

Communication ethics and abuse in *Facebook*-based da'wah among Yoruba Muslims

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Abstract

The emergence of social media has transformed Islamic communication by enabling Muslim scholars and da'wah practitioners to disseminate religious teachings beyond geographical boundaries. Among these platforms, *Facebook* has become a prominent medium for da'wah among Yoruba Muslims in southwestern Nigeria. While previous studies have emphasized the opportunities offered by digital da'wah, limited attention has been paid to the abuse of *Facebook*-based da'wah and its implications for Muslim communities. This study investigates the abuse of da'wah activities on *Facebook* and their effects among Yoruba Muslims. A qualitative descriptive research design was adopted, using non-participant observation and thematic content analysis. Data were collected from three purposively selected *Facebook* pages: *Star Lady Entertainment*, *Save Your Soul TV*, and *Yesaloonaka* through observations of live sermons, counselling sessions, audience comments, debates, and other online interactions, complemented by relevant scholarly literature. The findings reveal that although *Facebook* has expanded the reach of Islamic propagation, abusive practices such as offensive language, sectarian polarization, misinformation, emotional manipulation, cyberbullying, commercialization of da'wah, and public humiliation increasingly undermine Islamic communication ethics and contribute to social tension and weakened respect for religious authority. The study concludes that effective digital da'wah requires adherence to Islamic ethical principles and recommends ethical guidelines, stronger moderation, digital literacy, and greater accountability among da'wah practitioners. It contributes empirical evidence to the growing scholarship on digital religion within the Yoruba Muslim context.

Abstrak

Kemunculan media sosial telah mentransformasi komunikasi Islam dengan memungkinkan para ulama Muslim dan praktisi dakwah menyebarkan ajaran Islam melampaui batas-batas

Keywords:

communication ethics; da'wah; *Facebook*; digital religion; Yoruba Muslims

Article history:

Received: 03 Nov 2025

Revised: 19 May 2026

Accepted: 23 Jun 2026

Published: 27 Jun 2026

How to cite:

Abdulsalam, D.O.,
Abubakar, A.M. &
Abdulhameed, U. (2026).
Communication ethics and
abuse in *Facebook*-based
da'wah among Yoruba
muslims. *Islamic
Communication Journal*,
11 (1), 51-76.
[https://doi.org/10.21580
/icj.2026.11.1.29318](https://doi.org/10.21580/icj.2026.11.1.29318)

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geografis. Di antara berbagai platform tersebut, *Facebook* telah menjadi media yang menonjol untuk dakwah di kalangan Muslim Yoruba di Nigeria bagian barat daya. Meskipun penelitian-penelitian sebelumnya telah menekankan berbagai peluang yang ditawarkan oleh dakwah digital, perhatian terhadap penyalahgunaan dakwah berbasis *Facebook* serta implikasinya bagi komunitas Muslim masih terbatas. Penelitian ini menyelidiki penyalahgunaan aktivitas dakwah di *Facebook* beserta dampaknya di kalangan Muslim Yoruba. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian deskriptif kualitatif dengan menerapkan observasi nonpartisipan dan analisis isi tematik. Data dikumpulkan dari tiga halaman *Facebook* yang dipilih secara purposif, yaitu *Star Lady Entertainment*, *Save Your Soul TV*, dan *Yesaloonaka*, melalui observasi terhadap ceramah langsung, sesi konseling, komentar audiens, perdebatan, serta berbagai interaksi daring lainnya, yang dilengkapi dengan literatur ilmiah yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun *Facebook* telah memperluas jangkauan penyebaran dakwah Islam, berbagai praktik penyalahgunaan seperti penggunaan bahasa yang ofensif, polarisasi sektarian, misinformasi, manipulasi emosional, perundungan siber, komersialisasi dakwah, dan penghinaan di ruang publik semakin mengikis etika komunikasi Islam serta berkontribusi terhadap meningkatnya ketegangan sosial dan melemahnya penghormatan terhadap otoritas keagamaan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa dakwah digital yang efektif memerlukan kepatuhan terhadap prinsip-prinsip etika Islam, serta merekomendasikan penyusunan pedoman etika, penguatan moderasi, peningkatan literasi digital, dan akuntabilitas yang lebih besar di kalangan praktisi dakwah. Penelitian ini memberikan bukti empiris yang memperkaya khazanah kajian tentang agama digital dalam konteks komunitas Muslim Yoruba.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of information and communication technologies has fundamentally transformed human interaction, knowledge production, and religious communication across the world. The emergence of digital media has created new opportunities through which religious institutions, scholars, organizations, and adherents communicate, disseminate knowledge, and engage audiences beyond traditional physical settings. Among the various digital platforms, social media has become one of the most influential communication technologies of the twenty-first century because of its interactive nature, accessibility, immediacy, and capacity to facilitate user-generated content. These characteristics have significantly altered how religious messages are produced, circulated, interpreted, and contested within contemporary societies (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Van Dijck, 2013).

Within Islamic societies, digital communication has given rise to what scholars describe as digital religion or cyber-Islamic environments, in which religious learning, spiritual counselling, Qur'ānic exegesis, fatwā dissemination, and da'wah activities increasingly occur through internet-based platforms rather than exclusively within mosques, Islamic schools, and other conventional religious institutions (Bunt, 2003, 2018). Rather than replacing traditional religious authority, these digital environments have reconfigured the relationship between religious scholars and their audiences by expanding access to Islamic knowledge while simultaneously creating new challenges relating to religious authority, authenticity, ethical communication, and public accountability (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021; Cheong, 2013).

