

Intercultural *Da'wah* Taxonomy for a Pluralist Society

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Abstract

Intercultural *da'wah* is an act of effective communication pertinent to the matters of heart, mind and emotion. Intercultural *da'wah* begins with search of commonality. In other words, it does not repudiate others but invites for reflection on features that are shared in common. In terms of its intellectual and practical paradigms, intercultural *da'wah* serves as means of formatting and shaping Muslims approaches to the pluralist society. The term of taxonomy is generally defined as the process of classifying things into groups within a larger system according to their similarities and differences. Nonetheless, Benjamin Bloom created the taxonomy for categorising levels of abstraction, thus providing a useful structure in which to describe lesson plan components in learning and teaching methodology. He divided the structure into six components: knowledge; comprehension; application; analysis; synthesis; and evaluation. This paper attempts to investigate the applicability of Bloom's taxonomy to the process of building the methodology for intercultural *da'wah* in a pluralist society. The paper suggests that the six components of Bloom's taxonomy could be useful to *da'wah* workers in finding similarities in the moral paradigms across cultures. This in turn will enable them to dynamically appreciate others and engage in effective communication to disseminate the peaceful message of Islam.

Keywords: Islamic thought, intercultural *da'wah*, Bloom's taxonomy, pluralist society

Introduction

The study of *da‘wah* grew rapidly during the twentieth century, from simple and modest to more complex forms. However, it has received little attention from Muslim scholars. *Da‘wah* models, on the other hand, have attracted virtually no attention despite their widespread use in explaining and simplifying complex processes. They can organise the scattered information, simplify the processes of *da‘wah*, and help predict outcomes or reveal facts about certain realities.

According to Islamic teachings, *da‘wah* is an obligation. This task is to be performed by every Muslim as an individual and by the Muslim communities on a collective basis (al-Ghazzālī, 1993, 304.) This was the call to Islam, i.e. submission to none but Allah in all affairs of individual as well as collective affairs of life, addressed by all the Prophets and Messengers commissioned by Allah starting from the very first human Adam to the last and final of the Prophets and Messengers, Muhammad (peace be on them all). This claim is supported by the various verses of the Qur’an including the following: “He has ordained for you the same religion which He ordained for Noah, and that which We have revealed to you, and that which We ordained for Abraham, Moses and Jesus saying you should establish religion and make no divisions in it” (al-Qur’an, 42:13.)

***Da‘wah*: Meanings and Approach**

Before proceeding further, it would be instructive to define *da‘wah*. Islamic *da‘wah* means “an invitation extended to humanity by Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) to believe in Islam” (al-Wakīl, 1991, 9; Sayyīd 1985, 27.) From this definition, it can be understood that the word “invitation” is including admission, inviting, request, call to come to and accept Islam as faith and as a way of life. This is an invitation to all human beings and the invitation becomes more pressing for those who respond to this call, for they have to engage themselves in an unceasing struggle to transform their own lives, individual and social, in accordance with Islamic code of guidance.

It is addressed to the 'self' as well as to the society, to Muslims as well as to non-Muslims. It cannot be restricted to any race, colour, community or religion. *Da'wah* is the most obvious *sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) (see al-Qur'an, 18:6), which he performed in the best possible manner using the most appropriate language and themes in compliance with divine command revealed in various verses of the Qur'an including the following verse: "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good counsel. And argue with them in the best of manners. Surely, your Lord knows best the one who deviates from His path, and He knows best the ones who are on the right path" (al-Qur'an, 16:125.)

It should be mentioned here that invitation of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) to the people of Makkah and to the humanity at large of his own time and that of all times to come was not only to the true faith propagated by all of Allah's true Prophets and Messengers (peace be on them), a *tauhīdic* outlook in life, but also to embody the last expression of Islam (see al-Qur'an, 2: 130–133; 3: 19, 52, 85; 5: 44.) Islam has laid down some universal fundamental rights, for humanity as a whole, which are to be observed and respected under all circumstances. To achieve these rights, Islam provides not only legal safeguards but also a very effective moral system (al-Shāṭibī, 2005, 44; Mohd Sharif, 2017, 53.)

Da'wah, as explained elsewhere, invokes the people, to practise *akhlāq* (ethics, the science of virtue or *adāb*) (Nik Roskiman, 2003, 6-7; Aiza and Roshimah, 2016, 93), rather also to establish *akhlāq* and to eradicate vice, or in other words, to enjoin good and to forbid wrong (Ibn Qayyīm, 1951, 38.) Those who respond to this call are gathered together into a community and given the name *ummah*. It implies that *da'wah* is also to make an organised effort to establish and enforce good and eradicate wrong (Mohd Farid, 2011, 49.) The above discussion should be enough to help us to formulate most of the general principles and ideas of *da'wah*.

