

EMPLOYING YOUTUBE TO ENHANCE ZAKAT AWARENESS

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Abstract: Widespread usage of social media among members of the public can be tapped by religious institutions such as *zakat* collection and disbursement centers to introduce, promote and reinforce the institution of *zakat*. This call is supported by the results produced for *zakat* and related terminology. This paper utilized the results from the two search engines accessed on 27 March 2022, 2.34 a.m. Malaysian time. The search terms used in both search engines were: YouTube *zakat*, YouTube *Zakat* management, YouTube *Zakat* distribution, YouTube Issue of *Zakat*, YouTube *Sadaqah*, and YouTube Islamic philanthropy. YouTube *zakat* (0.41; 0.38 out of 1.00) and YouTube issues (0.47; 0.18 out of 1.00) search terms generated high results by Google Search and Google Scholars, respectively, in comparison with the other search terms. These statistics suggest that YouTube has already been used as a platform to disseminate the message on *zakat* for multiple purposes

Keywords: *Awareness, Social media, YouTube, Zakat, Zakat management*

INTRODUCTION

Zakat is associated with wealth and poverty, *rizq* (provision of Allah) and *shukr* (gratitude), organized collection, and disbursement of the *zakat* collections. A matter related to all these is education and dissemination of knowledge and enhancement of awareness of *zakat* as an obligation of qualified Muslims.

This paper aims to portray the evidence of the popularity of YouTube as a contemporary social medium by revealing the search results of the two search engines, i.e., Google Scholar and Google Search. It describes its data collection method, findings, discusses research limitations, and suggestions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Internet has been used both intensively and extensively by scholars to carry out their core academic work and to communicate with others (Biddinik, Syamsiro, Novianti, Nakhshiniev, Aziz, and Takahashi, 2019). While traditional knowledge dissemination methods continue to be used, scholars, in particular, have increasingly been using social media to reach audiences to disseminate research findings (Castillo, Hadjistavropoulos, and Brachaniec, 2021).

Social media have the potential to reach broader audiences than more traditional methods to disseminate research findings (Castillo, Hadjistavropoulos, and Brachaniec, 2021). Among social media, YouTube is becoming a popular platform (Biddinika, Syamsiro, Novianti, Nakhshiniev, Aziz, & Takahashi, 2019; Habib dan Smith. (u.d.)). Visual content like that provided on YouTube helps any viewers learn (Shiftelearning.com, 2022).

Institutions should be using visuals, like on YouTube, in engaging viewers (Evans, 2016) because YouTube videos are watched by the public from various backgrounds. A source estimates that 65 percent of the population are visual learners (Shiftelearning.com, 2022). YouTube is user-friendly and rated the largest search engine after Google (Wagner, 2017). An increasing number of people become “casual learners” and view YouTube to expand their knowledge (Maynard, 2020). In fact, an academic has called upon the scholarly community to use YouTube, a visual communication tool to communicate their research findings (Eric B. Brennan, 2021).

Medical scientists have been using YouTube to upload their videos considering the fact that as a social media platform, it has more than 1 billion users with more than 0.6 million videos on prostate cancer alone (Loeb, Sengupta, Butaney, Macaluso Jr, Czarniecki, Robbins, Braithwait, Gao, Byrne, Walter, and Langford, 2019). In agriculture, a government agency disseminates its results to farmers through YouTube (Ayub Agricultural Research Institute, 2022). Behavioral informatics scientists have been using social media to promote improvements in health behavior change (Laranjo, 2016).

Social media serves more than one purpose. It may be used as a web-based social outlet (igi-global, 2022). YouTube tutorials have been used by one institution to improve the academic performance of students (Iftikhar, Riaz, and Yousaf, 2019). Since YouTube has been used to disseminate information and educate, the service provider should create the contents to be accessible to information seekers (Haslam, Doucette, Hachey, MacCallum, Zwicker, Smith-Brilliant, and Robert Gilbert, 2019).

A number of institutions have been using YouTube for educational purposes. Younger generation especially prefers social media platform to learn (Bokoh, Bello, & Idowu, Adeol, 2022). One religious educational institution has found its use of YouTube has shown improvement in *fiqh* learning among its students (Subqi, 2021). Another institution found that its videos on the *fiqh al-zakah* provide higher positive impacts (98%) on learners (Pusparini, Paramitha, & Ni'ams, 2021).

In fact, a researcher suggests that educationists use YouTube videos of a known preacher as a learning material to teach principles of *Fiqh* in Islamic school (Cahyono, 2019).

