

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DA'WAH AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A
CASE STUDY AT BRAINY BUNCH INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC
HUBUNGAN ANTARA DA'WAH DAN KEUSAHAWANAN: KAJIAN KES DI
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Abstract

Islam stresses the importance of engaging in economic activities that advance the goals of society as a whole. The influence of Islamic laws plays a significant role in shaping Islamic entrepreneurial activity. This study is about Da'wah and Entrepreneurship implemented by Brainy Bunch International Islamic Montessori Company. The research is initiated to understand how they implement Da'wah in their company and customers especially kids. This research used qualitative method by interview the specialist informants and interviews were the tools employed for data gathering purpose. The findings were recorded from thematical analysis. Implications of the study will be elaborated together with recommendations for future studies. It can be concluded that there is a relationship between da'wah and entrepreneurship which have been elaborated in terms of da'wah activities and challenges faced in Brainy Bunch International Islamic Montessori Company.

Keywords*Da'wah, Preschool, Islamic, Economy, Business***Abstrak**

Islam menekankan kepentingan melibatkan diri dalam aktiviti ekonomi yang memajukan matlamat masyarakat keseluruhannya. Pengaruh undang-undang Islam memainkan peranan penting dalam membentuk aktiviti keusahawanan Islam. Kajian ini adalah mengenai Dakwah dan Keusahawanan yang dilaksanakan oleh Syarikat Brainy Bunch International Islamic Montessori. Penyelidikan ini dimulakan untuk memahami bagaimana mereka melaksanakan Dakwah di syarikat dan pelanggan mereka terutamanya kanak-kanak. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kualitatif dengan menemu bual pemberi maklumat dan temu bual merupakan alat yang digunakan untuk tujuan pengumpulan data. Penemuan telah direkodkan daripada analisis tematik. Implikasi kajian akan dihuraikan bersama-sama cadangan untuk kajian akan datang. Dapat disimpulkan bahawa terdapat hubungan antara dakwah dan keusahawanan yang telah dihuraikan dari segi aktiviti dan cabaran dakwah yang dihadapi dalam Syarikat Brainy Bunch International Islamic Montessori.

Kata Kunci

Da'wah, Prasekolah, Islamik, Ekonomi, Perniagaan

1. Introduction

In facing today's novel challenges of raising our children in a world that is becoming increasingly un-Islamic, Brainy Bunch was set up in 2010 to spread the wisdom and Islamic tradition to children using the revolutionary Montessori world. This unique blend of teaching philosophy which mandates Islamic doctrines at its heart combined with modern themes of child development and education makes this institution a very special one.

The brainy bunch program is designed to meet the developmental needs of 2-12-year-old. In doing so, Brainy Bunch follows the Montessori syllabus, which has been globally accepted as one of the most efficient methods of education, with the added value of Islamic integration into all subjects within an Islamic setting. In striving to provide a safe and nurturing environment that upholds an Islamic way of life, the emphasis of Islamic Montessori program is based on:

1. Promoting total child development
2. Rearing the child with Islamic values
3. Providing a conducive and prepared environment
4. Developing inner discipline and independence
5. Stimulating curiosity and laying a foundation for lifelong learning

More than just a child enrichment center, the Brainy Bunch experience is a Total Learning Experience for young children! Therefore, this paper aims to look up how Brainy Bunch implement Da'wah in their business especially kids and what is the challenges they faced in Brainy Bunch business.

2. Literature review

According to a study by M-Said Oukil, (2013), In favor of Islamic entrepreneurship today is that young Muslim generations are exposed to modern education, with higher technological acceptance levels than the old generations. Their aspirations and need for achievements look also stronger with the view to make change leading to solve social, environmental and economic problems, while maintaining faith and recognizing the importance of ethics.

M-Said Oukil, (2013) concluded that the pursuit of the turning point and various Islamic sources related to the subject allowed outlining the basis of Islamic entrepreneurship, and specifying the behavior of conscientious Muslim entrepreneurs, in particular. In such context, the ultimate objective is to obey Allah, doing so is quite possible through targeting useful objectives, or contributing to the well-being of all creatures be they human of any religion, and even animals and plants. In this way, the very concept and

practice of entrepreneurship, in Islam, go beyond the simple activity of doing of business, creating wealth and making profit, to caring about the environment, and combining between social and economic contribution, faith-based work generating deeds and ultimately Allah's blessings.