***Da‘wah* and the Malaysian Society**

The position and rights of Muslims and non-Muslims are protected under the Malaysian Federal Constitution (Mohd Farid & Khadijah, 2017, 4.) A. Aziz & S. A. Baharudin (2004, 343) claims they are free to practise their ritual ceremonies within the permission granted by the said constitution. The most important issue, as pointed out by Siti Zubaidah (2016, 83), that worries non-Muslims in Malaysia and all around the world is the methods used by Muslims to achieve their political aspirations and motives which are at times associated with terror and violence by some. Studies by Siti Zubaidah (2016), Rahimin (2008), Mohd Farid (2017) and Kamar (2010) for instance found that the Malaysian society has realised the most significant dimensions of this narrative: the role of Islam vis-a-vis religious and ethnic coexistence, recognition and the reality of pluralism through continuous accommodation and power sharing. This has been the continuous pre-occupation of the Islamic leadership in Malaysia. The phenomenon of exchange of criticism, response to criticism, and a certain adjustment coming out as a result, has been active. However, “there is no particular end to issues like religious coexistence, pluralism and religious tolerance” (Kamar, 2010, 25.) These are the continuums, so to speak, they are not destinations; and it is a question of refinement. And a question arises whether we have reached a certain level where we can say that true religious harmony exists. Adjustment has been most pronounced in the structure of leadership, but whether it has percolated down to the level of social interaction and to the level of the reality of society, where people communicate with one another tolerating one another. This is an aspect that remains the challenge of our society in Malaysia and duly aspired to become a characteristic of the Malaysian environment. This paper, in line with these aspirations, explores some issues surrounding scenarios in relation to intercultural interaction in Malaysia.

This paper uses models of taxonomy presented by Benjamin Samuel Bloom (1913–1999) (see Husén 2001, 88-90), an American educational psychologist who made contributions to the classification of educational objectives and to the theory of mastery-learning, to explain the process of building the methodology for intercultural *da‘wah* in pluralist society. The paper discusses how

could the six components of Bloom's taxonomy be useful in helping the *dā'i*. The paper explicates the components by identifying the aspects that related to *da'wah* accompanied by examples or illustrations. The objective of the paper is to suggest Muslims how to best appreciate each other, show good *akhlāq* to all people and engage in effective communication, in order to win their heart by portraying the true image of Islam. More the Muslims in Malaysia and elsewhere exemplify this intercultural *da'wah* framework, in present author's view, more it will make Malaysia and other countries better places to live and it clearly seems the path to future.

Pluralist Society in Malaysia

In his study on Islam in the Malay world, al-Attas (1969, 29-30) maintained that Islam arrived at this continent around year 596/1200 through the efforts of Arab and Indian traders. They preached Islam with tolerance and peace. It is accurate to state and agree with al-Attas (1969, 29) that Islamic values of tolerance and moderation have coloured the souls and spirits of the Malays and become the force for the Malays to move forward and establish the Malay civilisation.

Malaysians are not only comprised of many ethnic groups from different backgrounds, but also have different cultures, languages and religions (Siti Zubaidah, 2016, 90.) In his study on the population of Malaysia, Kim (2001, 42) stated as the Malays are Muslim, the Chinese adhere to the Chinese religions and the Indians are Hindus, while the indigenous people follow various beliefs and practise animism. These differences require Malaysians to exercise tolerance in their daily life and in the practice of their beliefs for the sake of peace and harmony.

Before and after independence, Malaysia was a pluralistic society. However, the pluralistic society before independence already consisted of the various races of Malays (45%), Chinese (35%) and Indians (20%), with their respective cultures, religions, customs and value systems. As mentioned before, the Malays are Muslim, the Chinese who are usually described as practising a syncretic blend of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism and Indians are Hindu. According to 2010 Population and Housing Census of Malaysia there were 60.4% Muslims in Malaysia of the nation's population of about

25 million (Department of Statistics 2010). According to Khadijah (2015, 147), there are now more interethnic interactions in all places especially for the young people in the schools, workers in the factories, private and governmental offices. Social interactions are now beyond the markets and grocery shops. It is probably worth mentioning in this context that the growth of industrialisation in a particular area, as pointed out by her, increases interdependence and network among the ethnic groups, leading to better relationships and strengthening the ties between them.