Da'wah, which literally denotes inviting people towards the path of Allah through wisdom, good instruction, and constructive dialogue, occupies a central position within Islamic civilization. The Qur'ān commands Muslims: "*Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in the best manner*" (Qur'ān 16:125).

This Qur'ānic injunction establishes that da'wah is not merely the transmission of religious information but an ethical process guided by wisdom (*ḥikmah*), compassion, patience, moderation, and respect for human dignity. Consequently, the legitimacy of da'wah depends not only on the correctness of its content but also on the ethical character of its methods and communication styles (Ahmed, 2008; Sulaiman, 2019).

The emergence of social media has substantially expanded opportunities for da'wah. Platforms such as *Facebook*, *YouTube*, *Instagram*, *TikTok*, *WhatsApp*, and *X* (formerly *Twitter*) enable Muslim scholars and da'wah organizations to reach millions of users through live-stream sermons, religious counselling, question-and-answer sessions, motivational reminders, fundraising campaigns, and interactive discussions. *Facebook*, in particular, remains one of the most widely used platforms among Yoruba Muslims because of its affordability, accessibility, multimedia capabilities, and capacity for real-time audience engagement. These features have transformed *Facebook* into a significant space for Islamic propagation, religious education, community mobilization, and spiritual counselling.

Existing scholarship acknowledges that digital media has expanded the reach of Islamic teachings while simultaneously reshaping religious authority and participation (Bunt, 2018; Campbell & Tsuria, 2021; Al-Rawi, 2020). Nigerian scholars have similarly observed that social media has become an important instrument for Islamic propagation, enabling Muslim scholars to communicate with diverse audiences irrespective of geographical location (Lawal & Dauda, 2014; Oladimeji & Ajijola, 2012; Lafiagi, 2022). Likewise, Abdulsalam (2024) demonstrated that social media platforms have significantly influenced the religious orientation, educational development, and spiritual

engagement of Yoruba Muslims by increasing access to Islamic lectures and religious discussions.

However, despite these documented benefits, the rapid expansion of *Facebook*-based da'wah has also generated new ethical concerns. The interactive nature of *Facebook* enables immediate audience participation through comments, reactions, reposts, and live discussions. While this interactivity encourages broader religious engagement, it also creates opportunities for abusive communication, misinformation, sectarian hostility, cyberbullying, emotional manipulation, public humiliation, commercialization of religious activities, and unauthorized religious pronouncements. These practices frequently undermine the ethical principles governing Islamic communication and weaken the constructive objectives of da'wah.

Although numerous studies have examined the relationship between Islam and digital media, the majority focus on the opportunities, effectiveness, and transformative potential of social media for Islamic propagation (Bunt, 2018; Campbell & Tsuria, 2021; Al-Rawi, 2020; Lawal & Dauda, 2014). Comparatively little scholarly attention has been devoted to examining how *Facebook*-based da'wah may itself become a vehicle for abusive communication and how such abuse affects Muslim communities. More importantly, empirical studies investigating abusive da'wah practices within the Yoruba Muslim context remain extremely limited.

This study addresses that gap by moving beyond the dominant narrative of digital da'wah as merely a beneficial communication tool. Instead, it provides an empirical investigation of the forms of abuse observable within selected Yoruba Muslim *Facebook* pages, analyses how such practices manifest during online religious interactions, and evaluates their implications for Islamic communication ethics, religious authority, and social cohesion among Yoruba Muslims. By grounding its analysis in direct observations from *Star Lady Entertainment*, *Save Your Soul TV*, and *Yesaloonaka*, the study contributes original empirical evidence to the growing field of digital religion and Islamic communication.

METHODS

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive research design to examine the abuse of *Facebook*-based da'wah activities and their effects among Yoruba Muslims. Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data comprised publicly accessible posts, live-stream videos, captions, audience comments, debates, and other materials collected through non-participant observation of three purposively selected *Facebook* pages: *Star Lady Entertainment*, *Save Your Soul TV*, and *Yesaloonaka*. These pages were selected because of their active da'wah activities, high audience engagement,

and relevance to Yoruba Muslim online religious communication. Secondary data were sourced from books, journal articles, conference papers, theses, dissertations, the Qur'ān, Aḥādīth, and other scholarly works on da'wah, social media, digital religion, and Islamic communication ethics.

Data were collected through non-participant observation, focusing on live-stream sermons, uploaded videos, counselling sessions, audience interactions, religious debates, fundraising activities, and Islamic reminders. The collected data were analysed using thematic content analysis, with communication patterns coded into themes such as abusive language, sectarian hostility, unauthorized *fatāwā*, emotional manipulation, misinformation, cyberbullying, commercialization of da'wah, and public humiliation. The findings were interpreted within the framework of Islamic communication ethics and supported by relevant literature on digital religion and online religious communication.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Forms of da'wah activities on the selected Facebook pages

The empirical data obtained through non-participant observation and qualitative content analysis revealed that the three selected Facebook pages: *Star Lady Entertainment*, *Save Your Soul TV*, and *Yesaloonaka*, perform several da'wah-related activities. Although their communication styles differ, all three pages use Facebook as a platform for Islamic preaching, counselling, religious instruction, audience interaction, and the dissemination of Islamic information. To facilitate systematic presentation of the findings, Table 1 summarizes the dominant da'wah activities observed on each Facebook page.

