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Digital Da'wah in Northern Nigeria: A Thematic Analysis of Online Islamic Outreach Strategies in Taraba State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study explores the emerging landscape of digital Da'wah in Northern Nigeria, focusing specifically on Taraba State. Through a thematic analysis of online engagement by Islamic scholars and Da'wah actors, the study investigates the strategies, content styles, challenges, and audience responses associated with the use of social media for religious outreach. Using qualitative methods, including interviews and platform content analysis, the research identifies a shift from traditional methods to dynamic digital engagement that combines theological accuracy with accessibility. Despite infrastructural, social, and epistemic challenges, online Da'wah in Taraba is expanding in reach and impact, shaping new modes of Islamic communication and youth engagement. The study calls for improved institutional synergy, digital training, ethical standards, and strategic content development to ensure that digital Da'wah remains both authentic and effective in addressing contemporary societal needs

Keywords: *Da'wah; Social Media; Taraba State; Online Religious Communication; Northern Nigeria; Islamic Outreach.*

Introduction

The digital revolution has transformed nearly every facet of human interaction, including the ways of Da'wah, in Islamic terminology, which refers to the invitation toward the path of Allah. Rooted in the Arabic word meaning "to summon" or "to invite," Da'wah encompasses various modes of outreach, whether through speech, writing, or community service, to spread Islamic teachings and values. It is considered a noble and spiritual pursuit, often equated with jihad of the tongue or pen, as it seeks to guide others toward faith and righteousness. Da'wah is not merely a religious recommendation but a prophetic tradition (Sunnah), epitomized in the life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), who is described in the Qur'an as the Da'ee Ila-Allah, the Inviter to Allah (Qur'an 33:45-46). His call to Islam began with the Arabs of Mecca, urging them to abandon ignorance (Jahiliyyah) and submit to the will of the One Creator. His message, conveyed with patience and wisdom, represents the culmination of all prophetic missions [1].

In Nigeria, and specifically in the region now known as Taraba State, Islam began to take root around the 17th century. However, structured Da'wah activities were largely absent until the 19th century, when Fulani-led jihadist movements expanded Islamic influence through military and sociopolitical means. Communities such as the Abakwariga and the Jukun of Wukari encountered Islam not through systematic preaching, but through indirect means such as trade, social relations, and intermarriage. Leaders like Lamido Hammaruwa Usman institutionalized Islam by building mosques and promoting integration. Successive figures such as Lamido Umar Abba Tukur and Emir Abbas Njidda Tafida continued to advance Da'wah using both leadership authority and social influence [2].

Later, the policies and religious zeal of Sir Ahmadu Bello further propelled Islamization through large-scale conversion campaigns and public support for new adherents. In the absence of centralized Da'wah structures, the role of individual scholars, converts, and local initiatives became vital. Qur'anic schools, circles of Islamic knowledge ('Ilm), and formal Islamiyyah schools emerged to meet the growing need for Islamic education, although they struggled with limited resources and oversight. Religious organizations like Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI), Fityanul Islam, and the Izala Movement further formalized Da'wah activities in Taraba, particularly in towns like Wukari, where they led to significant conversions [3].

In recent years, the emergence of digital communication has dramatically transformed religious engagement, including Da'wah. With the proliferation of smartphones and internet connectivity, social media platforms such as Facebook,

WhatsApp, YouTube, and Twitter have become powerful tools for disseminating Islamic content. Among Muslims, particularly youth, these platforms have redefined how religious teachings are accessed, interpreted, and shared. Unlike traditional forms of preaching bound by time and space, digital Da'wah offers flexibility, immediacy, and interactivity, allowing users to engage with religious messages at their convenience and pace [4].

In this context, Taraba State, characterized by religious diversity and growing online presence, presents a compelling case for examining how Da'wah is evolving in the digital age. The shift from conventional, face-to-face Da'wah to virtual platforms raises critical questions about strategy, authenticity, and impact. It also provides opportunities to investigate how online Da'wah contributes to or complicates religious communication, community building, and interfaith dynamics in Northern Nigeria. Thus, exploring the nature and effectiveness of digital Da'wah in Taraba is essential for understanding broader trends in contemporary Islamic outreach.

As part of the statement of the problem is that the rise of digital communication technologies, particularly social media, has significantly reshaped how Da'wah is practiced and disseminated across Northern Nigeria. In Taraba State, an ethnically and religiously diverse region, the adoption of online platforms for Da'wah presents new possibilities for outreach, religious instruction, and community engagement. However, despite the growing reliance on digital media for religious communication, there remains a notable absence of empirical research examining how Da'wah is conducted online in this specific context. Little is known about the strategies employed by Da'wah actors in Taraba, the nature of their digital content, the reception of their messages by various audiences, or the socio-religious implications of these online interactions.

