Women and the Themes and Narratives of the 'Diary of a *Muhajirah*' Tumblr Page

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ABSTRACT

2014 saw the rise of the Islamic State (IS) as a prominent threat to global security. Even more worrying is that the recent phenomenon saw an influx of foreign female recruits, including Malaysian women, lured into the terrorist organization through its online propaganda campaign. This research is a qualitative thematic analysis of the 'Diary of a Muhajirah', the Tumblr account of an IS recruiter, from July 10, 2015 to September 26, 2015. The objectives of this research are to identify the propaganda techniques used by the author and to determine the emerging themes as well as narratives of the propaganda used for recruiting female potentials. Based on the findings, the researcher

found that the author had employed the seven propaganda techniques as issued by the Institute for Propaganda Analysis (IPA). The researcher also identified seven emerging themes and narratives delivered through the postings on the Tumblr page. The data collected in this research is useful for the Malaysian Government in producing effective counter-propaganda strategies and security agencies in developing information security tools for online terrorist threats analysis. This research may be further expanded into other area of concern by other researchers.

Keywords: *Diary of a Muhajirah, Islamic State, Online Recruitment, Propaganda, Terrorism, Women*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Terrorism is predominantly a man's game. Most literatures focused on the dominant roles of men at the core of terrorist activities. Often women, in these literatures, were mentioned almost limitedly to none. Women were also frequently stereotyped as vulnerable and incapable of violence.

However, women's participation in the field of terrorism is not to be underestimated. Previous history had shown significant involvement of women in the act of modern politically- or religiously-inspired terrorism. Women had played strong leadership, strategic and supporting roles in terrorist organizations. Based on several cases, women were proven to be more dedicated, aggressive and hostile than their male counterparts. In desperate times, terrorist organizations resorted to using their female members to penetrate tight securities where no men can.

Realizing the usefulness of women in achieving their goals, terrorist organizations had started to expand their memberships to women. These organizations started to market their terrorist brand in ways that were appealing to their intended female audience. In order to attract them, religious terrorist organizations such as Al-

Qaeda sought to use religion to justify more prominent women's participation in their terrorist acts. Previously, women were restricted to certain supporting roles only using the similar religious reasoning.

The development of the Internet and technological advancement have proven to be useful, especially in the recent Islamic State (IS) phenomenon, as new platforms for the conduct of their propaganda campaigns towards women. The cyberspace has become a crucial asset to a terrorist organization due to its geographical reach, ubiquity, cheap costs and real-time communication. The number of terrorist-linked websites increases every year.

Through these tailor-made websites, the terrorists are able to reach out to their specific target audience faster, pervasively and more effectively. These websites serve as the communication medium between the terrorists and their target audience. Communication is essential to summon the attention of the public and ensure the survival of a terrorist organization. Without effective communication, the expansion and longevity of a terrorist organization will be disrupted.

Thus, much attention are given by the terrorists on their communication strategies to ensure that their propaganda messages are strategically and effectively communicated to the target audience. To understand these messages is to analyze the communication particularly the language and content of the propaganda.

The technology and media savvy IS has successfully formulated propagandas that attract women of various socio-economic backgrounds globally through a click of a button. The recent cases of Malaysian women reported to be travelling to Syria after being recruited into IS through IS-linked websites are evidence that the ideology of IS has spread into the household of Malaysians. Several were arrested, including a young 14-year old, while attempting to leave the country for Syria to serve as 'sexual

comfort' to IS men after being propagate with the idea through the concept of *Jihad Al-Nikah* (*Jihad* through marriage).

One of the main identified source of IS propaganda that influenced these women is the 'Diary of a *Muhajirah*', a blog claimed to be owned by a 26-year old Malaysian woman. Through the blog, she shared her experience of travelling to Syria and marrying an IS fighter which was narrated beautifully and interweaved with religious reasoning.

This development is certainly alarming as it indicates the possibility that Malaysian women are also starting to play more prominent strategic roles in IS. This calls for further analysis of the phenomenon. Hence, this research addresses the need to provide initial understanding of the phenomenon by analysing the propaganda used in the postings of the 'Diary of a *Muhajirah*'.

2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following literature review seeks to give an understanding and guidance on the area of research. The literatures on the propaganda concepts and techniques provides a foundation on the historical background and development of modern propaganda. Jacque Ellul's propaganda concept is best to explain most terrorist organisation's communication strategy, including IS, due to its consistency with the characteristics of their propaganda practice. Meanwhile, the literatures on the topic of women and terrorism presents the background on women's participation in terrorism as well as the common themes and narratives used in the propaganda of religious terrorist organizations especially IS.

2.1 Propaganda Concepts and Techniques

Propaganda, in its earliest form, was seen as a moral endeavour as it was used by the Roman Catholic Church in 1622. The *Congregation de Propaganda Fide* or Congregation for the Propaganda of Faith was established by the Vatican to transmit and

disseminate the Roman Catholic faith against the Protestant interests in its missions by means of a strategic communication. However, the nature of deliberate influencing of public's attitudes against another belief had later given the term a negative connotation.

Often, the term is used interchangeably with negative words such as lies, distortions, deceit, manipulation, mind control, psychological warfare, brainwashing and palaver. The variety of words associated to it often carry pejorative connotation due to the ways modern propaganda is carried out which among others, involves manipulation of symbols and the psychology of the person [1].

This use of a strategic method to influence the attitudes of people had been proven to be as old as human communication. One of the early propaganda materials, the *Arthashastra* or "science of political economy" which was written by Kautilya, the main adviser and political strategist to Chandragupta Maurya (c. 317-293 B.C.E), the Indian king who was known for unifying the Indian subcontinent in an empire. The writings promised great political and economic power to kings to rule the earth through specific warfare strategies which include the use of disinformation or propaganda, often exploiting religion, to demoralize or intimidate the enemies as well as motivate their own armies [2].

Propaganda is not limited to the religious and internal political governance of an organization or a state but also in warfare campaigns as shown throughout the history. The start of the 20th century saw propaganda at its golden age due to its wide scale conduct during wars especially the World Wars. The First World War, which occurred from 1914 to 1918, was the first conflict where the importance of propaganda as an instrument of warfare with unprecedented power was recognized by the participating states. It became the initial case study for propaganda theorist such as Harold Lasswell, Edward L. Bernays in the 1920s. While acknowledging the initial term of propaganda referred to its usage

by the church as a religious doctrine, most scholars agreed that the widespread use, pejorative connotation and the development of modern propaganda was the outcome of the First World War [3]. It saw the great advantages of propaganda, hence the use of modern propaganda strategies in the political affairs of a state including warfare continues till these days.

