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This special issue of *Da'wah in the Media for Muslims' Sustainability* brings together six selected articles presented at 2017 *International Conference on Islam, Media and Communication (ICIMaC)* which was held on 8 & 9 August. The conference was organized by Communication Program, Faculty of Leadership and Management, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM). The topics presented discussed on the relationship between Muslims identity in new media and the use of social media and film as a platform to spread da'wah. However, there are three invited articles from outside which have been included together in this issue to discuss on the representation of Muslims' sustainability.

In al-Quran, (51:58) the sustainability recognized Allah as *al-Razzaq* or the sustainer and Allah further describes humankind as the *khalifah* or vicegerent of Allah on earth (2:30). Therefore, all human beings need to play a role as the sustainer as to ensure the harmony so a peaceful life can be enjoyed by all. To a large extent, the responsibility of media in shaping the sustainability is expected as media play a crucial role in any sustainable strategy (Genc, 2017). This is partly because, media have to remind, educate and encourage everyone to preserve the sustainability life among Muslims through long-life learning of Islam and cultivating a well-mannered of Muslims' attitude.

New media is one of the popular media used to communicate. Nor Nirwandy (2017) in his article, *The Significant Impact of Muslim's Identity through Big Data and Information Overload in the New Media* explores how new media does impact Muslim society especially in media coverage. News about Muslims, which always been related to terrorism are not only aired in traditional media but also in the new media especially in social media. The image of Muslim identity needs to be corrected by Muslims who can use social media for the sustainability of the ummah.

However, the use of new media could be misused by certain users who do not know to differentiate the dos and the don'ts. Nowadays, people can access anything at their fingertips since the invention of smartphone. This has resulted to an addiction among users which can affect their productivity or work performance (Abdullah & Norlaila, 2017). Abdullah and Norlaila (2017) in the next article, *The Impact of Smartphones on Work Productivity as Perceived by Employees at a Government Department in Salalah, Oman* explored the impact of smartphones on work productivity in Oman, which is a good move in order to see how workers in other Muslim countries balance between the use of social media and work performance which is very important for their living and sustainability.

In addition, the use of new media and social media can be channeled for knowledgable use such as for da'wah (Azizah & Azlina, 2017). The authors in the next article, *De-Westernization of Social Media Dependency for Da'wah Purposes* discussed how social media plays a role in giving awareness towards Islamization of knowledge and persuading people towards good deeds. Thus, world citizens can understand more about Islam which means that the de-westernization of social media gives more significant values to the contribution of Islamic da'wah in the new media for Muslims' sustainability.

Da'wah in the media for Muslims' sustainability has been discussed in this special edition widely covers various aspects including films. The article written by Osama et al. (2017), *Authenticity of Characters Portrayal in Islamic Films: A Study on the Message* touched on how the Islamic film namely *The Message* focused on the characters played in that film. In this article, the authors have successfully analysed and compared between Muslims and non-Muslims characters in which eventually showed Muslims characters were degraded, barbaric and hegemonic. The portrayals of this film showed contradicting elements of Muslim characters in Islam and this should be highlighted by Muslim researchers in film study to sustain the good image of Islam and Muslims.

Research on the study of films within the scope of Islamic da'wah continues to develop for both local and international films. Apart from the study of characters portrayal in films, there are also studies done in analysing misportrayal of Islam in films. Osama, et al. (2017) in the next article explored the misportrayal of Islam in Islamic films whereby he and his colleagues analysed the film *The Message* and wrote a very good article based on the analysis. Films often portray ideology and culture that empower knowledge and understanding of civilisation. Unlike the previous article, Osama and his colleagues (2017) in this article focused on the content of this selected film which represented Islam negatively despite the theme of the film as Islamic. They discovered that *The Message* contains propaganda against Islam. This article is significant in contributing to the sustainability of Muslims in media.

The definition of the term da'wah has been widened by Muslims who believe that delivering da'wah is a responsibility of every Muslim including film makers. Thus, the expansion of the definition of da'wah is seen also in film production. The next authors, Hajar et al. (2017) wrote on a development of syariah compliant film in Malaysia. Nowadays, efforts made by local film makers in producing films with Islamic elements are progressively increasing. The authors analysed the transcripts based on in-depth interviews done on several respondents and following the analysis, they built up the measurement instrument that contains criteria to determine sharia compliant films.

Da'wah in the media for Muslims' sustainability is further visualized in the article written by Mohd Nazif (2017) on the analysis of the delivery strategy of Islamic da'wah message in social media. In this article entitled *Analisis Strategi Penyampaian Mesej Dakwah Islamiah dalam Halaman Facebook*, the author expressed on the current globalisation of new media that contributes to the transformation of Islamic da'wah messages sent via social media. He explained on the analysis based on the research conducted using thematic analysis approach. The results showed that Islamic preachers prioritized persuasive writings in delivering messages as their strategy in Islamic da'wah.

The sustainability issues among Muslims have been maintained through the discussion of Khatijah et al. (2017) on the article namely *Pembelajaran Islam Sepanjang Hayat (PISH): Kearah Melahirkan Generasi Seimbang untuk Pembangunan Negara*. Through this article, they enlightened on the sustainability of the knowledge which is Lifelong Islamic Learning (PISH) as a key factor in shaping the balance of future generations. As a Muslim, the importance of human self-balance is between earthly and ukhrawi knowledge that contributes to the development of a sustainable generation in terms of intellectual, behavioral and thinking in regards to developing the nation.

Muslims' sustainability is very much related to developing good Muslim's character for future generations, it is important for us to understand deeply on 20 Attributes of Allah SWT. This has been emphasized by Hamidi Ismail (2017) in his article on *Sufism Discourse in Notion of 20 Attributes*. The importance of understanding 20 Attributes of Allah is to create an ensconce approach against falsity of polytheism, and at the same time, manuring noble deeds into human's temperament. Focuses on sincerity, khawf, qana'ah, tawbah, khunu ', khudu', mahabbah, tawakkal and rida which are the spiritual foundations for the pursuit of pure Islam.

In conclusion, all nine articles in this special edition have aligned with the theme, Da'wah in the Media for Muslims' Sustainability. Most of the articles emphasize on how to portray Muslim and Islam in a positive way to the mass audience of media (Nirwandy, 2017; Abdullah & Norlaila, 2017; Hajar et al., 2017, Khatijah et al., 2017; Hamidi Ismail, 2017). The misrepresentation of Islam and Muslim in media does affect Muslim

identity globally. Thus, global citizens need to be educated on what is Islam and who are the true Muslims. This approach can be part of responsibilities carried by Muslim preachers while they are spreading and disseminating da’wah as Azizah and Azlina (2017) and Nazif (2017) highlighted in their articles. In the development of new media, especially social media, the task in spreading the information about Islam is more convenient. Finally, it is the time for Islam to rise via media in a positive way in order to increase sustainability of the Muslim society. Instead of being portrayed negatively, Muslims should use media to make people understand about Islam and fall in love with it.

## REFERENCES

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