



## **Utilization of Social Media in the Qur'anic Exegesis (Tafseer) During COVID-19 Lockdown: Online Survey**

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*This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author MIS managed conceptualization, software, writing-reviewing, editing, analysis and author AAS managed data curation, writing- original draft preparation. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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### **ABSTRACT**

COVID-19 pandemic despite seen as disaster but can also be seen as blessing. Social media prior to the period of the pandemic has been seen as negative aspect of the 21<sup>st</sup> century due to its improper utilization and number of side effects to the young generation. This study aims at determining the level of utilization of the Social media in Qur'anic Exegesis during COVID-19 lockdown in Northern Nigeria. This paper collects an empirical data on Social Media that have become available via the Internet in the light of usability and impact for Qur'anic Exegesis during COVID-19 Lockdown. Nevertheless, the analysis revealed that the response about the level and extent of utilization of social media in the Qur'anic exegesis is extremely high. People reflection on their experience about social media in listening to Qur'anic exegesis shows high level of acceptance and adoptability. Similarly, it concludes that the number of audience or listeners to Qur'anic exegesis (Tafseer) during the lockdown via social media is significantly high. Moreover,

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people have positive perception on the use of social media to listen to Qur'anic exegesis. Meanwhile, it is therefore recommended that Muslims should explore optimum use of social media to spread the cause of Allah. In the same vein, awareness should be done to enlighten Muslims on the permissibility of using social media. The mode of Qur'anic exegesis via social media used during COVID-19 pandemic should be adopted even after the pandemic for the onwards Islamic programs.

*Keywords: Social media; Qur'anic exegesis; COVID-19; lockdown.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Recent development in digital technologies, especially web 2.0 and web 3.0 tools such as social media and mobile devices such as tablets and phones, have given end users much more control over access to, creation and sharing of knowledge [1]. The social media has become one of the most important communication means in recent times. Still, social networking exist so as to provide communication among people regardless of the distance, making it open to people so as to easily share information, files, pictures, videos, create blogs, send messages and conduct real-time conversations [2]. These systems are referred to as social, simply because they allow communication with buddies and coworkers so easily and effectively. It also strengthens the ties between people of those systems. It is only now that Islamic scholars realized that it can be put to a better use due to the lockdown and social distancing policy. For years, social media have been a part of daily life. Within the last 5-10 years, the use of social media (and in particular social networking sites) has expanded to almost all sides of life: private people, businesses and public institutions. Muslims are not different from other societies in the last few years, due to their increased use of social media trends. It has brought changes that can have a significant impact on the individual and group level of Muslim society [3].

Muslims should fully explore and make optimum use of the new social media to promote the cause of Islam and the Muslim world. In the past, seeking knowledge about Islam was mainly restricted to the Masjids, educational institutions, and learning from imams and sheikhs. 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 through which one can learn about Islam [4]. The Internet has given the public access to all kinds of information and made Islamic literature so much more accessible. You can listen to a lecture in

any language you want and whenever you want on YouTube, Instagram, Zoom and Facebook. User-Generated live video streaming systems are services that allow anybody to broadcast a video stream over the Internet [5]. This new social media feature allows the live streaming of Qur'anic Exegesis (Tafseer) during Ramadan Period in Northern Nigeria. Social media Live streaming is a feature on some social media platforms that allows users to stream video to followers and engage with them in real time. Going live is a simple way to create a virtual event. When users broadcast live video streams on their accounts, a ring highlights their profile to alert followers that they can view the live stream, this serves as a reminder to the followers even if they forget the time of a program. This study aims at finding out the level and perception of people in the utilization of social media in the Qur'anic exegesis (Tafseer) during COVID-19 lockdown in Northern Nigeria.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

The year 2020 has experience a pandemic outbreak which leads to the closure of worship places as well as lockdown policy. This has greatly affected the Islamic activities during the month of Ramadan (fasting period) in Northern Nigeria. The Qur'anic Exegesis is one of the greatest aspects of Islamic teaching that guide the Muslim world because it serves as reminder to the word of the Almighty. In Nigeria Qur'anic Exegesis is mostly carried out by every mosque in the month of Ramadan. Despite the fact that some Islamic scholars attempted to tap on the potential of using these networks for Islamic purposes (especially Qur'anic Exegesis) to complement or replace the traditional approach, many others saw it as a set back and a means of luring the young into waste of time and addiction for games and non-educational activities. But the level of utilization and the impact of these approach (using social media) need to be investigated in other to have a full image of its possible adaptation for Islamic teaching to complement the traditional approach which is

practiced in the country. Female gender finds it difficult to integrate household activities with listening to Qur'anic Exegesis from the mosques during the fasting period, this study also investigates the significance difference between gender in utilization of social media.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Social Media