This lack of systematic inquiry creates a gap in understanding the transformative role of digital Da'wah in shaping religious consciousness, interfaith relations, and social cohesion within the state. Without clear insights into the dynamics of digital religious outreach, its effectiveness, limitations, and potential risks, both scholars and religious stakeholders are left without the tools necessary to guide, regulate, or optimize these efforts. This study, therefore, seeks to explore and analyze the digital Da'wah landscape in Taraba State, offering a thematic understanding of the strategies, challenges, and impacts of online Islamic outreach in a rapidly evolving media environment.

The objective of the research is (1) to examine the strategies used by Da'wah workers on selected social media platforms in Taraba State. (2) To analyze the content, tone, and engagement patterns in online Da'wah activities. (3) To assess the reactions and feedback of audiences toward digital Da'wah

initiatives. (4) To identify major challenges in conducting effective online Da'wah in Taraba. (5) To explore the implications of online Da'wah on religious education, communication, and social cohesion.

Literature Review

The emergence of digital platforms has significantly transformed the scope, authority, and strategies of Da'wah worldwide. These shifts find local expression in Northern Nigeria, particularly in Taraba State, where Islamic scholars, educators, and activists are increasingly adopting online channels to deliver religious guidance and community engagement.

In Southeast Asia, studies such as those by Basri and Murtadlo reveal that platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook have surpassed traditional media as primary tools for Islamic instruction. While this democratization of access facilitates broader participation, it also poses risks, such as the circulation of unauthenticated religious content and weakening of traditional learning hierarchies [5]. Similarly, Mahmudah demonstrates that Facebook has become a space not just for aesthetic Qur'anic appreciation but also for reflective engagement, altering the ways lay Muslims interact with scripture [6].

However, Hosen offers a cautionary perspective, arguing that social media has disrupted established Islamic authority structures. Trained jurists and scholars who previously guided interpretation through disciplined scholarship are now being supplanted by online preachers with minimal qualifications. This phenomenon, according to Hosen, opens the door to oversimplified and even radical interpretations of core Islamic texts [7].

Adding a behavioral lens, Fatah et al. document a rise in "digital incivility" among Muslims online, characterized by insults, misinformation, and unethical interactions. These behaviors, they argue, directly conflict with the Qur'anic call for respectful speech and moral conduct [8]. Shibly and Nairoos emphasize that while the internet provides opportunities for Da'wah, it also exposes Islam to distortion unless Islamic messaging is delivered strategically and with scholarly precision [9].

In the Nigerian context, Sule and Sulaiman provide compelling evidence that Islamic scholars are utilizing platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Telegram to expand outreach and foster interactive learning [10]. Expanding this scope, Sule and Aliyu observe that Muslim students in tertiary institutions are leveraging social media to form Da'wah collectives, thereby positioning youth as key players in digital religious discourse [11].

Nugraha et al. further illustrate the expansion of Islamic Da'wah into sociopolitical spaces, showing how social media is used not just for religious

messaging but also for civic and political education. Yet, their findings highlight that political content often suffers from distrust among youth, signaling a disconnection between Islamic ethics and political discourse online [12].

From a broader sociotechnical perspective, Sebihi and Moazzam reflect on the evolution of religious transmission—from oral to digital—and caution against the growing influence of extremist content online. They advocate for a Qur'an-guided navigation of the digital space, emphasizing resilience and ethical awareness in the face of misinformation [13].

Shehu, Othman, and Osman examine how Islamic ethics interface with social media use. While affirming Islam's openness to technological advancement, they warn that the proliferation of blasphemous content and misinformation requires stronger moral guidance. They call for digital literacy, parental oversight, and even the creation of Islamic-centered social platforms to preserve religious integrity [14].

Focusing on scholarly adoption of digital tools, Nurdin and Rusli argue that despite the widespread use of social media, many Muslim scholars lack the skills and frameworks needed for effective digital Da'wah. They advocate empirical inquiry grounded in technology acceptance models (like TAM) to better understand barriers and potentials for Da'wah innovation [15].

In Northern Nigeria, Rabi'u et al. raise an emerging concern: the rise of atheistic ideologies among Muslim youth, fueled by exposure to secular and anti-religious content on social media. Their research calls for a proactive response combining Islamic pedagogy, critical thinking, mentorship, and targeted content creation to preserve the faith of young Muslims [16].