It is also worth mentioning that, in Malaysia, cultural differences do not prevent the Malays, Chinese, Indians and others to interact across race boundaries. However, certain religious values do have certain implications for interethnic interaction; for example, it is hard to find a Muslim going to a temple and church. Similarly, most of the non-Muslim Chinese and Indians would seldom go to the mosque. The Muslims would not participate in the activities of the temples and churches. In the same way, the non-Muslims would not participate in the activities of the mosque (Ahmad Sabri, 2012, 47.) While *tauḥīd* being the cardinal and uncompromising principle of the Islamic faith time and again emphasised in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, Muslims can worship none but the Creator Allah alone, be it idols, spirits or any other creation, worshipping idols and ancestors are filial piety to Chinese and Indians (Ahmad Sabri, 2012, 48.) This has an impact on the interactions of the non-Muslims with the Muslims in Malaysia.

Taxonomy for Intercultural *Da'wah*

Having briefly examined the practice of Islam in the pluralist society of Malaysia, it is important to relate it to the taxonomy for intercultural *da'wah*. The purpose of dialogue or communication in Islam is to strengthen the relationship between Muslims on one hand, and between Muslims and non-Muslims on the other hand. Through dialogue and understanding each other solidarity is established and strengthened. There are many ways to understand the others. But, in present author's view, Benjamin Bloom's six steps taxonomy presents a nice and refined way and methodology for the process of understanding others. Benjamin Bloom described the six steps of his

taxonomy as follows: knowledge; comprehension; application; analysis; synthesis; and evaluation (Bloom *et. al.*, 1956, 4.)

It is worth reflecting for a little on the history of taxonomy of educational objectives. The idea for this classification system was formed at an informal gathering of college examiners attending the 1948 American Psychological Association Convention in Boston. At this discussion, interest was raised in a theoretical framework which could be used to facilitate interaction among examiners. This team felt that such a framework could do much to promote the exchange of test materials and views about testing. What is more, it could be helpful in encouraging research on examining and on the relations between examining and education. After substantial discussion, there was agreement that such a theoretical framework might be obtained through a system of classifying the objectives of the educational process (Bloom *et. al.*, 1956, 4.)

As the taxonomy is now organised, it contains six major components: knowledge; comprehension; application; analysis; synthesis; and evaluation (Bloom *et. al.*, 1956, 18.) Use of the taxonomy can help one to have a perspective on the emphasis given to particular behaviours by a certain set of *da'wah* plans. A *dā'i* in classifying the objectives of *da'wah*, may find that they all fall within the taxonomy category of recalling or remembering knowledge. Looking at the taxonomy categories may suggest to him that, for example, he could include some objectives dealing with the application of this knowledge and with the analysis of the situations in which the knowledge is used.

Also, a *dā'i* might find the taxonomy helps him to specify objectives so that it becomes easier to plan *da'wah* efforts, experiences and prepare evaluation devices. To give one example of the use of the term "comprehension", a *dā'i* might use the taxonomy to decide which of several meanings he intended. If it meant that the *dā'i* was sufficiently aware of a situation of phenomenon to describe it in terms slightly different from those originally used in describing it, this would correspond to the taxonomy category of "interpretation." Deeper understanding would be reflected in the next level of the taxonomy, namely "extrapolation," where a *dā'i* would be expected to explain the phenomenon in his description.

The above discussion seems enough to help us formulate most of the general ideas of Bloom’s taxonomy and in particular, the taxonomy for intercultural *da‘wah* in a pluralist society. Given that statement, we can now consider the discussion of the applicability of the Bloom’s taxonomy to the process of building the methodology for intercultural *da‘wah*.

Component 1: Knowledge

Knowledge involves the recall of specifics and generals, or the recall of methods and processes (Bloom *et. al.*, 1956, 202.) This component can be divided into three taxonomies: the first is the knowledge of terminology; the second is the knowledge of ways and means of dealing with society; and the last is knowledge of the governing principles. These three taxonomies of the knowledge and the relationship of each of these taxonomies with *da‘wah*, more specifically with intercultural *da‘wah*, are shown in the following table:

Table 1:

No	Three Taxonomies of Knowledge in Relation with <i>Da‘wah</i>	
	<i>Taxonomy</i>	<i>Aspect Related to da‘wah</i>
1.	Knowledge of terminology	What is <i>da‘wah</i> ?
2.	Knowledge of ways and means of dealing with society	Knowledge of Islamic teachings governing the dealings with society like, <i>al-Ta‘āruf</i> (acquaintance) and <i>al-Ta‘āluḥ</i> (being friendly)
3.	Knowledge of the governing principles	Knowledge of the Islamic principles related to intercultural <i>da‘wah</i> , like unity of humanity as well as that of the Islamic message; universalism