Social media are means by which people create, share, exchange, synthesize, analyze, critique information and ideas online, in virtual communities. These social media permit and indeed encourage multiple forms of interaction, rather than simply permitting passive viewing. Six different types of social media have been identified [6]: collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia, google), blogs and microblogs (e.g., Twitter, Blogger), content communities (e.g., YouTube, Scoop.it, Zoom), social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, WhatsApp, Imo), virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft), and virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life). Social media is a website or application that allows people to share their content very quickly and efficiently and as a means of communicating with people you know or strangers [3]. Social media are changing the way people live and communicate with others and at the same time making it easy for the international technology of social networks at a more speedy, dependable and cheaper cost. Indeed, the way and manner in which people communicate, consume media, seek and receive information is changing through the social media which is reliant on cultural geography. Thus, it does not have any single definition, but determined by the number of those who retrieve what is sent by the sender(s) [7].

### 2.2 Merit of Social Media in Instruction

There has been various overview and opinions which recognized four major advantages of social media use in higher education. These include, enhancing relationship, improving learning motivation, offering personalized course material, and developing collaborative abilities [2]. Researchers have argued that in teaching and learning the integration of media to facilitate the process is widely encouraged especially in relation to improving final results of scholars [8]. The 'always-on' culture has created a new form of social media where students have the power and autonomy to locate knowledge instantaneously, anytime, anyplace, anywhere

[9]. Social media has the potentials of influencing decision-making in a very short time regardless of the distance. These platforms are way of communicating directly with other people socially [10]. Instructors have reported that using online technologies can encourage online discussion among students outside the classes, beyond the traditional setting [11]. The prominence of social media in the lives of learners of all ages has prompted great enthusiasm amongst some educators [12]. Now people are comfortable with the comfort of their homes to learn the words of the Quran. Social media supports different languages. Besides, their practical words are also very easy. Social media has a role to play in independent expression and creating good authors. Through this, as innumerable people enrich their knowledge and further develop their own skills, enlighten themselves in the way of a beautiful life. Social media have the capacity of boosting participation because of their open, conversational nature, connectedness and textual and audio-visual characteristic appeals [4].

### 2.3 Virtue of Qur'anic Teaching

In Islam seeking knowledge and teaching its aspect to other Muslim brothers and sisters and even non-Muslims as the case may be is one of the most recommended and good acts of worship that a true Muslim can do. Conversely, it has numerous virtues to the one teaching it, to the one learning it and to the Muslim community as whole. However, Quran is the most noble book and the primary sources of Shari'ah (prescribed laws) in Islam. Muslims all over are recommended to seek for Qur'anic and or Islamic knowledge and act upon it teaching.

*Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) Said" The best among you (Muslims) are those who learn the Quran and teach it" [13].*

Teaching and learning of the Holy Quran are among the best deeds that Muslim can perform, and are the main source of respect and integrity for him both in present world and in the hereafter. Moreover, the virtues of teaching Quran can be understood in the following connections:

There is an authentic saying that" One who teaches even a single verse (ayat) of the holy Quran to someone, the reward (Sawab) will be earned and returned to them so long as the verse is being recited". This saying indicates the numerous virtues of teaching the noble Quran

because whenever the one you teach recite that particular verse, portion or chapter you will earn the rewards [14]. Another remarkable aspects and virtues of teaching Quran is that it gives person a second life. In general, we will all die, and our acts and deeds come to an end; but there is some exception that one can be rewarded for even after his death:

The prophet Muhammad peace and blessing of Allah be upon Him said "When a person dies his deeds discontinue except for three things: Ongoing charity, Knowledge which people benefit from and a righteous son who prays for him" [15]. Knowledge in this context means teaching of Quran and other Islamic books, preaching, writing of books for the guidance of people among others are all deeds of continuing charity in this regard.

