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ISLAMIC OUTREACH IN THE DIGITAL AGE: A STUDY OF ONLINE DA'WAH PRACTICES IN TARABA STATE, NIGERIA

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Keywords	Abstract
Online Da'wah, Social Media Engagement, Islamic Outreach in Nigeria, Religious Communication, Digital Da'wah Challenges	*This study explores the transformative role of social media in Islamic religious outreach (Da'wah) within Taraba State, Nigeria. Using a quantitative descriptive approach, it analyzes the engagement patterns, content preferences, platform usage, and perceived spiritual impacts among 217 Muslim respondents. Findings reveal high daily engagement with Da'wah content on Facebook and WhatsApp, with audio-visual formats proving most effective. Online Da'wah significantly enhances religious knowledge, communication, and social cohesion, though gender disparities, infrastructural deficits, and content authenticity challenges remain. The paper offers thematic insights and practical recommendations aimed at enhancing digital Da'wah inclusivity, cultural sensitivity, and strategic dissemination. It underscores the potential of social media to serve as a dynamic and complementary tool to traditional Islamic propagation, provided that ethical standards and technological capacities are prioritized*
Kata Kunci	Abstrak
Dakwah Daring, Keterlibatan Media Sosial, Penyebaran Islam di Nigeria, Komunikasi Agama, Tantangan Dakwah Digital	*Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi peran transformatif media sosial dalam dakwah agama Islam di Negara Bagian Taraba, Nigeria. Menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kuantitatif, penelitian ini menganalisis pola keterlibatan, preferensi konten, penggunaan platform, dan dampak spiritual yang dirasakan di antara 217 responden Muslim. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan tingkat keterlibatan harian yang tinggi dengan konten dakwah di Facebook dan WhatsApp, dengan format audio-visual yang terbukti paling efektif. Dakwah daring secara signifikan meningkatkan pengetahuan agama, komunikasi, dan kohesi sosial, meskipun terdapat ketimpangan gender, defisit infrastruktur, dan tantangan keaslian konten. Makalah ini menawarkan wawasan tematik dan rekomendasi praktis yang bertujuan untuk meningkatkan inklusivitas dakwah digital, kepekaan budaya, dan penyebaran strategis. Makalah ini menekankan potensi media sosial untuk berfungsi sebagai alat dinamis dan pelengkap dakwah Islam tradisional, dengan catatan bahwa standar etika dan kapasitas teknologi harus menjadi prioritas utama.*

Introduction

Da'wah, in Islamic tradition, refers to the act of inviting others to understand and embrace the teachings of Islam. Rooted in the Arabic word meaning "invitation" or "summons," *Da'wah* has historically played a vital role in spreading the message of Islam through speech, writing, and service. It is regarded

as a spiritual obligation and a prophetic practice, notably exemplified by Prophet Muhammad (SAW), who is described in the Qur'an as the "Inviter to Allah" (Qur'an 33:45-46). [1]

The propagation of Islam in what is now Taraba State began in the 17th century, largely through social integration and intermarriage, with structured *Da'wah* efforts emerging in the 19th century during the era of Jihadist movements. Influential figures such as Lamido Hammaruwa Usman and his successors promoted Islam by establishing mosques and supporting Islamic education. Despite these efforts, organized *Da'wah* activities remained limited, relying heavily on individual scholars and informal religious instruction. [2] With the rise of educational institutions such as Qur'anic and *Islamiyyah* schools, and the establishment of Muslim organizations like JNI, Fityanul Islam, and *Izala*, *Da'wah* activities expanded. However, these efforts were often constrained by limited resources and administrative challenges.[3]

In the 21st century, the digital revolution has reshaped the way people communicate and interact, including how religious messages are shared. Social media platforms—such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Twitter—now serve as powerful tools for *Da'wah,* enabling real-time, far-reaching engagement beyond the boundaries of traditional preaching. This shift has presented new opportunities for Islamic propagation, as well as emerging challenges regarding content authenticity, engagement strategies, and cultural sensitivities.[4]

With its rich religious diversity and growing digital presence, Taraba State offers a distinctive environment for understanding Muslim engagement with online *Da'wah*. The advent of social media has transformed religious outreach, creating new avenues for communication that transcend age, gender, and educational boundaries. This study examines how Muslims in the state interact with *Da'wah* content on social media, the platforms and content types they find most effective, and the broader impact of these engagements. It seeks to address existing gaps in the literature by evaluating the effectiveness, relevance, and emerging challenges of digital *Da'wah* within this dynamic context.

The growing significance of social media in Islamic propagation has attracted scholarly attention in recent years. Several studies have examined the role of online platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube in facilitating *Da'wah* (Islamic outreach), highlighting their effectiveness in knowledge dissemination and community engagement. Dauda's research underscores the transformative influence of the Social Media Revolution (SMR) on Islamic

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[1] Sulaiman, Kamal-Deen Olawale & Bello, Mufutau Olusola, "Exploring the Roles of Muslim Youths in Propagation of Islam (Da'wah) in Contemporary World", International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Management Studies, Volume 05, No. 08, July 2019, p. 2-4

[2] Ali Bello, "Muslims and Da'wah in Taraba State: Prospects and Challenges", Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, (Unpublished Dissertation, M.A. Islamic Studies) 2014, pp. 87-90

[3] Ali Bello, "Muslims and Da'wah in Taraba State: Prospects and Challenges…, pp. 94-97

[4] Sule, Muhammad Maga, "Social Media And Its Utilization For Da'wah By Selected Muslim Scholars In Northern Nigeria", Al-Risalah : Jurnal Studi Agama dan Pemikiran Islam, Vol. 13 | No. 1 | 2022, pp. 133-134.

communication, particularly among preachers in Ijebuland.[5] However, while this study affirms the global shift in *Da'wah* dynamics due to SMR, it does not account for the specific socio-cultural and religious environment of Taraba State.