The use of propaganda intensified with the emergence of literate and politically active societies informed by mass media. Propaganda was, and still is, a powerful tool, further enhanced by the mass media, used by various owners of the media including governments and their oppositions to sway the attitudes of the publics towards supporting their policies. As witnessed through history, mass media is a crucial agent of propaganda. With the technological advancement of mass media, propaganda continues to evolve. A significant current development is the internet which enables propagandists to reach and persuade broader audiences and sway public opinion towards their desired objectives.

Earlier definitions, precursors to the modern ones, defined propaganda as a communication technique which is strategically designed by an organization for specific target group, in masses, in order to cognitively persuade and inspire as well as alter the social pattern of, the targeted individuals to support or join their cause. It is also suggested that the actions are carried out deliberately and covertly by the propagandist with a certain purpose and advantages.

Jacque Ellul's book, 'Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitude', offered valuable insights into the beginning of modern propaganda. In his book, he identified propaganda as a modern technique with scientific traits based on analyses of psychology and sociology. This was based on the premise that propaganda is built upon the knowledge of the propagandist of his subjects individually and shaped based on the knowledge of the mass [4].

He added that there were three reasons to explain the need for manipulation of symbols. Firstly, it sways the individual to join the framework of an organization. Secondly, it provides the individual with motives, validations and stimulus for action. Thirdly, it attains the individual's total commitment. It is crucial that an individual's commitment is genuine for a propaganda to be effective. Thus, great emphasis is put on the need for an individual to have faith, commit wholeheartedly and gain satisfaction in their actions.

He pointed out that propaganda takes time as it prepares an individual for a specific action through a pre-propaganda by means of conditioned reflex and the myth. Conditioned reflex is created by training the individual with repetitive words, signs, symbols, facts and others through a period of time in order to induce consistent reactions. A propagandist too tries to construct myths that respond to an individual's sense of sacredness by activating a vision of desirable aims that have lost their substantial, practical character and have become strongly coloured, overwhelming, encompassing and which displace from the conscious all that is not related to it. This image will provide the push a man needs to act specifically because of the positive feelings he has.

Furthermore, Jacque Ellul argued that the objective of modern propaganda is no longer about transforming ideas, indoctrination or leading one's choice. It is about encouraging and mobilizing participation whether passively or actively through the process of choice and deliberation. He emphasized on the need for a physical structure to ensure that the psychological excitement induced through propaganda is translated into genuine actions. Action makes propaganda's effect irreversible as the propaganda is compelled to justify and provide authority to his actions.

Jacque Ellul highlighted two attitudes that are susceptible to propaganda. The first attitude is that an individual who is confidently claimed that he shall not be victims of propaganda as he is able to distinguish truth from falsehood. The second attitude is that he will believe in nothing the propagandist says as

everything is untrue. These two attitudes make a person vulnerable as the propagandist may be able to present their arguments in such manner that is believable, accurate, vague and almost truth.

A person, according to Jacque Elull, when exposed to propaganda, will experience psychological manipulation that not only alters his opinion and attitudes, but also his internal psychological structure. Propaganda reinforced and crystalized prejudices or objectives set by the propagandist. Once a person goes through the crystallization process, his mind limits or reject completely, incoming new ideas. Apart from that, propaganda detaches or alienates someone from other individuals or groups. Thus, the individual would easily obey foreign impulses and devote himself to a seemingly great leader and a great cause. The individual subjected to propaganda can no longer do without it. The more propaganda there is, the more the public wants.

Thus, in brief, propaganda can be defined as a carefully thought and organized effort that are disseminated to masses of people by an institution [5] to form perceptions, manipulate cognitions and direct behaviour towards a response as desired by the propagandist [6].

There are various techniques used in the practice of propaganda. The techniques were expanded from the seven basic and common propaganda techniques namely Name Calling, Glittering Generalities, Transfer, Testimonial, Plain Folks, Card Stacking and Bandwagon as identified by Institute for Propaganda Analysis (IPA) [7].

Name-calling is giving a negative or derogatory label to an idea, a person, a subject, in the form of insult, sarcasm and ridicule which makes audiences reject and condemn it without examining the evidence. This technique is used to tarnish and ruin the reputation of the opponent by associating him with something that is despised, immoral and undesirable. By doing so, it is hoped that

the audience will reject the person on the basis of negative symbol, instead of looking at the available evidence.

Glittering generality is associating something with a virtue word or high value concept such as civilization, democracy, patriotism, love and right, which carries different meaning to different people. It seeks to evoke emotions without making commitments or putting the propagandist in a position where they may be challenged or criticized. When these techniques are used, they insist on consent without thinking, simply because a significant conception is involved.

Transfer technique is a technique that carries over the authority, prestige and approval of respected and revered person or symbol to something that the propagandist wished for the audience to accept. This technique can be used to transfer and generate positive or negative emotions. The emotions are generated when the audience links the person or symbol to their own feeling about it.

Testimonial is a technique that involves having some respected or hated person to make a statement that provides an idea or program or product or even a person with negative or positive recognition.

Plain folks technique is a technique where the propagandist makes himself appear as an average, common person who has had a similar experience to the audience. By doing so, the propagandist provides the audience with some trust and comfort, believing that both parties share common goals and thus, they should agree with the propagandist.

The card stacking technique involves the selection and omission of information in order to give the best or worst possible case for an idea, program, person or product. It is done by emphasizing one side of the subject and repressing the other. Often, the propagandist will resort to deception, lies, censorship and distortion in executing this technique.

The bandwagon technique is a technique which involves appealing to the common desire to follow the crowd. Due to this,

the propagandist directs the appeal to groups held together by common ties. The bandwagon technique generally plays heavily on the need for belonging, tries to persuade and convince the subject or audience to think or act in the same way that others are doing.

2.2 Women and Terrorism

Women and terrorism is hardly a new topic. It had been discussed, though limitedly, in various literatures. Based on a study done by Weinberg and Eubank [8] on women's involvement in the four waves of terrorism, it was shown throughout history that women have been actively participating in terrorism or radicalized movements from the Russian People's Will and Socialist Revolutionaries through the contemporary Tamil Tigers and Hamas, with various roles and responsibilities based on political and religious deliberation.

A study done by Mahan and Griset [9] on gender and terrorism categorized the role of women in terrorism into four major categories mainly sympathizers, spies, warriors and dominant forces. Sympathizers provides general logistical assistance to terrorist organizations including money, time and sex to their male counterparts. Spies undertake missions of delivering messages, collecting intelligence and acting as decoys. Warriors are trained to handle artilleries and be part of tactical operative activities. Prominent and leadership role is undertaken by those in the dominant forces categories.