*More so, prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said" Whoever call (others) to guidance, then he will receive the rewards similar to the rewards of whoever follow him, without that diminishing anything from their rewards" [16].*

This means, he who works actively for good and betterment of others in the cause of Allah, that is, teaching the noble Quran and other Islamic books, call for the practice of holy Quran and the Sunnah by way of teaching, writing literature, compilation, publication, Islamic spreads and propagation, preaching and exhortation, education and teaching as long as these objects will remain and serves the aims and the people will keep benefitting from it. The one who initiated and performed such activities will also gain the rewards [14]. Hence, the virtues one can gets or receives in the cause of teaching the Holy Quran are numerous and uncountable to him in particular (Here and Hereafter) and to the Muslim community in general. Furthermore, some of the virtues he may receive include rewards from Allah, self-recognition, self-concept, self-actualization, Allah's guidance, protection, help, as well as respect and recognition from those learning from him and the Muslim world in general.

#### **2.4 Place of Social Media in Islamic Teaching**

On one hand, the global community has witnessed tremendous change and advancement in information and communication technology which has permeated into and eased all endeavors of humankind. On the other hand,

Islam welcomes and accommodates such tremendous changes with particular reference to social media in its positive sense. The social media has a significant positive impact in the Islamic teaching if properly and positively utilized. It helps in spreading the religion of Allah, improves the morality of humankind and at the same time help reduces vices in the society [7]. Social media has come with many good solutions to Muslims since the platform has become an indispensable part of human life with increased and dominant use of social media, many problems and challenges threatening the religious standards, social bond, cohesion and overall conduct of life provision have emerged in the Muslim world, that is protection of Islam from blasphemous, utterances, publications against Islam and Muslims, spread of mischief, evils in the society and other anti-Islamic vices [17].

Social media is found to play a role in making Muslims become responsible for civilization, development in sciences, medicine, astronomy, algebra, navigation, computer and calligraphy among others. Thus, the use and development of social media is seen as another opportunity which should be fully explored by Muslims because it is a great and viable tool in spreading of Islamic knowledge and globalizing Islam and its values, reaching the world in cheap, faster and more conducive atmosphere [4].

However, the place of social media in Islamic teaching is a subject of tremendous importance in the present world as it eases spreading of Islamic knowledge and increases teaching learning opportunities in Muslim world [18]. Muslims can take lectures online, listen to Qur'anic exegesis online in and outside Ramadan period delivered by Islamic scholars online and it also paves way for having contact with these scholars online through social media. Scholars can also teach Quran and Sunnah (Hadiths) through social media voice and video calling, live streaming, YouTube, Webinar, Facebook, Twitter, Telegram, WhatsApp among others to extend Da'awah to Muslim and non-Muslim people [19]. Moreover, social media play an important role in broadcasting Islamic faith between social media users universally. The use of social media is not only restricted to religious leaders and scholars but also found essential and useful to common Muslims who wish to listen to Islamic lectures, Quran exegesis (Tafseer), tweeting Qur'anic verses and Hadiths or prophetic sayings. The spreading of religious substance commonly reaches its climax

during Ramadan when the level of religiosity increases.

Thus, social media play an important and significant role in Islamic teaching as shown below:

- i. Social media serves as fora or means for conducting online Quran exegesis via livestreaming in Facebook, YouTube channels among other social medial channels.
- ii. Its gives way for online Quran teaching; recitation and Tajweed.
- iii. It helps in spreading Quran, Hadiths and Islamic references. This includes software's for searching Quran and Hadiths such as YouTube channel, Androids Quran Applications. It also helps in spreading of Islamic Da'awah
- iv. It serves as sources of news and information to the Muslim communities such as announcements regarding Islamic lectures, online Qur'anic classes, Islamic treaties and fatwas as well as other Islamic affairs such as sighting of new moon of Ramadan and Islamic calendars.
- v. It enhances teaching, learning, education and access to research in Islam. Social media increases learning opportunities to both scholars and learners or students in the Muslim world [3].
- vi. Above all, social media reduces human physical contacts during Quran exegesis at this period of COVID-19 thereby provides alternative by the use of life streaming via Facebook, YouTube and other means made available at the user's disposal. This also helps in achieving the effort for social distance across the world.

