



Social media utilization in Covid-19 epoch: Virtual da'wah-ramadan lectures in Northern Nigeria

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Abstract

Social media have become part of the individual and public lifestyles of Muslims globally. The paper examined the utilization of social media platform such as Facebook and YouTube as an available option to conduct Virtual Da'wah Ramadan lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an and Ta'aleem in Northern Nigeria and this was done with the sampled of scholars from the three zones in Northern Nigeria, i.e. North-West, North-Central and North-East. The paper adopts the use of secondary data as method of data collection where In-depth survey of the various pages/channels on social media and participant observation to obtain data. The researchers purposively sampled nine scholars for the study and survey was carried out on their various social media pages/channels to ascertain their level of utilization of the technology during the COVID-19 period to teach their followers with the restriction of movement and gathering in places of worship in Nigeria. Some of the findings of the study revealed that the sampled Muslims scholars finds it convenient to present live programme of their teachings virtually and post video and audio of their Virtual Da'wah Ramadan lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an and Ta'aleem social media. The research paper concludes Muslim scholars to continue with the utilization of the social media platforms even after the Ramadan and Post-COVID-19 pandemic in carrying out their day to day virtual teachings so that other audience who are not close to their Masjid will benefit from their lectures on the various teachings of Islam.

Keywords: COVID-19, Ramadan Fast, Lectures, Utilization, Social Media

1. INTRODUCTION

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. All praise is due to Allah who created man and bestowed upon him the faculties of learning, speaking and understanding. May His salutations and benediction be upon the noble Prophet Muhammad (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), members of his family, his companions and those who follow his footsteps till the Day of Judgment. Allah created man with the basic function to communicate.

Ngozika, Chinenye & Mathias, (2020) stated that over the years, social media has become an active technological tool in Nigeria; as well as a news and communication channel for the citizenry of Nigeria. Access to mobile telephony especially among the

technologically savvy youths has made dissemination of information easy with a snap of the finger. In recent times, as the pandemic encroaches on and emasculates world activities, social media platforms have been utilized as an information outlet to citizens. Its significance has gained more recognition owing especially to the fact that the government implemented a lockdown policy to curb the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Thus, it has become an active tool for engagement and communication for the dissemination of plausible information. In Nigeria, where a good number of citizens believe that the Coronavirus is a hoax created by the government to corruptly enrich few State officials. This belief is difficult to erase from the minds of many people, thus making almost impossible to adhere to personal hygiene instructions issued by both the World Health Organization and the Nigeria Centre for Diseases Control.

Social media as a tool of communication provides huge information outlets to Nigerians during this pandemic. The announcement of the first Coronavirus victim was made through various social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, and various websites. Since a good number of Nigerians have access to these platforms, it was easy to spread this information. Subsequently, Health Care Agencies such as the NCDC updated the masses on the number of cases that have are positive, fatal or have recovered in Nigeria through these social media platforms. This gave Nigerian citizens a better chance to be fully prepared for Covid-19; as opposed to the period of the Influenza pandemic in which there was limited news on the virus when it came to Nigeria. At the time of the Influenza, the Nigeria government was only able to curtail it in parts of Lagos by disinfecting houses; however, limitations in the spread of information prompted the faster spread of the disease to other parts of the country (Adebowale, 2020).

Contemporary Nigerian Da'wah (proselytization) scenes have been coloured by the active presence of Nigerian Muslims on social media platforms. It has been observed that many activities that are performed to spread Islam and Islamic messages can be classified under the general rubric of Da'wah. This article focuses on what can be considered soft or light Da'wah performed by Muslim scholars in Northern Nigerian, using the new media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram and YouTube to transmit their live programmes, posts and share most of their Da'wah activities.