The study of challenges faced by new entrepreneurs by R.S.Kanchana, J.V. Divya and A.Ansalna Beegom (2013) have shown that an entrepreneur is one who plays significant role in the economic development of a country. Basically, an entrepreneur can be regarded as a person who has initiative, skill and motivation to set up a business or an enterprise of his own and who always looks for high achievement. The most important challenges faced by new entrepreneurs include developing the vision and business idea, raising capital for start-up, assembling a business team, finding the right business location, finding good employees, finding good customers, dealing with competition, unforeseen business challenges and expenses, keeping up with industrial changes and trends, lack of support, negative mindset, lack of marketing facilities, lack of infrastructural facilities etc. So, it is necessary to overcome these challenges in order to conduct an efficient business.

According to study by P.R.M. Faizal, A.A.M. Ridhwan, and A.W. Kalsom (2013) The concept of fard kifayah (collective obligations) in Islam is based on the ability of society to meet its minimum and basic needs from a specified activity or meet national challenges and obligations. An appropriate share of the Muslim population should undertake entrepreneurial activities by their own choice and according to their own initiative to ensure the continuity of the nation's economic viability. Failure to achieve such a level of a performance means that Islamic Government has to step in and assume its legal and moral obligation to compensate for any shortfall of the private sector. Having Islamic characteristic could cause someone to be closely related to Allah and the people. This relationship is based on the concept of taqwa which needs the entrepreneurs totally remembrance to Allah and also have good relationship with other people.

According to the study of the entrepreneur's characteristic from al-Quran and al-Hadis by P.R.M. Faizal et al., the holistic characteristics of Muslimpreneurs has inculcated rule of metaphysics which are abstract like sin, merit, hell and heaven that becomes the trigger to human's behavior in structuring entrepreneurial development. The implication from the concept of property as trust, test, instrument and it's in absolute ownership will make Muslimpreneurs more careful in searching and spending. Thus, Muslimpreneurs should differ from other entrepreneurs in their motives and aims. It is hoped that if they are able to manage their business successfully, they should have good performance in terms of faith and belief towards Allah SWT.

Reviews by P.R.M. Faizal et,al (2013) concluded that the relationship between Muslimpreneurs and the concept of taqwa will give them the ability and capability in developing their characteristic based on the Islamic needs which derived from al-Quran and al-Sunnah. The Muslimpreneurs characteristic is an important asset to obtain high achievement in the field of entrepreneurship. The charge that the Islamic religion does not motivate entrepreneurial behavior is erroneous. In fact, engaging in productive or

entrepreneurial endeavors is encouraged and even demanded in the teachings of Islam (Kayed and Hassan 2011; Adas 2006).

3. Research Methodology

This research used quantitative method which is one-on-one interviews. The reason why this method used is because qualitative have several benefits in conducting this research. First, a qualitative research approach produces thick (detailed) feelings of feelings, opinions, and experiences of participants; and interpret the meaning of their actions (Denzin, 1989). Secondly,

Firstly, qualitative research approach produces the thick (detailed) description of participants' feelings, opinions, and experiences; and interprets the meanings of their actions (Denzin, 1989). Secondly, there are some argue that qualitative research understands human experience in certain settings. Thirdly, qualitative research acknowledges the researchers to know the participants' inner experiences, and to know how the meaning is formed and, in the culture (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Based on these benefits of qualitative, this research has chosen qualitative as the method of this research which is interview one-one-one with the informant.

4. Findings

Background of Brainy Bunch International Islamic Montessori

Brainy Bunch International Islamic Montessori School was Set up in 2010 founded by 3 passionate Individuals, Mr. Mohd Fadzil Hashim, Ms. Efizah Mohtar Rasali and Ms. Ladyana Zoraya Abdullah. The motivation behind the initiation is the quality of education for their own children. Starting by wanting the best for their children, Brainy Bunch was thus founded. They have always dreamt of creating the ideal world that will benefit everyone in every aspect of their lives.

In 2004, their desire to pursue their lifelong dream became more pressing with the birth of their firstborn, followed by the births of their two other children in 2005 and 2008. Just as having a baby changes every parent's life, it further realigned with their founders' priorities. Overnight, their greatest concerns were centered around providing only the best for their children and giving them every opportunity to excel in life – linguistically, intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally, and especially, spiritually.

To this end, the founders believe that children should not just continue their parents' legacy but instead, the next generation should be far better than their parents' generation. And, this can only be done with strong learning foundation seeded early in their lives. They believe that children's learning could be accelerated during the first six years of their lives when their tender minds are truly sensitive and in its high absorbency state.

That momentous day finally arrived in January 2008. Unable to deny their aspiration any longer, they bravely embraced the new year by purchasing their first kindergarten in Kajang. With a dream of an ideal world held very close to their hearts and filled by their strong desire to give back to the community, their first kindergarten was meticulously designed and developed with the prime objective of shaping it to be their children's and their children's friends' dream school, and then later to act as a pilot for all Brainy Bunch franchises.