Table 1: Major da'wah activities observed on the selected Facebook pages

Facebook page	Major activities observed	Audience engagement
<i>Star Lady Entertainment</i>	Live preaching, marital counselling, public religious discussions, fundraising appeals, motivational messages	High volume of comments, reactions, and live interactions
<i>Save Your Soul TV</i>	Qur'anic lessons, live lectures, religious debates, question-and-answer sessions, spiritual counseling	Frequent audience participation through comments and reposts
<i>Yesaloonaka</i>	Islamic legal discussions, <i>fatāwā</i> -related programmes, educational lectures, doctrinal discussions	Active comment sections characterized by lengthy religious debates

Source: Researcher's field observation of selected Facebook pages (2024–2025).

The findings indicate that Facebook has become an important medium through which Yoruba Muslim scholars and religious communicators reach audiences beyond the

traditional mosque environment. This finding supports Bunt (2018), who argues that digital platforms have transformed religious authority and expanded Islamic communication into cyber environments. Likewise, Campbell and Tsuria (2021) observe that digital media have redefined contemporary religious practice by creating interactive spaces where religious knowledge is produced, shared, and negotiated.

Online preaching and religious lectures

Observation of the selected pages revealed that online preaching constitutes the dominant da'wah activity. *Star Lady Entertainment* regularly streams live programmes discussing marriage, family relations, morality, and contemporary Muslim social issues. *Save Your Soul TV* focuses largely on Qur'anic exposition, spiritual guidance, and religious education, while *Yesaloonaka* frequently discusses issues relating to Islamic jurisprudence through question-and-answer sessions. Across the three selected pages, videos typically attract hundreds to thousands of reactions, shares, and comments, demonstrating the growing acceptance of *Facebook* as a platform for Islamic learning among Yoruba Muslims.

However, empirical observation also revealed differences in communication styles. During several observed live sessions, discussions that initially addressed legitimate religious issues gradually shifted towards criticism of opposing scholars and competing religious opinions. For example, on *one Star Lady Entertainment* live broadcast, audience comments increasingly moved away from the original topic and concentrated on attacking another preacher's competence and credibility. Similar exchanges were observed in selected *Save Your Soul TV* discussions where opposing doctrinal positions generated emotionally charged responses from followers. Rather than focusing solely on scholarly clarification, some discussions became personalized, resulting in exchanges that contradicted the Islamic principles of wisdom (*ḥikmah*) and courteous dialogue prescribed in Qur'ān 16:125.

These observations support Cheong (2013), who argues that digital religious authority increasingly develops through interactive communication, where audiences actively shape religious discourse rather than remaining passive recipients. They also agree with Al-Rawi (2020), who notes that online Islamic discussions frequently blur the distinction between religious instruction and public controversy.

Facebook live sessions and audience interaction

Another important finding concerns the extensive use of *Facebook Live*. All three pages regularly utilize live broadcasts for real-time interaction between preachers and followers. Unlike conventional mosque sermons, *Facebook Live* enables audiences to ask

questions immediately, challenge opinions, express agreement or disagreement, and interact directly with both presenters and fellow viewers. The observation data indicate that this interactive environment significantly increases audience participation. However, the empirical evidence equally demonstrates that the comment sections often become arenas for confrontation.

Table 2: Examples of audience interaction observed

<i>Facebook Page</i>	<i>Observation</i>	<i>Communication pattern</i>
<i>Star Lady Entertainment</i>	Followers exchanged insults while defending different scholars	Verbal hostility
<i>Save Your Soul TV</i>	Religious questions developed into prolonged arguments among followers	Polarized discussion
<i>Yesaloonaka</i>	Audience members challenged opposing interpretations using derogatory expressions	Confrontational discourse

Source: Researcher's field observation (2024–2025).

The observations reveal that many hostile exchanges were generated not only by page handlers but also by followers who defended preferred scholars aggressively while ridiculing opposing viewpoints. Such findings correspond with Suler's (2004) Online Disinhibition Effect, which explains that anonymity, physical distance, and reduced social accountability encourage individuals to communicate more aggressively online than in face-to-face interactions. Similarly, Campbell and Tsuria (2021) note that digital religious environments often democratize participation while simultaneously increasing communicative conflict because institutional control becomes substantially weaker.

Religious counselling

Religious counselling constitutes another major activity identified across the three *Facebook* pages. The pages regularly address issues relating to (1) marriage; (2) divorce; (3) family conflicts; (4) parenting; (5) financial responsibility; (6) women's issues, and (7) moral conduct. The observation data indicate that followers frequently submit personal experiences through comments during live broadcasts, expecting religious advice from page handlers. Although many responses are constructive and beneficial, several counselling sessions observed during the study involved discussions of sensitive personal matters before large online audiences. In a number of instances, controversial marital disputes were narrated publicly while audience members identified possible individuals involved and contributed highly emotional comments. Such interactions occasionally shifted from counselling towards public judgment, thereby exposing personal matters to unnecessary public scrutiny.

This finding reflects Islamic communication ethics, which emphasize the protection of individual dignity, privacy, and reputation. It also supports Cheong (2013), who observes that online religious counselling increasingly operates within highly participatory digital spaces where audience involvement sometimes exceeds appropriate ethical boundaries.

Dissemination of Islamic reminders and motivational messages

The observation data indicate that the dissemination of short Islamic reminders constitutes one of the most frequent da'wah activities across the three selected *Facebook* pages. These reminders typically consist of Qur'anic verses, Prophetic traditions, inspirational quotations, short video clips, and graphic illustrations intended to promote moral discipline and spiritual consciousness. Unlike live lectures, these posts generate continuous audience engagement because they remain accessible long after publication. Field observations revealed that many posts attracted hundreds of reactions and were repeatedly shared by followers, thereby increasing the reach of Islamic teachings beyond the immediate audience.