Finally, Sule et al. explore the broader implications of misappropriated digital content in the context of insurgency. They argue that extremist messaging, often disseminated online, necessitates not just military but ideological and digital countermeasures rooted in social justice and inclusive governance [17].

Collectively, these empirical works underscore a global and local trend: digital media has democratized access to Islamic knowledge while simultaneously challenging traditional authority, ethical standards, and community cohesion. For Northern Nigeria—and Taraba State in particular—these insights highlight the potential and peril of online Islamic outreach. Yet, a distinct gap remains in contextual studies that thematically analyze how Da'wah strategies are practically executed in Taraba State, especially among rural and semi-urban Muslim communities. There is a pressing need for interdisciplinary and localized research that explores the sociocultural, theological, and technical

aspects of digital Da'wah in ways that reflect the state's complex religious and technological realities.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative, exploratory design to investigate the strategies, challenges, and implications of digital Da'wah in Taraba State. The choice of this methodological approach was informed by the need to understand not only the content and delivery of online religious messaging but also the context and lived experiences of Da'wah practitioners and their audiences. Key informant interviews were conducted with selected Da'wah actors known for their online presence across social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Telegram, X (formerly Twitter), and TikTok. These individuals were identified through purposive sampling. The interviews explored their motivations, methods, doctrinal orientations, engagement strategies, and perceived outcomes. Supplementary data were gathered through informal observations of public comment sections, group interactions, and Da'wah group activities on these platforms.

To complement the interview data, a content analysis was conducted. The study's triangulated methods, combining interviews, observation, and document analysis which allowed for a deeper understanding of how traditional Islamic teachings are adapted and conveyed through new digital channels in Taraba State. The methodology ensured that the analysis remained grounded in real-world interactions while offering theoretical insights into digital religious communication.

Result

Platform Engagement and Strategy

Da'wah practitioners strategically utilize a diverse range of digital platforms, selecting those that best align with their target audiences and their technical capabilities. For example, Haruna engages his audience through Facebook (Jibwis Zing & Dr. Tahir Harun Zing), YouTube (Dr. Tahir Harun Zing: @dr.tahirharunzing), TikTok (Dr. Tahir Harun Zing: @dr.tahirharunzing), and WhatsApp [18]. Similarly, Kabiru maintains an active presence on Facebook (Kabiru Adamu Lamido Gora & DR Kabiru Adamu Lamido Gora), Twitter (@kabirgora), YouTube (Kabiru Adamu L/Gora), and WhatsApp, broadening his reach across both social media and instant messaging platforms [19]. In contrast, Usman adopts a more structured method by focusing on Facebook (Usman Bakari), YouTube (Dr Usman Bakari: @drusmanbakari), and a dedicated WhatsApp group linked to Darussa Masjidul Ummah [20].

Other practitioners also demonstrate varied platform usage tailored to their outreach style. Musa operates through Facebook (Abu Maryam Muhammad Dandabara), YouTube (Muhammad Abu Maryam Muhammad: @muhammadmmusa7567), Telegram (@Dandabara), and X (formerly Twitter) MUHAMMAD M MUSA: @MUHAMMA85784658) [21]. Isa curates Da'wah content professionally, utilizing Facebook (Imtiyaz Unique School & Isa Adam Usman), Instagram (@isaadamusman), Telegram (Imtiyaz Unique School Jalingo), WhatsApp (Imtiyaz Masjid Tudun-Haske), and the Darulfikr Da'wah Page to reach a broad and diverse audience [22].

Other notable practitioners include Abubakar, who works via Facebook (Sheikh Abubakar Imam Abbas Fullatee), WhatsApp (Sheikh Fullaty's Archive) [23], and Abdulkadir, who delivers Hadith-based lessons on Facebook (Sheikh Babando Atba'uddalil), YouTube (@sheikhabandoatbauddalil), and Telegram (Atba'uddalil Da'wah Group) [24]. Malam Musa Maikasuwa primarily uses the Izala Youth Organization – Wukari Chapter Facebook page [25], while Bashir engages followers through Ahmad Bashir Yusuf and Ahlussuffa Media Facebook pages [26].

In the educational domain, Ibrahim, Director of ABSARI School, utilizes Facebook (Mall. Ibrahim Umar Abokin Sarki & Jibwis Wukari) and WhatsApp for his outreach [27]. The newest member, Khaleed, Imam of the Wukari Correctional Centre, is active on Facebook through the Jibwis Wukari page. His strategy focuses on growing followers by posting live sessions and engaging the community through video content [28].

