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# A THEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE NEEDS AND CHALLENGES OF CONVERT MUSLIM WOMEN PREACHERS IN MALAYSIA

## TINJAUAN LITERATUR BERTEMA TENTANG KEPERLUAN DAN CABARAN PENDAKWAH WANITA MUALLLAF DI MALAYSIA

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## ABSTRAK

Women play a vital role in dakwah due to their prominent role in families and society. So, considering Malaysia's diverse society, women's groups like Muslim women converts can influence the direction of dakwah in addition to their significant role in promoting Islamic teachings. Despite their significant role in dakwah, there is a lack of research on Muslim convert women preachers in Malaysia. These preachers face challenges in social integration, religious adaptation and the absence of structured support, which hinder their effectiveness in spreading Islam. Given the limited literature on their contributions and struggles, this paper aims to analyze the literature on women preachers of Muslim convert thematically. The purpose of the study is to determine the patterns and important topics that are present in the literature on women Muslim convert preachers. This study employed a qualitative approach through document analysis to explore key issues related to female preachers among Muslim converts in Malaysia. This study used manual thematic analysis to examine literature, identifying recurring themes and challenges. Google Scholar was the primary source, with selected articles reviewed inductively to allow themes to emerge from the texts in-depth exploration of an under-researched topic. The study found a scarcity of literature and research on the convert Muslim women preachers. Thematic analysis of the literature has formed two significant themes, namely the studies on convert preachers and the studies on women preachers. Furthermore, sub-themes for convert preachers include challenges faced by convert preachers, while sub-themes for women preacher literature include the needs of

women preachers, the uniqueness and persona of women preachers, the roles of women preachers, and the challenges of women preachers. Therefore, academics, particularly those with expertise in the subject of socio-religious dakwah, might investigate the research on Muslim women preachers who have converted. Efforts and contributions of these minority group of preachers need to be highlighted through studies such as detailed profiling of each women convert preacher. These studies can increase their capacity to support dakwah on a bigger scale and have a favourable impact on the community, particularly among converts.

**Keywords:** Muslim convert, women preachers, dakwah, Malaysia dan literatures

## ABSTRAK

Wanita memainkan peranan penting dalam dakwah kerana peranan mereka yang penting dalam keluarga dan masyarakat. Oleh kerana masyarakat Malaysia yang pelbagai, kumpulan wanita seperti mualaf wanita boleh mempengaruhi hala tuju dakwah di samping peranan signifikan mereka dalam dakwah Islam. Selain peranan penting mereka dalam dakwah, masih kurang kajian tentang pendakwah wanita mualaf di Malaysia. Kumpulan pendakwah ini menghadapi cabaran dalam integrasi sosial, penyesuaian agama dan ketiadaan sokongan berstruktur yang menghalang keberkesanan usaha mereka dalam menyebarkan Islam. Oleh kerana keterbatasan literatur mengenai sumbangan dan perjuangan mereka, makalah ini akan menganalisis literatur mengenai pendakwah wanita mualaf secara tematik. Tujuan kajian adalah untuk menentukan corak dan topik penting yang terdapat dalam literatur tentang pendakwah wanita mualaf. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui analisis dokumen untuk meneroka isu utama berkaitan pendakwah wanita dalam kalangan mualaf di Malaysia. Kajian menggunakan analisis tematik secara manual untuk mengkaji literatur serta mengenal pasti tema dan cabaran yang berulang. *Google Scholar* merupakan sumber utama kajian, dengan artikel-artikel terpilih dikaji secara induktif bagi membolehkan tema-tema muncul daripada penerokaan teks secara mendalam mengenai topik yang kurang dikaji. Kajian mendapati terdapat kekurangan literatur dan kajian mengenai pendakwah wanita mualaf. Analisis tematik literatur telah membentuk dua tema yang signifikan iaitu kajian tentang pendakwah mualaf dan kajian tentang pendakwah wanita. Tambahan pula, sub-tema pendakwah mualaf termasuk cabaran yang dihadapi oleh pendakwah mualaf, manakala sub-tema penulisan tentang pendakwah wanita merangkumi keperluan pendakwah wanita, keunikan dan persona pendakwah wanita, peranan pendakwah wanita dan cabaran pendakwah wanita. Oleh itu, ahli akademik khususnya yang mempunyai kepakaran dalam subjek dakwah sosio-agama boleh menjalankan kajian tentang pendakwah wanita mualaf. Usaha dan sumbangan golongan minoriti pendakwah ini perlu ditonjolkan melalui kajian seperti profil terperinci bagi pendakwah wanita mualaf. Kajian-kajian ini boleh meningkatkan kapasiti mereka untuk menyokong dakwah pada skala yang lebih besar dan memberikan impak positif kepada masyarakat khususnya dalam kalangan mualaf.

