

# The Use of Social Network Sites for Healthcare in Islamic Perspective

**Asia Mohamed Ahmed** (1,\*)  
**Akram M Zeki** <sup>2</sup>

© 2023 University of Science and Technology, Aden, Yemen. This article can be distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

© 2023 جامعة العلوم والتكنولوجيا، المركز الرئيس عدن، اليمن. يمكن إعادة استخدام المادة المنشورة حسب رخصة مؤسسة المشاع الإبداعي شريطة الاستشهاد بالمؤلف والمجلة.

<sup>1</sup> International Islamic University Malaysia, Malaysia.

<sup>2</sup> International Islamic University Malaysia, Malaysia. Email: [akramzeki@iium.edu.my](mailto:akramzeki@iium.edu.my)

\* Corresponding Author Designation, Email: [asiah.360view@gmail.com](mailto:asiah.360view@gmail.com).

# Use of Social Network Sites for Healthcare in Islamic Perspective

**Asia Mohamed Ahmed**

*International Islamic University Malaysia*  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
asiah.360view@gmail.com

**Akram M Zeki**

*International Islamic University Malaysia*  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
akramzeki@iiu.edu.my

**Abstract**— There are numerous applications for social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, amongst many more. These applications can be helpful in many facets of our lives. These platforms have just recently become an efficient way of communicating medical information. Additionally, the number of people using social media platforms is growing at a rapid rate, and the use of social networking websites is a significant component of our day-to-day activities. However, it is possible for it to be associated with a variety of difficulties, such as the inappropriate use of social networking sites in healthcare, which can have dire effects. These difficulties can range from seemingly basic issues, such as harming the reputation of both patients and doctors, to more significant problems. It is essential to keep up appearances of professionalism while also protecting the privacy and confidentiality of information. The purpose of this paper is to address the application of Islamic principles and fundamental values to social networking sites as guides for long-term solutions based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, with the end goal of making these sites more helpful and useful for mankind.

**Keywords**— *Social Networking sites, Preservation of life, Prevention, Privacy, Healthcare, Islamic viewpoint.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Islam is a comprehensive religion that covers every single aspect of life, and it is a guideline for human interactions and activities for this worldly life and life after here. Indeed, Almighty Allah has completed his favor upon Muslims by choosing Islam for them as their religion and a complete way of life, as Allah S.W.T said in Qur'an:

“This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed my favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.” (Soorat Al-Maa'idah, 5:3).

The above verse from the Qur'an shows that Islam is a complete way of life. Therefore, it's require to applied Islamic principles to every part of life and every activity in daily life. In this present era of technology, we have already experienced decades of progress in digitalizing healthcare, creating healthcare systems, and developing data in electronic databases. Advanced technology provides

exceptional opportunities for both patients and health professionals, and it facilitates the access of significant medical information and sharing it easily through online platforms such as Social network sites, and there are numerous patients, physicians, caregivers, and nurses who use social network sites for health related reasons. The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of the extant usage of social network sites for healthcare from an Islamic perspective as well as applying Islamic principles and core values to social network sites as guidelines for durable solutions based on Qur'an and Sunnah to make it more advantageous and useful for mankind.

## II. ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE OF USING SNS FOR HEALTHCARE

In this section, we present and discuss some solutions based on Qur'an and Sunnah that can be applied to social networking sites to make them beneficial and to overcome some of the challenges that users are consistently facing while using it for healthcare, including challenges in security, privacy, and Amanah. These solutions can be applied to make social networking sites beneficial and to overcome some of the challenges that users are consistently facing while using it for healthcare. To fulfil the obligation of humans as khalifah of Allah on this world, which is to differentiate between good and evil, knowing and realising how valuable it is to preserve and save lives on regardless, is therefore one of the most important answers for these issues. Therefore, these components have the potential to be solutions that will make social networking sites safer and more helpful for the human race.

### A. Preservation of lives

Advanced technology and digital transformation in healthcare are responsible for improving and saving countless lives by providing endless valuable and real-time medical-related information. From an Islamic perspective, saving lives is the base and the fundamentals of life, and Islamic core values emphasize the importance of saving lives.

