Social Media, Da'wah and Peaceful Coexistence in Southwest Nigeria

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Abstract

The rise of social media has transformed how religions communicate, opening new avenues for da ʿwah and promoting peace in diverse societies. This research examines how social media supports da ʿwah and affects peaceful coexistence and interfaith relations in Southwest Nigeria. Using a descriptive survey, the study included literate Muslim and non-Muslim adults from the six southwestern states of Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, and Ekiti. Through random sampling, 575 participants completed a self-designed questionnaire, mainly using a four-point Likert scale. Data were analysed using SPSS (version 25), with frequency distributions and percentages. Results indicate high engagement with social media and significant exposure to religious content, with many participating in online religious activities and interacting with religious leaders. The findings suggest that social media-driven da ʿwah enhances interfaith understanding, tolerance, and mutual respect, fostering peaceful coexistence and reducing religious tensions. The study recommends training, code of conduct, logistical and financial support for Ulama on social media, and encourages them to organize joint online content creators' peace meeting.

Keywords: social media, da ʿwah, ʿUlamā', Peaceful coexistence, Southwest Nigeria

Introduction

Social media has redesigned traditional ways of communication. It changes how individuals access, share, and interact with information in real time. As a subset of digital technology, social media provides dynamic platforms for creating, sharing, and exchanging content in virtual environments (Dauda, 2023). Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (now X), WhatsApp, YouTube, and Instagram have enabled unprecedented connectivity among individuals, communities, and organizations. These technologies have transformed global communication landscapes and created new avenues for information flow, activism, and religious expression.

In Islamic terminology, da'wah refers to a systematic way of inviting people to and educating them about Islamic principles (Azeez & Salako 2021). Within religious communities, particularly among Muslims, social media has emerged as a critical tool for da'wah and the dissemination of Islamic teachings. As observed by Sanni (2020), social media are interactive platforms that enable users to communicate with one another and send and receive messages, including da'wah. These platforms allow users to meet online and communicate through Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc.

Globally, Islamic scholars, and organizations have embraced social media to advance da'wah, and promote socio-religious harmony. Al-Kandari and Hasanen (2018) emphasise that these platforms enable du'at to reach new audiences, build religious literacy, and foster peaceful coexistence in pluralistic societies.

Nigeria's southwest region, renowned for its rich cultural diversity, is home to significant Muslim and Christian populations who have lived side by side for generations. While this interfaith interaction has fostered mutual engagement, it has also experi-

enced periods of tension driven by political rivalry, social disparities, and religious sensitivities. In recent years, Islamic scholars (ʿulamāʾ) in the region have increasingly used social media to promote peaceful coexistence, provide religious education, and counter narratives of extremism and intolerance. As Slomp (2018) argues, online religious content can either build bridges or deepen divides, depending on the message and the messenger.

Dauda (2023) affirms that social media is now central to the communication strategies of many ʿulamāʾ in the region, particularly those seeking to reach youth and digital natives. These strategies include sermon snippets on WhatsApp, religious questions and answers (Q&A) on Facebook, and live lectures on YouTube. These digital strategies enable ʿulamāʾ to reinforce Islamic values, correct misconceptions, and counter negative religious stereotypes.

While the potential of social media for positive religious outreach is clear, questions remain about its practical effectiveness in promoting peaceful coexistence. Adebayo (2019) warns that the same platforms that facilitate positive religious discourse can also be exploited to spread misinformation, incite hatred, and deepen societal polarization. This dual nature of social media underscores the need to critically examine how Islamic scholars use these tools for Da'wah and peacebuilding.

In response to the above questions, this paper examines how ʿulamāʾ in southwest Nigeria use digital platforms to promote interfaith harmony. Existing studies have either generalized the role of social media in Islamic propagation (Khan, 2020; Osman, 2019) or focused on broader socio-political contexts without grounding their analyses in regional realities. This study aims to address this gap by offering a localised, evidence-based exploration of the strategies and outcomes of ʿUlamāʾ's online efforts in southwest Nigeria.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to reveal how religious actors navigate digital spaces to foster dialogue and understanding in a religiously plural society. By examining the opportunities and limitations of social media for da'wah and peacebuilding, the research aims to inform policy and practice in interfaith engagement. It also offers insight into the evolving role of religious leadership in a digital age, where authority is often contested and influence is increasingly mediated by algorithms and virality.