Shuaibu manages Facebook and WhatsApp platforms, running regular series like Witriyyah and Hallul Masa'il [29]. Sadisu, a businessman and religious leader, has been active online for two years. He uses Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram, and TikTok to deliver Tafsir and Hadith sessions. His Facebook pages include Zawiyah Tijjaniyah Brotherhood Association of Nigeria and Darul Tauhid Jalingo. His WhatsApp groups include Tahzib Akhlaq Baraya and Makarantar Tahzibul Akhlaq. He broadcasts both video and live sessions, converting content to audio for WhatsApp audiences [30].

Mukhtar, Director of Darul Hadith Centre Jalingo, brings over two decades of digital Da'wah experience. His platforms include:

- i. Facebook: Darul-Hadith Centre Jalingo, Darul Hadiths Centre Jalingo
- ii. YouTube: @darulhadith7449
- iii. Instagram: @darulhadithjaling
- iv. Telegram: Darul-Hadith Center Jalingo

- v. WhatsApp: Darul-Hadith Members, Darul-Hadith Center Jalingo
- vi. TikTok: Darul Hadiths Center Jalingo
- vii. Twitter/X: @HadithDarul

He adapts his content daily based on relevance, targeting youth in particular [31]. This multi-platform approach allows them to effectively reach and engage their followers across different social media and messaging services.

Discussion

Content, Tone, and Engagement Patterns

A critical element of online Da'wah in Taraba State is the diversity of content, tone, and audience engagement strategies employed by Da'wah practitioners. This thematic variety reflects an evolving landscape of digital Islamic outreach, where tradition intersects with innovation, and scholarly authority negotiates with viral logic.

Ibrahim centers his Da'wah around core themes of Tawheed (the oneness of Allah), moral conduct, Hadith, and Qur'anic reflections. His tone is largely positive and encouraging, aimed at reinforcing Islamic values and strengthening faith. Occasionally, he uses a corrective tone to clarify misconceptions or discourage harmful social practices. A notable instance of high audience engagement was his post about the importance of maintaining daily prayers and avoiding distractions, which elicited a wave of affirmative feedback, personal testimonies, and widespread sharing [32].

Isa provides insights into content performance trends. He highlights that short-form videos, interactive posts, user-generated content, and trending religious topics often yield the highest engagement. He also notes that controversial content and Islamic memes tend to go viral, though he cautions against their misuse, emphasizing the importance of ethical framing and doctrinal fidelity. His awareness of digital engagement trends reveals a media-savvy approach that blends spiritual content with platform optimization [33].

Thematic and tonal orientations among other Taraba-based Da'wah actors reveal a nuanced blend of educational rigor, motivational messaging, and reformist critique. Haruna maintains a scholarly focus on ibadaat (acts of worship), tafsir, and moral instruction. His tone is formal and educational, targeting audiences interested in structured learning [34]. Kabiru, meanwhile, addresses Tawheed and social ethics through a motivational lens, often appealing to emotional and spiritual upliftment [35].

Usman distinguishes himself with deep academic content rooted in classical Islamic texts. His tone is analytical and methodical, appealing to students of Islamic sciences [36]. Musa adopts a more accessible and simplified approach, delivering motivational content for broader audiences, especially youths and laypersons [37].

Flexibility in delivery is also evident in the work of Abubakar, who varies his tone and format depending on the social media platform – balancing text-based Da'wah on Facebook with more visual and interactive formats on WhatsApp and YouTube [38]. Abdulkadir contributes by contextualizing Hadith, offering relevant applications to daily life. His tone is explanatory, bridging classical knowledge with everyday practice [39].

Maikasuwa and Bashir utilize a reformist and corrective tone. Maikasuwa focuses on doctrinal and ethical reform, challenging cultural innovations that contradict Islamic teachings [40]. Bashir simplifies Sunnah-based teachings and directly addresses deviations through firm yet respectful correction [41]. Khaleed focuses his online Da'wah on tafsir, salat (prayer), and theological discourse, particularly in response to Qur'aniyyun ideologies that reject Hadith. His tone is both motivational and logically structured, using Qur'anic arguments and emotional intelligence to engage opponents and support seekers of knowledge [42].

Shuaibu covers the sirah (Prophetic biography), worship, and Islamic ethics. His tone is dynamic and adaptive – sometimes gentle, sometimes firm – depending on the subject matter and audience [43]. Sadiu emphasizes the status of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), Islamic unity, the importance of sacrifice, and seeking knowledge. He combines motivational, instructive, and corrective tones, particularly when addressing sectarian divisions or contemporary misunderstandings [44].

