from this study cannot be generalized because the case study was chosen for only zakat organizations in a particular country.

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