The first taxonomy is to define technical term of *da'wah* by giving its attributes, properties or relations. For example, the term *da'wah* means “an invitation extended to humanity by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) to believe in Islam.” The attributes of the term *da'wah* includes admission, inviting, request and call to accept Islam as faith and as a way of life. What is more, the terms *da'wah*, *al-amr bi al- ma'rūf* and *al-nahy 'an al-munkar* and *jihad* found in the Islamic literature are often used interchangeably (Mohd Farid, 2006, 2.)

The second taxonomy is about knowledge of a conventional salutation in greeting to someone and rules of social behaviour commonly employed in a society. For example, non-Muslims in Malaysia greet Muslims and each other by saying: “how are you? Have you had a meal? (*apa khabar? sudah makan?*).” To start a communication with non-Muslims in Malaysia, using a similar quotation seems to be advisable. To take another example, in almost all Muslim communications, in line with realities of the existence described in the Qur'an, life after death is given emphasis; this world being temporal is considered not to be worthy of being the aim of ones endeavours in comparison with the everlasting life of the hereafter, its rewards and punishments (see al-Qur'an 18:103.) Those who look at the Chinese situation in Malaysia will agree that they are endowed with wealth, good health and lively intellect. Surely all these are nothing if compared with what Allah will reward His good servants in Paradise in addition to His bounties bestowed upon the sincerely believing and complying human societies in this world (see al-Qur'an 7:96; 71:10-12.) But starting the invitation to Islam in the Chinese community by stating, “You will have all those things after death if you are a Muslim,” as many ill-trained Callers (*du'āt*) tend to do, would not seem to appeal them and thus would be ineffective. They will say, “Well, we do have all this now.” A *dā'i* need to figure out the starting point as well as details of the discourse carefully while communicating the message of Islam with Chinese society in Malaysia, and with any community for that matter. It would be advisable that such communication, in line with the sequence of the Qur'anic revelation, must not neglect starting by explaining the right understanding of the fundamentals of the reality of the universe and their relationship with the Islamic faith, as it must not ignore the

Islamic surety of a decent peaceful life of contentment and affluence in this world to the sincerely believing and faithfully complying societies, along with the everlasting, countless and matchless bounties in the life after death (al-Qur'an 7: 96; 16: 97); or in other words providence of the best of this as well as that of the next world (al-Qur'an 2: 201); more emphasis on the life after death may wait for some time till the faith makes its way and entrenches its roots strongly in the heart.

Another element of second taxonomy is about the knowledge of the processes, directions and movements of phenomena with respect to time. For instance, in understanding continuity and development of the Malay culture as exemplified in Malaysian life it should be noted that the Malay concept is actually universal in nature. The term 'Malay' does not exclusively reflect original Malay ethnicity but also others such as Indians, Chinese and other 'Bumis' who willingly accept and practise Malay values as their way of life. This makes Malays cosmopolitan people in nature who never look down on other races. Malay culture does not teach us to distinguish people according to their skin or physical appearance but rather by their hearts and values. Malay culture upholds moral values as depicted in the Malay *pantun* (proverbial saying): "*Pisang emas dibawa belayar; masak sebiji di atas peti; hutang emas boleh dibayar; hutang budi dibawa mati*" (This *pantun* basically means that material debt can be paid, but debt of honour can never be. For more detailed information of *pantun*, see: <http://www.usm.my/pantun/pantuninenglish2.asp>).

The third taxonomy is about the knowledge of principles. The Islamic principles related to intercultural *da'wah* stem from the clear guidelines that Islam lays down to transform the society into a peaceful cohesive cooperative community. The very first of these principles is the bond of Islamic brotherhood and the loving spirit. The textual bases of these principles are found in the Qur'an as well as in the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). The Qur'an commanded: "The believers are but a single brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and be conscience of (the commands of) Allah, that you may receive mercy" (al-Qur'an 49:10.) The Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) is reported to have stated: "The similarity of

believers with respect to being mutually merciful, friendliness, and affectionate attachment is like that of (the organs of) a single body, when an organ is sick, surely the rest of them sympathise by staying up during the night and bearing the fever” (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, kitāb al-adab, bāb rahmah al-nās wa al-bahā'im*).