**Kata kunci**: mualaf, pendakwah wanita, dakwah, Malaysia dan literatur

## INTRODUCTION

Dakwah or Islamic call plays an important role in shaping the socio-religious landscape of the Muslim community in Malaysia. However, there are now several barriers preventing the religious message from being widely disseminated, especially considering the potential for false information about other religions, ethnicities and racial groups to proliferate on the increasingly powerful social media platform. In such a challenging situation, there are great opportunities in dakwah activities in Malaysia which have been supported by strong social and institutional structures, as well as ethnic and cultural diversity that opens space for an inclusive dakwah approach either in physical space or through social media. It is essential that dakwah be continually studied and expanded to support dakwah operations in Malaysia and to set an example for progressive Islam. This is because dakwah is essential in the formation of society based on Islamic ideals.

Given the importance of dakwah, preachers from all backgrounds need to play a significant role in spreading dakwah in Malaysia. A noteworthy subset of preachers is the group of women converts. As has been known, the converts are individuals who have recently embraced Islam and some of them has encountered a variety of unusual and difficult problems. Challenges related to social integration, identity formation, adaption and religious comprehension are a few of them (Tan Abdullah @ Tan Ai Pao & Harun, 2023). In the pursuit of promoting and comprehending Islam, it is important also to acknowledge the unique obstacles and prospects faced by the group of women who have converted. Finding appropriate and thorough methods to provide dakwah to this group of women converts is one of the major issues. Thus, a dakwah strategy that disregards these groups' special needs and experiences may make it more difficult to effectively promote Islam among them.

Apart from that, women convert also face challenges in adapting to new lifestyle and religious rules after embracing Islam. This adaptation process involves major transformations in daily life, such as the way of dressing, social interactions and worship routines. Dakwah must therefore be given with complete awareness of these difficulties and enough assistance to facilitate their process of adaption. As has been stated, despite the challenges, there is a great opportunity to expand dakwah among women converts. This is because they often bring a new spirit in exploring and understanding the teachings of Islam. Therefore, a creative and fresh dakwah approach can attract their interest and provide them with an opportunity to engage with the Muslim community. By emphasizing a deep understanding of religion as

well as an integrated and responsive preaching, dakwah can be an effective tool in supporting the religious journey of women converts in Malaysia.

All things considered, women convert preachers contribute significantly to the dissemination of Islamic teachings and aid fellow converts and the Muslim community. One of them is to address the need for a thorough understanding of the struggles and experiences that women convert encounter. This is because women convert preachers must have a high level of empathy and sensitivity to this unique experience which is able them to provide appropriate support and guidance. Converted women preachers can also set good examples in their religious and moral practices. By showing obedience and seriousness in living a life based on Islamic teachings, they can inspire other converts to pursue excellence in religion. This calls for a strong commitment to moral development and self-improvement. In addition, Muslim women convert can give emphasis to a closer and focused preaching approach, especially to women who have just converted to Islam. In addition, they must also be able to interact with various layers of society, including converts and traditional Muslims, as well as understand the diversity of individual needs and backgrounds.

Consequently, it is important that women who have become preachers undergo ongoing self-development. They should continue to improve their religious knowledge and preaching skills through either formal or informal education (Che Daud & Abdullah, 2020). This will ensure that they can provide quality and relevant support to the community and carry out their responsibilities as preachers well. Preachers who have undergone conversion to Islam can also be valuable in spreading the word about Islam and helping the Muslim community in Malaysia to flourish, particularly among converts. As such, this paper will analyse thematically the literature of Muslim convert women preachers in Malaysia.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

In this study, manual thematic analysis was used to examine relevant literatures on women preachers among Muslim convert in Malaysia. Since the research focused on identifying trends, challenges and key themes from existing studies, the manual approach allowed for a detailed and interpretative exploration of the available literatures. Instead of using available software tools for qualitative data research such as NVivo or ATLAS.ti, the researcher conducted a manual thematic review of selected literature, highlighting and categorizing themes inductively based on recurring patterns in the texts.