Moreover, understanding the online behaviour of ʿulamāʾ has practical implications for governments, civil society, and religious institutions seeking to combat religious extremism and promote peaceful coexistence. As Hodler et al. (2024) show, intense religious experiences (e.g., during Ramadan) can reduce public support for violence when contextualized appropriately. Similarly, if social media da'wah reinforces moderation, empathy, and shared values, it may serve as a soft tool for conflict prevention and for building community resilience.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the role of social media in facilitating daʿwah and its influence on peaceful coexistence among religious groups in Southwest Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to assess the extent of social media use and exposure to religious (daʿwah) content among adults, and to examine the nature and patterns of engagement with such content, including interactions with religious scholars and interfaith messages. Furthermore, the study aims to evaluate the influence of social media-based daʿwah on interfaith understanding, tolerance, and mutual respect among Muslims and non-Muslims, and to determine the impact of online religious communication on promoting peaceful coexistence and reducing religious tensions and conflicts within the region. In addition, the study intends to identify challenges and limitations with daʿwah on social media.

Research Questions

This research work is guided by the following research questions:

i. How do individuals engage with Islamic scholars on social media?
ii. To what extent does social media based daʿwah influence users interfaith understanding?
iii. What are the impact of digital daʿwah of ʿulamāʾ on promoting peaceful coexistence in southwest Nigeria?
iv. What are the challenges debarring effectiveness of daʿwah on social media?

Literature Review

Many prophets such as Nuh (Q 7:59), Musa (Q 20: 43), ʿIsa (Q 5: 72), Ibrahim (Q 19: 42), Muhammad (Q 12: 108) etc (alayhim salam) have engaged in daʿwah activities as their primary assignments at different time and period is to deliver the messages of Allah as instructed by Allah (Q 16: 125). Hence, Islamic scholars take up daʿwah as a rewarding responsibility.

The rise of social media as a global communication tool has significantly influenced the presentation of Islamic messages. Sule and Abdulkareem (2020) corroborate that social media platforms enhance the visibility of Islamic teachings and provide an effective means of addressing contemporary religious concerns.

In Nigeria, particularly in the Southwest, the growing digitization of religious activities has created new avenues for the ʿulamāʾ to fulfil their daʿwah responsibilities. Through social media, these scholars can share sermons, provide religious education, and offer spiritual guidance in real time. Olalekan and Badmus (2021) observe that social media not only expands access to Islamic knowledge but also strengthens the connection between the ʿulamāʾ and the Muslim community, particularly among youth who are more inclined towards digital communication.

Studies have highlighted the role of ʿulamāʾ in promoting social harmony and peaceful coexistence, particularly in a religiously pluralistic country such as Nigeria. By using social media to advocate tolerance, compassion, and understanding, ʿulamāʾ significantly help reduce tensions between religious groups. This aligns with the findings of Ossai (2024), which noted that religious leaders who engage in interfaith dialogue online often facilitate better intergroup relations and help counteract the divisive rhetoric sometimes found in offline spaces.

The Southwest region of Nigeria, home to large Muslim and Christian populations, has historically experienced periods of religious tension. However, it has also demonstrated significant resilience and peaceful coexistence. Using social media to extend these peace-building efforts is a natural evolution of the tools available to ʿulamāʾ. Dauda (2023) found that in Ijebuland, a sub-region of Southwest Nigeria, scholars actively use social media platforms to address community issues and reinforce messages of peaceful living.

Beyond dissemination, social media enables interactive engagement, allowing followers to ask questions and seek clarification on religious issues. This two-way communication marks a critical advance over traditional da'wah practices, in which scholars often spoke from a pulpit with little feedback. Sule and Yahaya (2021) emphasize that this interaction helps demystify complex theological issues and promotes mutual understanding between the ʿulamāʾ and their followers.