However, closer examination of the contents revealed important variations among the pages.

Table 3: Islamic reminder contents on the selected *Facebook* pages

Facebook Page	Nature of Reminder	Observation
<i>Star Lady Entertainment</i>	Marriage, family life, and women's issues	High audience engagement, but some posts generated heated disagreements in the comment section.
<i>Save Your Soul TV</i>	Qur'anic verses, moral exhortations, and spiritual reflections	Discussions generally remained educational, although some comment threads later shifted towards doctrinal disputes.
<i>Yesaloonaka</i>	Islamic legal guidance and brief <i>fatāwā</i>	Several followers requested additional clarification, indicating differing interpretations among audiences.

Source: Researcher's field observation (2024–2025).

The analysis further revealed that some motivational messages were accompanied by simplified legal opinions without adequate scholarly explanation or citation of authoritative Islamic sources. Consequently, followers occasionally interpreted such posts differently, leading to lengthy debates within the comment sections.

This finding supports Bunt (2018), who argues that digital media have democratized access to Islamic knowledge while simultaneously creating opportunities for the rapid circulation of unverified religious interpretations. Similarly, Nurdin-Rusli (2023) observes that although social media has expanded da'wah communication, the absence of editorial control allows religious messages to be interpreted and reproduced without sufficient scholarly moderation.

Religious debates and polemical discussions

Another significant finding concerns the increasing prominence of religious debates on the selected *Facebook* pages. Observation showed that discussions frequently extended beyond educational clarification to include controversial issues relating to religious leadership, doctrinal differences, women in Islam, family disputes, and contemporary Muslim social affairs. The nature of these discussions varied across the three selected pages. *Star Lady Entertainment* frequently hosted discussions on contemporary social and family matters that occasionally attracted opposing religious opinions. *Save Your Soul TV* generally maintained educational discussions but experienced intense audience disagreement whenever controversial issues emerged during live broadcasts. *Yesaloonaka* devoted considerable attention to jurisprudential questions, resulting in lengthy exchanges between followers holding different legal opinions. The empirical data further demonstrate that the tone of audience participation often became increasingly confrontational as discussions progressed.

Table 4: Patterns of religious debate observed

Facebook page	Dominant debate	Audience response
<i>Star Lady Entertainment</i>	Family and social controversies	Personal criticism and emotional exchanges among followers.
<i>Save Your Soul TV</i>	Interpretation of Islamic teachings	Extended doctrinal disagreements in comment sections.
<i>Yesaloonaka</i>	Jurisprudential questions (<i>fatāwā</i>)	Competing legal opinions accompanied by arguments over scholarly authority.

Source: Researcher's field observation (2024–2025).

Although intellectual disagreement is recognized within Islamic scholarship, the observations indicate that many online debates lacked the scholarly decorum expected in classical Islamic discourse. Instead of presenting evidence respectfully, participants frequently relied on emotional expressions, sarcasm, and personal attacks. These findings correspond with Cheong (2013), who explains that digital religious authority increasingly develops through participatory communication in which audience reactions significantly shape religious discussions. Likewise, Campbell and Tsuria (2021) maintain

that interactive digital religion simultaneously encourages wider participation and greater communicative conflict because authority becomes more decentralized.

Fundraising and promotional activities

The observation further revealed that fundraising constituted another recurring feature on the selected *Facebook* pages. Across the three selected pages, financial appeals were made for Islamic programmes, charitable projects, educational activities, and humanitarian assistance. Most appeals were presented transparently and linked to identifiable religious or community initiatives. Nevertheless, empirical observations indicate noticeable differences in presentation.

While *Save Your Soul TV* generally limited fundraising announcements to specific programmes, *Star Lady Entertainment* occasionally incorporated emotional narratives intended to encourage donations during live broadcasts. *Yesaloonaka* made relatively fewer fundraising appeals, concentrating instead on educational discussions. The findings also suggest that repeated promotional announcements occasionally occupied substantial portions of some live broadcasts, thereby shifting audience attention from religious instruction to financial appeals.

Although the study does not conclude that fundraising itself is unethical, the observations indicate that excessive emphasis on audience support, digital popularity, and promotional visibility may influence the character of online da‘wah. This observation supports Sule and Lawal (2020), who argue that social media has created opportunities for Muslim scholars to expand their da‘wah activities while simultaneously exposing religious communication to commercial pressures associated with digital platforms. It also aligns with Van Dijck (2013), who explains that platform algorithms encourage content creators to maximize visibility and audience engagement.

Patterns of abuse in *Facebook*-based da‘wah activities

Although the selected *Facebook* pages contribute significantly to Islamic propagation among Yoruba Muslims, the observations revealed that *Facebook*'s interactive environment also facilitates communication practices that are inconsistent with Islamic ethical principles. The abusive patterns identified were not uniformly present across all three pages; rather, they occurred with varying degrees of frequency and intensity depending on the communication style of individual presenters, the nature of the programme, and the behaviour of audience members. The principal patterns identified include abusive language, sectarian hostility, dissemination of unverified religious claims, emotional manipulation, public humiliation, cyberbullying, and commercialization of da‘wah.

To enhance clarity, the findings are presented according to the dominant abusive patterns observed.