Mukhtar represents a pragmatic and socially aware stream of Da'wah. His content focuses on youth empowerment and ethical dilemmas arising in modern contexts – such as riba (usury), artificial insemination, and employment issues under Islamic law. His tone is reform-driven, inspirational, and rooted in real-life applicability. His ability to address practical concerns without compromising on theological integrity distinguishes his contribution to Taraba's digital Da'wah space [45].

Collectively, these actors reflect a highly adaptive ecosystem of digital Da'wah in Taraba State. They deploy a spectrum of tones like educational, motivational, corrective, empathetic, and sometimes confrontational, depending on content type, platform used, and audience demographics. Their ability to communicate complex Islamic themes through accessible and platform-friendly

formats has greatly expanded the reach of Da'wah, bringing classical teachings into new digital public spheres.

Audience Response and Impact

The effectiveness of digital Da'wah in Taraba State is most clearly evidenced through patterns of audience interaction, spiritual feedback, and behavioral transformation. Across platforms and among varied actors, a common thread is visible: audiences are not only consuming content, but also responding, engaging, and adapting their religious lives based on what they encounter online.

Ibrahim whose thematic focus includes Tawheed, Qur'anic lessons, and moral rectitude, reports active engagement from his followers—particularly through questions on improving personal acts of worship like Salat. His audience regularly comments, shares his posts, and poses follow-up inquiries, reflecting genuine interest. He affirms noticeable positive change in behavior and understanding, both at individual and community levels. A post emphasizing focus during daily prayers drew significant attention, sparking deep reflection and numerous affirmations from his followers, suggesting emotional as well as theological impact [46].

Isa complements this with a metrics-based approach. He tracks audience reactions through standard engagement indicators such as likes, comments, shares, watch time, and click-through rates (CTR). His highest-performing content includes short-form videos, trending topics, and even religiously-appropriate memes. While acknowledging their viral potential, he stresses the ethical responsibility in handling such formats. His thoughtful use of feedback mechanisms and audience management tools illustrates a strategic understanding of digital Da'wah that combines doctrinal fidelity with user engagement. Though he does not formally collect testimonials, he encourages digital storytelling as a way to showcase impact [47].

Among scholars and content creators, Haruna receives notable live responses during his lectures and interactive sessions. A recurring audience phrase, "Allah ya saka da alheri" (May Allah reward you), captures the reverent tone and gratitude with which his followers receive his teachings. This reflects a deep sense of spiritual enrichment and trust in his religious authority, reaffirming the human connection behind digital interaction. His thematic focus on Ibadaat and Tafsir is conveyed with an educational tone, and the responses underscore that his content resonates across linguistic and cultural lines [48].

Kabiru similarly receives live and direct audience feedback, especially on topics related to social ethics and Tawheed. His motivational style appeals

particularly to younger audiences seeking faith-based direction in their daily lives [49]. Usman, who offers in-depth sessions on classical Islamic texts, notes a more contemplative form of engagement, often through structured and thoughtful questions [50]. Musa, with his accessible and motivational approach, shares that he regularly receives unsolicited testimonials about the positive influence of his content on youth behavior and personal development [51].

Fullati and Abdulkadir ensure engagement through moderated comments, preserving the integrity of discussions on sensitive topics [52]. Maikasuwa closely monitors the theological understanding of his followers, reporting steady improvements in how they interpret foundational Islamic principles [53]. Bashir Yusuf Ahmed, known for simplifying Sunnah-based teachings, notes many instances where followers credit his guidance for changes in personal conduct and family practices [54].

Khaleed engages audiences through direct calls and active comment sections. His content often attracts deep theological queries, particularly regarding Salat and contemporary debates with groups like the Qur'aniyyun. His instructive tone is both logical and empathetic, fostering both clarity and confidence in religious understanding [55]. Shuaibu, likewise, receives audience feedback through calls and wide post sharing. His dynamic teaching style encourages learners to share content within their networks, extending his reach [56].

Sadisu reports that expressions like "Muna tare" ("We are together") and calls from across Nigeria frequently accompany his content. Audience responses affirm that his teaching – particularly on nuanced aspects of prayer like Jalsatul Istiraha, has directly improved religious practices. He also notes that marriage, divorce, and family issues are common topics in followers' questions [57].

Mukhtar stands out for the scale of his impact. With posts receiving over a thousand comments, especially on socio-ethical issues like riba and exemptions from fasting, his content stimulates sustained dialogue. Even during breaks from posting, he is contacted by followers urging him to return – a testament to his enduring relevance. His engagement shows how online Da'wah can become integral to the religious routines of many, especially youth navigating complex modern challenges [58].