Based on the understanding of the meaning of the above verse, we should make technology a beneficial tool that we can use in a way that we can save lives. Social Network Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are definitely a very big part of the advanced technology which is empowering the continual build-out and expansion of healthcare communication, education, discussions, and awareness to achieve positive health outcomes that has the potential to affect every aspect of healthcare and it enables smarter choices and better utilization of time and resources for both patients and physicians.

Social network sites should be used as gateways for improving users' lives as it has a significant role in the outreach of the internet population which is rapidly increasing day after day. The usage of Social Networking sites can bring benefits to healthcare institutions, patients, and physicians. Therefore, healthcare institutions should utilize online platforms for publicity, patient education, and customer service, since patients also use social networking sites to search health information, to assess their health progress and to receive support. Lastly, physicians should acquire updated information that can facilitate in medical research with a speedy means of communication between colleagues in order to work and comment on complicated cases.

Therefore, applying and practicing Islamic core values and ethics with the attention of preserving lives when using technology, especially social network sites to make it more advantageous for all human beings, to share and spread useful information in healthcare and to shift the focus from all types of misusing, misleading, sharing fake news and gossip, and to concentrate on helping each other and promoting healthcare-related information to reach out the potential users and to provide respect, and support each other with physical and emotional needs through relieving pain and suffering, to coordinate continuous care, and to advocate continuously for disease preventions to preserve lives of many people by promoting healthy lifestyles and wellness without an invasion of privacy of others.

### ***B. Mandate Fulfillment as Vicegerent (Khalifah)***

Vicegerent refers to the role, status as well as the person's responsibilities to themselves and to the community (ummah) as a whole. The fundamental of the Islamic worldview is to fulfill our mandate as vicegerent on this world, Allah Almighty has mandated people to live and manage this world as the representative of Allah because humans occupy a valuable position in safeguarding of the sanctity of life which is paramount. The above verse from Quran points out that people have the utmost privilege state among all the creations of Allah. Additionally, this verse also

indicates that human beings are Allah's vicegerent on this earth. Allah could have chosen other beings or angels, which did not happen, therefore, human beings should appreciate having such honor and privilege from Allah. Allah has provided all the mankind on this earth all kinds of provisions for his support and existence. the fastest growing religion is Islam and by the year of 2050 Muslims are estimated to increase by 73% in population. Since the number of Muslims in the world is increasing, Muslims should not be secluded from the uprising of information technology. Educated Muslims, IT professionals, vendors, manufacturers as well as users should consider developing solutions that can facilitate and automate health services and help foster ecosystems where communities can access healthcare services.

Therefore, as the vicegerent of Allah, Muslims should stand for their responsibility in this life and they should apply and use Islamic code of conduct to preserve security and protect their lives and the lives of others. Adoption and the use of SNS should be based on that Islamic perspective of being vicegerent and with its entire means, only then we would fulfill our responsibility as khalifah on this earth. The primary objective of God's creation of all mankind is to worship Allah through developing the world and rebuilding it for the best as Khalifah through good deeds.

### **Prevention**

Islam emphasizes on prevention "wiqaya", which a general phenomenon is found in all situations that could be harmful. The concept of prevention is used in many different situations in Qur'an and Hadith. Islam forbids all kinds of harm and it emphasizes eliminating and avoiding all the causes of harm before it happens.

The meaning of this hadith is that, one must not harm himself or bring harm to others; it also means that the causes of harm should be removed and all the necessary measures should be taken to prevent any kind of harm from happening. It is therefore readily applicable to medicine and healthcare. People can only acquire limited empirical knowledge about the factors that increase risks to anticipate, estimate, and to predict about diseases. Whereas, precautionary actions could be used as modification, mitigation, as well as a major reversal of the effect of risk factors. Using technology and social network sites can assist to enhance healthcare and broadening prevention efforts.

The use of social network sites for healthcare is rapidly growing, thus, communication about health and disease prevention while engaging with the target audiences is very significant for delivering campaigns and awareness. Using all the forms of communication including written, photos and videos become easier than at any time in the past and users

should utilize that for focusing on prevention. The valuation of spreading medical information and medical awareness campaigns through social network sites was found the greatest engagement with the audience. Social network sites are used for sharing information about healthy lifestyle, it is also used to engage with the public about infectious and noninfectious diseases, as well as educating and interacting with patients to provide clinical care, and to communicate with caregivers, coworkers, and medical students.