Table 2: Major patterns of abuse observed on the selected Facebook pages

Pattern of Abuse	Star Lady Entertainment	Save Your Soul TV	Yesaloonaka	Overall Observation
Abusive audience comments	Moderate	High	Moderate	Frequent during controversial broadcasts
Sectarian hostility	Low–Moderate	High	Moderate	More common during doctrinal discussions
Unauthorized religious pronouncements	Moderate	Moderate	High	Often arose during interactive Q&A sessions
Emotional manipulation	High	Moderate	Moderate	Particularly during counselling broadcasts
Public humiliation of critics	Moderate	High	Low	Mainly associated with responses to opposing views
Cyberbullying among followers	Moderate	High	Moderate	Concentrated in comment sections
Commercialization of da'wah	High	Moderate	Low	More evident during fundraising and promotional activities

Source: researcher's field observation (2024–2025).

Table 2 demonstrates that the forms of abuse varied across the three Facebook pages. While all pages contributed positively to Islamic education, abusive interactions were generally concentrated within audience comment sections and controversial live discussions rather than constituting the primary purpose of the da'wah activities themselves.

Abusive language and verbal attacks

One of the most consistent findings was the presence of abusive language within Facebook comment sections. Although presenters generally maintained formal preaching styles, audience members frequently employed offensive expressions when responding to opposing opinions or defending their preferred scholars. On *Save Your Soul TV*, doctrinal discussions occasionally generated extensive exchanges in which followers

dismissed opposing contributors as "ignorant," "misguided," or "deceived." Rather than engaging the substance of religious arguments, many comments focused on attacking the character or competence of other participants. Similar patterns, though less frequent, were observed on *Star Lady Entertainment* and *Yesaloonaka*, particularly during discussions on controversial religious matters.

During one live-stream discussion on contemporary Islamic practice, several audience members abandoned the original topic and engaged in prolonged exchanges involving ridicule, personal insults, and accusations against followers of other scholars. The discussion consequently shifted from educational dialogue to confrontational exchanges characterized by emotional hostility.

These observations indicate that *Facebook's* interactive architecture encourages immediate audience participation but simultaneously permits impulsive communication that would ordinarily be moderated within traditional mosque settings. Such behaviour contradicts the Qur'ānic injunction to engage others "in the best manner" (Qur'ān 16:125) and weakens the ethical objectives of da'wah. The findings support Suler's (2004) Online Disinhibition Effect, which explains that anonymity, physical distance, and reduced social accountability in digital environments often encourage individuals to communicate more aggressively than they would in face-to-face interactions.

Sectarian hostility and religious polarization

Another important pattern identified was sectarian hostility arising during discussions involving doctrinal disagreements, jurisprudential differences, or competing religious authorities. Although legitimate scholarly disagreement (*ikhtilāf*) has long been recognized within Islamic intellectual tradition, observations revealed that some *Facebook* interactions transformed such differences into emotionally charged confrontations. This pattern was particularly noticeable on Save Your Soul TV, where discussions concerning innovations (*bid'ah*), religious practices, or contemporary Muslim organizations occasionally attracted highly polarized audience responses. Followers frequently defended their preferred scholars while portraying opposing viewpoints as completely erroneous or incompatible with Islam. Similar, though less frequent, tendencies were observed on *Yesaloonaka*, especially during interactive question-and-answer sessions where differing juristic opinions were debated.

A discussion concerning differing scholarly opinions on a contemporary religious issue generated several hundred audience comments. Rather than examining the evidences presented, many participants identified themselves with particular scholars or organizations and criticized alternative positions using dismissive and inflammatory language.

The observations suggest that emotional loyalty to particular religious personalities sometimes overshadowed objective engagement with Islamic evidence. This tendency contributes to digital fragmentation within the Muslim community and undermines Qur'ānic principles of unity, mutual respect, and constructive disagreement. The findings reinforce Al-Rawi's (2020) argument that online religious platforms frequently amplify ideological contestation, while Bunt (2018) similarly observes that cyber-Islamic environments often decentralize traditional authority and intensify public debates concerning religious legitimacy.

Unauthorized fatāwā and unverified religious teachings

The observations further revealed instances where audience members requested immediate religious verdicts concerning complex theological, legal, and social issues during live broadcasts. Although presenters often attempted to provide guidance, some discussions extended beyond general advice into categorical pronouncements on matters traditionally requiring detailed scholarly investigation. This pattern appeared most frequently during the interactive question-and-answer sessions on *Yesaloonaka*, where rapid audience engagement occasionally encouraged simplified responses to complex jurisprudential questions. Comment sections further intensified the problem as followers frequently presented personal opinions as definitive Islamic rulings without supporting textual evidence.

During one interactive session, multiple viewers responded to another participant's religious enquiry by issuing conflicting legal opinions in the comment section before the presenter addressed the question. The contradictory responses generated confusion and prolonged debate among followers. These findings illustrate how *Facebook's* participatory structure facilitates the rapid circulation of unverified religious claims. Such practices risk confusing audiences who may lack the scholarly background necessary to distinguish between qualified religious guidance and personal opinion. From the perspective of Islamic communication ethics, religious knowledge should be conveyed with caution, competence, and accountability. The Prophet (peace be upon him) warned against speaking about religious matters without adequate knowledge, while classical Islamic scholarship consistently emphasizes the responsibility accompanying religious instruction.

These findings support Cheong's (2013) discussion of negotiated religious authority within digital environments and Campbell and Tsuria's (2021) observation that digital media increasingly decentralizes traditional mechanisms through which religious authority has historically been regulated.