Together, these experiences reveal that digital Da'wah in Taraba is not just content creation; it is participatory, emotionally resonant, and deeply impactful. Through spiritual counsel, doctrinal clarity, and culturally attuned communication, whether in English, Hausa, or Arabic, Da'wah actors are fostering a vibrant digital Ummah in Northern Nigeria.

Challenges in Online Da'wah Practice

While digital Da'wah in Taraba State has opened new frontiers of religious engagement, it is not without significant challenges. Many Da'wah actors report infrastructural, content-related, and sociocultural obstacles that hinder the consistent and effective delivery of their message. For instance, Haruna and Kabiru identify key setbacks such as limited funding, lack of technical support, and digital illiteracy among followers, especially in rural communities [59]. Usman's efforts are frequently disrupted by unreliable internet connectivity, which delays uploads and reduces audience retention [60]. Musa shares difficulties with sustainability and occasional public backlash, particularly when addressing sensitive social issues [61]. Similarly, Da'wah content creators like Maikasuwa, Abubakar, and Abdulkadir highlight criticism from conservative audiences, limited access to funding, and logistical constraints as persistent hurdles in their digital outreach [62].

In these challenges, Ibrahim offers an important insight into the linguistic and cultural diversity of Taraba State. Although he notes that these differences do not greatly affect the reception of his messages, he emphasizes that content delivery often requires adaptation, such as incorporating local dialects or switching between Arabic, Hausa, Fulfulde, or English to resonate with varied audiences. One major difficulty he experiences is low real-time engagement during live sessions, which limits interactive feedback at critical moments of delivery. Nevertheless, he handles criticism with composure – using Qur'anic references and Hadith to clarify misconceptions in a respectful and scholarly tone [63].

On another front, Khaleed faces constant limitations due to data costs and network unreliability, which he counters by ignoring provocations and trolls, choosing instead to remain focused on knowledge dissemination [64]. Sadiu also reports technical setbacks and intermittent connectivity, although he notes minimal resistance to his content due to alignment with his audience's expectations [65]. Meanwhile, Mukhtar points to the more complex challenge of conflicting fatwas, contentious scholars, and the rise of unqualified influencers, which he sees as threats to religious integrity. He advocates for clarification of doubts through offline teaching and adherence to scholarly principles [66].

Culminating this assessment, Isa offers a more systematic and behind-the-scenes perspective on Da'wah challenges. From a technical standpoint, he highlights frequent algorithm changes, platform tool inefficiencies, and creative fatigue, all of which disrupt content planning and delivery. Content-wise, he stresses the difficulty of addressing religious diversity while ensuring doctrinal accuracy. He also notes that managing sensitive topics requires a research-based,

conflict-averse approach, sometimes necessitating deliberate silence to avoid controversy. Linguistically, Isa emphasizes the importance of inclusivity and ethical translation, especially when communicating across cultural lines. In terms of criticism or trolling, he advocates for measured, respectful responses and notes the psychological toll content management can take on solo Da'wah actors [67].

These reflections collectively show that online Da'wah in Taraba State is not a frictionless endeavor. It is shaped by technical limitations, audience heterogeneity, content sensitivity, and the need for ethical navigation of a dynamic digital space. The voices of seasoned practitioners like Ibrahim and Isa underscore both the promise and complexity of Islamic outreach in the digital age. Moving forward, a strategic framework incorporating digital literacy training, institutional support, intercultural communication strategies, and mental health awareness will be vital in sustaining impactful, inclusive, and resilient online Da'wah practices in Taraba and beyond

Implications and Strategic Recommendations

Across the diverse voices of online Da'wah practitioners in Taraba State, there is a shared affirmation that digital platforms are reshaping the landscape of Islamic communication. These actors consistently advocate for greater training, doctrinal precision, and cross-sectarian unity as foundational pillars for sustaining effective online Da'wah. Haruna recommends stronger regulation and institutional support for digital Da'wah practitioners, while Kabiru emphasizes the need for formal training and scholarly alignment [68]. Usman urges the integration of modern technology into religious outreach frameworks [69], and Musa calls for active inclusion of youth in online faith engagement [70]. Abubakar and Abdulkadir emphasize the importance of ethical literacy, advocating for content that is context-sensitive and community-driven [71]. Maikasuwa proposes infrastructure improvement and the strategic development of Da'wah personnel to ensure sustainability [72]. Bashir supports structured orientations for new Da'wah workers, aiming to bridge the gap between classical teachings and modern dissemination tools [73].