In today digital era, the internet is more than just a means of seeking information only. The rapid development in internet technology has made the usage of social media sites become an innovative ways for people to communicate with others. According to Moreno, *et. al.* (2013), online social network sites can be defined as service based on the internet that grant people to connect with the other user for sharing the connection within the system while allowing people to design a profile within a limited system. Mainly, people use social network sites such as Facebook, Telegram, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp and MySpace to build and keep up relationships with others (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Social media is one of the best ways to share news nowadays (it may be the only way for some people), especially if you are trying to alert people of something serious in a very, very quick manner. Whether it be Coronavirus (COVID-19) news from individual states or news on a national scope, social media gets the message where it needs to go. We have seen pretty much everything in terms of the coronavirus over the last few days to weeks. The number of people being affected by the illness in states, counties, and specific cities and towns come to mind. This news has made people aware of how the situation has been

constantly deteriorating the sense of normalcy across the nation. Social media has also educated the world about the symptoms of COVID-19 in turn, perhaps saving lives! As a product of the globalized world, social media have created a virtual space of communication and interaction. Many people use it with enthusiasm as it helps humans build communication and connectivity much faster than ever before (Anang G. Alfian).

Remarkably, Nigeria is trying to curb the fast spread of COVID-19 through immediate lockdown of the major epicenters of Lagos, Ogun, and Abuja: commercial and administrative hubs of the country; where there have been spike of coronavirus cases. Some state governors have also taken proactive actions by closing their “borders” in a bid to curtail the spread of the virus. Other measures include prohibition of mass gathering of people at churches, sports arenas and burials while schools were closed nationwide. The achievement of these feats can be attributed not just to the proper healthcare measures but also to the impacts of social media in the country. The social media platforms: WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Zoom have become variable means of communication and engagement by not just the government but by the general populace (Ngozika, Chinenye & Mathias, 2020).

Social media is a crucial source of information nowadays; twitter has the potential to provide real-time content analysis acknowledging the public health authorities to answer the queries of the people quickly (Ahmed et al., 2020). During COVID-19 pandemic, social media have offered immediate disease related information to exchange among the people in real-time. It was found in a study that the H1N1 flu outbreak was also first accounted in social media (Jang and Baek, 2019). Consequently, government organisations such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) began using social media to notify people of the apparent infections like the Zika and Ebola outbreaks (Oh et al., 2020). The continually evolving social media has become a key platform for communication during a crisis.

Social media platforms have played a crucial role in disseminating news about the spread of COVID-19. And with such a wide scope of responsibility and overall power over the distribution of information. Social media platforms are taking their role in the crisis seriously and are continuously rolling out new measures to not only raise awareness about the seriousness of coronavirus, but also fight the misinformation about the pandemic (Sarma Reitere, 2020).

1.1 Social Media and Da’wah

Social media has become a hot topic of debate through its role and effectiveness in creating awareness and giving the sense of motivation among its users on various social, political, economic and religious issues. Social network sites are communication nodes, which ties between individuals, groups, organizations, and related systems with different types of interdependencies. It has included shared values, visions, ideas and group participation events, among numerous other aspects of human relationships (Serrat, 2009). These sites allow individuals to present to others using different formats, including text and video (Hernandez, 2010), allowing individuals to get a visible list of connections with others (Coyle, et al., 2008).

Social networking are described as a technological media, which allows individuals to communicate, build online communities, build in discussions, encourage contributions,

feedback and replies, and share information about things that everyone likes which enable users to find like-minded (Wu, et al., 2009). Once users discover and find like-minded who have the same mutual interest, and are satisfied by using social networks, members can form ad hoc communities. These communities may become the new power to publish and serve Islam. Social networks facilitate unmanaged and untapped online conversations. This helps religion workers to get closer views, and concentrate on Islamic topics which people need (Maoz, et al., 2009).

Before now, Islamic issues were found in audio tapes, books, and booklets which are only available in libraries, Islamic schools, and Masjid. Non-Muslims, and also Muslims cannot benefit from these resources unless they are close to them. Nowadays, Muslims realized and used an information technology in serving and publishing Islam around the world via the social media platforms (Adam, et al., 2009). Different efforts in different Islamic topics, (Glorious Qur'an, *Hadith, Sunnah, Ta'aleem, Seerah, Fiqh*, Translation, etc.) are available in different forms (Audio, Video, Text, etc.) on the internet. These days, the most used media has become the social media. Millions of Muslims and non-Muslims in different countries around the world use the social media sites to conduct an online discussion on different topics. Islam all the time is present in all these social media platforms. This is reflected on the social attitudes of people in general and Muslims in special (Ashraf, 2010).