During these crucial foundational years in the Brainy Bunch story, En Fadzil and Puan Efizah met and partnered with Madam Ladyana Zoraya Abdullah, who brought with her 21 years of early childhood education experience as well as a solid Montessori background. Together, they helped build Brainy Bunch from a modest beginning to soar to great heights to get to where they are now. What started as a kindergarten to their then very young children, Brainy Bunch grows to provide Islamic, Cambridge and Montessori learning at Elementary, Secondary and High School level. The growth was rapid and exemplary and could not have been made possible without the relentless and overwhelming support by dedicated and equally passionate parents who shared the same dreams. Today, Brainy Bunch boasts a total of 72 campuses across the country, two in Singapore, one in China and Indonesia, and a charity school in Gaza.

The dreams will continue burning as they target to open 5,000 campuses worldwide by 2030. Those campuses will continue to serve the very main purpose it was built on, and that is towards building the betterment of humanity and produces great generation of Ummah.

Da'wah Activities in Brainy Bunch School

The main reason why Brainy Bunch International Montessori created is to produce a new breed of dynamic Muslims with Al-Quran and Hadith as their true guidance in life, and who are able to converse fluently in English. Thus, it seeks to coordinate the efforts of parents, teachers, and community member to empower all students to develop, through education, the knowledge, skills, and values needed to create better lives for themselves and build a more just, ideal society based on Islamic values. Brainy Bunch believes that the world can be an Ideal World if everyone follows their true fitrah (nature) via the right education and the right environment. At Brainy Bunch International Islamic Montessori, they envision a high-quality education founded on a revolutionary, world recognized educational philosophy that is the Montessori "method" while simultaneously maintaining the need for Islamic teachings and guidance as one's way of life, thus allowing parents to enjoy the best of both worlds. The greater vision is to ensure that educating children through the Brainy Bunch way reaches far and wide all over Malaysia and beyond by committing to the mission of providing extensive training for future teachers of Islamic Montessori who are proficient in English and of high standards.

The Brainy Bunch Dream Tahfiz Program was established with the objective of producing students who are able to memorize the Al-Quran, understand it and incorporate its teachings and values in their daily lives. It also aims for the students to be proficient in Arabic, for the sole purpose of understanding Al-Quran better. Dream Tahfiz incorporates Islamic values in every aspect of life. The core emphasis of this program is the development of spiritual side of the students. The students will live in hostel and be taught the Sunnah way of living. In a stress-free environment, the students are free to memorize the Surahs at their own pace and present any topic that they are comfortable with during daily Tazkirah. The 5 daily Solat will be performed congregationally to inculcate the spirit of brotherhood.

They also have annual parenting conference. They also bring international speakers around the world such as Mufti Menk, Ammar Al-Shukry, Boona Mohammed, Abu Ease Niamatullah, Waleed Basyouni and Dr. Rida from al-Maghrib and many more. And then they also have annual glamming work, they call it dinner the issues of humanity, meaning that the issue of Syria, Gaza, Rohingya, they have a program like their student will do a poster, so they will go to Putrajaya. Last year in Taman Wetland Putrajaya. And then they give donations and send the money to Syria, every month they will send some donations in their charity school in Gaza and also send donations in Philippine. They have a program and project in Pakistan under Yayasan.

And the latest program is, they have launched 1 program, which is Zero Hunger. Zero Hunger Program will be implementing a family adoption method. Each less fortunate family that are identified around Brainy Bunch International School neighborhood will receive RM100 value of groceries per month. They call it zero hunger to solve the problem of hunger in Malaysia. Examples of relief items are flour, ketchup, onions, cooking oil, noodles, eggs, anchovies, tea, rice, sugar, salt and dates. Brainy bunch deliver their da'wah not only provide a talk or Tazkirah but by doing any program. When they send the donations, they also bring the students to teach them the value and to educate students Brainy Bunch help those in need while fostering their deep concern with the problems of life outside the narrow. "When we send the food, we also bring student to teach them the value of kindness, to show them people who is in needy and to inspire them that you have to do more so that you can help more" says Mr. Fadzil as a founder of Brainy Bunch. The program also aims to encourage the community to participate in helping families in need and enable them to live their lives.