If any disagreement occurs among various factions of the Muslim society, taking recourse to arbitration becomes obligatory upon the Muslim community to solve the dispute with full justice to bring about the enduring peace (see al-Qur'an 49:9.)

The second of these principles, springing from the universal nature of the message of Islam, is having good relationship with non-Muslims (see al-Qur'an 9:6; Ahmad, 2010, 13). In today's global pluralist society regulated by various international peace and coordination treaties which became the foundation of the United Nations and others sponsored by various bodies of United Nations and Organisation of the Islamic Countries (OIC), it is vitally necessary to fully understand the Islamic teachings about the Muslim non-Muslim relations so that leaving aside the insignificant number of non-Muslim forces involved in aggression upon Muslims, Muslims need to interact peacefully with non-Muslims wholeheartedly to preserve pleasant socio, economic, religious and political relations with one another for prudent economic activities, achieving noble charitable objectives, promoting supremacy of law and justice to ensure the welfare of global human community. The Textual bases for the peaceful Muslim non-Muslims relations and mutual cooperation with all non-Muslims who do not involved in aggression against Islam and Muslims rather remain in peace are drawn from the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) (see al-Qur'an 60:8.)

A noteworthy event in relation to Islam's emphasis on Muslim and non-Muslim cooperation in righteousness and piety was the prevention of Muslims by Makkans to visit the mosque al-Haram in the year 628 of the Truce of al-Hudaybiyyah (Esposito, 1999, 69.) When the non-Muslims of Makkah, in contravention of the well-established Arab custom, barred the Muslims to visit the Ka'bah, Muslims were so outraged that they started considering to prevent those non-Muslims who happened to pass across their land for visiting the Ka'bah arguing that “we should prevent them as their

fellows prevented us from visiting the Ka‘bah.” Whereupon Allah warned Muslims not to violate the established custom of letting everyone enjoy free access to visit the Ka‘bah although the Muslims were the victims of the same violation (see al-Qur’an 5:2.)

The same principle is reiterated by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him), who said: “Give the trust back to the one who entrusted you with it and do not be dishonest even to the one who had shown dishonesty to you” (*Sunan Abū Dāwūd, kitāb al-ijārah, bāb fī al-rajul ya ‘khudhu ḥaqqahu min taḥti yadihi*; see also *al-Jāmī‘ al-Kābīr lī al-Tirmidhī, abwāb al-buyū‘*). The third of these principles is ensuring a cordial community environment ever ready to give comments and accept advice. It is in line with the advice of the Prophet (peace be on him), who is reported to have said: “Verily *al-dīn* is the advice. The Companions asked: ‘for whom?’ He (peace be on him) replied: ‘for Allah, and for His Books, and for His Messenger, and for the Muslim leaders and the public among them’” (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb al-imān, bāb bayān ‘an al-dīn al-naṣīḥah*). The sincere advice for Allah and His Messenger (peace be on him) means a sincere advice for oneself to make the Qur’an and the *Sunnah* as the source of guidance and guideline for his life honestly. A positive sincere comment is an important instrument to detect errors. Hence, an effort to solve such mistake can be done efficiently. However, such advice should be given sincerely for the purpose of bringing reformation to the society. Apart from that, it is required that the person who wants to give advice should be aware of the etiquette of debate and discussion.

There are many forms of etiquette of debate and discussion. For instance, the *dā‘i* should not look down nor raise voice nor shout in the face of his addressee(s) even the one who has become an opponent; he should be patient, forbearing and forgiving; he should avoid getting angry and annoyed; he should think about what his opponent is saying and understand it (see al-Qur’an 3:159; Zaydān, 2010, 55.) These are some of the etiquettes of debate and discussion that need to be employed by all Muslims.

Component 2: Comprehension

This component refers to a type of understanding such that the individual knows what is being communicated and can make use of the material or idea being communicated (Bloom *et. al.*, 1956, 204.) In other words, it refers to an activity of translating knowledge into new context, interpreting facts and extrapolating from known facts. This second component can be divided into three taxonomies: the first is translation the second is interpretation; and the last is extrapolation. The three taxonomies of comprehension are shown in the following table:

Table 2:

No	Taxonomies of Comprehension and the Aspects Related to <i>Da'wah</i>	
	<i>Taxonomy</i>	<i>Aspect Related to Da'wah</i>
1.	Translation	<i>Al-fahm</i>
2.	Interpretation	<i>Al-ta'bīr</i>
3.	Extrapolation	<i>Al-istiqrā'</i>

The first taxonomy is about the ability of *dā'i* to understand different situation of phenomenon and translate the knowledge into different context. The *dā'i* shall possess skill in translating the revelation, verbal and non-verbal material into comprehensible statements. The second taxonomy is about interpretation. It involves a reordering, rearrangement, or a new view of the material. The *dā'i* shall have the ability to grasp the idea of the *da'wah* work or literature as a whole at any desired level of generality. In other words, they shall know the way of how to interpret knowledge into new context. The third taxonomy refers to the ability to deal with the conclusions of a work in terms of the immediate inference made from the explicit statements. It also involves the skill in predicting continuation of trends of thinking in society and the consequences.