While, manual thematic analysis method offered flexibility and interpretative depth, it came with certain limitations. Manual analysis is inherently subjective, as the process of identifying and categorizing themes relies heavily on the researcher's interpretation, which may introduce bias (Nowell et al., 2017). Despite these limitations, manual thematic analysis was considered appropriate given the preliminary and exploratory nature of this study. The limited volume of available literature on Muslim convert women preachers made manual coding feasible and allowed the researcher to engage deeply with the content, identifying patterns and research gaps. The method also enabled a flexible and interpretive exploration, which was suitable for understanding under-researched social phenomena where predefined coding schemes or quantitative synthesis methods may not apply (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As a result, this study provides a foundational thematic overview that can guide future research.

Google Scholar was chosen as the primary database for this study due to its extensive coverage of academic literature across various disciplines, including peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, theses and books. It found nearly all citations found by WoS (95%) and Scopus (92%), and a large number of unique citations (Martín-Martín et al., 2018). Furthermore, Google Scholar enables for broad and inclusive searches, making it suitable for identifying relevant literature on convert Muslim women preachers in Malaysia. To ensure the credibility of the selected literature, preference was given to sources published in indexed journals, conference proceedings and reputable academic publishers.

However, a key limitation of this study is its reliance on secondary data from Google Scholar, which may not capture all relevant sources, such as institutional reports or field studies. Moreover, the absence of primary data such as interviews or ethnographic observations, limited the ability to capture first-hand experiences and complex viewpoints of the subjects. While it provides a thematic overview, this limitation means the findings are not conclusive and highlight the need for further empirical research such as interviews or surveys to gain firsthand insights and develop practical strategies for empowering women convert preachers in Malaysia.

The research used terms such as "women preachers of Muslim converts" and "*pendakwah wanita muallaf*" to acquire articles from Google Scholar, which were then thoroughly reviewed. The selection of articles was based on their scholarly significance to the main research areas dakwah, women preachers and Muslim converts. Rather than imposing pre-defined categories, the analysis allows themes to emerge inductively from the literature.

This ensures that the findings are driven by the actual content of the studies, giving a more authentic understanding of the experiences and challenges faced by convert women preachers in the context of Malaysia.

During the initial coding phase, recurring ideas and issues such as dakwah challenges, adaptation and recognition were noted and tagged with short descriptive labels. These codes were then grouped into themes reflecting dominant trends in the literature: (i) Studies on convert preachers, with sub-themes like conversion challenges, and (ii) Studies on women preachers, with sub-themes such as their roles, persona and uniqueness as well as challenges in dakwah. Next, the themes were reviewed to ensure their clarity, non-overlap and alignment with the study's objectives. Finally, the findings were interpreted and presented qualitatively, highlighting both the lack of research on this topic and the need for more in-depth empirical exploration to understand the contributions and struggles of Muslim convert women preachers in Malaysia. The entire methodological procedure of this study is depicted in the figure 1 below.