Sule and Abubakar, (2017) posits that social media, which include blogs (political Blog), networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), video sharing (YouTube) audio sharing (Podcast), mobile sites (2go etc.), image or picture sharing (flicker), etc. have the capacity of boosting participation because of their open, conversational nature, connectedness and textual and audio-visual characteristic appeals. In the past, seeking knowledge about Islam was mainly restricted to the Masjids, educational institutions, and learning from imams and sheikhs. These traditional learning opportunities remain intact. However, now Muslims are also able to learn, question, teach, and network through social media sites. There are more avenues through which to learn about Islam. The Internet has given the public access to all kinds of information and made Islamic literature so much more accessible. On YouTube, for example, you can listen to a lecture in any language you want and whenever you want. Blogging sites such Muslim Matters.org and SuhaibWebb.com have become extremely popular with both Muslims and non-Muslims as a way to gain information and learn about Islam (Salman, 2011).

1.2 Ramadan Fast in Nigerian during Lockdown and Physical Distancing

The Holy Month of Ramadan which is marked by social and religious gatherings where Muslim families and friends unite to break their fast together, after sunset during *Iftar* or before dawn during *Suhour*. This is a period where many Muslims increase their attendance at *Masjid* (mosques) during the month and congregate for lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an at various *Masjid* or designated centres during the day time or at night. It is on record that many Muslims also spend consecutive days and nights at mosques during the last 10 days of Ramadan (*I'tikaf*) for prayers. These traditional and religious practices are regularly observed throughout the month. This year Ramadan falls between late April and late May as the COVID-19 pandemic continues.

Accordingly, World Health Organization, (2020) observed that the transmission of COVID-19 is facilitated by close contact between people, as the virus is spread through respiratory droplets and contact with contaminated surfaces. To mitigate the public health impact, several countries and Islamic organisation have implemented physical distancing measures aimed at interrupting transmission by reducing interaction between people. Hence the adoption physical distancing measures, including the closing of *Masjid* (mosques), monitoring of public gatherings and other restrictions on movement, will have direct implications for the social and religious gatherings central to Ramadan.

During a lockdown you are allowed to do all the essential activities like picking up groceries, going to a doctor or going on a walk, provided you practice social distancing. People working in emergency services are not included in the restrictions. It is advisable to check with the regulations released by your local authorities. Non-essential venues can be closed which include schools, colleges, and businesses. There might be restrictions on transportation as well, depending on the spread of the virus in your locality.

In Nigeria, the situation was more serious and the authorities have put strict measures across the entire country to limit the infection (Kamal, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on Muslims and their religion activities in various ways, including the cancellation of the worship services of various faiths, the closure of Sunday Schools, as well as the cancellation of pilgrimages surrounding observances and festivals (Burke, 2020). Many Mosques, Churches, Synagogues, and temples have offered worship and other religious activities through Live-stream on some the social media platforms amidst lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Parke, 2020).

It is observed in Nigeria, that since the pronouncement by the Nigerian government for lockdown in Lagos, Ogun and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, the Northern Nigeria state governors also took measures to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus to the region. One of the measures taken by the various state governor include the lockdown of their respective states. These lockdown order also affected places of worship which necessitated some Muslim scholars to go online for virtual Da'wah during the Holy Month of Ramadan so as to effectively remind Muslims and Non-Muslims the teachings of Islam as preached by the Noble Prophet Muhammad (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

In Northern Nigeria, Muslims have deepen their faith through various religious activities during year 2020 Ramadan Fasting which took place amid coronavirus pandemic, Muslim scholars and Islamic organisations have resorted to VIRTUAL DA'WAH RAMADAN lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an and, in compliance with the rule of social distancing and lockdown orders by the Nigerian government (Salau & Adunola, 2020).

But due to the overwhelming eruption of the novel COVID-19 pandemic, the Muslim *Ummah's* in Nigeria enthusiasm needs to be reinvigorated as against what obtains of palpable fear over the pandemic outbreak. Hence abide by the government directives and medical regulations therefore resort to the virtual presentations of Ramadan Lectures (Opejobi, 2020). To sum it up, Nigeria as declared by the government there will be no annual Ramadan lectures sessions and no congregational *Taraweeh* in Masjid (mosques), until when the situation permits. We should, therefore, pray with our families at home and stay safe.