In line of the above scenario, social media play a key role in providing positive impacts in the Muslim society of the popular uprising in Islamic teaching. Social media is a great way for a wider audience and help in making Islamic knowledge and affairs very easy to access, very easy to learn and give ability to communicate to the general public with a high level of universality of speed and at a very short period of time Davis, [20] cited in [3]. Social media can be seen as Allah's gift to Muslims in spreading the message of Islam. More so, Muslims today have limitless ways of giving online lesson in Arabic, Tajweed and so on from social media and internet. Now peoples learn the words of the Quran as well as its narration with comforts in their houses. Islamic

internet websites provide question and answer sessions which are intimately synchronized by certified Ulamas of the Deen (Religious scholars). Thus, Islam is rapidly expanding religion in the world due to the optimum increase in the utilization of social media by Islamic scholars in all the religious activities such as Quran exegesis (Tafseer), Friday sermons, Islamic lectures, online Islamic classes to mention a few. It is becoming popular among young people who are linked to the social media [19]. All these practices point out that social media is incorporated in the habit of spreading the word of Allah and protection of Islam besides critics from outside. Social media also formed an Islamic popular cooperation. This involves worldwide mobilization of believers throughout an effective platform in case of person or group attacks on the prophet or the Quran all in an effort to protect the religion and at the same time teach Islamic knowledge to the world through the utilization of social media platform.

## 2.5 Research Question

1. Which Social media is the most utilized for listening to Qur'an Exegesis (Tafseer) during Ramadan period of COVID-19 lockdown?
2. What is the level of utilization of Social media in listening to Qur'an Exegesis (Tafseer) during Ramadan period of COVID-19 lockdown?
3. What are the people's reflections on their experience on Social media for listening to Qur'an Exegesis (Tafseer) during Ramadan period of COVID-19 lockdown?
4. Is there any significance difference between gender in utilization of Social media for listening to Qur'an Exegesis during Ramadan period of COVID-19 lockdown?

## 3. METHODS

### 3.1 Design

An online survey design was employed for this study in the Northern part of Nigeria in the year 2020. The Online survey has become a popular method of data collection in social investigations. Its main advantages are that it is usually being faster and cheaper because of its technology, its ability to obtain an unbiased population sample and it is having only slightly lower response rates.

### 3.2 Sampling

A snowball sampling method was used, where by a google doc link was sent to several individuals who shared them to their contacts for collection of response. The participants include all social media users in the Northern part of Nigeria that utilizes social media for Qur'an Exegesis during Ramadan period of COVID-19 lockdown.

The table above shows that the highest number of respondents are of 25-35 years of age (53%), the data also shows that most of the respondents are single males. Only (0.8%) are divorced female. 4.2% are above 45years. This data shows that social media is more common with the youth than other group of the population. This is in line with previous findings which reveals that majority of youths spend a great deal of time focusing on social media [21].

### 3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected via online questionnaire. The survey questionnaire was created and distributed electronically through google form. When building our research tool, we did not refer to other similar studies because we tried to investigate the (relatively recent) experience and utilization of social media (currently, there is no representative study for utilization of social media for Qur'an Exegesis in Northern part of Nigeria). Data gathered from the administered questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics; Mean and Percentage for research question one, two and three. Hypothesis from research question four was analyzed using independent sample t-test.

## 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Research Question 1

Which Social media is the most utilized for listening to Qur'an Exegesis (Tafseer) during Ramadan period of COVID-19 lockdown?

The survey also revealed that 98.2% of the population access social media via Smart phone, iPad and Computer, while 1.8% of the research population access social media via other means or do not have access to social media.

### 4.2 Research Question 2

What is the level of utilization of Social media in listening to Qur'an Exegesis (Tafseer) during Ramadan period of COVID-19 lockdown?

The above figure shows the extend of the of social media in listening to Tafseer (Qur'anic Exegesis) during Ramadan period of COVID-19 lockdown. The data revealed that 34.4% respondents use social media very often and 45.6% respondents often used social media in listening to Tafseer (Qur'anic Exegesis), while 14.8% respondents rarely use social media in listening to Tafseer. Only 4.2% respondents never used social media in listening to Tafseer (Qur'anic Exegesis).

### 4.3 Research Question 3

What are the people's reflections on their experience on Social media for listening to Qur'an Exegesis (Tafseer) during Ramadan period of COVID-19 lockdown?