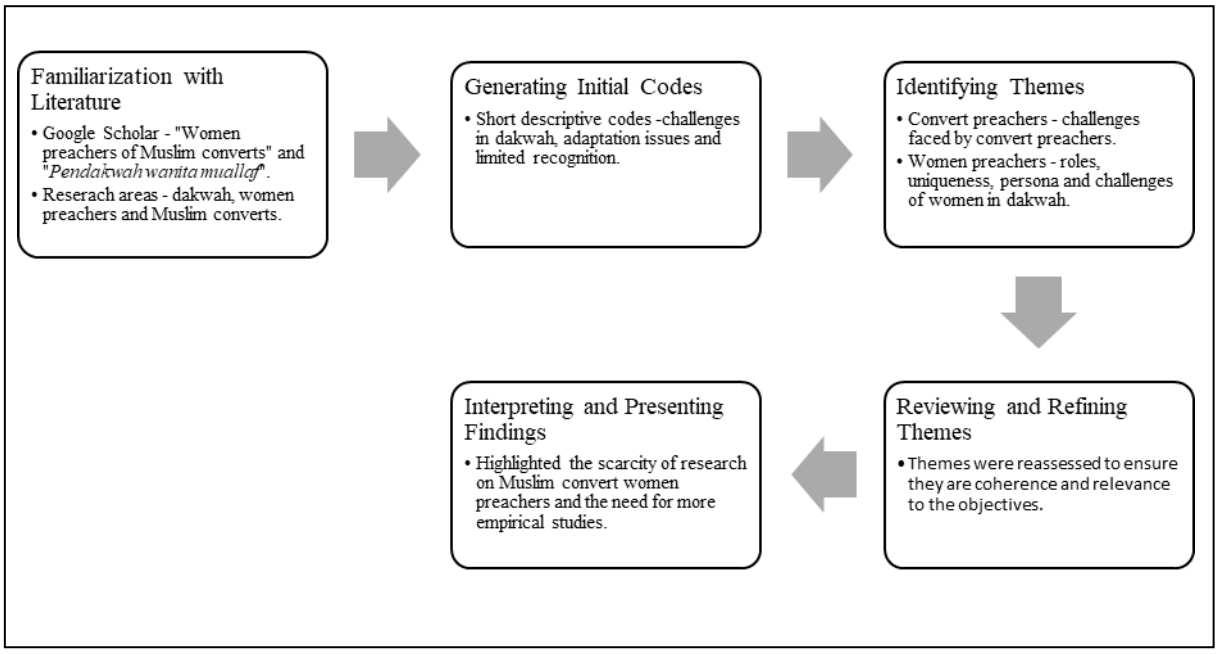


Figure 1: Thematic Analysis Diagram

## THEMATIC ANALYSIS ON THE LITERATURE OF CONVERTED WOMEN PREACHERS IN MALAYSIA

Overall, the current research on Muslim convert in Malaysia has revealed a strong trend toward three primary themes. First are the issues that converts encounter after accepting Islam, such as the identity, social, and psychological difficulties that arise from adjusting to a new life as Muslims. Second, the study also highlights the dakwah approach, which is meant to assist and direct converts in comprehending and putting Islamic principles into practice. This includes an analysis of dakwah methods that are effective in attracting and supporting converts in their religious journey. Third, there is increased interest in study on the development of modules for muallaf that include various locations, focusing on the needs and aspirations of muallaf in various local communities. Thus, the study's general tendency illustrates the ongoing efforts made in Malaysia to comprehend and assist converts' religious journeys through a range of strategies and programs.

Even so, there is still a lack of literature focusing on women convert preachers. The two distinct major themes identified in the literature by means of thematic analysis are convert preachers and women preachers. Most of the discussion about the literature is focused on the challenge of the convert preacher. Among these is a study of the *Cabaran Pendakwah Mualaf di Malaysia* (Tan Abdullah @ Tan Ai Pao & Harun, 2023) about the challenges of converted preachers in Malaysia. Converted preachers are a minority group of Muslim in Malaysia and play an important role in preaching and doing dakwah. This study was conducted in the form of a qualitative study and found that there are challenges after embracing Islam such as the spiritual challenges of religious appreciation and religious studies, marriage and family challenges, psychological challenges from family, adoptive families and society, self-adjustment challenges, role model challenges, the disagreement over the conversion intention problem, the challenge of physical and emotional abuse, the challenge of the flawed principle of the one door policy, the challenge of the misunderstanding of Malay-Muslim and Islam is terrorism and other issues. Because of that, there is a need for the development and empowerment of Muslim converts in the future.

In addition, another study on the challenges of convert preachers is *Pendekatan dan Cabaran Persatuan Kedah Convert Muslim Assosiation (KECMA) dalam Melaksanakan*

*Program Bimbingan dan Kebajikan Saudara Muslim* (S. F. Abdullah et al., 2015). This study will examine the approach and challenges faced by Kedah Convert Muslim Association (KECMA) in carrying out its welfare and guiding program for Muslim converts in Kedah. This study used an interview and observation in the data collection process which is later analyzed descriptively. The results of the study found that this organization focuses more on welfare initiatives than on guidance programs. This study also found that these organizations face the challenges of less systematic organizational management, lack of funds and trained human resources.

In many studies on the theme of dakwah, it seems that the discussion about the involvement of women in dakwah activities is not a priority. Referring to the early writings that addressed the dakwah technique, man (or referred to as daie) is accountable for imparting prophetic treatises or performing dakwah, such as *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (Arnold, 2002). With this regard, Arnold (2002) explained that although Siti Khadijah was the first woman to accept Islam and became Prophet's first wife, but during the first three years of preaching activity while in Mecca, it was driven by Companions such as Abu Bakr, Zayd bin Harithah, Ali bin Abi Talib, Hamzah, Sa'ad Abi Waqas, Zubayr al-Awwam and many others.