Sule and Sulaiman have shown that platforms like YouTube and WhatsApp are effective tools for Islamic outreach[6], while Rasyida et al. link social media usage with increased youth participation in *Da'wah*.[7] Sule and Mainiyo also emphasize the role of virtual Qur'anic teaching in strengthening religious knowledge.[8] Although these studies demonstrate the potential of social media in Islamic propagation, they do not focus on the regional variations that may influence *Da'wah* engagement, particularly in a culturally diverse setting like Taraba State.

From a theoretical standpoint, Akil's model on online *Da'wah* identifies factors that support or hinder the use of internet-based media for religious teaching, including the availability of internet infrastructure and digital skills. [9] Nurdin-Rusli and Sule & Yahaya further explore the benefits and pitfalls of social media, highlighting both the increased access to religious content and the dangers posed by untrained online preachers.[10] Other works, such as those by Huda and Nur, Shehu, and Modibbo, provide valuable historical or cultural insights into *Da'wah*, yet they fall short of addressing its digital evolution in a regional Nigerian context.[11]

Empirical studies by Sule and others have documented how Muslim scholars and students across Northern Nigeria are utilizing social media for *Da'wah*, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. These studies provide useful insights into behavior trends, content sharing, and digital sermons.[12] However,

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[5] Dauda, Kazeem Oluwaseun, "Social Media Revolution and Trends of da'wah Propagation in Ijebuland, Ogun State, Nigeria: An Empirical Survey". Islamic Communication Journal, 8 (2), 2023, 171-186 Doi: https://doi.org/10.21580/icj.2023.8.2.18104.

[6] Sule, Muhammad Maga & Sulaiman.Yahaya, "Enhancing Islamic Da'wah and Spread of Knowledge Via Social Media Platforms", Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun (JIP)-The Indonesian Journal of the Social Sciences, Vol. 9, No. 1, January, 2021, pp.1 45-160, https://journal.scadindependent.org/index.php/jipeuradeun/article/view/549, retrieved 3rd May, 2024

[7]Rasyida, Anisa, Aisha,Tengku Siti & Shariffadeen, Tengku Mohd Azzman, "Examining Factors that Influence IIUM Students' Involvement in Da'wah Activities via Social Media", IIUM Journal of Human Sciences, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2021, pp. 27-42.

[8] Sule, Muhammad Maga & Sulaiman.Yahaya, "Enhancing Islamic Da'wah and Spread of Knowledge Via Social Media Platforms", Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun (JIP)-The Indonesian Journal of the Social Sciences, Vol. 9, No. 1, January, 2021, pp.1 45-160, https://journal.scadindependent.org/index.php/jipeuradeun/article/view/549, retrieved 3rd May, 2024

[9] Akil, Muhammad Anshar, "Online Da'wah (Islamic Missionary Work) Model (A Study on the Use of the Internet as Missionary Media by Muballigh/Muballighah of UIN Alauddin", Journal of Islam and Science, Volume 02 Number 01, June 2015, pp. 73-103

[10] Nurdin-Rusli, "Spiritualising New Media: The Use of Social Media for Da'wah Purposes within Indonesian Muslim Scholars", Jurnal Komunikasi Islam | ISBN 2088-6314 | Volume 03, Nomor 01, Juni 2013, pp. 1-19

[11] Huda, Moh. And Nur, Iffatin, "Islam, Culture, and Social Media: A Study on the Culture of the Social Media Usage in the Covid-19 Pandemic Era", The Journal of Society and Media, Vol. 5(2), October 2021, 347-361, https://journal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/jsm/index, retrieved 3rd May, 2024.

[12] Sule. Muhammad Maga, "Social Media Utilization in Covid-19 Epoch: Virtual Da'wah-Ramadan Lectures in Northern Nigeria", Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah Volume 40 No 2, 2020, pp. 128-140, Shehu, Fatmir,

despite their contributions, they do not delve into the unique challenges, platform preferences, and audience engagement strategies within Taraba State. Furthermore, studies that touch on the moral and behavioral implications of social media, such as those focusing on TikTok usage among Muslim women, emphasize the need for ethical online conduct but do not comprehensively address *Da'wah*-specific dynamics.

While existing studies have advanced understanding of Islamic *Da'wah* in the digital age across various parts of Nigeria, they largely overlook the specific experiences and challenges of online *Da'wah* engagement in Taraba State. This study fills that gap by exploring how Muslims in Taraba State interact with *Da'wah* content on social media, the platforms and content types they prefer, the frequency and depth of their engagement, and the perceived spiritual and behavioral impacts. It also examines the cultural and structural barriers unique to this context and proposes strategies for enhancing the effectiveness and inclusivity of online *Da'wah* efforts in the region.

Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design to explore the dynamics of online *Da'wah* engagement through social media platforms in Taraba State. The focus was to identify patterns of interaction, content preferences, and the perceived effectiveness of digital *Da'wah* among Muslim users. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire administered digitally to participants across various localities within the state. A total of 217 valid responses were obtained, representing a diverse sample in terms of age, gender, education level, and occupation. The questionnaire consisted of multiple-choice and Likert-scale items, designed to capture respondents' social media usage habits, *Da'wah* content engagement, and personal perceptions.

The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented through charts and graphical illustrations to provide visual insight into trends and distributions. Key areas examined include frequency of social media use, preferred platforms, types of *Da'wah* content consumed, changes in religious knowledge and practice, and challenges affecting engagement.

This methodology enabled the researcher to derive meaningful interpretations from user behavior and feedback, providing an evidence-based foundation for evaluating the current state and future prospects of online *Da'wah* in the State.