Component 3: Application

This component is about the use of information, methods, concepts, and theories in particular and new situations. What is more, the taxonomy is also about solving problems using required skills or knowledge (Bloom *et. al.*, 1956, 205.) This component can be divided into two taxonomies; the first is application in thought; and the second is application in practice. The explanation of the relation of these two taxonomies of application to *da‘wah* are shown in the following table:

Table 3:

No	Taxonomies of Application and the Aspects Related to <i>Da‘wah</i>	
	<i>Taxonomy</i>	<i>Aspect Related to Da‘wah</i>
1.	Application in thought	<i>Ijtihād</i>
2.	Application in practice	<i>Al-da‘wah bī al-hāl or bī al-qudwah al-thīqah</i>

This taxonomy is about the ability of *dā‘i* to use information, methods, concepts and theories in new situations. This normally involves the usage of specific skills or knowledge. The taxonomy also requires the *dā‘i* to demonstrate and apply the skills to the practical *da‘wah* activity. Muslims, in so far as their conditions and capabilities permit, are obliged to speak and to act in pursuit of what in their enlightened judgement seems good, on the other hand they are obliged to forbid, whether in action, words or silent (heart) denunciation, any wrong which they see being committed. Nonetheless, it remains as the collective obligation in which everyone ought to participate to the extent of their ability. There is only one situation where *da‘wah* becomes an individual obligation, and that is when there is only one person in the entire community, or when a single individual witnesses evil being committed.

Another aspect is about personality. Presenting a charming and attractive personal character is essential. It is something not material. It is a spiritual connection. Sincerity at hearts is more persuasive than the spoken or written matter. If our communication gives the feeling that Islam results in peace of mind and satisfaction at hearts, the

people will come closer. But if they get the wrong impression that being Muslim means to be poor, uneducated, unclean, secluded and giving up all the comforts at the very outset, then none will be influenced at all.

Component 4: Analysis

This fourth component refers to a kind of seeing patterns, organising of parts and identifying of hidden meanings. It is intended to clarify the communication or interaction, to indicate how the communication is organised, and the way in which it manages to convey its effects, as well as its basis and arrangement (Bloom *et. al.*, 1956, 205.) This component can be divided into three taxonomies: the first is that analysis of elements; the second is that analysis of relationships; and the last is that analysis of organisational principles. The three taxonomies to which the component analysis divides out and their aspects related to *da'wah* are shown in the following table below:

Table 4:

No	Taxonomies of Analysis and the Aspects Related to <i>Da'wah</i>	
	<i>Taxonomy</i>	<i>Aspect Related to Da'wah</i>
1.	Analysis of elements	<i>Da'wah, dā'i and mad'u</i>
2.	Analysis of relationships	Love and brotherhood
3.	Analysis of organisational principles	The works for Islam

The first taxonomy refers to the process of identification of the elements included in *da'wah*, *dā'i* and *mad'u*. Each has its own particular criteria. For the effective fulfilment of the responsibility of *da'wah* the criteria of each element must be thoroughly met. *Da'wah* is an invitation in which the message of Islam should be conveyed in its pristine purity and beauty. The message of *tawhid* should not be compromised and must be conveyed wherever and whenever possible and as directly as possible. The *dā'i* shall possess certain characteristics to effectively convey the message. These

characteristics are mentioned in the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. For instance, the *dā'i* must have sound basic knowledge of what one is inviting others to. In other words, the *dā'i* should have adequate knowledge of whatever limited area of Islam he is inviting others to (see al-Qur'an 12:108.) Further examples of the characteristics of the *dā'i* are kindness (see al-Qur'an 3:159), wisdom (see al-Qur'an 16:125), patience (see al-Qur'an 74:7) and morality (the Prophet Muhammad [peace be on him] said: "Indeed, I was only sent to complete the most noble of character traits." Narrated by Abū Hurairah (*Musnad Ahmad, bāb musnad Abī Hurayrah*; see also *Muwattā' Mālik, kitāb ḥusn al-khulq, bāb mā jā'a fī ḥusn al-khulq*). The second taxonomy is the analysis of relationships between *dā'i* and *mad'u*, which according to Islamic teachings is love and brotherhood. Therefore, whenever the *dā'i* is in a discussion with an individual or giving a lecture to a group, that he is not there to win the argument or the debate. The aim is to make sure they properly understand the true message of Islam in its pristine purity. It is also important for the *dā'i* to put himself in the other person's shoes and be gentle with them.