Whereas, if referred to the definition of dakwah in general, dakwah which is meant as inviting, persuading, obeying the command of Allah SWT, doing good with the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), multiplying good and preventing evil, is responsibility of all Muslims and believers (men and women) (Mohd. Zin, 1997). Because of this, the duty of dakwah belongs to all Muslims, men and women alike, who declare their faith in Allah SWT, regardless of their occupation as farmers, officials, politicians, artists, educators, or leaders. Thus, there is no difference or distinction between the role played by men and women preachers in terms of advancing the preaching agenda. This is because both men and women preachers must support one another for the dakwah message to be successfully delivered. This is consistent with what God says in Surah Al-Taubah Verse 71:

وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتُ بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍۘ يَأْمُرُوْنَ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَيُطِيْعُوْنَ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗۗ اُولٰۤىِٕكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللّٰهُۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيْزٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٧١﴾

> And the believers, men and women, some of them are helpers for others. They enjoin (do) what is good and forbid what is bad, establish prayer, pay zakat, and they obey Allah and His Messenger. They will be blessed by God. Indeed, Allah is Mighty and Wise.

The literature on women preachers focuses mostly on the need for more women preachers. The Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) reported the total population of Malaysians to be 33.2 million in 2023 with a ratio of 110 men to 100 women. Even so, the report from the Malaysian Gender Gap Index (MGGI) in 2021 shows a score of 0.707 equal to 70.7 percent, which is a decrease of 0.7 percentage points compared to 0.714 in 2020 (Bernama, 2024). The report states that a score with a value of 1.0 (100 percent) indicates that equality between men and women has been achieved rather than a difference in the ratio of numbers between genders. Considering that, Malaysia introduced the National Women's Policy (DWN) in 1989 and this policy was updated with the new document National Women's Policy and Women's Development Action Plan in 2015. This policy aims to empower women from all walks of life and all sectors to be change agents in society and contributors to the nation's economic and social development. It also makes sure that women's opinions are heard in decision-making processes at all levels, which is in keeping with the theme of the need for women preachers.

The data also indicates that women play a substantial role in Malaysia and have never experienced national marginalization. Research on gender-related literature in Malaysia since the 1980s until 2000s has found that women's active participation in the national development process has contributed to the implications of various gender issues in every sphere of women's involvement, including policies and policies on religious affairs such as preaching activities (A. Abdullah, 2012). Furthermore, in Malaysia, dakwah activities are nothing new. In actuality, the roles of men and women have always been involved in the growth of preaching activities carried out at the government level or by non-governmental organizations and individuals (Mohd Yunus et al., 2000; Suleiman et al., 2021). However, there is a study focusing on women preachers entitled *Keperluan Pendakwah Muslimah dalam Dakwah Kontemporari kepada Masyarakat* (Che Daud & Abdullah, 2020) examines on the lack and needs of women preachers who are actively engaged in community outreach. This is a result of women preachers' incapacity to apply modern methods, lack of knowledge, and inability to articulate opinions to address contemporary problems affecting women. Therefore, to continue fulfilling the duty of Islamic preaching, it is crucial to organize an effort and movement to create a layering force among women preachers. It is imperative that

all parties take into consideration the role that women preachers play in the advancement of society and the nation. As a sizable group better known as “the mother of the nation’s children”, women preachers also contribute significantly to community education by ensuring that character and education are developed to the highest standards.

Women preachers, or *da’iyyat* play a vital role in spreading Islamic teachings and addressing issues that particularly affect women. They possessed their own persona which make them unique from men. The study *Risky Appearances, Skillful Performances: Female Islamic Preachers and Professional Style in Malaysia* (Kloos, 2021) has examined the importance of having a skilful and professional style among women preachers in Malaysia as one contributing reason to success in dakwah. The author elaborates more on the importance of professional appearance by taking examples from famous women preachers such as Dr Nik Salida Suhaila, Ustazah Nor Bahyah Mahamood and Ustazah Norhafizah Musa. This study also recognizes the need for a professional appearance among new women preachers. The study suggests that the women audience in Malaysia is mainly from a professional background who seek a balance between career and religious responsibilities.