SNS can enhance the health outcomes potentially by creating professional networks, increasing awareness to promote the new medical insights, discoveries and news, as well as inspiring patients to develop healthy behaviors, and providing accurate, efficient and real-time health information to the online communities. Doctors mostly connect to online communities, and they also read new health related information, papers, and researches, they also discuss with other experts, they do their own medical research and developments, consult and network with colleagues regarding patient issues, where they share cases and insights, and debate about challenges, make referrals, publish and market their researches, they also involve in health advocacy. However, practicing Islamic core values and understanding the concept of prevention in Islam can be one of the main elements that can help to decrease harm and provide appropriate healthcare and useful medical information on the digital world using social network sites. In order to support and improve people's lives, it is required to apply the Islamic concept of prevention on social networking sites to eliminate and prevent diseases by providing social media users with information about preventive measures, and providing opportunities to access them, and therefore, they can take charge and keep themselves and their communities safe.

### C. Privacy

Technology is evolving rapidly and it comes up with many changes and advancements. There are numerous high-tech devices and platforms available for healthcare, including social networking sites, blogs, Wikipedia, and virtual reality. These platforms can be used to enhance and enhance information access, communications, and workflows across providers to deliver information and insights that improve patient care, patients, and public education, as well as improve organizational growth and financial performance. However, there are also potential risks to patients and healthcare personnel regarding the distribution of information, which can cause significant damage to the professional reputation of providers and violate personal boundaries and patient privacy. To preserve and safeguard the privacy of users, the Islamic concept of privacy must be applied to social networking sites by providing users with

private information. Moreover, Islam emphasizes the protection of the rights of all mankind and the importance of privacy which is essential to existence.

Islam fully acknowledges the sanctity of having the right to privacy in people's private lives and homes, and there is ample warning against trespassing on the affairs of others. Protecting confidentiality and privacy are indispensable features of Islam. That means Muslims are commanded to not enter another person's home without permission, and the person should not even enter his own house unexpectedly or secretly. Islam commands not to investigate the private matters of others, and interference in these matters is strictly prohibited therefore, Islam gives an exclusive right to everyone to manage their affairs, and if someone comes across that private information, it is strictly forbidden to disclose it further. However, people who involve in the development and implementation of technology should apply ethics in the work they are doing. The privacy of information mustn't be created only on social networking sites but it should also be applied to the intention and activities of people who are using it.

There are so many ethical terms that can be used to describe the concept of privacy regarding the moral principles from the Quran and Sunnah, starting with authentication and verification of the source of information, effective way of information dissemination, maintaining transparency and confidentiality, and being trustworthy and honest. Therefore, it is very clear that Islam encourages, takes up, and follows comprehensive principles of privacy. Teachings of Islam are already complete in principle and the essence of privacy and encourage to adopt and practice the core values of trust and privacy when using social networking sites.

## III. DISCUSSION

### A. *The Role of Technology and social media in Healthcare*

This paper highlights the significance of employing advanced technology, particularly social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, in the healthcare sector. It argues that these tools can save lives by delivering real-time medical information, thereby aligning with Islamic core values that prioritize saving lives. It emphasizes the importance of healthcare organizations using social media for patient education, publicity, and customer service. Additionally, it suggests that doctors should stay updated on medical research and communicate effectively through these platforms.

**Discussion:** The paper makes a compelling case for harnessing social media and technology to improve healthcare outcomes. It underscores the compatibility of

these approaches with Islamic principles, particularly the value placed on saving lives. The focus on patient education and engagement through online platforms aligns with modern trends in healthcare, where information accessibility and patient involvement are key components of effective care.

### **B. Muslims as Vicegerents and Technology Users**

This paper discusses the concept of "vicegerent" in Islam, emphasizing that humans are entrusted with the responsibility to exist and control the world as representatives of Allah. It argues that as the Muslim population grows, they should actively participate in the information technology revolution to facilitate access to healthcare services. The paper calls for Muslim educators, IT experts, and users to automate healthcare services and create environments that promote healthcare accessibility.

**Discussion:** The paper explores the idea of Muslims as stewards of the Earth and suggests that embracing technology, including information technology, is a way to fulfill this role effectively. It emphasizes the importance of Muslims contributing to advancements in healthcare through technology, aligning with the broader goal of improving human well-being.