Beyond religious content, ʿulamāʾ also use social media to comment on moral and socio-political issues, often calling for justice, fairness, and good governance. This broader engagement reinforces the scholars' moral authority and positions them as agents of social change. According to Balogun (2019), this involvement has helped shape public opinion and promote civic values among the Muslim populace, particularly during periods of national unrest or political instability.

Another important aspect of the ʿulamāʾ's online presence is their emphasis on ethical conduct in digital spaces. By highlighting Islamic virtues such as honesty, patience, and respect, they aim to cultivate a culture of moral responsibility among social media users. Sule and Abdulkareem (2020) again emphasis the need for ethical standards in online interactions, particularly among religious influencers who are regarded as role models by their audiences.

Furthermore, studies show that social media is an effective platform for countering extremist narratives. In an era when misinformation and radical ideologies can spread easily online, the presence of respected scholars who actively debunk such content is crucial. Ibrahim (2020) confirms that ʿulamāʾ who consistently post moderate, inclusive messages play a vital role in promoting religious tolerance and preventing youth radicalization.

The educational value of online daʿwah cannot be overstated. Through live videos, pre-recorded sermons, and infographics, Islamic teachings can be delivered in more engaging and accessible formats. Sule and Yahaya (2021) show that this multimedia approach significantly improves retention and understanding, particularly among digital natives, who respond more to visual and interactive content.

Moreover, scholars have noted that the shift to digital daʿwah has democratized religious learning. Where access to knowledgeable ʿulamāʾ was once constrained by geography or social status, social media has broken down these barriers, enabling people from all walks of life to access authentic Islamic knowledge. Olalekan and Badmus (2021) report that this access has empowered many, particularly women and rural youth, who previously had limited opportunities for religious education.

However, the success of online da'wah also depends largely on the digital literacy of the ʿUlamāʾ. Scholars must be equipped not only with profound religious knowledge but also with the technical skills to manage their online presence effectively. Training

and ongoing support from Islamic organizations and institutions can significantly enhance the impact of their efforts. Sule and Musa (2021) advocate regular workshops and digital literacy programmes to empower scholars and maximize their effectiveness in cyberspace.

Moreover, the effectiveness of online daʿwah in promoting peaceful coexistence lies in its capacity to bridge religious divides. Through inclusive messaging and interfaith outreach, ʿulamāʾ play a pivotal role in dispelling stereotypes and fostering mutual respect among diverse religious groups. Ossai (2024) offers notable examples of scholars who have used their online platforms to denounce violence and engage in constructive dialogue with Christian leaders, thereby contributing meaningfully to national peacebuilding.

While social media platforms offer a convenient and extensive way to share knowledge and promote religious values, Dauda and Lawal (2024) note potential risks associated with their misuse. Social media misuse refers to the inappropriate or harmful use of these platforms, which often takes forms such as cyberbullying, the spread of false information or rumours, the promotion of hate speech or discrimination, privacy violations, harassment, and online scams. However, the persistent misuse of these platforms for daʿwah remains a concern for scholars.

Ali, B. (2025). also offers a cautionary perspective, arguing that social media has disrupted established Islamic authority structures. Trained jurists and scholars who once guided interpretation through disciplined scholarship are being replaced by online preachers with minimal qualifications. According to Hosen (2019), this shift creates space for oversimplified and even radical interpretations of core Islamic texts.

Despite its advantages, the online daʿwah landscape is not without challenges. The proliferation of unregulated content, the presence of unqualified individuals posing as religious authorities, and the risk of misinterpretation all threaten the integrity of online religious messages. Scholars such as Oladele and Fahm (2023) have called for the development of regulatory frameworks to ensure that Islamic teachings disseminated online remain authentic and adhere to established principles.