The use of female operatives are advantages to the terrorist organization due to several reasons. According to Speckhard [10], female operatives gain more attention from the media than male which is beneficial to terrorist organizations in highlighting their cause in the media. Apart from that, female operatives were able to pass security while carrying dangerous weapons, money or messages without being suspicious. Women were also used,

through marriage, to create strategic alliances, gain citizenship, as sexual companionship and other home-making role.

Hudson [11] highlighted that based on a profiling report done by the Government of the United States in 1999, female terrorist possessed three sets of characteristics namely practicality and coolness; dedication, strength and ruthlessness; and single mindedness. Female terrorists remain calm under pressure; practical in their decision making and actions; stronger and dedicated in their missions; and their single-mindedness makes them far more dangerous than their male counterparts as they are more focus.

Speckhard further stated that terrorist groups, especially religious radical groups, only resorted to using women in their tactical operations when the circumstances become so tough and desperate that it demands the use of women. This is due to the social and religious context that do not permit such use of women. Conservative Islamist radical group such as Al-Qaeda and Palestinian Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade were hesitant in using women and only equipped them for suicide mission when the situation is challenging. Weinberg and Eubank added that women's role as suicide bombers in Islamist radical groups such as Al-Qaeda and IS only came at a much later period and beyond this role, women have not been dominant. Interestingly, the study also found that most suicide killings were carried out by secular groups than Islamist ones.

In contrast, Garrison [12] argued that women had been fully integrated into the Chechen rebels as female suicide bombers in the fight against Russian military. These women, nicknamed the 'Black Widows', were Chechen women who lost their husbands and loved ones to the Russian military and known for their aggressiveness, determination and discipline.

Through the experience of interviewing more than 400 hundred terrorists, their family members, close associates and hostages, Speckhard found that motivations for the act of terrorism differs depending on whether she resides inside or outside a conflict zone.

Those in the conflict zone were mostly driven by vengeance, outrage and shock caused by the cruelty and merciless killing of civilians. Meanwhile those outside were motivated by, among others, feelings of discrimination, marginalization, sense of belonging, adventure and romance.

Meanwhile, a report by Saltman and Smith [13] on gender and the IS phenomenon identified the push and pull factors for the migration of foreign female migrants to Syria. The push factors were the feeling of isolation within Western culture; feeling of violent persecution of Muslim community as a whole; and anger, sadness or frustration over a perceived irresponsive international action to this persecution. The pull factors identified were the idealistic goals of religious duty and building a utopian 'Caliphate state'; belonging and sisterhood; and romanticization of the experience.

In a study done by Bakker and de Leede [14] on the European female *Jihadists* in Syria, the researcher found that the majority of the foreign female recruits from the United Kingdom, France or Netherlands were young girls who do not fit the usual stereotype of submissive and passive types. These women were recruited into significant roles which indirectly support the fight in Syria such as child bearers, nurses, fundraisers and propagandists.

Verkaik and Akhbar [15] observed that unlike other Islamist terrorist groups, IS is opened to idea of women's participation as operatives and earlier indicated that women may also be sent for suicide missions with the consent by the Caliph of the IS as written on their marriage certificate, 'If the Prince of believers (Caliph) consents to her carrying out a suicide mission, then her husband should not prohibit her'.

Al-Qaeda was acknowledge as the first guerrilla movement in history to migrate from the physical world to cyberspace, according to a study done by Rabasa, Chalk , Cragin, Daly and Gregg [16] as

it was the first to revolutionize its operations by successfully utilizing information technology.

Al-Tabaa [17] found that Al-Qaeda spread its propaganda towards women through its publication of a digital magazine, Al-Shamikha, launched in 2011 for recruitment purposes. The propaganda in the said magazine played on empowering women through their roles as mother, wives, supporter of *Jihad*, and funder of *Jihad*. It also ascertained the need for Muslim women to defend Islam and Muslims and make *Jihad* possible. In one of the edition, Al-Qaeda manipulated a widow name Umm Muhamed as the voice of a good *Jihadist* wife to gain the sympathy and evoke the emotions of the potential female recruits.

A study done by Alex [18] found that Al-Qaeda uses a single narrative through a unifying framework of explanations in expressing their ideology which provides its follower with emotionally satisfying representation of the world in which they live in and their role in it, giving them a sense of identity and meaning to their lives.

The recent IS phenomenon saw the total use of the social media and file sharing platforms such as Ask.fm, Facebook, Twitter and others in the recruitment process. The IS media strategy was far more sophisticated than the Al-Qaeda's.

In a study of female *Jihad* recruitment through an open Facebook group Torok [19] observed that initially the interest of the target audience were engaged as they expressed their anti-government or anti-Western sentiments before attempts were made to shift their identities and convert them towards the path of radicalization. The major themes of the discourses with the female target audience were focused on oppression and injustice against Muslims, Islam as a fight against oppression and corruption, reference to key terrorist figures, concept of unity and martyrdom. In the process, the messages and information given to the new converts were controlled and they were introduced to other radical Islamic websites for their further reading.

A study by Shmid [20] on the narratives of IS identified twelve claims made by IS. IS claims that it stands for pure and unadulterated Islam; Muslims are victimized and violated globally and that the only solution is to fight back; true Islam can only be established by the sword; civil strife is a positive thing because it enables the differentiate between true IS believers and non-believers; violence in *Jihad* is unavoidable in the road to Paradise; the honorable resistance has noble and great Sharia objectives; Muslims must unify under one leader; IS is the legitimate Muslim authority; IS is true land of Islam and migration is unavoidable; there is amazing brotherhood in the Islamic State; IS caliphate is the new nucleus of Islam and IS is capable to win over Western interest. Adding to that, Winter [21] stated that the the propaganda by IS is mainly focus on subject of brutality, mercy, victimhood, war, belonging and utopianism. Apart from that, a study also showed that those who join the fight in Syria were willing to be martyrs in the name of Allah.

3.0 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The objectives of this research are to identify the propaganda techniques used by the author and to determine the emerging themes as well as narratives of the propaganda used for recruiting female potentials. Based on these objectives, the researcher formulated the following Research Objectives (RO):

RQ1: What are the propaganda techniques used by the propagandist in the postings on the said Tumblr page?

RQ2: What are the themes and narratives used by the propagandist?

RQ3: What are the languages used in the postings on the said Tumblr page?

RQ4: How frequent are the postings on the page?

RQ1 refers to the first research objective, which is to identify the propaganda techniques used in the 'Diary of a *Muhajirah*'. Meanwhile, the second research objective which is to determine the emerging themes and narratives of the propaganda used will be represented by RQ2, RQ3 and RQ4. The language and frequency of the postings contribute indirectly in the delivery of the themes and narratives by the propaganda to her audience.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

This qualitative thematic analysis of the 'Diary of a *Muhajirah*' Tumblr page sampled the postings and communication made between the propagandist and her audience on the 'Diary of a *Muhajirah*' Tumblr page at http://diary-of-a-muhajira.tumblr.com/ from July 10, 2015 to September 26, 2015. The account was opened on July 10, 2015 following the closing down of the previous site of the same name.