**Table 1. Background information on survey respondents: Gender, Age and Marital status (frequencies and percentages)**

Age/ Gender	Male	Female	Total
15-25	67	62	129 (33.5%)
25-35	179	27	205 (53%)
35-45	60	6	36 (9.4%)
45 and Above	15	1	16 (4.2%)
Total	291	95	386
Marital status			
Single	219	69	289 (72.7%)
Married	72	22	94 (27.3%)
Divorced	0	3	3 (0.8%)
Total	291	92	386

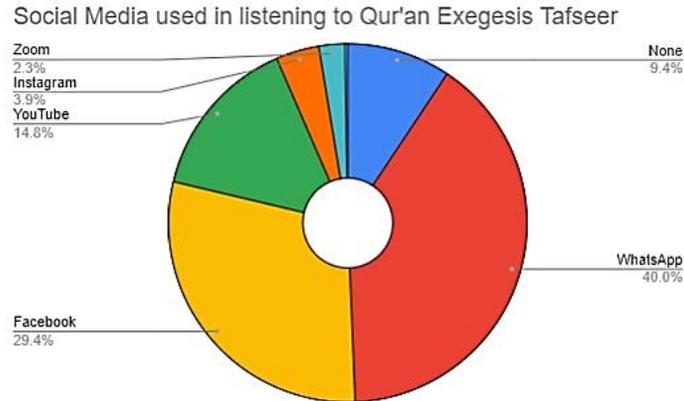


Fig. 1. Social media used in listening to Qur'an Exegesis (percentage)

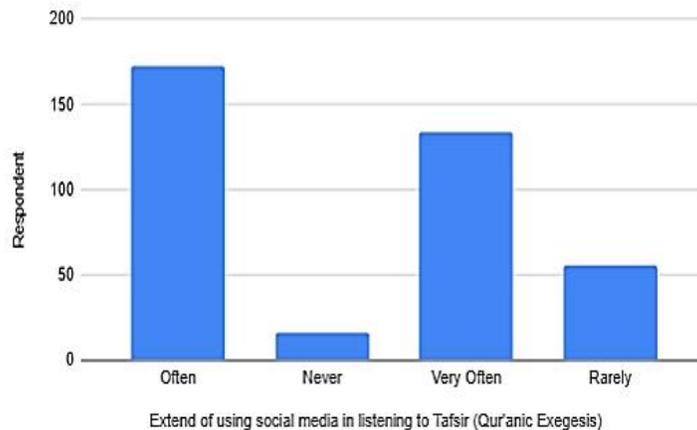


Fig. 2. The extent of the use of social media in listening to Tafseer (Qur'anic Exegesis) during Ramadan period of COVID-19 lockdown

#### 4.4 Research Question 4

Is there any significance difference between gender in utilization of Social media for listening to Qur'an Exegesis during Ramadan period of COVID-19 lockdown?

To address the question of there any significance difference between gender in utilization of Social media for listening to Qur'an Exegesis during Ramadan period of COVID-19 lockdown, an independent sample t-test was computed. The Levene's Test for Equality of Variances shows that male and female did not differ in their choice of how social media prompt them to attempt tafsir on time (Sig .491,  $p < .05$ ), with men having a mean of 3.04 and female having a mean of 2.99. The result also shows that both genders attend more Tafseer (Qur'anic Exegesis) on social

media than on regular traditional approach (Sig .922,  $p < .05$ ). Both genders believed that social media represents a much more natural learning environment than that provided by Tafseer (Qur'anic Exegesis) Gathering approach (Sig .796,  $p < .05$ ). This means that social media can serve as much benefit as the mosque attendance for learning Tafseer. There is no significance difference between gender in the ease of social media in learning Tafseer (Qur'anic Exegesis) during the COVID-19 lockdown (Sig .098,  $p < .05$ ). Despite the fact that people find it easier to learn Tafseer using social media, both genders find it difficult to use social media for Tafseer (Qur'anic Exegesis) (Sig .402,  $p < .05$ ). This result is line with previous researches which reveals the challenges of using social media in Nigeria [22].