Medical experts and mid-course *Ulama's* advice on COVID-19 should be religiously adhered to. This according to Opejobi, (2020) that Muslims in Nigeria must collectively shun the vituperations of extremists in thoughts and actions on any matter, as warned by the Prophet Muhammad (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Accordingly, in the Northern part of Nigerian state of Kano, the State government has reached an agreement with Islamic clerics on suspension of all types of gathering during Ramadan including lectures, *Ta'aleem* and the famous congregational prayers of *Taraweeh* and *Tahajjud* respectively through a statement by the Commissioner for Religious Affairs (Yusha'u, *et al*, 2020).

It has been observed that the COVID-19 pandemic have affected almost all congregational religious rituals of the Muslims in Northern Nigeria, where *Masjid* and centres of learning being closed living the Muslim *Ummah* to observed the religious rituals at home and or neighbourhood *Masjid* (mosque). Not only that, Muslims in the Northern part of Nigeria adhered strictly to the safety measures that were placed by the government, hence utilized the alternative option. The alternative which is to go virtual via the social media platforms to listen or view lectures of prominent Muslim scholars. This is done in order to observe the physical distancing.

To corroborate the above statement, Siddiqi, (2020) states that, social distancing, as per the CDC, entails "remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible" He further stated that in context of Covid-19, some medical professionals are encouraging the term 'physical distancing' as a clearer alternative to social distancing, making it clear that people can still spend time with family and friends using digital technology and social media if they are physically separated Siddiqi, (2020). Establishing an example of precautionary measure, Noble Prophet Muhammad (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) practiced social distancing and advised isolation as well. The following are some *Ahadith* which can be taken into consideration, in order to contain transmission of Covid-19.

It was narrated from a man from the family of Sharid whose name was 'Amr that his father said:

There was a man who suffered from leprosy among the delegation of Thaqif. Prophet Muhammad (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent word to him: 'Go back, for we have accepted your oath of allegiance. (Sunan Ibn Majah, The Book on Medicine, Hadith 3544)

Pledging allegiance was an act that would require the leper to touch or hold the beloved Prophet Muhammad's (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) hand, but the Prophet (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) maintained physical distancing as a precautionary lesson for others, therefore he sent word to him that oath of allegiance had already been accepted and that he should go back home. It was also reported that the beloved Prophet (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is reported to have said

One should run away from the leper as one runs away from a lion (Sahih Bukhari, The Book on Medicine, Hadith 608).

It was narrated from Ibn Abbas that the Prophet Muhammad (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

Do not keep looking at those who have leprosy (Sunan Ibn Majah,
The Book on Medicine, Hadith 3543)

1.3 Available Options/Alternative for Virtual Da'wah Ramadan Lectures

Muslims in Nigeria have observed the year 2020 Ramadan Fasting and other rituals related to the Holy Month with the threat of COVID-19 to their lives. This has left Muslim scholars in Northern Nigeria with no option than to resort to the available technological means to propagate the teachings of the Glorious Qur'an as they are used to in the previous years during Ramadan Fasting as against the physical gathering of Muslims in *Masjid* (Mosques) or designated centres for Ramadan lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an and lectures on other books in relation to the religion of Islam.

The exploitation of online platforms for Ramadan lectures, meetings and another necessary religious gathering can be done through the utilization of Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram, Zoom meeting, Twitter, Webinar, Instagram among others social media platforms as available options.

The President-General, Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and the Sultan of Sokoto, His Eminences said that year 2020 Ramadan Fasting is one with a difference, in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, hence everyone should observe *Salat* (prayer) and other activities connected to Ramadan Fast at home with their families, as Muslims cannot afford to be reckless with their lives. Therefore, it is recommended that Muslim faithful should in addition to the recitation of the Glorious Qur'an, listen to Ramadan lecture through the internet and other virtual means.

Despite the challenges of physical and social distancing, Ramadan lectures and other religious teachings could continue using various information technology (IT) platforms, such as Facebook, Skype, YouTube, Zoom, etc., for live stream preaching sessions. Reliable information and communication technology (ICT) professionals could be consulted for proper guidance. And with this it is observed that numerous Muslim scholars and Islamic organisations have immediately changed their Ramadan lectures to online, by utilizing the "live stream presentation on Facebook and YouTube and also sharing same on the Telegram channels and WhatsApp groups.

It has been observed that the available VIRTUAL DA'WAH RAMADAN lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an and *Ta'aleem* to scholars not only in Northern Nigeria to make use of the Live-Stream on Facebook and the live performance on the YouTube. This is because they are the most easier social media platforms to be utilize for virtual Islamic teachings.