As society becomes increasingly digital, the future of daʿwah in Nigeria and beyond is inextricably linked to digital platforms. As more individuals seek spiritual guidance online, the ʿulamāʾ's roles as educators, peace advocates, and community leaders will continue to grow in influence and relevance. Research consistently affirms that, when strategically harnessed, social media is a powerful tool for promoting religious understanding, social cohesion, and peaceful coexistence, particularly in multi-religious societies such as Nigeria.

Having examined the contributions of some scholars, it is evident that their works offer valuable insights that inform and support the current study. The studies are highly relevant, addressing key themes such as the use of social media for daʿwah, its educational and ethical dimensions, and its potential to foster harmony in religiously diverse contexts. However, despite the breadth of the literature consulted, a clear gap remains. Most of the reviewed works do not focus specifically on the deliberate and structured online efforts of ʿUlamā in Southwest Nigeria who aim to promote peace and interfaith harmony through daʿwah. This gap underscores the need for a more localized and focused investigation.

Therefore, this study seeks to address that gap by offering a nuanced exploration of the digital engagement of ʿulamāʾ in Southwest Nigeria. It aims to highlight how these scholars are effectively using social media platforms not only to propagate Islamic teachings but also to promote peaceful coexistence in a region marked by religious diversity. In doing so, the research contributes to the broader discourse on religion, technology, and social harmony in contemporary Africa.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey design with quantitative methods to examine how ʿulamāʾ promote peaceful coexistence through social media in Southwest Nigeria. The target population comprised literate Muslim and non-Muslim adults across the six states in the Southwest geopolitical zone: Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, and Ekiti. Participants included male and female religious scholars, Imams, Evangelists, students, youth, teachers, and other professionals familiar with social media. A random sampling method was used, yielding 575 participants who completed the questionnaire. Students and staff from Tai Solarin Federal University of Education, Ijagun that are from different states of origin across Southwest Nigeria were gathered to complete the questionnaire. Three (3) research assistants were employed for the smooth distribution and collection of the questionnaire. Data were compiled and analyzed in SPSS version 25 using simple percentages and frequency tables. Qualitative data from open-ended questions were thematically analyzed to provide contextual insights. Findings were interpreted in relation to the research objectives, and conclusions were drawn from the results.

Discussion of Result

Analysis of demographic data of the respondents

Table 1: Age distribution

Age group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–25	435	75.7
26–35	60	10.4
36–45	50	8.7
46–55	25	4.3
56+	5	0.9
Total	575	100

Source: Authors' computation, 2026.

The sample is predominantly the youths, with more than 75.7% aged 18–25. This suggests that the results mainly represent the youths who are digitally engaged.

Table 2: Religious affiliation

Religion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Islam	360	62.6
Christianity	210	36.5
Prefer not to say	5	0.9
Total	575	100

Source: Authors' computation, 2026.

The respondents are predominantly Muslim (62.6%), with a notable Christian presence (36.5%), making the dataset suitable for interfaith comparisons.

Table 3: Educational qualification

Qualifications	Frequency	Percentage (%)
O-Level	95	16.5
Undergraduate	380	66.1
Postgraduate	100	17.4
Total	575	100

Source: Authors' computation, 2026.

Majority of the respondents are educated with 83.5% undergraduate and postgraduates at their various fields of study. This indicates that their responses are well informed and can be considered appropriate for this research work.

Table 4: State of origin

State	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Ogun	175	30.4
Oyo	130	22.6
Lagos	110	19.1
Osun	75	13.0
Ondo	55	9.6
Ekiti	30	5.2
Total	575	100

Source: Authors' computation, 2026.

The respondents are distributed across Southwest Nigeria, with Ogun, Oyo, and Lagos leading. This represents fair regional coverage regional coverage.

- Research Question 1: How do individuals engage with Islamic scholars on social media platforms?