**Table 2. Percentage and mean of various social media users on their experience on Social media utilization for listening to Qur’an Exegesis (Tafseer) during Ramadan period of COVID-19 lockdown**

Experience on the utilization of social media for listening to Qur’an Exegesis (Tafsir)	Response	Percentage (%)	Mean
It prompts me attend the Tafsir (Qur’anic Exegesis) on time	Strongly Agree	2.1	3.03
	Agree	14.5	
	Disagree	61.8	
	Strongly Disagree	21.7	
I attend more Tafseer (Qur’anic Exegesis) on social media than on regular traditional approach.	Strongly Agree	6.4	2.86
	Agree	25.0	
	Disagree	44.3	
	Strongly Disagree	24.2	
Social media represents a much more natural learning environment than that provided by Tafseer (Qur’anic Exegesis) Gathering	Strongly Agree	12.4	2.50
	Agree	37.2	
	Disagree	38.8	
	Strongly Disagree	11.6	
Using Social media in learning Tafsir (Qur’anic Exegesis) is easier for me	Strongly Agree	5.7	2.83
	Agree	23.3	
	Disagree	53.5	
	Strongly Disagree	17.6	
I find it difficult to use social media for Tafsir (Qur’anic Exegesis)	Strongly Agree	16.2	2.22
	Agree	52.1	
	Disagree	25.0	
	Strongly Disagree	6.7	

**Table 3. mean difference between gender in the utilization of social media for listening to Qur’an Exegesis during Ramadan period of COVID-19 lockdown**

Experience on the utilization of social media for listening to Qur’an Exegesis (Tafsir)	F	Sig.	T	Sig. (2 tail)	Mean difference
It prompts me attend the Tafsir (Qur’anic Exegesis) on time	.566	.452	.689	.491	.055
I attend more Tafseer (Qur’anic Exegesis) on social media than on regular traditional approach	.145	.703	-.098	.922	-.010
Social media represents a much more natural learning environment than that provided by Tafseer (Qur’anic Exegesis) Gathering	.453	.503	-.258	.796	-.026
Using Social media in learning Tafsir (Qur’anic Exegesis) is easier for me	2.757	.098	-1.661	.098	-.154
I find it difficult to use social media for Tafsir (Qur’anic Exegesis)	4.057	.045	.839	.402	.079

## 5. CONCLUSION

The use of social media today is one of the most growing emerging trends in the world of modern technology and its impacts have pervade almost all human endeavors. It comes with multifarious advantage in making things simple and easy. Moreover, the adoption and use of social media permeate even religious sector, hence Islam found it as a useful mechanism in spreading the Islamic knowledge to reach larger audience at ease and within a very short period of time. It is

against this claim, social media was championed to supplement the conventional face to face mode of delivering Ramadan Qur’anic exegesis during the temporary lockdown, which was enforced by government with a view to check and contain the wide spread of corona virus. However, the utilization of social media in the Qur’anic exegesis during the COVID-19 lockdown brings positive results and as such showcase the future prospect and transformation in the utilization of social media for Qur’anic exegesis and other Islamic teaching and learning

activities which can be translated as substitute of interpersonal communication with online platform as the most effective means of socialization. Accounting for the discussion, it is therefore concluded that the level of social media utilization during the Qur'anic exegesis (Tafseer) have significantly increased. The number of audiences listening to Qur'anic exegesis via social media has also dramatically increased. The study further concludes that those who were not opportune to attend Ramadan Qur'anic exegesis (Tafseer) in the mosques like women and working men have found social media as a golden opportunity and alternative for them. Lastly the study concludes that the use of social media in Qur'anic exegesis was perceived by many people as a welcome development in the Muslim society and it is also seen as an opportunity which can leads to realization of concerted reform in Islamic Da'awah if carefully managed and properly utilized.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above scenario, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Muslims (i.e. scholars, teachers and audience or learners) should explore and make optimum utilization of social media in spreading and or learning Islamic knowledge for it is cheaper, faster and suitable.
- ii. Series of Islamic lectures and sermons should be organized to make awareness as well as enlighten the Muslims on the lawfulness of using social media and how to use such advancement in the propagation of Islam.
- iii. Muslim should make efforts to provide Islamic social media services and ensure strict adherence.
- iv. The use of social media to conduct or deliver Qur'anic exegesis during the COVID-19 lockdown make spread of Islamic message very simple, fast, and cheap, thus effort should be made to maintain the status quo even after the pandemic.
- v. Muslim should be warned to refrain from all vices caused by social media and use it wisely.
- vi. Social media should be use as an avenue to clear the wrong notion of some people against Islam or shun away Islam phobia.

## CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the authors.

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## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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