"Methodology of Prophetic Da'wah and Its Relevance to Contemporary Global Society" Journal of Education and Social Sciences, Vol. 6, (February, 2017, pp. 9-18 & Modibbo, Muhammad Sani Adam, "A General Description of The Formation and Activities of Islamic Daʿwah Groups in Nigeria", Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies, (IJOURELS), Vol.7 No.2, 2017, pp.83-96, http://ijourels.org.ng, retrieved on 30th April, 2024.

Results and Discussion
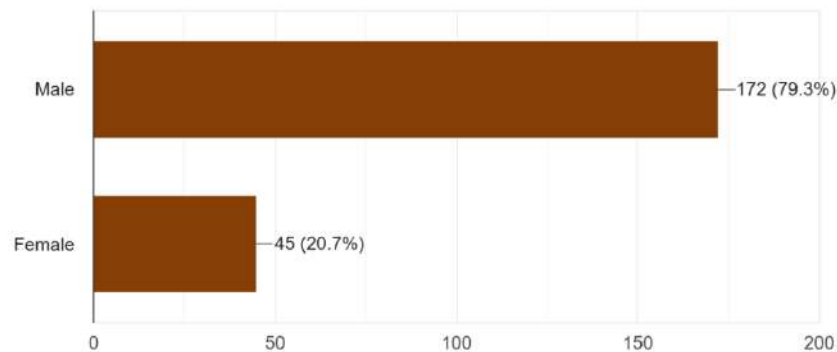**Demographics**

Gender
217 responses

Figure 1. Gender

The data shows a clear gender imbalance in online *Da'wah* engagement in Taraba State, with 79.3% male and 20.7% female among the 217 respondents. This disparity may stem from socio-cultural norms that limit women's participation in public religious discourse, along with challenges such as restricted access to digital tools, lower digital literacy, and the predominantly male-oriented nature of *Da'wah* content online.

To address this gap, efforts should focus on empowering Muslim women through digital literacy programs, improving access to affordable internet, and developing inclusive, women-focused *Da'wah* content. Promoting broader participation will help ensure that online *Da'wah* reflects the diversity of the Muslim community and reaches a wider, more representative audience.

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Age Group
217 responses
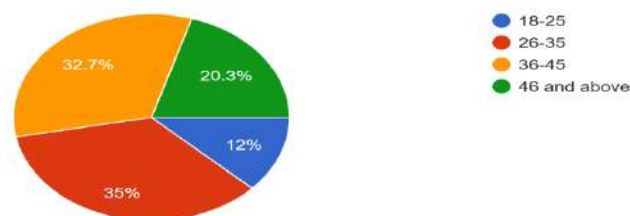
Figure 2. Age Group

The majority of respondents fall within the 26–35 age group (35%) and 36–45 (32.7%), indicating that online *Da'wah* is particularly engaging for young to middle-aged adults. This demographic is typically active on social media and more

likely to encounter and interact with religious content in their daily digital routines.

This trend presents an opportunity for *Da'wah* practitioners to shape values, correct misconceptions, and strengthen religious identity among a highly connected and impressionable audience. To sustain their interest, content must be interactive, culturally relevant, and visually engaging, tailored to their lifestyles and communication preferences.
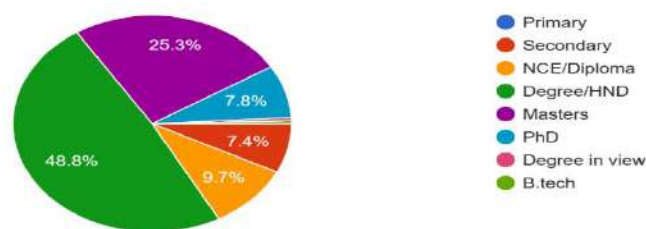

Figure 3. Educational Level

Nearly 48.8% of respondents held a Bachelor's degree or HND, while 25.3% had a Master's qualification, indicating a high level of educational attainment among those engaging with online *Da'wah.* This suggests that participants are not only literate but also possess the analytical skills needed to navigate complex religious discussions and digital platforms. Such individuals are more likely to prefer structured, intellectually engaging content, including theological debates and scholarly interpretations backed by scriptural evidence. This trend also highlights a gap: those with lower educational backgrounds may be underrepresented and may benefit more from simplified formats, such as audio messages or content in local languages, to enhance inclusivity.
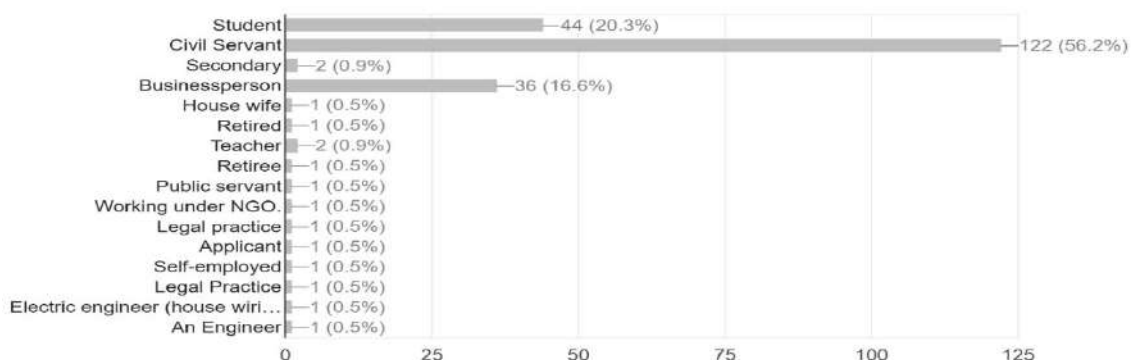

Figure 4. Occupation

The majority of respondents were civil servants (56.2%), followed by students (20.3%) and businesspeople (16.6%). Smaller portions included teachers,

housewives, and other professionals. This suggests that civil servants are the most engaged in online *Da'wah*, likely due to better internet access, education, and structured routines. Student involvement reflects strong interest among youth, while participation from businesspeople indicates growing engagement among the self-employed. Lower representation from other groups may be due to limited time, access, or online prioritization.