### **C. Islamic Prevention and Healthcare**

This paper discusses the concept of "wīqāya," which refers to prevention in Islam. It emphasizes that Islam prohibits harm and focuses on preventing it. The paper highlights the relevance of prevention in medicine and healthcare and suggests that technology and social media can enhance healthcare prevention efforts. It underscores the importance of communication, particularly on social media, to promote health awareness and share information about healthy lifestyles and disease prevention.

**Discussion:** The paper underscores the importance of preventive healthcare and how technology, including social media, can play a significant role in spreading awareness and encouraging preventive measures. The connection between Islamic principles of prevention and healthcare aligns with the broader goal of promoting well-being and preventing illness.

### **D. Privacy and Ethics in Healthcare Technology**

This paper discusses the importance of privacy and ethics in healthcare technology. It emphasizes that Islam values privacy and confidentiality and encourages ethical behavior in technology development and implementation. The paper suggests that privacy should extend to users' intentions and activities on social media. It highlights various ethical terms

for privacy in the Quran and Sunnah and underscores the need for trust and secrecy in social media use.

**Discussion:** The paper emphasizes the ethical considerations related to healthcare technology and social media use. It aligns with Islamic principles of privacy and confidentiality, emphasizing the importance of respecting individuals' rights and maintaining trust in online interactions.

## **IV. CONCLUSION**

This paper focused on using social network sites for healthcare based on Islamic core values and principles, it discussed how SNS are significant for healthcare and the impact that it has on people's lives and how Muslims shouldn't be isolated from the digital growth and progress in online communication. In addition, it is very important to Islamize the digital world and apply Islamic principles when using it, especially for healthcare. Furthermore, Islam teaches us how to fulfill our responsibility as vicegerent of Allah in this world and how Muslims should educate themselves and spread their knowledge and message through SNS with Islamic principles. Social Network Sites are taking a very significant role in healthcare and it saves a very big number of lives. According to Islam, saving one person is equivalent to saving all mankind. Save guarding the privacy on SNS for healthcare and overall usage of the technology can make a very big difference if users consider applying Islamic principle of saving lives and one small act of kindness which can change the lives of many people by starting from sharing accurate and useful medical information while communicating and, getting feedback and support from the such large online community including caregivers, physicians, and patients, keeping in mind the Islamic perspective of privacy and how it is very important to protect it from the wrong hands.

## **V. REFERENCES**

- [1] Smailhodzic, E., Hooijsma, W., Boonstra, A., & Langley, D. J. (2016). Social media use in healthcare: a systematic review of effects on patients and on their relationship with healthcare professionals. *BMC health services research*, 16(1), 442.
- [2] Ibarra-Yruegas, B., Camara-Lemarroy, C., Loredó-Díaz, L. and Kawas-Valle, O. (2015). Social networks in medical practice.
- [3] Zada Khan, W., Zahid, M., Y Aalsalem, M., Mohammed Zangoti, H. and Arshad, Q. (2017). [Online] Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327327744\\_Ethical\\_Aspects\\_of\\_Internet\\_of\\_Things\\_from\\_Islamic\\_Perspective](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327327744_Ethical_Aspects_of_Internet_of_Things_from_Islamic_Perspective) [Accessed 23 Oct. 2018].

- [4] Prochaska, J., Coughlin, S. and Lyons, E. (2017). Social Media and Mobile Technology for Cancer Prevention and Treatment. *American Society of Clinical Oncology Educational Book*, 37, pp.128-137.
- [5] Ventola, C. L. (2014). Social media and health care professionals: benefits, risks, and best practices. *Pharmacy and Therapeutics*, 39(7), 491.
- [6] Hayat 1, M. A. (2007). Privacy and Islam: From the Quran to data protection in Pakistan. *Information & Communications Technology Law*, 16(2), 137-148.
- [7] Hosseini, S. E., Ramchahi, A. A., & Yusuf, R. J. (2014). The impact of information technology on Islamic behaviour. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Engineering Science and Technology (JMEST)*, 1(5), 135-141.
- [8] Sulaiman, M., Sabian, N. A. A., & Othman, A. K. (2013). The understanding of Islamic management practices among muslim managers in Malaysia. *Asian Social Science*, 10(1), 189.
- [9] Hayat, M.A. (2007) "Privacy and Islam: From the quran to data protection in Pakistan," *Information & Communications Technology Law*, 16(2), pp. 137–148. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600830701532043>.