The Challenges Faced in Brainy Bunch International Islamic Montessori

In brainy bunch, challenges are diversity such as different level of knowledge and level of understanding. The biggest challenges in anything is ourselves. Meeting a different kind of people is also a challenge especially parents that sometimes so Islamism. Some of them have different perspective of Islam, different kind of Mazhab and also non-Islamic. According to the respondent, one of the people of Syiah asked if Brainy Bunch can accept his child to their school. "Education is fundamental. The best give we can give your children is education" commented him when asked. As an education institution, we cannot label anyone with their Mazhab, we just have to explain what we know and do. Even though with non-Muslim. Brainy Bunch also have school for non-

Muslim such as Chinese, Indian, Portuguese, American, Philippine and also have Pilipino teachers.

As a Muslim entrepreneur and also a da'i, we can't show the negative things to others. Brainy Bunch also take a good care of their customer, even some of the child parents are non-Muslim or Muslim but don't practice. It is not a problem for them because they don't practice judgmental and know that Islam is very universal. It doesn't mean they support parents not to wear hijab or did not practice Islam but because of they don't want to stop her from coming. If they stop her from coming, it is difficult for them to deliver da'wah. For example, if anyone want to find some advice from Imam in mosque but not wearing hijab and the mosque have their own rules that not to allowed any non-Muslim or anyone not wearing hijab to enter the mosque, so it will make them difficult to find the answer and understandings about Islam.

In brainy bunch the most challenge is also how to accept different perspective of community. Different people, different kind of thinking styles. Some of the people think that Montessori syllabus cannot be use in their school. Some of people also asked why not use Islamic name such as Ibnu Sina teachings and so on. Montessori represents an entirely different approach to education. Dr. Montessori discovered that the best learning is self-learning as she saw in each child tremendous urge to learn and to develop independence. Guided by her discovery that children teach *themselves*, Dr. Montessori designed a "prepared environment" in which children could freely choose from a number of developmentally appropriate activities in the form of apparatuses. These apparatuses in turn are "self-correcting", so that the child may concentrate without being constantly corrected by someone outside his work.

5. Discussion

The Brainy Muslim integration includes the Islamization of the existing Montessori curriculum. A comprehensive, age-appropriate Islamic studies plan (Tawhid & Aqidah, Ibadah, Iqra', Hafazan, Hadeeth, Adaab & Akhlaq, Fiqh, Seerah, Tareekh, Arabic & Jawi) has been integrated into the whole curriculum so the little Muslims may understand the relevance of religion in their daily lives. Over and above helping each child develop a basic understanding of these essential Islamic topics, the integrated Islamic component enables them to realize the need to incorporate Islamic values and ideology in their young, and Insha-Allah, later life as an adolescent and adult.

In Brainy Bunch office, they also have weekend Usrah, and also, they have a new plan to offer 1 program which they called, Diploma Islamic studies mainly targeting their staff and also their parents to help others have strong basis in Islamic knowledge.

At Brainy Bunch, they arranged the environment according to subject areas, and children are free to move around the room, and to continue to work on a piece of material at their own pace, out of their own interest, without a reward and punishment system, without an imposed competitive environment, with the guidance and assistance of a loving and observant teacher, with a communal responsibility to offer care and respect for others and for the environment, and ultimately for their own selves. Montessori is not related to any religion and it is a tool used by Brainy Bunch to help children learn faster and easy to understand by learning tools.

6. Conclusion

The study was conducted to understand the current practices of Muslim Social entrepreneurs in delivering da'wah in their business. Islam is the universal religion that can benefit the entire world. This paper first attempted to identify that may be called a comprehensive framework of Islamic entrepreneurship. The Brainy Bunch school setting fully adapts of Islamic values, providing the 'prepared-environment' for a child to be a true Muslim. The ambience of the school is one of peace and serenity to the best imbibe an Islamic Culture.

In such a context, the ultimate objective is to obey Allah. In this way, the very concept and practice of entrepreneurship, in Islam, go beyond the simple activity of doing business, creating wealth and making profit, to caring about the environment, and combining between social and economics contribution, faith-based work generating deeds and ultimately Allah's blessings.

By making a serious commitment to beauty of character in every business, we can show non-Muslims the real beauty of our religion. If every Muslim business owner was to make a serious commitment to doing so, then in a very short time, through the side-effect of positive re-enforcement, non-Muslims children will greatly benefit from high standard of moral values thus helping the child to be the best that he can be- a productive, respectable and dignified citizen of the world.

As no one claims to be perfect, the way Muslim entrepreneurs behave could determine if he or she is conscientiousness or not (M-Said Oukil, 2013). Not all Muslim practices the principles of Islam, some of them have a wide knowledge to spread Islam by talk or seminar and etc. In Islam, balancing, between life matters and moral or spiritual goals, remains quite possible and free from deviations and sin as narrated in Hadith Bukhari, the best of people is those who are most beneficial to people.

7. Acknowledgements

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