Social Media Engagement

Figure 5. Frequency of Social Media Use

A majority of respondents (82.9%) use social media several times daily, while 9.2% access it a few times a week. Only a small fraction use it less frequently, and none reported never using it. This high level of daily usage highlights the central role of social media in respondents' lives and its strong potential for consistent online *Da'wah* exposure. The findings emphasize the need to strategically leverage these platforms to enhance religious engagement, especially among youth and urban users.
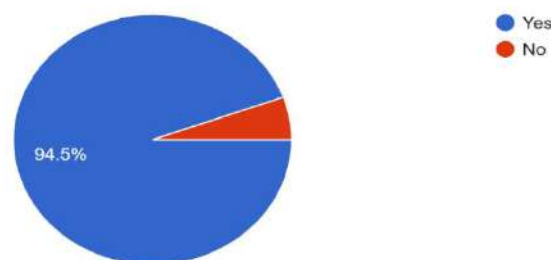

Figure 6: Following *Da'wah* Scholars or Religious Organizations on Social Media

A vast majority (94.5%) of respondents follow at least one *Da'wah* scholar or religious organization on social media, while only 5.5% do not. This indicates strong digital engagement with religious figures and highlights social media as a key source of spiritual guidance and community connection in Taraba State. It

underscores the potential for religious authorities to shape beliefs and behaviors through online platforms.

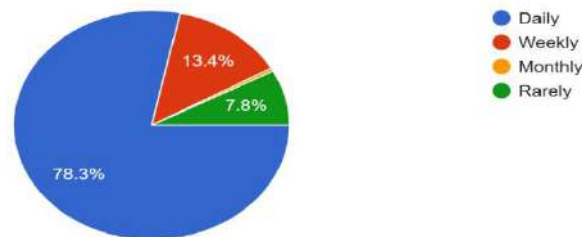How frequently do you engage with Da'wah content on social media?
217 responses

Figure 7: Frequency of Engagement with *Da'wah* Content

A large portion of respondents (78.3%) engage with *Da'wah* content daily, indicating strong integration of Islamic messages into their online routines. Only 7.8% reported rare or monthly engagement. This consistent interaction reflects the relevance and appeal of digital *Da'wah* in Taraba State and presents an opportunity for scholars and organizations to offer continuous religious education through regular, interactive content.

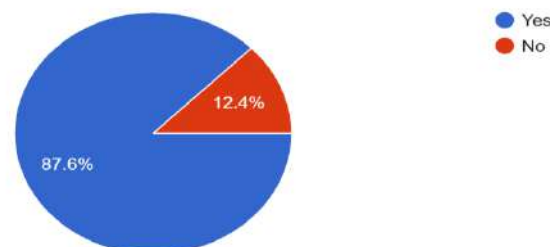Have you ever shared or commented on an online Da'wah post?
217 responses

Figure 8. Engagement Through Sharing or Commenting on *Da'wah* Content

A strong 87.6% of respondents have shared or commented on *Da'wah* content, showing active participation in spreading Islamic messages online. This reflects a sense of community responsibility and involvement. The 12.4% who haven't engaged may prefer private consumption or feel hesitant to express religious views publicly. Overall, the data highlights online *Da'wah* as an interactive, user-driven practice in Taraba State.

Social Media Platforms for Accessing *Da'wah* Content

Which social media platform do you use most to access Da'wah content? Select all that apply
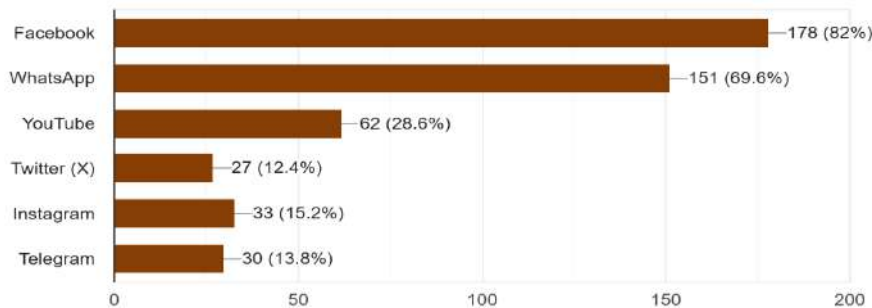217 responses

Figure 9. Most Accessed Social Media Platforms

Respondents mainly accessed *Da'wah* content through Facebook (82%) and WhatsApp (69.6%), with lower engagement on YouTube (28.6%), Instagram (15.2%), Telegram (13.8%), and Twitter (12.4%). The dominance of Facebook and WhatsApp reflects their widespread use and group-sharing features, making them key platforms for *Da'wah* outreach. However, the lower use of visually rich platforms like YouTube and Instagram highlights the need to diversify content to engage broader audiences, particularly youth and women.

What type of Da'wah content do you engage with most? Select all that apply
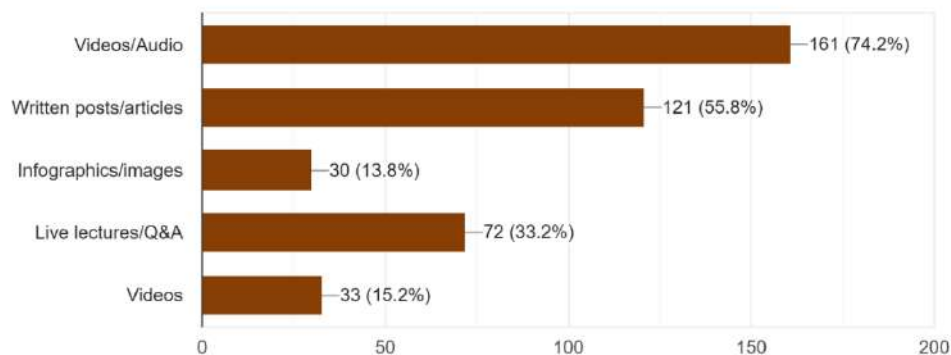217 responses

Figure 10. The Most Engaged *Da'wah* Contents

Videos and Audio (74.2%) were by far the most engaged format, followed by written articles (55.8%). This shows a clear preference for visual and auditory content, which is often more accessible and engaging. Then Live lectures (33.2%) and infographics (13.8%) had less traction, possibly due to technical limitations (e.g., live streaming data needs) or lower visual appeal in static formats.