In general, the best person to talk to people is one who shares a similar background with them (al-Qur'an 14:4.) For instance, someone from Malaysia or one who has visited Malaysia and has intimate knowledge of their culture can make their talks more effective and relevant to a Malaysian audience by illustrating local examples. Their impact may be much greater than a very knowledgeable foreigner. Apart from that, the *dā'i* needs a degree of eloquence or a good speaking manner. Even if the *dā'i* can quote the whole of the Qur'an, he still may not reach the *mad'u* unless he can speak to them in an eloquent manner. To build a relationship with *mad'u*, the *dā'i* needs to have some common background and speak in their language. The *dā'i* always has to be conscious of the situation or the environment and tailor the approach accordingly. Love and brotherhood become manifest when the *dā'i* is able to link the knowledge, the morality and the ability to build relationships. The third taxonomy involves coordination of the role of mosques and Muslim organisations. This idea is to explain that the mosques can play a very significant role in communicating the message of peace and harmony and understanding among Muslims as well as with non-Muslims all over the world. But they need to be strengthened and

must not be limited to any particular school of thought. Membership in Muslim organisations needs to be opened for all, if they are to play a wider role in the field of communication and propagation.

Component 5: Synthesis

This component involves the process of using old ideas to create new ones, generalising from given facts, relating knowledge from several areas and predicting or drawing conclusions (Bloom *et. al.*, 1956, 206.) This component of synthesis can be divided into two taxonomies: the first is that production of a unique communication; and the second is that production of a plan or proposed set of operations. The division of the two taxonomies of synthesis and their related aspects with *da'wah* is shown in the table below:

Table 5:

No	Taxonomies of Synthesis and the Aspects Related to <i>Da'wah</i>	
	<i>Taxonomy</i>	<i>Aspect Related to Da'wah</i>
1.	Production of a unique communication	Phrasing the message of Islam in such a way that should resonate with the admirations of the addressees by synthesis of background information of the addressees from various angles and the core message of Islam
2.	Production of a plan or proposed set of operations	' <i>Amal jamā'ī</i> ' - creation of a comprehensive plan and procedures for conveying of the message of Islam in locality or in a community, whether online or otherwise.

The first taxonomy refers to the development of a communication in which the *dā'i* attempts to convey ideas or message of Islam. It involves the ability to know what the priority in conveying the message of Islam is. Some aspects of Islam are more critical than others, thus priority must be given to the most important aspects. The

first pillar of Islam is to witness *shahādah* (declaration that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah) and the first pillar of faith is belief in Allah. Therefore, whatever topic the *da'wah* may begin on, a deliberate action should be made to divert the topic eventually to that of *tauḥīd*. In other words, the communication between the *dā'i* and *mad'u* must be designed to focus on *tauḥīd*. When calling others to Islam, the *dā'i* must divert the conversation to the subject of *tauḥīd*, if at all possible. The second point the level of education. Talking to someone who is a university graduate or student is different from talking to somebody who is a labourer. The *dā'i* may quote many things to a university graduate which the common labourer would not normally understand. Philosophical concepts and complicated ideas like pluralism, liberalism or mysticism are not suitable for discussion with people of limited education. The *dā'i* needs to look at the level of education and understanding of the *mad'u* and deal with them accordingly.

The second taxonomy is about the development of a plan of activity which satisfies requirements of the task which may be given to the subordinate or which the *dā'i* may develop for himself, for instance, developing ability to plan a unit for conveying the message effectively to a specific audience or venue. Another aspect is about training the *dā'i* in the art and science of communication. This skill is a must. They have to know the proper language and understand the social situation before conveying the message. The *dā'i* needs to understand, learn and adopt the sequence of priorities in conveying the message of Islam. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) said: Ibn 'Abbās reported that when the Prophet (peace be on him) sent Mu'adh b. Jabal to Yemen he told him: "You will be going to the people of the book, so the first thing you should do invite them to is the assertion of the oneness of Allah, the Most High. If they realise that, then inform them that Allah has made five daily prayers obligatory on them. If they pray, then inform them that Allah has made the payment of charity from their wealth obligatory on their rich to be given to their poor. If they accept that, then take it from them and avoid the best part of people's property" (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, kitāb al-tauḥīd, bāb mā jā'a fī du'ā al-nabī 'ummatahu 'ilā tauḥīd Allāh Tabāraka wa Ta'āla*). It is improper to explain the beauties and reward of prayers, fasting, and pilgrimage to the people who know