The 'Diary of a *Muhajirah*' was chosen as it is one of the most prominent IS propaganda site which contents were geared towards women for the purposes of, among others, recruitment. The contents of each postings were analyzed to determine the propaganda techniques employed as well as the themes and narratives presented by the IS propagandist.

The research was conducted in five stages. In Stage 1, the research questions were developed based on the objectives of the research which were (i) to identify the propaganda techniques used in the 'Diary of a *Muhajirah*', the Tumblr account of Bird of Jannah; and (ii) to determine the emerging themes and narratives of the propaganda used for recruiting female potentials through the postings on the said Tumblr account.

Later, in Stage 2, the researcher conducted the systematic review and literature review to investigate on significant information to support the research topic and to seek the gap between the previous studies and unexplored areas of studies. For

this purpose, five keywords were identified namely, concept of propaganda, propaganda types and techniques, terrorist propaganda, and women and terrorism. Through this review, the researcher was able to gain an in-depth understanding of the research topic relating to women and online terrorist propaganda as well as the concept of propaganda.

This was followed by Stage 3 where the research methodology was formulated based on the epistemological approach of the researcher. The process involved defining and developing the research design, method, samples and data analysis. The researcher chose to do a qualitative thematic analysis as she believed that it would be best to analyze and explain the data.

The collection of data were performed in Stage 4 of the research process. In performing the data collection, the researcher was guided by a research protocol which was reviewed and refined from time to time to suit the need for this research. The research protocol is as illustrated in the following Figure 1:
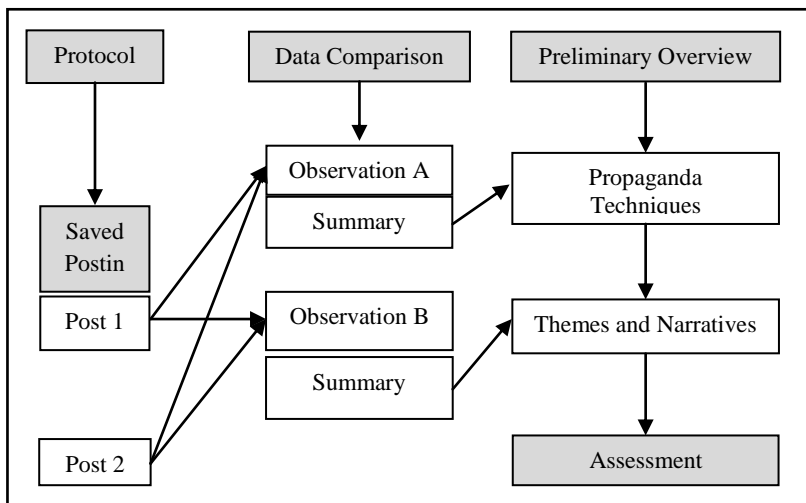

Figure 1: Framework of Protocol Construct

During this stage, all textual data from the postings on 'Diary of a *Muhajirah*' from July 10, 2015 to September 26, 2015 were compiled. The contents of each postings of the 'Diary of a *Muhajirah*' from July 10, 2015 to September 26, 2015 were recorded and continuously reviewed and re-examined.

Upon familiarization with the data, the researcher generated initial codes to organize and reduce the data to meet the research objectives. The initial codes were used to construct the coding sheet as in Table 1:

TABLE 1
Coding Sheet

Date :	
Original Text :	
Main Language :	
Propaganda Technique :	
Theme and Narrative :	
Miscellaneous :	
Summary :	

The data from each posting were later sorted and organized into the identified codes during the data comparison process. A summary for each observation was also included. The summarized data of the respective categories gave a preliminary overview of the data collected.

Subsequently, in Stage 5, the thematic analysis of each posting on 'Diary of a *Muhajirah*' was conducted in respect of the research objectives and questions. Through the process, the researcher reviewed and reread again the entire data collected through the coding sheet in order to observe the emerging coherent patterns across the data. The patterns were later recorded under two categories namely Propaganda Techniques, and Themes and Narratives.

Lastly, in Stage 6, the researcher discussed the findings, provided recommendations and concluded the research.

5.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Propaganda Techniques

The observed data on the propaganda techniques used by the author which was repeatedly reviewed were categorized into different groups based on the patterns of the language used by the author. The researcher found that the author had employed the seven propaganda techniques, as issued by IPA, in delivering her contents and capturing the heart and minds of her audience.

The most employed propaganda technique was the glittering generalities technique. Meanwhile, the least used propaganda technique was the transfer technique.

5.1.1 Glittering Generalities

From her postings, it was evident that the author had used the glittering generalities technique by incorporating emotionally appealing words or phrases with highly valued concepts and beliefs that carry conviction without supporting information or reason. Perceptually meaningful and value words such as 'valuable', 'beautiful', 'victory', 'sacrifice', 'bigger goal', 'reward', 'peace' and 'win' were observable in many of her statements on the page. Apart from that, the author repeatedly exploited Arabic words such as *'Ramadan', 'Eeman', 'Jannah', 'Izzah', 'Hijrah', 'Ummah', 'Muslimah'* and *'Mujahid'* which are associated with important Islamic concepts that are highly regarded by the Muslims. These words carry different meaning to individuals and when used, they demand approval without thinking, simply because such an important concept is involved.

These words were used to form attractive, yet vague general statements that were utilized by the author to trigger powerful

emotions in the audience. The idea of pleasing Allah entices the audience to make needed changes in their attitudes and behaviour towards the advantage of the author. The author exploited the desire to repent and please Allah, especially in the holy month of *Ramadan*, to encourage change in attitudes and behaviours of her audience. The glory of *Ramadan* which was coming to an end was used by the author to create a sense of urgency to return to righteous way of Allah. The author too uplifted the emotion of her audience towards her objectives by placing them at high place with their creator as 'special' and 'valuable'.

Apart from that, the author used metaphors and symbolisms that were presented through a poetic language to hypnotize her audience. In her poem posted on July 27, 2015, the author used the technique to emphasize the ideal *Muslimah*, roles, responsibilities and characteristics of a woman of IS. An ideal woman was described, among others, as 'the backbone of the *Ummah*', 'a preserved pearl sealed with modesty and *hayaa*' (shyness)', 'shining even brighter and prettier that *Hooris* of *Jannah* (companion of Paradise)' and 'not any random Muslimah'. The target audience were address as a 'green bird of *Jannah*' where this green represented Islam, while bird symbolized freedom. This statement glorified the concept of a hereafter with an underlying tone for *Jihad*.