Impact and Reception of Online *Da'wah* on Religious Understanding and Practice
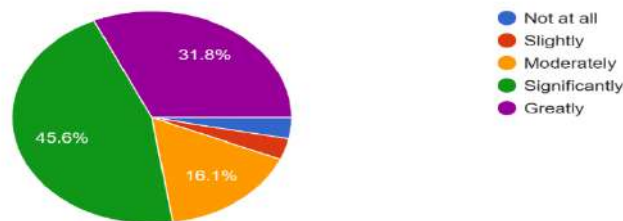

Figure 11: Influence of Online *Da'wah* on Religious Knowledge

A combined 77.4% of respondents reported that online *Da'wah* significantly (45.6%) or greatly (31.8%) improved their religious knowledge, highlighting its strong educational value in Taraba State. An additional 16.1% noted a moderate impact, while few reported minimal or no influence. These findings confirm that social media is an effective tool for enhancing Islamic understanding, though some individuals may still benefit more from personalized or traditional learning methods.
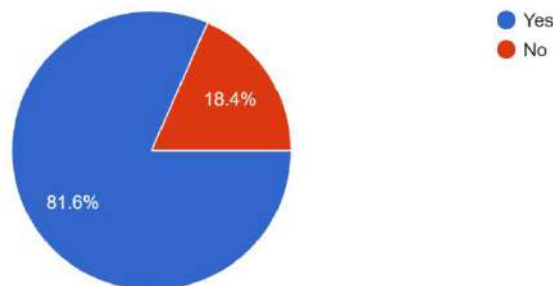
Figure 12. Influence of Online *Da'wah* on Religious Knowledge

A total of 77.4% of respondents stated that online *Da'wah* significantly or greatly enhanced their religious knowledge, underscoring its educational impact in Taraba State. Another 16.1% reported a moderate effect, with few indicating minimal or no influence. This affirms the role of social media as a key platform for Islamic learning, while also suggesting that some individuals may still require more tailored or traditional approaches to religious education

How would you describe the feedback you commonly see on Da'wah content?
217 responses

- Mostly positive
- Mixed (positive and negative)
- Mostly negative

42.4%

55.8%

Figure 13. Audience Feedback on Online *Da'wah* Content

Most respondents (55.8%) observed mostly positive feedback on *Da'wah* content, while 42.4% noted mixed reactions. Only a small number reported mostly negative responses. This suggests that online *Da'wah* is generally well-received in Taraba State. Mixed feedback reflects the diversity of perspectives online, though the low rate of negativity indicates that most content is delivered in a respectful and constructive manner.

Digital *Da'wah* as a Catalyst for Religious Engagement, Communication, and Social Cohesion in Taraba State

On a scale of 1−5, how effective is online Da'wah in delivering Islamic teachings?
217 responses

- 1 (Not effective)
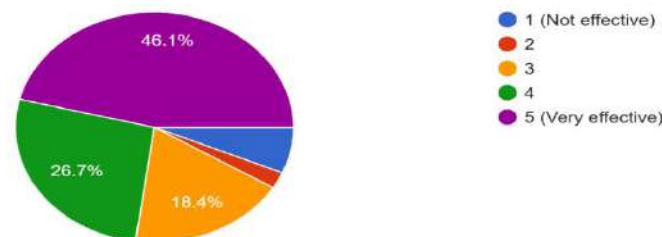- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (Very effective)

46.1%

26.7%

18.4%

Figure 14. Perceived Effectiveness of Online *Da'wah*

The data shows that 46.1% of respondents rated online *Da'wah* as "very effective," and 26.7% rated it as "effective" (4/5 on the scale). This indicates that 72.8% view online *Da'wah* as a valuable tool for religious education and guidance. The positive perception suggests strong credibility, acceptance, and trust in digital religious content. With few respondents rating it as ineffective, this underscores the importance of expanding and enhancing digital outreach, particularly on high-engagement platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp, while maintaining message authenticity and relevance.

Would you recommend online Da'wah as a tool for religious education and guidance?
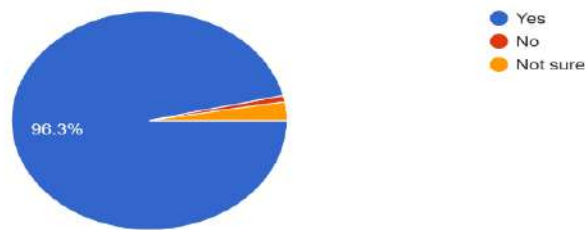217 responses

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

96.3%

Figure 15. Willingness to Recommend Online *Da'wah*

A significant 96.3% of respondents expressed willingness to recommend online *Da'wah* for religious education and guidance, reflecting high trust and satisfaction. This suggests that most participants not only benefit from online *Da'wah* but also recognize its value for others. Only 3.7% were unsure or unwilling to recommend it, indicating minimal skepticism. This strong support highlights online Da'wah's credibility and effectiveness, emphasizing the growing role of technology in religious outreach and the need for scholars and organizations to continue producing inclusive, accurate, and engaging content.