In his response, Isa articulates a forward-thinking model rooted in audience segmentation, content moderation, and thematic alignment with the Qur'an—notably invoking Surah An-Nahl (16:125) as a guiding principle. He calls for the use of interactive multimedia, platform-specific content strategies, and positive messaging to reach wider audiences. Isa also outlines key performance indicators (KPIs) such as watch time, click-through rates, comment volume, and engagement ratios as essential tools for content evaluation. He notes that online Da'wah has contributed to inter-sect unity, especially by creating neutral platforms for learning and constructive dialogue. However, he also

stresses the importance of guardrails—clear ethical guidelines to handle controversial themes, emotional feedback, and trolling, advocating a grounded, research-based, and spiritually mature approach [74].

Ibrahim echoes the value of content accuracy and youth inclusion. He focuses on themes like Tawheed, Qur’anic teachings, and good manners, using a tone that encourages positive behavior and faith enhancement. Ibrahim suggests expanding Da’wah through multilingual delivery, tailored to Taraba's linguistic diversity. His strategy is not only doctrinally sound but also pragmatic—he simplifies complex teachings while preserving scholarly integrity. He recommends training more youth and scholars in digital media, creating authentic, engaging content in multiple local languages, and ensuring that messages remain firmly grounded in the Qur’an and Sunnah. Ibrahim’s emphasis on calmness in handling criticism, as well as his commitment to audience feedback, underscores his pastoral sensitivity and effectiveness in spiritual mentorship [75].

Similarly, Khaleed advocates for professional training of social media handlers, recognizing the critical yet demanding role they play in shaping public theology. His content often challenges deviant ideologies, such as Qur’aniyyun, using a motivational and instructive tone grounded in the Qur’an and Hadith [76]. Shuaibu and Sadisu add a deeply spiritual lens to the conversation, underscoring the importance of Taqwa (piety), Ikhlas (sincerity), and Maslaha (public benefit) in online religious communication. He believes that digital Da’wah bridges knowledge gaps and promotes inter-sect cohesion [77]. Meanwhile, Mukhtar, with nearly two decades of experience, emphasizes the necessity of methodological discipline, institutional collaboration among scholars, and the rejection of sensationalism, warning against the growing influence of unqualified preachers online [78].

Da’wah actors in Taraba State prioritize doctrinal accuracy, ensuring online religious content aligns with classical Islamic sources and principles. They adopt diverse yet complementary approaches—from academic rigor to traditionalist verification and peer consultation—highlighting a shared commitment to authenticity. This has fostered an ethically grounded and technologically savvy ecosystem of digital Islamic engagement that promotes knowledge, unity, and reform. However, sustaining these gains requires continued investment in training, collaboration, and ethical standards to balance digital innovation with spiritual depth.

Discussion on the Major Findings

One of the most prominent findings of the study is the diversity of platforms used by Da'wah practitioners in Taraba State. Facebook and WhatsApp dominate, while YouTube, Telegram, TikTok, and Instagram serve as supplementary channels. This aligns with the works of Basri and Murtadlo, as well as Sule and Sulaiman, who observed a similar shift away from traditional media towards digital platforms for Islamic propagation [79]. These platforms offer greater flexibility and access, enabling Da'wah to reach wider audiences more efficiently. The strategic selection of platforms in Taraba State mirrors global trends and underscores a localized adaptation to technological realities.

The range of content shared is equally noteworthy, covering both traditional themes such as Ibadat (ritual worship), Tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis), and social ethics, as well as contemporary issues like artificial insemination, cyber-ethics, and apostasy. This expansion of content reflects what Mahmudah and Nugraha et al. describe as the evolution of Da'wah into domains beyond spiritual guidance, engaging with medical, social, and political concerns [80]. However, the inclusion of sensitive and emerging issues such as artificial insemination is less emphasized in the literature, suggesting that practitioners in Taraba State may be innovating more boldly than their counterparts elsewhere.

In terms of tone and style, the study finds a broad spectrum—from scholarly and didactic approaches to motivational and youth-oriented methods—depending on the audience. This aligns well with the recommendations of Shibly and Nairoos for strategic, audience-sensitive Da'wah communication [81]. It also echoes the theoretical support found in technology acceptance models (TAM), as discussed by Nurdin and Rusli, which emphasize the importance of adaptability in user engagement [82]. The versatility of style observed in Taraba illustrates an effective balance between engagement and reverence, countering Hosen's concern that social media often trivializes Islamic scholarship [83].