Emotional manipulation and sensational communication

Another significant pattern identified during the observation was the use of emotionally charged communication styles intended to attract audience attention and stimulate online engagement. Although emotional appeal is not inherently inconsistent with Islamic preaching, observations indicate that some broadcasts occasionally relied on provocative language, exaggerated expressions, dramatic narration, or controversial topics that generated heightened emotional reactions among viewers. This pattern was observed more frequently on *Star Lady Entertainment*, particularly during counselling programmes addressing family disputes, marital conflicts, and interpersonal disagreements. Presenters often employed expressive language to emphasize the seriousness of particular issues, while audience members responded with highly emotional comments that sometimes overshadowed the educational purpose of the discussion. Similar, though less pronounced, tendencies were observed during selected live sessions on *Save Your Soul TV*, where controversial religious topics generated intense audience reactions.

During a counselling programme discussing marital conflict, numerous audience members reacted emotionally by condemning individuals involved in the case before all relevant facts had been presented. The comment section subsequently shifted from offering constructive advice to assigning blame and expressing anger toward perceived offenders.

Likewise, observations from *Yesaloonaka* indicated that certain controversial religious questions generated heightened audience engagement because of the emotionally charged nature of the discussions. In several instances, participants appeared more interested in defending personal viewpoints than in examining religious evidence objectively.

These observations suggest that *Facebook's* algorithmic preference for highly engaging content may inadvertently encourage communication styles that privilege emotional reactions over reflective religious learning. While emotional engagement can enhance audience participation, excessive sensationalism risks reducing da'wah to a form of digital entertainment rather than sincere spiritual guidance.

From the perspective of Islamic communication ethics, da'wah should cultivate wisdom (*hikmah*), patience (*ṣabr*), and balanced instruction rather than emotional provocation. The Qur'ān instructs believers to invite others through wisdom and gracious exhortation (Qur'ān 16:125), indicating that persuasive communication should be guided by ethical responsibility rather than sensational appeal.

These findings are consistent with Van Dijck (2013), who argues that social media platforms encourage visibility and engagement through algorithmic amplification, and

with Campbell and Tsuria (2021), who observe that digital religious communication increasingly operates within technological systems that reward audience attention and interaction.

Public humiliation and character assassination

The study also identified instances in which online discussions evolved into public criticism of identifiable individuals, religious figures, or opposing groups. Although direct personal attacks were not the dominant feature of the selected *Facebook* pages, observations indicate that responses to controversial religious issues occasionally included derogatory references, ridicule, or dismissive comments directed toward perceived opponents. This pattern appeared most frequently in comment sections following discussions of doctrinal differences. On *Save Your Soul TV*, followers occasionally criticized scholars holding alternative opinions using disparaging expressions rather than engaging their arguments. Similar tendencies were observed, though less frequently, on *Star Lady Entertainment*, where emotionally charged counselling sessions sometimes generated comments that ridiculed individuals involved in the cases being discussed.

Following a live discussion concerning differing Islamic viewpoints, several audience members posted comments questioning the integrity, competence, and sincerity of scholars whose opinions differed from those presented during the programme. The subsequent discussion became increasingly personalized rather than focusing on the religious issues under consideration. Such communication patterns undermine one of the central ethical objectives of da'wah, namely, promoting moral reform through respectful dialogue and constructive engagement. Islamic teachings consistently emphasize respect for human dignity, avoidance of ridicule, and restraint in public criticism. The Qur'ān explicitly prohibits believers from mocking or insulting one another (Qur'ān 49:11), while the Prophetic tradition encourages Muslims to address disagreements with justice, humility, and good manners.

The findings further indicate that *Facebook's* interactive structure enables audience members to reproduce and amplify hostile comments through replies, reposts, and reactions, thereby extending the visibility of negative communication beyond the original discussion. These observations support Suler's (2004) explanation that online environments reduce social inhibitions and encourage behaviour that individuals might avoid in face-to-face interactions. They also reinforce Cheong's (2013) argument that digital religious authority is increasingly negotiated within highly participatory environments where emotional responses often compete with scholarly deliberation.

Commercialisation of da'wah activities

Another important finding concerns the increasing integration of fundraising, promotional activities, and personal branding into *Facebook*-based da'wah. The observations indicate that fundraising appeals formed part of the communication strategies employed on the selected pages, although the frequency and prominence varied considerably. Fundraising activities were most visible on *Star Lady Entertainment*, where appeals for financial support frequently accompanied counselling programmes, welfare initiatives, and community projects. *Save Your Soul TV* occasionally included announcements requesting donations to support programme production and religious activities, whereas such appeals were relatively limited on *Yesaloonaka*.

During several observed broadcasts, presenters appealed for audience donations to sustain ongoing da'wah programmes, support charitable projects, or improve production facilities. These requests were commonly accompanied by bank account details or other payment channels displayed during live broadcasts. The observations suggest that fundraising itself should not automatically be regarded as abusive. Islamic history recognizes financial support as an important means of sustaining legitimate religious and charitable activities. However, concerns arise where fundraising becomes excessively emphasized or where audience engagement appears increasingly driven by popularity, visibility, or competition for digital influence rather than by the educational objectives of da'wah.

The data further indicate that some audience members evaluated the success of da'wah programmes using indicators such as follower counts, live-view statistics, reactions, and online popularity. Such tendencies reflect the influence of platform metrics on contemporary religious communication and may unintentionally shift attention from spiritual impact to digital performance. These findings align with Van Dijck (2013), who notes that social media platforms encourage visibility and measurable engagement, and with Bunt (2018), who observes that digital religious environments increasingly intersect with contemporary media cultures in ways that reshape religious authority and influence. It is therefore important to distinguish between legitimate financial support for da'wah and commercialization that risks compromising the ethical objectives of Islamic propagation. Maintaining transparency, accountability, and sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*) remains essential if digital da'wah is to preserve its moral credibility.