Do you believe online Da'wah has improved religious communication in Taraba State?
217 responses

- Strongly agree
- Agree
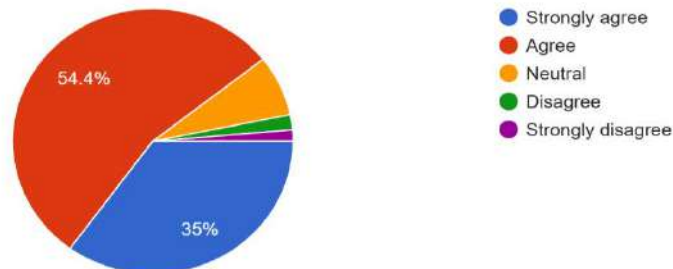- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

54.4%

35%

Figure 16: Effectiveness of Online *Da'wah* in Enhancing Religious Communication

A substantial 89.4% of respondents positively agreed that online *Da'wah* has improved religious communication in Taraba State, with 35% strongly agreeing and 54.4% agreeing. This widespread consensus highlights the effectiveness of online platforms for spiritual engagement and learning. Only a small minority were neutral or disagreed, indicating minimal dissatisfaction. These findings emphasize the transformative role of social media in broadening the reach of Islamic teachings and fostering real-time faith-based conversations, positioning online *Da'wah* as a valuable complement to traditional methods. The results support continued investment in digital *Da'wah* initiatives, content creator training, and strategic communication frameworks.

Do you think online Da'wah contributes to social cohesion among Muslims and other religious groups?
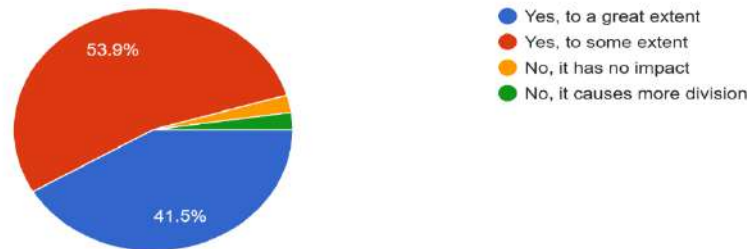217 responses

Figure 17. Online *Da'wah* and Social Cohesion

An overwhelming 95.4% of respondents felt that online *Da'wah* contributes to social cohesion, with 41.5% stating "Yes, to a great extent" and 53.9% agreeing "Yes, to some extent." Only 2.3% believed it had no impact, and another 2.3% thought it caused division. This strong consensus shows that online *Da'wah* is seen as a tool for fostering intra-faith harmony among Muslims and promoting interfaith dialogue. The high percentage of those agreeing "to some extent" suggests there is room for further growth. These findings highlight the potential of digital *Da'wah* to promote peaceful coexistence in diverse settings like Taraba State, emphasizing the need for inclusive, non-polarizing content and respectful communication

Challenges and Barriers to Effective Online *Da'wah* Engagement

What challenges prevent you from engaging more with Da'wah content? (Select all that apply)
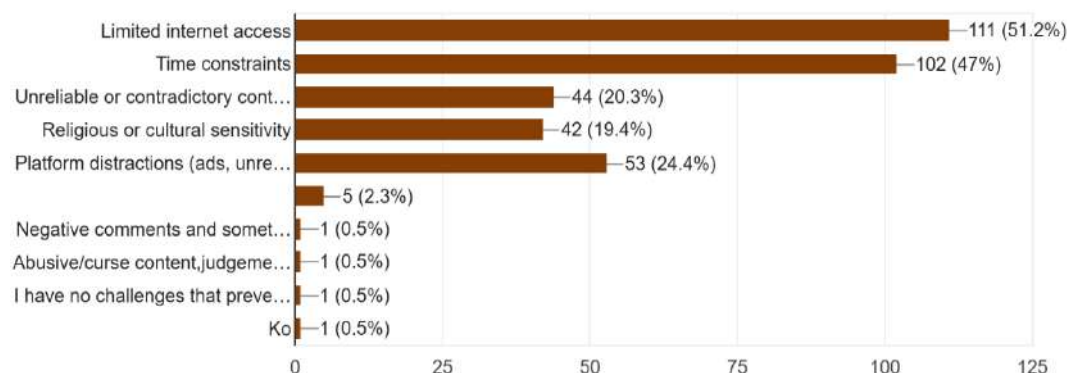217 responses

Figure 18. Challenges Hindering Online *Da'wah* Engagement

The data reveals that Limited Internet Access (51.2%) and Time Constraints (47%) are the primary challenges hindering consistent engagement with online *Da'wah* content, particularly in rural or underserved areas. A smaller proportion of

respondents identified Platform Distractions (24.4%) and Unreliable or Contradictory Content (20.3%) as barriers, pointing to concerns about content authenticity and user focus. A minority reported no challenges or cited abusive content. These findings highlight the need for improved infrastructure, user-friendly platforms, and high-quality, authentic content to enhance engagement.
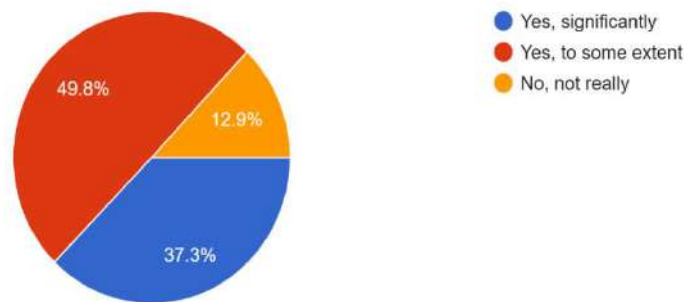

Figure 19. Cultural and Religious Barriers to Online *Da'wah*

When asked about cultural or religious barriers to online *Da'wah*, 49.8% of respondents noted they influence reception to some extent, while 37.3% believed they have a significant impact. Only 12.9% stated that such barriers do not affect reception. This indicates that 87.1% of respondents acknowledge the role of social and religious contexts in shaping how *Da'wah* messages are perceived. The findings underscore the need for culturally adaptive messaging strategies, encouraging *Da'wah* practitioners to use local languages, be sensitive to denominational diversity, and avoid controversial themes to enhance the reach and acceptance of online *Da'wah* in Taraba State.