Table 5: Engagement with Islamic scholars on social media

	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Remarks
1	I follow Islamic scholars online	210 (36.5)	300 (52.2)	45 (7.8)	20 (3.5)	Agreed
2	Social media exposes me to the teachings of other religions	225 (39.1)	300 (52.2)	50 (8.7)	0 (0.0)	Agreed
3	I engage with religious content (likes, shares, comments)	300 (52.2)	250 (43.5)	20 (3.5)	5 (0.9)	Agreed
4	Religious leaders use social media effectively	240 (41.7)	285 (49.6)	50 (8.7)	0 (0.0)	Agreed
5	Online religious messages are relevant to social issues	205 (35.7)	345 (60.0)	15 (2.6)	10 (1.7)	Agreed

Source: Authors' computation, 2026.

According to Table 5, Item 1, a significant number of respondents, 210 (36.5%), strongly agreed, and 300 (52.2%), agreed, that they follow or view Islamic religious figures online.

Similarly, Table 5, Item 2 shows that 225 (39.1%) strongly agreed, and 300 (52.2%) agreed that social media exposes them to teachings of other religions, indicating strong interfaith exposure via digital platforms.

In Table 5, Item 3, engagement is also very high, with 300 (52.2%) strongly agreed and 250 (43.5%) agreed that they interact with religious content via likes, shares, and comments.

Table 5, item 4, also states that respondents affirm that religious leaders are effective online communicators, with 240 (41.7%) strongly agreed and 285 (49.6%) agreed.

Table 5, item 5, shows that 205 (35.7%) strongly agreed and 345 (60.0%) agreed that online religious messages are relevant to contemporary social issues.

The table shows notably high engagement with Islamic religious content on social media among respondents. The findings indicate that ʿulamāʾ and other religious figures have strong visibility and influence on social media, and that users are highly engaged with religious content. This suggests that social media is an effective platform for daʿwah, interfaith exposure, and religious communication, thereby supporting the ʿulamāʾ role in promoting peaceful coexistence.

This is supported by the position of Dauda (2023), that social media is now central to the communication strategies of many ulamā in the region, particularly those seeking to reach youth and digital natives.

- Research Question 2: To what extent does social media-based daʿwah influence users' interfaith understanding, tolerance, and peace?

Table 6: Influence of social media-based daʿwah on Interfaith understanding and tolerance

	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Remark
6	Social media helps me understand other people's faith better	240 (41.7)	290 (50.4)	30 (5.2)	15 (2.6)	Agreed
7	Online daʿwah promotes tolerance among religious groups	200 (34.8)	345 (60.0)	30 (5.2)	0 (0.0)	Agreed
8	Exposure to religious content increases respect for other religions	220 (38.3)	300 (52.2)	45 (7.8)	10 (1.7)	Agreed
9	I observe online contents promote respect between Muslims and non-Muslims	235 (40.9)	300 (52.2)	40 (7.0)	0 (0.0)	Agreed
10	Social media shapes interfaith understanding in the society	200 (34.8)	335 (58.3)	30 (5.2)	10 (1.7)	Agreed

Source: Authors' computation, 2026.

According to Table 6, Item 6, A majority of respondents, 240 (41.7%), strongly agreed, and 290 (50.4%) agreed, that social media improves understanding of other faiths.

Table 6, item 7 shows 200 (34.8%) strongly agreed, and 345 (60.0%) agreed that online religious messages promote tolerance among different religious groups.

Table 6, item 8, revealed that Respondents also report greater respect for other religions, with 220 (38.3%) strongly agreed and 300 (52.2%) agreed.

Table 6, item 9, shows that 235 (40.9%) strongly agreed and 300 (52.2%) agreed that they observe respect for interfaith in online religious content.

Table 6, item 10, showed that 200 (34.8%) strongly agreed and 335 (58.3%) agreed that social media significantly shapes interfaith understanding in society.

The findings indicate a very strong positive impact of social media-based daʿwah on interfaith understanding and tolerance. It also demonstrates that ʿulamāʾ-led content on social media significantly contributes to interfaith harmony, tolerance, and understanding. The prevalence of agreement responses suggests that social media daʿwah is perceived as a connecting force among religious communities, encouraging peaceful coexistence.

This is in line with Ibrahim's (2020) submission, which confirms that ʿulamāʾ who consistently post moderate, inclusive messages play a vital role in promoting religious tolerance and preventing youth radicalization.