Based on an empirical study, a researcher suggests that *zakat* institutions should inform their activities using social media like YouTube because not many of these institutions are actively using this platform (Siswanto, 2021).

Researchers on students' interest in *zakat* management programs recommended that *zakat* organizations should utilize social media, including YouTube (Napitupulu, Batubara, & Sapna, 2021).

YouTube is being monitored through Google Scholar and Google Search. Select studies on YouTube available in Google Search include (Schalkwyk J, et al., 2010; Battelle, 2011; Hillis, Petit, & Jarrett, 2012; Schubert, 2016; Piasecki, Waligora, & Dranseika, 2018; and, Ziakis, Vlachopoulou, Kyrkoudis, & Karagkiozidou, 2019). Studies on YouTube accessible through Google Scholar include Kousha & Thelwal, 2007; Falagas, Pitsouni, Malietzis, & Pappas, 2008; van Aalst, 2010; Jacsó, 2011; Anders, & Evans; 2010; Giustini, & Boulos, 2013; and, Harzing, 2014.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed the results of two Internet search engines, i.e., Google Scholar and Google Search to assess the availability of videos on YouTube as a learning tool and an instrument of knowledge sharing.

A search on the two search engines used the keywords that combined both the term “YouTube” and *zakat*-related themes”. These terms were included in the searches: YouTube *Zakat* management, YouTube *Zakat* distribution, YouTube Issue of *Zakat*, YouTube *Sadaqah*, and YouTube Islamic philanthropy.

The online search was performed on 27 March 2022 at 2.30 a.m. Malaysian time. The results produced by the search engines were recorded in a comparative table as shown in Table 1 below. The ratios were computed for each search term under each of the two search engines.

FINDINGS

The ratios of the search terms in Table 1 show relative availability of research studies conducted on YouTube on the specified themes. Google Scholar carries comparatively more studies on YouTube and *Zakat*. Specifically, Google Scholar contains more publications related to *Zakat* Management (0.16), *Zakat* distribution (0.10), and Islamic philosophy (0.15), whereas Google Search carries more publications related to *Zakat* in general (0.41), and Issue of *Zakat* (0.47).

Table 1: Results of Search via Google Scholar and Google Search

	Google Scholar		Google Search		
	Results	Ratio	Results	Ratio	
YouTube <i>Zakat</i>	6520	0.38	YouTube <i>Zakat</i>	10100000	0.41
YouTube <i>Zakat</i> management	2730	0.16	YouTube <i>Zakat</i> Management	1020000	0.04
YouTube <i>Zakat</i> distribution	1780	0.10	YouTube <i>Zakat</i> distribution	657000	0.03
YouTube Issue of <i>zakat</i>	2980	0.18	YouTube Issue of <i>zakat</i>	11500000	0.47
YouTube <i>Sadaqah</i>	371	0.02	YouTube <i>Sadaqah</i>	383000	0.02
YouTube Islamic philanthropy	2620	0.15	YouTube Islamic philanthropy	806000	0.03
	17001	1.00		24466000	1.00

The above results show the relative availability of publications on YouTube on the selected themes. However, considering the volume of publications in each search engine, Google Search clearly provides more publications. One should note that “publications” in Google Search incorporate miscellaneous categories, beyond textual materials.

DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis provide an indicator to researchers and general users on the availability of YouTube videos on *Zakat* themes. Researchers would find Google Scholar more convenient to ascertain research papers, whereas general users have abundant choices in their reading materials due to the huge number of items available in Google Search.

Zakat institutions may be interested in the adoption of YouTube in achieving their objectives motivated by the number of publications in both Google Scholar and Google Search. Materials on *zakat* on YouTube are abundant. The institutions would be able to view and assess select videos as samples to guide them produce their own videos. Developing custom videos certainly requires dedicated teams of professionals. Despite this, limited viewing of available videos is hoped to generate increased interest in the leadership of *zakat* institutions to consider using YouTube as an important tool to increase the awareness of the Muslims to pay *zakat*, to be involved in *zakat* campaigns, to generate interest among the Muslims to air their views to the *zakat* institutions.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

While this study is hoped to be able to emphasize the importance of considering YouTube as an important information sharing tool and a medium of awareness on *zakat* related affairs, it does not investigate other detailed aspects of the YouTube videos such as the specific sub-themes, the categories of intended viewers, the duration, and the language of instruction. These limitations naturally reflect future research direction.

CONCLUSION

YouTube as a popular social medium platform has been researched relatively extensively. It has been used as a learning and dissemination tool. Its coverage on *zakat* will only motivate *zakat* institutions to consider its adoption wisely to reach *zakat* knowledge seekers, contributors as well as recipients.

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