Thematic Analysis of the Findings on Online *Da'wah* Engagement in Taraba State

The data from the study of online *Da'wah* engagement in Taraba State offers valuable insights into the socio-demographic factors, media engagement, impact, and challenges that shape the practice of religious outreach in the digital age. This analysis will present the findings in thematic areas: demographics, social media engagement, the impact and reception of online *Da'wah*, digital *Da'wah* as a catalyst for religious engagement and social cohesion, and the challenges to effective engagement.

Demographics and Participation Patterns

The study revealed a notable gender disparity in online *Da'wah* engagement in Taraba State, with 79.3% male and only 20.7% female respondents. This points to socio-cultural barriers limiting women's participation, such as restricted access to digital tools and male-dominated religious discourse. Addressing this requires targeted efforts like digital literacy programs for women, improved internet access,

and inclusive, women-centered *Da'wah* content. Most participants were aged 26–45, with 35% in the 26–35 range and 32.7% in the 36–45 group, reflecting strong engagement among digitally active, young to middle-aged adults. This age group's receptiveness suggests a need for relevant, culturally sensitive content tailored to digital habits.

Educationally, 74% of respondents held higher education degrees, indicating a capacity for engaging with complex religious content. However, this also highlights a gap in accessibility for less-educated individuals—calling for more inclusive formats such as simplified videos, audio messages, and content in local languages.

Social Media Engagement and Platforms

Social media plays a vital role in online *Da'wah* in Taraba State, with 82.9% of respondents using it multiple times daily. This high engagement highlights social media as a powerful tool for religious outreach, particularly among the younger, urban population. Notably, 94.5% of respondents follow at least one *Da'wah* scholar or religious organization online, underlining the importance of digital platforms for religious guidance.

The most engaging platforms are Facebook (82%) and WhatsApp (69.6%), with users actively interacting with *Da'wah* content. A significant 78.3% engage with content daily, and 87.6% share or comment on it, demonstrating a high level of participation and a sense of community responsibility. This active, interactive engagement reflects the potential of online *Da'wah* to foster dynamic, widespread religious education. These findings align with Sule and Sulaiman's study, which highlights social media as an effective medium for Islamic propagation, emphasizing platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp as authentic tools for spreading Islamic knowledge. This positions online *Da'wah* as a viable and impactful strategy for religious outreach in Taraba State.[13]

Impact and Reception of Online Da'wah

The study revealed that online *Da'wah* has a strong positive impact on religious knowledge, with 77.4% of respondents noting significant improvements in their understanding of Islam. The content is generally well-received, with 55.8% offering mostly positive feedback. Additionally, 89.4% of respondents believe that online *Da'wah* has enhanced religious communication, fostering real-time faith-based discussions. A remarkable 95.4% also felt that online *Da'wah* contributes to social cohesion, promoting harmony both within the Muslim community and with other faiths. These outcomes echo the findings of Sule & Mainiyo, Attahir, who highlighted the success of social media—particularly Facebook and YouTube—in spreading Qur'anic teachings and creating virtual communities for learning.[14]

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[13] Sule, Muhammad Maga & Sulaiman,Yahaya, "Enhancing Islamic Da'wah and Spread of Knowledge Via Social Media Platforms", Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun (JIP)-The Indonesian Journal of the Social Sciences, Vol. 9, No. 1, January, 2021, pp.1 45-160, https://journal.scadindependent.org/index.php/jipeuradeun/article/view/549, retrieved 3rd May, 2024
[14] Sule, Muhammad Maga & Mainiyo, Attahir Shehu, "Effectiveness of Social Media Platforms in Disseminating Qur'anic Teachings Among Contemporary Muslims", SPEKTRA JURNAL ILMUL-

Their research supports the view that digital platforms can be instrumental in uniting Muslims and fostering inclusive religious discourse, reinforcing the relevance of online *Da'wah* in Taraba State.

Digital *Da'wah* as a Catalyst for Religious Engagement and Social Cohesion

The findings position online *Da'wah* as a key driver of religious engagement and unity in Taraba State. With 72.8% of respondents rating it as effective or very effective, and many willing to recommend it, digital *Da'wah* is both credible and widely embraced. Its impact goes beyond education, with 95.4% acknowledging its role in fostering social cohesion through intra-faith harmony and interfaith dialogue. This aligns with Dauda's study, which emphasizes the global influence of *Da'wah* and how the social media revolution (SMR) has transformed communication in religious outreach. Together, these insights highlight the power of digital platforms to unify diverse communities and promote peaceful coexistence.[15]

Challenges and Barriers to Effective Engagement

While online *Da'wah* has gained wide acceptance, its reach and impact are limited by several challenges. Infrastructural constraints such as poor internet access (51.2%) and time limitations (47%) especially in rural areas, remain significant obstacles. Distractions on digital platforms (24.4%) and concerns over unreliable or contradictory content (20.3%) further hinder effective engagement. Cultural and religious sensitivities also play a role, with nearly half of the respondents acknowledging their influence on content reception. This calls for the development of culturally sensitive, linguistically accessible, and theologically sound content.

Sule and Yahaya's study reinforces these concerns, noting the rise of untrained digital preachers and the spread of uncensored content. Their findings underline the need for *Da'wah* practitioners to maintain authenticity and align with Islamic ethical standards to ensure that social media remains a positive force for religious education.[16]

Conclusion

This study highlights the growing significance of online *Da'wah* as a transformative tool for religious engagement, education, and social cohesion in Taraba State. Social media platforms—especially Facebook and WhatsApp—have emerged as dominant spaces for digital religious interaction, with high levels of daily engagement, content sharing, and positive feedback from users. Online *Da'wah* has not only deepened religious knowledge but also fostered community dialogue and unity.