2. METHODOLOGY

This paper performs a social media analysis and content analysis of YouTube, Telegram and Facebook. The paper is also a survey type which adopted the use of secondary data to elicit data from the social media pages/channels of the sample scholars. The population for the study were Muslims scholars'. To elicit the data, the researchers conducted In-Depth survey of the various pages/channels on social media and participant observation to obtain data. The paper adopted purposive sampling technique to select the participants for the research, this has enabled the researchers to sample and select nine (9) scholars who possess in-depth knowledge about the phenomenon investigated from the

three (3) Geo-Political Zones in Northern Nigeria and each zone having three (3) scholars. This is because the aim of qualitative study is not to cover large sample but to study select few participants and examine the phenomenon deeply. The researchers purposively selected nine scholars where In-depth observation was conducted on their activities on social media. The researchers with the used of observation checklist, observed posts, follower/subscribers and viewers of selected Muslim scholars on Facebook, YouTube and Telegram for the period the month of Ramadan for the year 2020/1441 A.H.

This work tends to sample and study selected Muslim scholars in Northern Nigeria and their utilization of social media for VIRTUAL DA'WAH RAMADAN lectures (Da'wah) in the time of COVID-19 pandemic. These scholars includes Professor Muhammad Mansur Ibrahim Sokoto, Dr. Bashir Aliyu Umar, Shaykh Muhammad Bin Uthman, Dr. Isa Ali Ibrahim (Pantami), Shaykh Umar Dada Paiko, Associate Prof. Muhammad Tanko Aliyu, Dr. Mansur Isa Yelwa, Shaykh Dr. Ibrahim Jalo Jalingo and Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Alhaji Abubakar.

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Level of Utilization, Followership/Subscribers/Viewing

This section discussed the level of the utilization of the social media platforms for the presentation of VIRTUAL DA'WAH RAMADAN lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an by the selected Muslim scholars. This includes the number of followers/subscribers and viewers on their various social media platforms and this is presented in a table.

Table 1. Level of Utilization of Social Media Platforms

Scholars	Facebook	YouTube	Telegram	WhatsApp	Zoom
Number of Scholars (9)	9	8	6	9	0

The table above indicate the number of scholars and their utilization of various social media platforms. Nine (9) of the scholars sampled utilizes Facebook for virtual lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an and *Ta'aleem* during the year 2020/1441 A.H Ramadan. Eight (8) out nine (9) of the scholars uses YouTube for their virtual lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an and *Ta'aleem* while six of the scholars utilizes Telegram to share their audio and video on their channels on Telegram. All the nine scholars have their audio and video shared on either their WhatsApp or other WhatsApp groups like Mimbarin Malamai and Darul Fikr, while none of the nine scholar studied utilizes Zoom for virtual lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an or *Ta'aleem* during the Ramadan corresponding with the COVID-19 pandemic because it is still new to people in Northern Nigeria at the time of the study. This implies that Facebook and YouTube are must utilized social media platforms among the scholars.

Table 2. Level of Followership/Subscribers

Scholars	Facebook	YouTube	Telegram	WhatsApp	Zoom
Prof. Muhammad Mansur Ibrahim Sokoto	193.006	860	666	-	-
Dr. Bashir Aliyu Umar	120.020	402	281	-	-
Shaykh Muhammad Bin Uthman	94.719	2,903	1.473	-	-
Dr. Isa Ali Ibrahim (Pantami)	570.684	5.004	10.247	-	-
Shaykh Umar Dada Paiko	10.107	609	-	-	-

Scholars	Facebook	YouTube	Telegram	WhatsApp	Zoom
Assoc. Prof. Muhammad Tanko Aliyu	9.624	-	106	-	-
Dr. Mansur Isa Yelwa	26.002	722	1.629	-	-
Shaykh Dr. Ibrahim Jalo Jalingo	89.271	463	-	-	-
Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Alhaji Abubakar	10.009	359	-	-	-