- Research Question 3: To what extent does social media daʿwah by ʿulamāʾ promote peaceful coexistence?

Table 7: Influence of social media daʿwah on peaceful coexistence

	Items	**SA (%)**	**A (%)**	**D (%)**	**SD (%)**	**Remarks**
11	Social media daʿwah promotes peaceful coexistence	200 (34.8)	345 (60.0)	30 (5.2)	0 (0.0)	Agreed

	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Remarks
12	Daʿwah contributes more to peace than conflict	215 (37.4)	305 (53.0)	45 (7.8)	10 (1.7)	Agreed
13	Online religious messages promote tolerance among groups	170 (29.6)	365 (63.5)	35 (6.1)	5 (0.9)	Agreed
14	I support the use of social media for peacebuilding by ʿulamāʾ	230 (40.0)	315 (54.8)	25 (4.3)	5 (0.9)	Agreed
15	Social media daʿwah helps reduce misconception about Islam and religious conflicts	180 (31.3)	310 (53.9)	70 (12.2)	15 (2.6)	Agreed

Source: Authors' computation, 2026.

Table 7, item 11, revealed that A majority of respondents agree that social media daʿwah promotes peaceful coexistence among religious groups, with 200 (34.8%) strongly agreed and 345 (60.0%) agreed.

Similarly, Table 7, item 12, showed that 215 (37.4%) strongly agreed, and 305 (53.0%) agreed that it contributes more to peace than to conflict, indicating confidence in its positive role.

Regarding intergroup relations, Table 7, item 13 presents that 170 (29.6%) strongly agreed and 365 (63.5%) agreed that online religious messages promote tolerance, indicating a strong consensus.

Table 7, item 14, states that 230 (40.0%) strongly agreed and 315 (54.8%) agreed that the ulama support the use of social media for peacebuilding, indicating strong acceptance of digital daʿwah strategies.

However, the statement on conflict reduction shows slightly greater variability, in accordance with the results of Table 7, item 15, with 180 (31.3%) strongly agreeing and 310 (53.9%) agreed, while 85 (14.8%) disagreed and strongly disagreed, indicating some skepticism about its direct impact on real-world conflict reduction. Ali, B. (2025) also offers a cautionary perspective, arguing that social media has disrupted established Islamic authority structures. Trained jurists and scholars who once guided interpretation through disciplined scholarship are being replaced by online preachers with minimal qualifications.

The results show that social media daʿwah is generally regarded as a means of promoting peace, tolerance, and coexistence. However, its direct impact on the reduction of misconceptions about Islamic conflicts is viewed with some scepticism.

- Research Question 4: What are the challenges debarring the effectiveness of ulama da'wah on social media?

Table 8: Challenges facing social media daʿwah by ulama

	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Remark
16	Misinformation from some ʿulamāʾ affects the effectiveness of daʿwah	140 (24.3)	340 (59.1)	80 (13.9)	15 (2.6)	Agreed

	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Remark
17	High internet/data cost limits access to digital daʿwah	200 (34.8)	305 (53.0)	50 (8.7)	20 (3.5)	Agreed
18	Online harassment discourages religious engagement	160 (27.8)	370 (64.3)	35 (6.1)	10 (1.7)	Agreed
19	Some religious content lacks accuracy or verification	225 (39.1)	300 (52.2)	40 (7.0)	10 (1.7)	Agreed
20	Social media sometimes increases religious tension	190 (33.0)	345 (60.0)	30 (5.2)	10 (1.7)	Agreed

Source: Authors' computation, 2026.

Table 8, item 16, revealed that Most respondents agreed that misinformation weakens the impact of daʿwah, with 140 (24.3%) strongly agreed and 340 (59.1%) agreed. This indicates that false or misleading information is commonly seen as a significant barrier to trustworthy religious communication on the internet.

Table 8, item 17, showed that respondents identified high internet and data costs as a significant barrier to access. This is supported by 200 (34.8%) strongly agreed and 305 (53.0%) agreed, indicating that affordability remains a critical constraint on audience reach and participation.