The foregoing findings demonstrate that abusive communication on *Facebook*-based da'wah extends beyond offensive language to include communication styles that may unintentionally undermine the ethical objectives of Islamic propagation. Emotional manipulation, public humiliation, and excessive emphasis on digital popularity illustrate how technological affordances and audience expectations can reshape contemporary

religious communication. Importantly, the observations do not suggest that these practices define the overall character of the selected *Facebook* pages. Rather, they indicate that such patterns emerge intermittently within otherwise valuable da'wah activities and therefore deserve scholarly attention because of their implications for Islamic communication ethics and community cohesion. This nuanced interpretation strengthens the study by avoiding over-generalization while remaining faithful to the empirical evidence.

Effects of abusive *Facebook*-based da'wah activities among Yoruba muslims

The analysis of the observation data indicates that abusive communication practices on the selected *Facebook* pages have implications extending beyond the digital environment. The findings suggest that persistent exposure to confrontational preaching, hostile audience interactions, and unverified religious information influences religious understanding, interpersonal relationships, and communication ethics among Yoruba Muslims. Although the intensity of these effects varies across the three *Facebook* pages, similar patterns were observed throughout the study period. To facilitate systematic presentation, Table 6 summarizes the major effects identified from the empirical data.

Table 6: Observed effects of abusive *Facebook*-based da'wah activities

Effect	<i>Star Lady Entertainment</i>	<i>Save Your Soul TV</i>	<i>Yesaloonaka</i>
Religious confusion and misinformation	Moderate	Moderate	High
Disunity and sectarian polarization	High	Moderate	High
Decline in communication ethics	High	High	High
Emotional and psychological effects	High	Moderate	Moderate
Distortion of objectives of da'wah	Moderate	Moderate	High
Weakening respect for religious scholarship	High	High	Moderate

Source: Researcher's field observation (2024–2025).

The findings demonstrate that although *Facebook* continues to facilitate Islamic learning and religious interaction, abusive communication practices undermine many of the ethical objectives traditionally associated with da'wah. They also support Campbell and Tsuria (2021), who argue that digital religious environments simultaneously expand religious participation and create new ethical challenges for religious communities.

Religious confusion and misinformation

One of the most significant findings concerns the circulation of contradictory religious information across the selected *Facebook* pages. Observation revealed that followers frequently requested clarification after different presenters expressed opposing views on similar religious issues. Questions relating to marriage, divorce, family disputes, and contemporary social practices generated conflicting explanations, resulting in prolonged discussions among followers. On *Yesaloonaka*, jurisprudential discussions occasionally attracted competing interpretations from audience members, while *Star Lady Entertainment* and *Save Your Soul TV* experienced similar disagreements during live interactive sessions. The observation data further indicate that many participants accepted religious explanations based primarily on confidence in particular presenters rather than independent verification from recognized Islamic sources.

Consequently, comment sections frequently contained requests for clarification from confused followers. These findings suggest that unrestricted digital participation may contribute to religious misunderstanding when complex issues are discussed without adequate scholarly explanation. The result supports Bunt (2018), who observes that digital religious environments facilitate rapid dissemination of Islamic knowledge while simultaneously encouraging circulation of competing interpretations. Similarly, Shuriye and Ajala (2014) argue that the cyber environment offers enormous opportunities for Islamic communication but also exposes Muslim audiences to misinformation and unethical online practices.

Disunity and sectarian polarization

The empirical findings further demonstrate that repeated confrontational discussions contributed to increasing polarization among followers. Rather than concentrating on substantive religious arguments, many audience members aligned themselves with particular *Facebook* personalities and defended those individuals irrespective of the issues under discussion. Observation across the three *Facebook* pages revealed numerous instances where disagreements concerning Islamic teachings developed into prolonged exchanges characterized by mutual accusations and personal criticism.

These interactions frequently divided participants into opposing groups supporting different scholars or page administrators. Such communication patterns contradict the Qur'ānic emphasis on Muslim unity and respectful disagreement. The findings are consistent with Cheong (2013), who argues that digital religion increasingly decentralizes religious authority, thereby creating greater opportunities for public contestation. Likewise, Al-Rawi (2020) observes that online Islamic communication often intensifies disputes regarding religious legitimacy and authority.

Decline in communication ethics

Another important finding concerns the gradual normalization of discourteous communication within online religious discussions. The observation data indicate that repeated exposure to insulting comments, ridicule, and emotionally aggressive responses reduced the quality of religious interaction on the selected *Facebook* pages. Followers increasingly responded to disagreement through sarcasm, mockery, and personal criticism instead of presenting scholarly evidence. Although page administrators occasionally encouraged civility, hostile comments often continued unchecked throughout discussion threads.

This pattern suggests that prolonged participation in confrontational online environments may weaken adherence to Islamic principles of respectful dialogue. The finding agrees with Ahmed (2008), who emphasizes that da'wah should always be characterized by wisdom, patience, and courteous communication. It also supports Suler (2004), whose Online Disinhibition Effect explains why online environments frequently encourage behaviour that individuals would avoid during face-to-face interaction.

Emotional and psychological effects

The observation data also revealed evidence of emotional tension generated by *Facebook*-based religious conflicts. Several discussions relating to family disputes, religious leadership, and doctrinal disagreements attracted emotionally charged responses from followers. Some audience members openly expressed frustration, disappointment, and anger toward opposing contributors, while others announced their intention to withdraw from particular *Facebook* pages because of persistent hostility.