The above table shows the level of followers/subscribers to each of the scholar's social media pages on their various platforms. Prof. Muhammad Mansur Ibrahim Sokoto has 193, 006 followers on his Facebook page, 860 subscriber to his YouTube and 666 subscribers on his Telegram channel. Dr. Bashir Aliyu Umar have 120,020 followers to his Facebook page, 402 subscribers on his YouTube and 281 subscribers on his Telegram channel while Shaykh Muhammad Bin Uthman have 94, 719 followers to his Facebook page, 2, 903 subscribers to his YouTube and 1, 473 subscribers on his Telegram channel. Dr. Isa Ali Ibrahim (Pantami) have 570,684 followers to his Facebook page, 5, 004 subscribers to his YouTube and 10, 247 subscribers to his Telegram channel. Shaykh Umar Dada Paiko have 10,107 followers to his Facebook page, 609 subscribers to his YouTube and has no Telegram channel as at the time of the study. While Assoc. Prof. Muhammad Tanko Aliyu have 9,624 followers to his Facebook page, as at the time of the study, he has no YouTube channel and has 106 subscribers on his Telegram channel. The table also shows that Dr. Mansur Isa Yelwa have 26,002 followers to his Facebook page, 722 subscribers to his YouTube and 1,629 subscribers on his Telegram channel, while Shaykh Dr. Ibrahim Jalo

Have 89,271 followers to his Facebook page, 463 subscribers to his YouTube and as at the time of the study, he has no Telegram channel. And Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Alhaji Abubakar have 10, 009 followers to his Facebook page, 359 subscribers to his YouTube and as at the time of the study, he has no Telegram channel. This signify that the location of the scholars determine the level or number of social media followers/subscribers. Also, the popularity of the scholar also influence the number of his followers/subscribers. However, Telegram and WhatsApp as social media platforms have no such application that enable one to determine the number of followers/subscribers. And as the time of the study none of the sampled scholars uses Zoom for their virtual lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an.

Table 3. Level of Viewers

Scholars	Facebook	YouTube	Telegram	WhatsApp	Zoom
Prof. Muhammad Mansur Ibrahim Sokoto	8.901	812	-	-	-
Dr. Bashir Aliyu Umar	8.816	534	-	-	-
Shaykh Muhammad Bin Uthman	8.400	2.706	-	-	-
Dr. Isa Ali Ibrahim (Pantami)	9.200	4.343	-	-	-
Shaykh Umar Dada Paiko	2.080	453	-	-	-
Assoc. Prof. Muhammad Tanko Aliyu	2.874	-	-	-	-
Dr. Mansur Isa Yelwa	4.108	551	-	-	-

Scholars	Facebook	YouTube	Telegram	WhatsApp	Zoom
Shaykh Dr. Ibrahim Jalo Jalingo	2.840	392	-	-	-
Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Alhaji Abubakar	3.560	248	-	-	-

In table 3 above, the level of viewers of the social media page and channels of the individual Muslim scholars under study shows that Prof. Muhammad Mansur Ibrahim Sokoto have an estimated of 8,901 viewers via Live-stream on his Facebook page and 802 viewers to his YouTube channel who views his Ramadan lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an and *Ta'aleem* daily during the year 2020/1441 A.H Ramadan Fasting. Dr. Bashir Aliyu Umar have an estimated of 8,816 daily viewers via Live-stream on his Facebook page and 534 viewers on his YouTube channel who views his Ramadan lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an and *Ta'aleem* daily during the year 2020/1441 A.H Ramadan Fasting while Shaykh Muhammad Bin Uthman have an estimated of 8,400 daily viewers of his lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an via Live-stream on his Facebook and 2,706 viewers to who views his Ramadan lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an and *Ta'aleem* daily during the year 2020/1441 A.H Ramadan Fasting via the YouTube. Dr. Isa Ali Ibrahim (Pantami) have an estimated of 9,200 daily viewers of his lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an via Live-stream on his Facebook and 4,343 viewers to who views his Ramadan lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an and *Ta'aleem* daily during the year 2020/1441 A.H Ramadan Fasting via the YouTube. While Shaykh umar Dada Paiko have an estimated of 2,080 daily viewers of his lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an via Live-stream on his Facebook and 453 viewers to who views his Ramadan lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an and *Ta'aleem* daily during the year 2020/1441 A.H Ramadan Fasting via the YouTube. And Assoc. Prof. Muhammad Tanko Aliyu have an estimated of 2,874 daily viewers of his lectures via Live-stream on his Facebook and as at the time of this study there is YouTube channel/page to his name and therefore has no viewers on the YouTube. Dr. Mansur Isa Yelwa have an estimated of 4,108 daily viewers of his lectures via Live-stream on his Facebook and 551 viewers to who views his Ramadan lectures and *Ta'aleem* daily during the year 2020/1441 A.H Ramadan Fasting via the YouTube while Shaykh Dr. Ibrahim Jalo Jalingo have an estimated of 2,840 daily viewers of his lectures via Live-stream on his Facebook and 392 viewers to who views his Ramadan lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an and *Ta'aleem* daily during the year 2020/1441 A.H Ramadan Fasting via the YouTube. And Shaykh Dr. Muhammad Alhaji Abubakar have an estimated of 3,560 daily viewers of his lectures via Live-stream on his Facebook and 248 viewers to who views his Ramadan lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an and *Ta'aleem* daily during the year 2020/1441 A.H Ramadan Fasting via the YouTube. This indicates that the level of flexibility of the social media platforms play a significant role in influencing the number of viewers. Facebook and YouTube are easier to use for virtual lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an /*Ta'aleem* and viewing at the same time Ramadan during the height of the COVID-19 in Northern Nigeria. However, it is impossible to ascertain the number of viewers/subscribers on Telegram and WhatsApp because the applications did not give