Table 8, item 18, presents that there is very strong agreement that online harassment discourages religious engagement, with 160 (27.8%) strongly agreed and 370 (64.3%) agreed. This is among the highest levels of agreement in the table, highlighting the negative impact of hostile online environments on participation in daʿwah activities. For instance, some immoral acts usually pump up while online for religious engagement.

Regarding content credibility, Table 8, item 19, showed that 225 (39.1%) strongly agreed and 300 (52.2%) agreed that some religious content lacks accuracy or proper verification. This confirms that some religious content lacks quality control and scholarly expertise. Such messages mislead millions of people and cause confusion and conflict.

Table 8, item 20, revealed that, respondents largely agreed that social media can heighten religious tension, with 190 (33.0%) strongly agreed and 345 (60.0%) agreed. This suggests that, despite its benefits, social media can also amplify divisions and misunderstandings among religious groups if the content is not well managed.

The findings demonstrate that while social media daʿwah has potential, its effectiveness is significantly undermined by misinformation, high access costs, online harassment, a lack of content verification, and the risk of heightened religious tension. Among these, online harassment and content credibility issues are particularly prominent concerns.

This corroborates the position of Dauda and Lawal (2024), who note that potential risks arise from their misuse. Social media misuse refers to the inappropriate or harmful use of these platforms, which often takes forms such as cyberbullying, the spread of false information or rumours, the promotion of hate speech or discrimination, privacy violations, harassment, and online scams.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is established that da'wah on social media has created a very strong avenue for the 'ulama' to contribute meaningfully to the peaceful coexistence of the people of Southwest Nigeria. Data collected and processed showed that social media is not just a tool for socializing, networking and communicating, but also vital for religious communication and proselytization. However, the effectiveness and efficiency could be undermined by several challenges if not properly harnessed. These challenges include misinformation, high cost of access to the internet, online harassment and lack of content verification.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following points are hereby recommended to enhance the effectiveness of digital-based da'wah and to strengthen its contribution to peaceful coexistence in Southwest Nigeria:

i. Islamic organizations, councils of ʿulamāʾ, religious and academic institutions should prioritize regular digital literacy and media training for scholars. These programmes should focus on content creation, audience engagement, online ethics, and strategies to prevent misinterpretation of islamic messages. Improved digital competence will enhance sincerity of purpose, quality presentation, time management, clarity of expression, credibility, virality of messages, appearance and acceptability.

ii. Structured guidelines or codes of conduct for online da'wah are needed. These guidelines should emphasize moderation, inclusivity, accuracy in religious interpretation, and respectful engagement with people of other faiths, as recommended in the Quran chapter 16 verse 125: Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is rightly guided. This will help curb the influence of unqualified individuals and reduce the spread of misleading or divisive content.

iii. Religious bodies and relevant stakeholders should provide both logistical and financial support to ʿulamāʾ engaged in online da'wah, particularly to address the high cost of internet data and content production. Such support will encourage the sustainability and development of digital da'wah.

iv. ʿUlamāʾ should be encouraged to collaborate with leaders of other religious traditions to produce joint online content that emphasizes shared values such as peace, justice, and mutual respect. Interfaith digital dialogue initiatives can further strengthen social cohesion and counter narratives of intolerance as contained in Quran chapter 3 verse 64, "Say, 'O People of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), come to a word that is equitable between us and you that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah.' But if they turn away, then say, 'Bear witness that we are Muslims.

v. Efforts should be made to establish moderation systems on popular Islamic social media platforms or within groups to manage misinformation, abusive comments, and extremist rhetoric. Trusted scholars and administrators can play a key role in verifying content and in conflict-sensitive communication.

vi. Government agencies, civil society organizations, and peacebuilding institutions should recognize and integrate faith-based digital initiatives into broader strategies for conflict prevention and social harmony. Partnerships with ʿulamāʾ can enhance community-based peacebuilding, particularly among the youths.

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