Besides, article entitled *Kajian Literatur Ciri-ciri Pendakwah Wanita dalam Membina Penghargaan Kendiri Remaja* (Norzli et al., 2019) elaborates on the characteristics of women preachers in building adolescent self-esteem. Among the values underlined for women preachers are knowledgeable, decent and good characteristics, setting good examples, gentleness and hearts full of remembrance of Allah SWT. According to the study, these ideal values assist adolescent in developing a self-esteem that enables them to be composed, understanding, outgoing, knowledege-seeking, and adaptable to life's obstacles and tribulations.

The study titled *Pembinaan dan Pengukuhan Identiti Sebagai Da'i: Pengalaman Pendakwah Wanita di Malaysia* (Abdul Mutalib, 2011) aims to show the development of the role, contribution and persistent efforts among women preachers in spreading Islamic dakwah in Malaysia, especially in the 21st century. The article also addresses the challenges and circumstances that contemporary women preachers need to confront such as difficulties pertaining to family, community relations, and unity. They must look forward to the future and build their identity as women leaders and speakers to influence Islamic society. Based on the religious anthropological approach, the study highlights that the response given by the Muslim women preachers set a clear identity and objective of Muslim preachers (daie).

Another important theme in the litertures is about the role of women preachers. *Peranan Wanita dalam Dakwah Bil Hal* (Abdul Razak & Abdul Rahim, 2018) is one of the literatures under this theme that addresses the role of women in dakwah *bil hal*. The focus of the discussion is directed towards the role of women in dakwah *bil hal* through morals advocation, service and infrastructure. This methodolgy of preaching has the potential to develop in the future, especially for women, if the research conducted is multidisciplinary and not limited to a specific field. Another article that discusses the role of women preachers is a study titled *Peranan Wanita Dalam Melestarikan Gerakan Dakwah* (Hassan & Mat Tuah, 2022) explained on the role of women in preserving the dakwah movement in pluralistic society in Malaysia. This is based on literature research through reading scientific books, previous studies and the views of important figures in the study of dakwah.

*Female Preachers and the Public Discourse on Islam in Malaysia* (Ismail, 2016) examines the role of Malaysian women preachers or activists by showing the leadership in dakwah of those who have a strong background in Islamic studies and Arabic language. This study analyzed their recorded online talks, radio lectures and interviews to identify the preaching styles they commonly exhibit. The study found that their highest objective is to help in creating an ethical society through the implementation of moral and religious obligations. This study also found that they maintain their activities under the control of social norms and the bureaucracy of religious authorities.

A study on the role of women in spreading Islamic teachings and assisting husbands in bringing up family members toward virtue was conducted by Mohd Kadri et al. (2020). The study was titled *Expression Style of Woman Preacher towards their Family* (Mohd Kadri et al., 2020). With the ATLAS.ti software 8, a qualitative investigation was carried out utilizing the thematic content analysis technique. The analysis of the study found that there are ten styles of Islamic dakwah experience that Islam recommends to women preachers to use in their families: polite, humorous, truthful and honest, prudent, telling stories, advice, clear and orderly, gentle, loving, and easy to understand. The findings of this study can be used as a reference for women in improving the quality of women's preaching communication with family members in addition to achieving harmony in the household.

*Dakwah Through Instagram Among Female Muslims Celebrities In Malaysia* (Aris & Hassan, 2017) describes how two well-known Malaysian celebrities, Abby Abadi and Raisya

Rania disseminate the word of Islam and goodness to their fan bases in Instagram. This study makes use of the content analysis method to examine the images and videos posted on each of their Instagram sites during the celebration of Maal Hijrah. According to the study, both celebrities have benefits and drawbacks when it comes to promoting dakwah, but they both actively post images and videos about Islamic dakwah. This instance demonstrates how preachers might use social media sites like Instagram to share the message of Islam with one another.

The role that women preachers can play in the family and society is examined in the paper *Peranan Wanita Muslimah Dalam Dakwah Kepada Keluarga Dan Masyarakat* (N. E. A. Abdullah & Abdullah, 2019). This library-based research involved reading scholarly publications, other studies, and the opinions of experts in Islamic studies. The role of women in the family: as children, they must obey their parents' commands; as wives, they must obey their husbands by looking out for their own well-being as well as his property; and as mothers, they must give their children the best possible religious education by teaching them about Islamic morality and faith. While, the role of women in society is more directed towards charitable works and women's contribution whether through educational, economic and political institutions. It then has an impact on how the family, society, and nation grow.