room for that. And none of the sample scholars uses Zoom as at the time of the study and therefore their utilization of the platform was not ascertained.

3.2 Discussion of Major Findings

In this section, findings of the data collected from the survey will be discussed. The study assessed the utilization of social media platforms in presenting VIRTUAL DA'WAH RAMADAN lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an during the COVID-19 pandemic in Northern Nigeria.

This paper found out that the proper and appropriate utilization of social media among Muslim scholars has helped significantly in the spread of Islam and its teachings in the event of Ramadan of the year 2020/1441A.H corresponding the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Nigeria. It has provided an avenue for engaging large virtual audience without the constraints of money, time and space. The study concluded that social media have the capacity of boosting participation because of their open conversational nature, connectedness and textual and audio-visual characteristic appeal.

On the utilization of the social media by Muslim scholars, the study revealed that Muslim scholars used most of the social media sites in the creation of Da'wah group, posting and sharing of the messages of Islam must especially the utilization of Facebook Live-Stream and the YouTube for conducting VIRTUAL DA'WAH RAMADAN lectures on the commentary of the Glorious Qur'an during Ramadan. In relation with the findings, Salman (2011) viewed that in the past, seeking knowledge about Islam was mainly restricted to the Masjids, educational institutions, and learning from imams and sheikhs. These traditional learning opportunities remain intact. However, now Muslims are also able to learn, question, teach, and network through social media sites. There are more avenues through which Muslim scholars can teach about Islam. The Internet has given the public access to all kinds of information and made Islamic literature so much more accessible. On YouTube Facebook, for example, you can listen to a lecture in any language you want and whenever you want.

Findings from the study revealed it portrayed that among the social media platforms, large proportion of the Muslim scholars sampled utilized Facebook Live-Stream and the YouTube. This correlates with the findings of (Gehad, Mahdi and Azizah, 2012 and Sule and Abubakar, 2017). The study found out that many of the Social Media platforms like Facebook and YouTube, provide avenue for Muslim Students in sharing permissible components of data with their fellow Muslims friend and relatives.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper suggests that it is very important for Muslim scholars learn and utilize the new technology of the social media in the conduct of all their teachings of the various aspects of the religion of Islam. Social media as a tool is very vital for the Muslim scholars to exploit and make use of it, but it should be used in accordance with the teachings laid down by Islam. The connection between Islam and the social media world is not a new one, and cannot be over emphasized in view of the fact that while the former shapes the latter, the latter helps to disseminate and better express the message of Islam. In modern times, however, it has been refined, and permeated new spaces with a procedure that has greatly affected not only the flow of ideas and information, but also the modes of social

interaction within and among socio-religious communities of the world. And this was so important in the lockdown and restriction on social gathering in the country. It is of utmost importance for Muslim scholars to continue with the utilization of the social media platforms even after the Ramadan and COVID-19 pandemic in carrying out their day to day virtual teachings so that other audience who are not close to their *Masjid* will benefit from their lectures on the various teachings of Islam.

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