5.1.2 Plain Folks

Using the plain folks technique, the author made herself appeared as a common person who is able to understand and empathize with her audience's concerns. Her postings were presented by using simple, short and easy-to-understand sentences to share information and her own experience with her target audience. Her postings also contained minor typo errors and incorrect grammars to make the postings seemed unplanned, believable and honest.

The author used informal way of writing by incorporating short forms such as 'Tbh' (To be honest), 'Btw' (By the way), and slang terms such as 'freshy', 'chilling' and 'gonna'. When answering the concerns of her audience, she used similar languages that matched her audience in terms of types, tones and delivery. Her ability in other languages namely Malaysian Malay and Indonesian languages gave her more advantage for the said purpose. The author addressed her audience as 'sister' or 'sisters', and used 'we' and 'us' to show that she was part of the common Muslims. These methods helped her to build the rapport with her audience by reducing the personal gap between them and creating a comfort setting for them to communicate.

An important observation was the author's portrayal of herself as someone who had a similar experience to the audience, and aware of their skeptical or cautious feeling about accepting the author's point of view. In this way, the author gave the audience a sense of trust and comfort, believing that the author and the audience share common goals and that they thus should agree with the author. It provided more authenticity and weight to her claims. This was observed in her statements such as "I, myself made *hijrah* when I was 26" and "I got married two months later after my arrival on my own will without being forced".

In her entry on July 11, 2015, the author made herself appeared as any common individuals who faced trials, failures and difficulties in life, and wished to become a better person and repent to Allah. The author employed the technique to make her *hijrah* experience and concerns that she had in making her decisions relatable to her audience on July 16, 2015. She continued to describe the social culture of 'sitting together, chat, cook, pray together, attending *dars* and other normal routine' at her friend's house to show life in IS is as ordinary as the lives of ordinary people.

She showed her understanding of what her audience were going through and continued to motivate them by making statements such as "It's normal to feel anxious and worry" and "It's hard if you're a total stranger but it's not impossible. All you need is some hard work".

5.1.3 Bandwagon

The author used the bandwagon technique to attempt to draw her audience collectively towards her desired objectives. For this purpose, the author packaged her statements attractively and linked them to the morality and values of her target audience.

This was evident since her earlier postings when she was opportunistic in exploiting the holy month of *Ramadan*, especially the last 10 days, to appeal to the desires of the target audience and direct them towards a common interest as emotions and motivations of Muslims during the month to seek repentance and return the pathway of their creator, Allah, were at the highest level. The author continued to reinforce the desires of the target audience by mentioning of reward and forgiveness from Allah for those who joined the cause by doing good deeds and repent in *Ramadan*. A quote from a religious leader, Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-Uthaymeen, was used on July 13, 2015 to deliver the content with the intention to bring the audience towards her intended outcomes.

Following that, on July 16, 2015, the author posted the question, "What is actually the ultimate purpose of this life?" and quickly led the target audience to a unified purpose of life through her answer, "And without thinking deep, the answer comes out quickly through our lips – to please Allah". The author then created a beautiful story of her *hijrah* and soul searching journey that ended with a change of value which was to do deeds to please Allah. This was the moment where the author started to introduce the idea of spiritual and physical *hijrah* to Syria in the name of Allah.

Throughout of her postings on the page, the author continued to motivate and entice the target audience to join the group and persuade them to leave the 'land of *Kuffar*' and be part of a greater IS by mentioning of unlimited rewards from Allah for their act of obedience and the hospitable environment in IS. Her statement on July 22, 2015, "We are praying for all of you because we want you to come here and live with *Izzah* (dignity)" to make the audience feel welcomed to be part of IS.

The author too employed the appeal of poems in delivering her propagandistic content to her audience as seen in her postings. In her short poem dated July 25, 2015, the author repetitively asked the audience to together 'fly high' and used the symbol of green birds to represent freedom after death and the concept of *Jihad*.

5.1.4 Testimonial

In employing the testimonial propaganda technique, the author used excerpts from the Holy Quran as presented in the previous Table 4.4. The excerpts were used to provide legitimacy and authority to the arguments presented by the author. In several instances, the excerpts from the Holy Quran were taken out of context and taken literally to the advantage of the propagandist.

For example, *Surah Nisa'* (4:59) was used to highlight the need to obey Allah, His Messenger and those charged with authority of affairs, in the context of the author, the Caliph of IS. Later, the context were manipulated into religious obligation and duties towards IS by performing deeds for them and migrating to Syria as they self-proclaimed themselves as the ultimate Islamic authority. The author used the verse to justify the need to obey the protocols set by the Caliph. Another example, *Surah Al-Ankabut* (29:64) and *Surah Al-Mu'min* (40:39) were used to project the idea that the life of the world is temporary and less important than life after death. The author proceeded to inject the idea of *Jihad* and other deeds in the name of Allah to the benefit of IS.

Apart from that, the author also reinforced credibility and further justification to her statements by quoting Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), prominent religious scholars such as Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-Uthaymeen and Ibn Qayyim al Jawziyyah, and Arab poet named Labid (Abu Aqil Labid ibn Rabi'ah). Stories of prophets and their companions were used to illustrate an action or obligation. For example, Sa'ad Ibn Abi Waqqas who was amongst 10 people promised *Jannah* as he chose Allah over his mother.

The author also introduced a very pious, religious and humble teacher character who performs her religious duties consistently in her posting on July 16, 2015. This was to create a character that was respectable enough by the audience. The teacher later gave the ultimate advice to her by saying, "Shams, each time when you about to do something ask yourself whether it will benefits you in the world and next". This was again to suggest doing deeds that will be beneficial especially in the hereafter.

5.1.5 Name Calling

The author used the name calling technique to incite hatred and prejudices amongst her audience towards the enemies of IS by associating negative symbols or labels to the opponents.

The author constantly labelled the states or authorities outside of IS as *'Dar-ul Kufr'* which means States of the Non-believers of Islam in her postings. She used the label interchangeably with 'Land of the *Kuffar*' which was of similar meaning and negative connotation. The word '*Kufr*' or '*Kuffar*' were often misused as a source of conflicts and tensions between the Muslims and non-Muslims. By using these labels, the author was creating a push so that the target audience will feel the urgency to disassociate themselves from authorities outside of the IS and make their move into Syria. .

Apart from that, even the world was given derogatory terms such as 'filthy', 'prison', 'cage', 'nothing but dust or dirt' and 'unjust' by the author. Encouraging a rejection to live in the real world and an affinity towards death enabled the acceptance of the *Jihad* concept among the audience.