Audience engagement was found to be robust and multidimensional, evidenced by likes, shares, private messages, and reports of behavioral change, as well as group discussions. This supports Mahmudah's and Sule & Aliyu's findings that social media fosters interaction and peer-led religious learning, especially among youth [84]. Furthermore, this feedback loop provides metrics that go beyond mere content consumption, reflecting a deeper, more impactful form of engagement. Fatah et al.'s concern with digital incivility also becomes relevant here, as high engagement can be either constructive or harmful, depending on the ethical foundation of the discourse [85].

Despite these advancements, practitioners face numerous challenges, including poor internet infrastructure, limited funding, platform censorship, inter-sectarian tensions, and a lack of digital literacy training. These barriers echo the concerns of Shehu et al. and Nurdin & Rusli, who highlight the technical and institutional limitations that hinder effective Da'wah [86]. Sebihi and Moazzam's warning about the exploitation of such gaps by extremist narratives further underscores the need for resilient and well-supported digital infrastructures [87]. While platform censorship is not widely addressed in the literature, its presence in this study introduces a critical dimension requiring future attention.

The ethical disposition of Da'wah actors in Taraba is another key finding. Most maintain scriptural fidelity, referencing the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical scholars to support their content. This contrasts with Hosen's critique of social media eroding scholarly authority [88], as Taraba practitioners demonstrate a conscious effort to uphold traditional legitimacy even within modern platforms. This ethical orientation also aligns with Shibly and Nairoos' emphasis on precise and well-grounded messaging as a safeguard against distortion, and it may serve as a model for regions where unqualified voices dominate the digital space [89].

Lastly, the study reveals institutional gaps—namely, the absence of coordinated frameworks, ethical guidelines, and policy support for digital Da'wah work. This supports the arguments of Nurdin and Rusli, who found that while social media use is widespread, many scholars operate without adequate training or strategic frameworks [90]. Similarly, Shehu et al. advocate for stronger moral guidance, digital literacy, and even the creation of Islamic-centered platforms to safeguard religious integrity online [91]. The situation in Taraba reflects both a growing urgency and a policy opportunity: structured support and ethical training could substantially enhance the effectiveness and credibility of digital Da'wah in Nigeria and beyond.

Conclusion

The emergence of digital media has transformed the practice of Da'wah from localized and hierarchical efforts into an interactive, decentralized, and highly accessible mode of religious communication. In Taraba State, the growing use of social media by Islamic preachers, students, and community influencers has redefined the contours of religious outreach. The findings of this study reveal a vibrant but fragmented digital Da'wah landscape where different actors employ diverse approaches from traditional scriptural exegesis to motivational speaking and contemporary issue engagement. Social media platforms have amplified the reach of Da'wah, allowing practitioners to engage youth, women, and non-Muslims more directly and frequently than traditional settings permit. However, the study also highlights challenges, including inadequate digital

literacy, doctrinal inconsistencies, insufficient regulation, and infrastructure deficits that limit the full potential of online Da'wah. Moreover, the absence of coordinated institutional frameworks means that individual efforts often operate in silos, increasing the risk of misinformation, radicalism, or content that lacks theological depth.

Given these dynamics, several recommendations are crucial for sustaining and improving digital Da'wah in Taraba State and similar contexts.

1. There is an urgent need for structured training programs to build the digital literacy of Da'wah actors. This includes technical skills for content creation, platform management, and audience analytics, as well as theological training to ensure scriptural integrity in digital spaces.
2. Religious institutions and umbrella bodies like JIBWIS, JNI, Muslim Council, NIC, NSCIA, Sufi Order and all other Muslim Organizations should establish digital Da'wah committees to provide content guidelines, ethical standards, and peer-review mechanisms.
3. Da'wah content should be audience-specific – crafted to meet the spiritual, emotional, and intellectual needs of various demographic groups including women, youths, and new converts.
4. Collaborative campaigns across organizations can pool resources, increase message coherence, and reach a broader audience.
5. Policy stakeholders should invest in affordable and reliable internet infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, to expand the digital reach of Islamic education.
6. Interfaith and intra-faith dialogue platforms should be encouraged to reduce sectarian tensions that sometimes spill over into digital preaching.
7. Mentorship and succession planning should be embedded within Da'wah groups to cultivate younger generations of preachers who are both theologically grounded and digitally fluent.
8. There is a need for continuous impact assessment of online Da'wah efforts, including audience surveys, engagement metrics, and qualitative feedback to refine content and strategy.

If implemented, these recommendations would not only improve the quality and reach of online Islamic preaching in Taraba State but also help

position digital Da'wah as a tool for social harmony, moral renewal, and community development in Nigeria's plural society.

Author Contributions

Bello Ali: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Project administration.

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Conflict of Interest

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