ILMUL SOSIAL, Vol. 5 | No. 1 | 2023, pp. 47-64, https://uia.e-journal.id/spektra/2668, retrieved on 4th May, 2024.

[15] Dauda, Kazeem Oluwaseun, "Social Media Revolution and Trends of da'wah Propagation in Ijebuland, Ogun State, Nigeria: An Empirical Survey". Islamic Communication Journal, 8 (2), 2023, 171-186 Doi: https://doi.org/10.21580/icj.2023.8.2.18104.

[16] Sule, Muhammad Maga and Yahaya, Atiku Garba, "Conceptualizing the Principles Of Social Media Engagement: Teachings From Selected Verses Of Surah Al-Hujuraat", Islamic Communication Journal Volume 5, Nomor 1, Januari-Juni 2020, pp. 1-18

Despite its promise, several challenges persist, including gender imbalance in participation, limited internet access, time constraints, platform distractions, and the need for culturally relevant messaging. These obstacles point to the need for strategic interventions such as promoting digital literacy—especially among women, enhancing content inclusivity, and training *Da'wah* agents in effective online communication.

In sum, while online *Da'wah* is thriving and widely accepted in Taraba State, its impact can be significantly enhanced through deliberate efforts to address these challenges. With appropriate support and adaptation, digital *Da'wah* can complement traditional methods and serve as a powerful force for spiritual enlightenment and social harmony.

Recommendations for Enhancing the Use of Social Media for *Da'wah* in Taraba State

To effectively harness the power of social media for Islamic *Da'wah* in Taraba State, a holistic and contextualized strategy is essential. The following recommendations offer practical guidance across six thematic areas:

1. Strategic Content Planning. Successful *Da'wah* begins with understanding the target audience. In Taraba State, where religious diversity and multi-ethnic representation are prominent, content should be tailored to suit the demographic realities of the region—taking into account age, educational backgrounds, religious affiliations, and the urban-rural divide. *Da'wah* messages should be presented in indigenous languages such as Hausa, Fulfulde, Jukun, Mumuye, and Wurkum to ensure accessibility and cultural relevance. Additionally, content must respond to current societal issues such as youth moral decline, unemployment, family crises, and interfaith tension. Drawing lessons from the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions, messages should be practical, solution-oriented, and deeply rooted in Islamic values. Moreover, content creators must avoid sectarian rhetoric that could provoke division within the Muslim community or alienate non-Muslim audiences.

2. Content Creation and Dissemination. Modern audiences engage best with dynamic, multimedia content. *Da'wah* practitioners in Taraba State should diversify their formats by producing short videos, infographics, reels, interactive carousels, and personalized storytelling. A multiplatform approach is also critical—leveraging Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and other emerging channels like Telegram and Medium to maximize reach. All content must be rooted in authentic Islamic sources—Qur'an, Hadith, and well-established scholarly views—avoiding speculative or controversial claims. Above all, the tone of communication must remain respectful, inclusive, and wise, in accordance with the Qur'anic guidance to preach "with wisdom and beautiful preaching" (Qur'an 16:125).

3. Community Engagement. Beyond content delivery, effective *Da'wah* must encourage interaction. Practitioners should engage followers in two-way communication—answering questions, responding to comments, and creating live sessions for dialogue and clarification. Followers should also be encouraged to share and amplify *Da'wah* messages organically through reposting, tagging, and discussion. Dedicated virtual *Da'wah* spaces such as WhatsApp groups, Facebook forums, or Telegram channels can serve as consistent platforms for reminders, Q&A sessions, and spiritual support, fostering a sense of belonging and shared purpose among participants.

4. Capacity Building and Collaboration. For *Da'wah* to be impactful in the digital space, collaboration between scholars, youth leaders, and media-savvy individuals is crucial. Islamic scholars should work closely with trusted influencers and mentors who understand the digital landscape and can help communicate messages in relatable formats. Training workshops should be organized to enhance digital literacy among preachers and *Da'wah* teams, covering areas such as video editing, ethical media usage, platform algorithms, and audience engagement strategies. Establishing structured media teams with defined roles—content planning, editing, moderation, and distribution—can ensure consistency, quality, and professionalism in *Da'wah* output.

5. Technological and Institutional Support. Effective digital *Da'wah* requires enabling infrastructure. There is a pressing need to advocate for broader and more affordable internet access, especially in rural and underserved areas of Taraba State. Additionally, *Da'wah* agents should be equipped with essential tools like smartphones, microphones, tripods, and editing software to produce quality content. Institutions or *Da'wah* organizations should establish review boards to verify the accuracy of content, vet public messages, and prevent the circulation of misinformation or extremist narratives. Routine evaluation through analytics and audience feedback will help assess impact and refine strategies.

6. Ethical Guidelines and Doctrinal Coordination. As *Da'wah* is a sacred trust, ethical standards must guide all digital engagements. Practitioners should be reminded of the principle of *Ikhlās* (sincerity) and their accountability before Allah in both intention and message. Efforts must be made to promote unity among different Islamic groups through respectful collaboration rooted in shared beliefs and values. To avoid doctrinal confusion, messages must be coherent, accurate, and presented in a language that is easy to understand. Content should undergo a thorough review before posting, ensuring theological soundness and social appropriateness. This structured approach helps prevent misinterpretations and unnecessary controversies.

In summary, enhancing social media-based *Da'wah* in Taraba State requires coordinated efforts across content strategy, community interaction, technological empowerment, ethical discipline, and institutional collaboration. By embracing this multi-dimensional approach, stakeholders—including scholars, youth leaders, *Da'wah* organizations, and digital practitioners—can foster a more impactful, inclusive, and sustainable model for religious outreach in the digital age.

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