5.1.6 Card Stacking

Another technique utilized by the author was the card stacking technique. Using the technique, the author sought to manipulate the perception of her audience and discredit the opponents.

On July 11, 2015, the author offered distorted facts implying that the *Dawlah* was usually a victim of the blame game and become the escape goat for crimes that they didn't commit. The claim was meant to gain the sympathy from the audience towards *Dawlah*. However, the author did not explain further the statement and omitted facts such as the types of accusations they received, definition of 'they' and others.

The author continued to use the card stacking technique by omitting facts or hiding the truth of the real life and hardship in Syria but focus on the subject of sisterhood and social culture in IS as well as the appropriate quality of living and facilities provided in IS.

5.1.7 Transfer

The least used technique by the author was the transfer technique. When provoked by an anonymous individual regarding the act of buying slaves on August 7, 2015, the author was defensive and needed to provide acceptable reasons to make the act justifiable. Thus, the author utilized the transfer technique to endorse the action by associating it to the action of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

In her example, she stated that the Prophet and his companions practiced female slavery during his time. The author further

highlighted the prophet's marriage to two of his female captives, Juwariyah and Saffiyah (*RadiAllahuanhumma*).

Based on the above findings, it is found that the author had incorporated high valued Islamic terms or concepts, excerpts from the Holy Quran and quotes from prominent Muslims such as Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and scholars, to provide legitimacy, credibility and authority to her arguments. The author also included metaphors and symbolisms that were manipulated and given ambiguous contexts. This also created an emotionally appeal to the desire of its intended audience and to sway them towards committing to IS. The author made herself relatable to her audience by making herself as a plain folk and part of a collective group. This is to keep the interest, attachment and relations of her target audience to her experience.

5.2 Themes and Narratives

Through the observation on the 'Diary of a *Muhajirah*', the researcher identified the following seven emerging themes and narratives of the propaganda delivered by the author:

i.   Victimization of and war against IS
ii. Call for spiritual and physical *hijrah* in the name of Allah
iii. Quality of life in the IS
iv. Women and sisterhood of the IS
v.   Religious sacrifices, obligations and duties in the name of Allah
vi. The glory of martyrdom and the promise of reward in the hereafter
vii. Marriage and widowhood to a *Mujahid*

The theme and narrative with the most number of postings is the 'Call for spiritual and physical *hijrah* in the name of Allah'. Meanwhile, the theme and narrative with the least appearance in the postings on the 'Diary of a *Muhajirah*' is the 'Victimization of and

war against IS'. Contrary to the popular belief, the themes and narratives on 'The glory of martyrdom and the promise of reward in the hereafter' and 'Marriage and widowhood to a *Mujahid*' were among the least appeared in the postings on the page.

The IS was presented as the current true authority of Islam which sought to restore the golden age of Islam through a caliphate system. It called upon all Muslims around the world to recognize their authority and pledge loyalty to IS.

The *Dawlah*, the term used by the author in her postings to represent IS, were portrayed to be victimized in a war against them. The statement by Shaikh Abu Muhammad al-'Adnani, the *Emir* or Head of State in Syria, "Even if the sky withheld the rain, they would blame *Dawlah*", suggested that 'they' have been falsely accusing and blaming the *Dawlah* for crimes they didn't commit. 'They' in his statement represented opposing authorities of IS.

Due to their innocence and unadulterated status as an authority of Islam, their fight against those they labelled *Kuffars* or enemies of Islam were seen as a righteous cause in the name of Allah (*Jihad fi sabilillah*). The author continued to give legitimacy and justification for the cause of the *Dawlah* as they were presented as the good side of the war that the sacrifices they made including their lives, will be repaid in the hereafter.

The 'Call for spiritual and physical *hijrah* in the name of Allah' was the most recurring theme and narrative in the propaganda of the 'Diary of a *Muhajirah*'. The author emphasized on the need to keep the intention pure for the sake of Allah alone, and not for other priorities such as the premise of being married to a *Mujahid*.

In her narration, the author began with motivating her target audience to rise up from their heartbreaks, mistakes, failures and downfalls, and return to the path of Allah. By exploiting the last ten days of *Ramadan* to create a sense of urgency to the audience, she urged them to make the necessary spiritual changes or *hijrah* to become better servants of Allah.

The emphasis on the last ten days of *Ramadan* was significant because one of the odd nights of the last ten days was the crucial event of *Lailatul Qadar*, which was revealed in the Holy Quran as better than one thousand months. Thus, Muslims were encouraged to increase their worship and religious activities during the said period. The audiences were presented with the promising idea of rewards and forgiveness granted by Allah for those who strive hard to perform good deeds and repent during *Ramadan*.

The author later introduced the subject of physical *hijrah* to Syria by sharing her own experience of migrating to Syria. However, her posting was still focused on the spiritual aspects as she narrated her experience of going through a soul searching process after few months in Shams. After meeting few characters whom she described as pious and highly committed in attaining Allah's pleasure, she came to a conclusion that anything she does should be solely and ultimately for Allah. She then offered the same advice to the audience to reset their priorities and subsequently stated, "Indeed the life in the Islamic State is beautiful. But a life with Allah is the MOST BEAUTIFUL".

The author continuously to stress on the need to make Allah as the main focus of everything through her postings. This includes doing activities in the cause of Allah to create distractions from the long wait to finally making the *hijrah* from the 'Land of the *Kuffar*'.

She kept her audience interested by providing some rough idea of life in IS. She also provided tips and reminders for the audience when making the migration to Syria to set their priorities for Allah, be discreet and limit information on their intention from their loved ones, study the possible routes to Syria, pack their needs and necessities and always update their contacts who will be assisting their journey. This was followed by a checklist of thing to be brought along on their journey which includes clothing for summer and winter, medications, toiletries, electronics and travel documents.

She gave the assurance that the opportunity for *hijrah* were still available for anyone of any origins and status and that the borders to Syria were open and secured by the *Mujahids*.

In her presentation of the quality of life in IS, the author gave the description of a beautiful and meaningful life under the Caliphate rule with minimal living condition.

Upon arriving in Syria, single ladies will be staying and taken care of at hostel-like *Makkars*, which were often overcrowded and with less privacy. One *makkar* placed a maximum of 15 females with three to eight females in one room. These single ladies will not be allowed to go out for any reasons until their *Mahram* come for them. During this period of stay too, the authority of IS will identify undercover intelligence among the female migrants. Meanwhile, women married to *Mujahids* will be given private or sharing accommodation depending on the area of their husbands' groups. The accommodations include apartments, villas or small bungalows, mostly equipped with kitchen cabinets, water heaters, and sometimes furniture.