nothing about Allah, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) and the Qur'an. It does not seem to be wise, for instance, to ask the new Muslims to go out for *tablīgh* tour for forty days leaving their works, families and homes. The *dā'i* needs to see things from the social perspective of the addressees. Rush and push is not the prophetic method thus could be harmful.

Component 6: Evaluation

It is about the judgements of the value of material and method for a given purposes. To be more precise, it refers to the activity of comparing between ideas, assessing value of theories and presentations, and verifying value of evidence. On another level, this taxonomy refers to the procedure of making choices based on reasoned argument (Bloom *et. al.*, 1956, 207.) This component of evaluation can be divided into two taxonomies: judgements in terms of internal criteria; judgements in terms of external criteria. The division of the two taxonomies of evaluation and their application in intercultural *da'wah* is shown in the table below:

Table 6:

No	Taxonomies of Evaluation and the Aspects Related to <i>Da'wah</i>	
	<i>Taxonomy</i>	<i>Aspect Related to Da'wah</i>
1.	Judgements in terms of internal criteria	<i>Al-muḥāsabah</i> – evaluation of one's own abilities, successes and failings
2.	Judgements in terms of external criteria	<i>Al-'uzlah</i> – enabling groups to work more independently

Evaluation and improvement can possibly be done by an organisation. The main objective of an Islamic organization is to carry on the Islamic ethics and Islamic philosophy and develop new socio-cultural bases on the Islamic spirit. It means that the Islamic schools should be developed not only disseminate religious sciences but also the natural sciences and technology. This taxonomy is also about interaction among the Muslims and the non-Muslims. This interaction needs to be developed for the short term as well as for the

long term ends. The *dā'i* needs to develop programs for education and training of humans for various fields of life, such as food production, food technology, environmental control and water quality management. The basic principle needs to change from religious sentiment to humanitarian sentiment, based on the Islamic ethics.

Conclusion

The above discussion seems enough to help us underlying most of the general principles of taxonomy for intercultural *da'wah* in a pluralist society. In Islam, *da'wah* is carried out on behalf of Allah in order to promote and establish good against wrong. *Da'wah* may take place within oneself or within the community. Thus, *da'wah* is being aware of never becoming bitter, harsh, jeering and so forth. The invitation, the words, the explanation and the manners must always be attractive, not boring, tiring or irritating.

Indeed, *da'wah* is to try and try again and never give up so that Allah may guide the addressees to the truth. But if they remain unconvinced or opt not to accept the message, the results are to be left to Allah. This is the very methodology which the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) himself followed as he peacefully coexisted with all those including Christians and Jews who were either not convinced by his own presentation of Islam or after understanding the message opted to reject his invitation for other reasons and kept their faith, until they took recourse to aggression against the Islamic state. This was because the mandate of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) like Allah's all other true Prophets (peace be on them) was to clearly proclaim (*al-balagh al-mubīn*) and to invite (*ud'u*) mankind to accept the concept of the deity-ship of Allah alone, and the common origin and unity of the mankind and to guide humanity to the path of virtue and righteousness. Thus, one has to acknowledge the absolute peaceful methods of *da'wah*, because according to Islamic teachings coercion, force and compulsion cannot be resorted to in such matters.

Another important element is that the *du'āt* must take recourse to best possible words in their communication and discussions. They need to absolutely abstain from using harsh words and from making exaggerated statements. They need to be soft in their conversation and state only what is true and dignified in spite of the provocation and aggressive behaviour of the opponents. Choosing polite language and proper theme are extremely important for effective *da'wah*. The message remains the same, but it should be conveyed through a medium that is understood by the audience.

In the same echo the themes of *da'wah* today ought to deal with the similar problems of the day concerning with matters of public interest and morality. The *dā'i*, thus, needs to make the basic themes of *da'wah*, i.e. the message of *tauḥīd*, *risālah*, and *ākhirah* relevant to the concerns and experience of average audience as well as to the ills of their contemporary society. All these Islamic ideals of *da'wah*, this paper contends, can easily be achieved by using the knowledge of taxonomy for intercultural *da'wah* as discussed above to be the core of the methodology of *da'wah*.

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