*Peranan Wanita dalam Berdakwah* (Ahmad et al., 2008) explained on the role of women in preaching which still marginalized and become an isolated issue. Although over half of Malaysia’s Muslim population is woman. The appreciation and practice of Islam in daily life will remain unfulfilled for others if there is no knowledge of and focus on this valuable resource. The Quranic verses and Hadith that address women's preaching roles will be cited in this topic, along with the ways Muslim women fulfilled their preaching duties during the Companions' lifetimes. *Etika Muslimah dalam Berdakwah di Media Sosial* (Mohd Razali & Osman, 2022) is another new piece that examines the topic of dakwah and social media among women preachers. The ethical rules Muslim women should follow when using social media for dakwah are covered in this article. In interacting with audiences of different genders, it highlights the significance of communicating dakwah in a positive way, setting excellent examples (*qudwah hasanah*), providing accurate and correct information, adhering to the syariat, and refraining from disparaging or insulting the beliefs of others.

There are relatively few previous studies that address the difficulties faced by Muslim women preachers. Among the studies on the challenges of women preachers is *Cabaran Kontemporari di Era Globalisasi dalam Pengurusan Masyarakat oleh Pendakwah Selebriti Wanita di Malaysia* (Mohd Noordin et al., 2019). This research employs in-depth interview techniques and case study methodologies. The informants selected were two women celebrity preachers in Malaysia, Isfadiah Mohamed Dasuki and Norhafizah Musa. The study found that among the challenges they faced were: (i) the public's ambiguity toward the status of preachers who set fees for their livelihood, which has led to negative perceptions that preachers are not sincere, (ii) complexity, (iii) uncertainty stemming from negative perceptions of the preachers' image and the message they are trying to convey, and (iv) the volatility of the globalized media world that requires women preachers to appear more creatively for ratings, while at the same time maintaining etiquette and appearance.

Prior to this study, an article written by Ibrahim (2015) titled *Wanita: Hala Tuju Dan Cabaran Dalam Dakwah* explained that one of the main challenges for women preachers is time management to balance their roles as wives, mothers, workers, and preachers (Ibrahim, 2012). Additionally, women preachers face the challenge of addressing women's moral issues, child abuse, and issues of faith more effectively. This is a result of insufficient proficiency in religious knowledge and dakwah skills, which leads to a lack of precise, practical, and strategic dakwah planning.

A study by Che Daud & Abdullah (2020) also highlighted the necessity for women preachers to improve their dakwah abilities and religious knowledge. They claimed that there are still not enough women preachers actively engaged in dakwah to the community (Che Daud & Abdullah, 2020). This is a result of women preachers' incapacity to apply modern methods and their lack of knowledge and experience in providing answers to the problems facing women today. Therefore, to continue carrying out the duties of Islamic dakwah, it is important to devise initiatives and courses of action for future women dakwah leaders.

## *CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION*

The thematic analysis of the literature revealed there are two significant themes that have been found out of the analysis towards the pertinent literatures as shown in table 1, which are convert preachers and women preachers. There is only one sub-theme under the theme of converted preachers, which is the challenge of convert preachers, while there are four sub-themes for the theme of women preachers, namely the needs of women preachers, the

uniqueness and persona of women preachers, the role of women preachers and the challenges of women preachers.

**Table 1**: A thematic analysis of the literature of converted women preachers in Malaysia

| NO. | THEME | SUB-THEME |
|---|---|---|
| **1.** | Convert Preacher | The Challenge of Converted Preachers |
| **2.** | Women Preachers | Needs of Women Preachers |
| | | The Uniqueness and Persona of Women Preachers |
| | | The Role of Women Preachers |
| | | The Challenges of Women Preachers |

Thus, this discovery has the potential to add to the body of knowledge about Muslim convert or muallaf from the perspective of muallaf as a dakwah worker, particularly among women. Furthermore, although the number of women converts actively engaged in dakwah activities within their community is relatively small, the truth is that they constitute a powerful force for dakwah and that their potential must be empowered. Therefore, to emphasize and reinforce these women preachers with references to scholarly literature, this kind of study should begin with obtaining a comprehensive profile of them before a more in-depth investigation is necessary. This is due to the fact that empowering women convert preachers can significantly enhance the dakwah landscape in Malaysia by fostering inclusive and culturally sensitive Islamic outreach. Their unique experiences as converts enable them to bridge gaps between new Muslims and the wider Muslim community, providing much-needed support, guidance and inspiration.

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