Electricity is usually available for an average of six to seven hours a day. Batteries to store power were used as and when necessary. Internet through mobile data is available with varied coverage depending on the area. Water is also available depending on the area of stay. There are shops which sell food, cosmetics, jewelry, gadgets and others. Good health care and education services are also available for everyone.

To create a sense of belonging for her female audience, the author highlighted the theme and narrative relating to the women and sisterhood of IS. The female migrants were described to be socially active with get together activities, attending classes together, stayovers and other routines.

The author further narrated the roles and responsibilities of women in IS through her poem entitled 'She is not a Superwoman'. In the poem, she described woman as a modest and dignified

Muslimah who lives by the teaching of the Holy Quran and *Sunnah*, and is the backbone of the *Ummah*. Adding to that, the women were described as humble servants of Allah, wives to *Mujahid* and mothers to future soldiers of Allah.

Women in IS must abide to the rules and regulations implemented by authority which included the dress code of wearing *niqaab*, gloves and others.

The author focused mainly on urging her audience to focus and perform religious sacrifices, obligations and duties in the name of Allah. The author gave examples of the Indonesian female migrants whose main focus were to please Allah as well as her teacher who conducted classes on *Tawheed* and Holy Quran during the day and devoted her night to studying and worshipping. The author emphasized on the need to do good deeds even outside of IS.

In joining the cause of Allah, the author reminded that there were sacrifices to be made that might break the hearts family and friends and turned them against oneself. Intentions to migrate are to be kept as a secret until after crossing the borders and one must be ready to take the blame after telling their loved ones the truth. The religious sacrifices, obligations and duties performed will be rewarded in the hereafter.

The author highlighted the theme and narrative on glory of martyrdom and the promise of reward the hereafter in her postings. The world is described as temporary and less important than life after death. Death are permanent and to stay.

Every deeds and sacrifices including *Jihad* against the *Kuffars* made in the cause of Allah will be rewarded and granted Paradise. The author gave the impression that death is liberation from the unjust and dirty world through the symbolism of a caged bird in her poem entitled 'O You, the caged bird of this *Dunya*'.

Apart from that, women who are married to *Mujahid* should look forward to death to be united with their husbands and no longer separated in Paradise.

In presenting the theme and narrative on marriage and widowhood to a *Mujahid*, the author firstly gave the assurance that there is no such thing as forced marriage. Women were given the freedom to choose and decide as well as provide information on their preferences such as ethnicity, language, personality and other qualities, to the person arranging the marriage.

The concept of love presented by the author is a love that withstands separation especially due to death. A woman must be able to understand this consequence of marrying a *Mujahid* and look forward to be reunited with her husband in life after death.

Before marrying a *Mujahid*, a woman shall go through a *Nadra Shariah* process where the woman accompanied by her female friend meets the prospective husband accompanied by his friend. This followed by a *taaruf* (introduction) session. If any of the parties is not interested in the other, they shall not need to proceed with the marriage. The author shared her own experience of going through the process. A woman may plan to conceive if permitted by their husbands.

Widows with or without children may choose to be remarried. Widows remain at the homes of their late husband's and are given 1000USD each as well as monthly allowance and other necessities. Should their husbands have more than one wives, the 1000USD are divided accordingly.

Based on the above findings, it is found that the themes and narratives delivered through the 'Diary of a *Muhajirah*' were mostly focused on the religious and spiritual aspects of joining IS. The author stressed on the religious obligations to answer the call to migrate to Syria and join IS. Unlike other IS-linked websites, the propaganda on this page focused less on the romanticism of marrying a *Mujahid.*

5.3 Language

Based on the data collected, the researcher found that the author
used three main languages, namely the English, Malaysian Malay
and Indonesian language in her postings on the 'Diary of a
Muhajirah' Tumblr page from July 10, 2015 to September 26,
2015.

English language was the most used language in the postings on
the 'Diary of a *Muhajirah*' page. The author used English in
presenting and narrating the content of the page, as well as,
communicating with her target audience.

Interestingly, the author communicated with her audience using
the Malaysian Malay language in five of her postings on August 7,
August 9, August 11 and August 19, 2015. The author also used the
Indonesian language to communicate with her audience in three
postings on August 11 and August 19, 2015.

Through her writings, the author demonstrated competent
writing skills and commendable articulation of the three languages
namely English, Indonesian and Malaysian Malay languages
through her postings. The author's used of colloquial language
through her informal way of writing creates a conversational tone
with her audience as she mirrored the language of her audience. She
bridged the distance between her and her audience by addressing
them as brothers and sisters. The tone of her language was mostly
emotional, persuasive and informational. Most of her postings were
focused on the topic of *Hijrah* or migration, spiritual and physical.

Apart from the three languages mentioned above, the author
also included a few romanized Arabic terms and common
expressions in her text.

It was observed that the author's way of spelling the romanized
Arabic words was not common amongst Malay language speakers.
For example, Malay language speakers would write, among others,
'*Assalamualaikum*' instead of '*As salaamu alaykum*', '*Iman*'
instead of '*Eeman*', '*Syawal*' instead of '*Shawwal*' and '*Syahid*'

instead of '*Shaheed*'. This observation is crucial as it may provide more details to the author's background and profile. The language proficiency of the author in the Arabic language may not be determined based on her writings.

The author also used Arabic verses of the Holy Quran, accompanied by English translation, to support, strengthen and justify her points and arguments according to her desired interpretation and context.

The propaganda delivered by the author combined several elements, in this case religious text to provide more authority and justification to her claims. Based on the above, several verses of the Holy Quran presented by the author were incomplete, taken out of contexts and too abstract for normal comprehension. Thus, this may lead to misinterpretation and confusion to the advantage of the author.

Apart from that, the author too used quotes made by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), religious scholar and Muslim poet to add credibility to her statements and convince the audience to participate.

The author incorporated emotionally appealing words or phrases such as 'valuable', 'beautiful', 'victory' and 'sacrifice', as well as significant Islamic concepts such as '*Eeman', 'Jannah'* and '*Hijrah*' which are meaningful and powerful to the audience especially Muslims. These words create emotional attachments between the audience and her statements.

The author used general, simple and vague statements which occasionally include metaphors and symbolism to attract the attention of her audience. To further convince her audience, the author made herself appeared as a normal person with experience relatable to her audience. Her postings were written with easy-to-understand and informal language along with minor typo and grammatical errors, and common short forms as well as slang terms, making them more believable and honest to the audience.

5.4 Frequency

The total number of postings in July 2015 was 23 postings. The distribution of data from July 10, 2015 to July 31, 2015 showed that the gaps between each postings were minimal with the highest, two days, as the author published new postings almost daily except on July 12, July 14, July 15, July 17, July 18, July 20, July 24, July 26 and July 29, 2015. The number of postings ranged from one to four postings a day.

In August 2015, a total number of 38 postings was recorded by the researcher. The gaps between each postings prior to August 12, 2015 were minimal with no postings recorded on August 5, August 6, August 8 and August 10, 2015. However, the gaps started to grow significantly apart after August 11, 2015. There were a seven day gap between August 11, 2015 and August 19, 2015. From August 19, 2015 until the next posting on September 13, 2015, the gap increased to 24 days. Though the author indicated on August 19, 2015 that she was expecting not to be able to online for approximately two months as the internet coverage was only limited to the internet café, the number of postings per day was substantially higher, ranging from seven to ten postings a day.

The gap between September 13, 2015 and September 26, 2015 was reduced to 12 days and the author only had 1 posting a day. The author posted "I will respond to ASK and post after some time…so please excuse me for now" on September 26, 2015 before deleting the page.

5.5 Author of Propaganda

In her postings, the author signed off as 'Bird of *Jannah*' and 'Shams', similar to the nicknames of the author of the original 'Diary of a *Muhajirah*' Tumblr page. On the page, she delivered propagandistic contents through her own writings or by re-blogging other fellow members' posts with the intention to lure the target audience, mainly females, towards the agenda of IS. She

offered guidance and advice especially on performing the migration to Syria and life in IS. She also led her readers to another propaganda page which had been taken down, www.al-muhajirat.tumblr.com, moderated by *akhawat* (sisters) as well as mentioned of other sources of propaganda such as Twitter.

The author provided her target audience with her KIK messenger's ID, shams__3 (with double underscores) in her first posting on July 10, 2015 and also indicated on several postings that she could also be contacted through Whatsapp messenger. However, no further details were provided and the author informed on August 11, 2015 that she was only available on the two messenger applications.

When asked of her origin by an anonymous audience in her posting on August 9, 2015, she replied, "I'm from Malaysia" without providing further information of her ethnicity or citizenship status. Although her postings were mostly in English, her responses to questions on August 7, August 9, August 11 and August 19, 2015 showed good command of the Malaysian Malay and Indonesian language. Apart from that, in most of her postings, she used common Arabic terms and expressions as listed in Table 4.3. Her postings too revealed her love for poetry as she wrote her own poems about life after death, women of IS and concept of love with a *Mujahid*.

It is also worth noting of her familiarity with the Malaysian, Indian and Indonesian cultures based on her statement on July 22, 2015 that she was "able to cook Indian, Malaysian and Indonesian food", and the Somalian culture as she identified the Somali's traditional *baati* dress as "the most useful things" she owned in her posting on July 23, 2015.

Based on her postings on July 16, 2015 and August 9, 2015, she made her *hijrah* to Sham, Syria in February 2014 when she was 26 years old. Thus, she is now 27 years old. Her current location as stated on July 22, 2015 was in Tabqah, a city located in

the Raqqah Governate of Syria. On August 7, 2015, she cited that her best friend had made her own *Hijrah* journey to Raqqah. She admitted, on July 21, 2015, of missing "attending *dawah* courses, doing street *dawah* to sisters and non-Muslim females, and charity works like feeding the homeless" at her home country before migrating to Syria. She described her life in the IS as "beautiful" and especially enjoyed the bonding with other female followers. She dedicated a posting on July 22, 2015 to share information on life in the IS.

The author revealed her personal concept of *Hijrah* which inclined towards being a spiritual act rather than a physical act of "just crossing the borders" in her fifth post on July 16, 2015. She narrated the story of swaying away from Allah after being blessed with a beautiful and perfect life of love and friendship in the IS. Not until February 2015, that she realized the importance of pleasing Allah after she joined a group of Indonesians at *dars* (lessons) for *ajami* (non-Arabs) and also stayed with her teacher. These people, according to her, devoted and submitted themselves religiously to Allah. Her teacher, whom she admired, gave her the ultimate advice which was to ask herself whether an action of hers will benefit her in the world and hereafter. She used this story to persuade her audience to clear their conscience and purify their heart in doing anything for the sake of Allah alone including *hijrah* to Syria. This could be seen in most of her postings where she continuously called for her audience to repent, make sacrifices and perform religious duties for the sake of Allah.

She briefly mentioned on July 16, 2015 that she was "married to a *Mujahid*". She assured, in her posting on August 9, 2015 that the marriage took place on her "own will without being forced" two months after her arrival in Sham. She went through the *Nadra Shari'ah* process, as shared in her posting on August 9, 2015, where she was accompanied by her friend Umm Yusuf and her husband-to-be by Abu Yusuf in a meet up before proceeding into marriage. This was followed by a *ta'aruf* session where both

parties introduced themselves. Abu Yusuf left to give privacy to them when it was time for her to lift her *niqaab* and revealed herself to her soon-to-be husband.

She was "blessed with a child" based on her posting on July 16, 2015. Her posting on August 9, 2015 further revealed the gender of her child as male aged six months old and nicknamed 'Little *Baraa*'. *Baraa* is an Arabic word for innocent. Her protective mother's instinct prevailed in her statement, "And today I know exactly how does a mom feels" after describing the bombardment by the warplanes at her area on August 4, 2015.

The author seemed to limit postings on her personal life and confessed on August 9, 2015 that a request from her relative made her deleted previous personal posts. On two occasions, August 19, 2015 and September 26, 2015, she mentioned that she wasn't able to be online for quite sometimes before finally deleting the blog.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This research highlights the recruitment of women of all ages and nations at supporting and even strategic positions in the IS terrorist organization. This phenomenon is a global concern as many women, including Malaysian women, are drawn to this organization. The terrorist organization has successfully exploited the cyberspace to deliver their propaganda that is attractive and appealing to its potential women recruits.

Due to this, more emphasis should be put on efforts to counter the ideology spread through terrorist propaganda towards women to mitigate the rising numbers of women's participation in their terrorism activities. The needs for development of credible counter-narratives instruments which appeal to the hearts and minds of Muslim women should be addressed by the policy makers. In order to this, better understanding of the push and pull factors that are motivating these women to join IS. One of the initial steps is to

analyse the content of their propaganda towards women as addressed by this research.

Future studies of this topic are recommended to focus other aspects which were not addressed by this research. Among the suggested future studies are linguistic analysis of online terrorist propaganda towards women; effectiveness of the terrorist propaganda towards women by examining its relations to actual radicalization or recruitment rates; and authorship analysis of the 'Diary of a *Muhajirah*' for better profiling of its author(s). Other researchers are also recommended to expand the sample to other terrorist-linked contents to enable comprehensive and comparative analyses of the topic.

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