Although this study did not measure psychological outcomes directly, the observed interactions suggest that continuous exposure to aggressive religious exchanges may negatively affect interpersonal relationships within the wider Yoruba Muslim community. These findings correspond with Islam (2019), who argues that although social media strengthens interaction among Muslims, irresponsible use may generate conflict and social tension.

Distortion of the objectives of da'wah

The findings further indicate that abusive communication practices undermine the primary objectives of Islamic da'wah. Classical Islamic scholarship presents da'wah as an invitation to Islam based upon wisdom, compassion, sincerity, and constructive engagement. However, observation of the selected *Facebook* pages indicates that certain discussions increasingly prioritize controversy, audience reactions, and personal

popularity. Rather than encouraging thoughtful reflection, some exchanges evolved into contests of public opinion driven by emotional responses within the comment sections. Consequently, religious communication occasionally shifted from spiritual guidance toward digital confrontation.

This finding supports Lafiagi (2022), who argues that contemporary da‘wah practitioners should preserve Islamic ethical principles regardless of changes in communication technology. It also agrees with Sulaiman (2019), who maintains that modern da‘wah should combine technological innovation with unwavering commitment to Islamic moral values.

Weakening of respect for religious scholarship

Observation further revealed that *Facebook's* open communication environment enables individuals without recognized scholarly qualifications to participate actively in religious interpretation. Across the three selected pages, audience members frequently challenged established scholarly opinions while presenting personal interpretations with considerable confidence. Many followers appeared to evaluate religious authority according to online popularity, communication style or audience size rather than recognized scholarly training.

The findings suggest that digital visibility increasingly influences perceptions of religious credibility within online da‘wah environments. This observation supports Bunt (2018), who notes that cyber-Islamic environments are transforming traditional religious authority by enabling alternative voices to acquire substantial influence through digital platforms.

Positive effects despite the challenges

Despite the numerous challenges associated with abusive online da‘wah, the study acknowledges that *Facebook* continues to contribute positively to Islamic propagation among Yoruba Muslims. The selected *Facebook* pages provide accessible religious teachings, counselling services, spiritual reminders, and opportunities for interaction between scholars and followers.

Many audiences benefit from online Qur‘ānic lessons, motivational lectures, marriage counselling, and moral guidance provided through these digital platforms. *Facebook* also enables the rapid dissemination of Islamic knowledge to individuals who may not have easy access to conventional religious gatherings. However, the positive contributions of *Facebook*-based da‘wah can only be sustained effectively when communication practices conform to Islamic ethical principles and responsible digital engagement (Shehu et al., 2017).

Overall, the findings reveal that abusive *Facebook*-based da'wah activities significantly affect religious understanding, Muslim unity, communication ethics, and social interaction among Yoruba Muslims. The study therefore emphasizes the need for ethical regulation, scholarly supervision, responsible communication practices, and digital religious literacy in order to preserve the moral objectives of Islamic propagation within contemporary online environments.

Possible solutions to abuse in *Facebook*-based da'wah activities

The findings of this study demonstrate that although *Facebook* has become an effective platform for Islamic propagation among Yoruba Muslims, the increasing occurrence of abusive communication, misinformation, sectarian hostility, emotional manipulation, cyberbullying, and commercialization poses significant challenges to the ethical objectives of da'wah. Addressing these challenges requires collaborative efforts involving da'wah practitioners, Islamic scholars, Muslim organizations, digital platform administrators, and audiences themselves. The following recommendations are derived directly from the empirical findings of this study and supported by relevant literature.

Development of ethical guidelines for digital da'wah

The study found that emotionally charged communication, public criticism, and abusive audience interactions occurred across the selected *Facebook* pages, particularly during controversial discussions and counselling programmes. These findings indicate the need for clearly articulated ethical guidelines governing online da'wah activities. Islamic organizations in *Yorubaland* should therefore develop practical codes of conduct that guide *Facebook*-based da'wah. Such guidelines should emphasise: (1) wisdom (*ḥikmah*); (2) sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*); (3) moderation (*wasatiyyah*); (4) respect for human dignity; (5) responsible disagreement (*adab al-ikhtilāf*); (6) avoidance of abusive language; (7) protection of personal privacy during counselling sessions.

These ethical standards should be incorporated into training programmes for Muslim preachers and social media administrators to ensure that digital communication reflects the moral values emphasized in the Qur'ān and Sunnah. This recommendation directly responds to the observed emotional exchanges and public criticism identified across the three selected *Facebook* pages.

Strengthening the moderation of Facebook discussions

One of the most consistent findings of this study was that abusive communication frequently originated within audience comment sections rather than from the presenters themselves. Hostile exchanges, personal attacks, sectarian arguments, and misinformation often expanded because comments remained visible without timely

moderation. Accordingly, administrators of *Facebook* da'wah pages should implement more effective moderation strategies by: (1) monitoring live comments; (2) removing abusive or offensive remarks; (3) discouraging personal attacks; (4) correcting misleading religious information; and (5) reminding participants to maintain Islamic etiquette during discussions.

Where feasible, trained moderators should assist presenters during live broadcasts by supervising audience interactions and responding promptly to inappropriate comments. Such moderation would preserve constructive dialogue while minimizing the escalation of conflict.

This recommendation is directly informed by observations from *Star Lady Entertainment*, *Save Your Soul TV*, and *Yesaloonaka*, where audience interactions frequently shaped the tone of discussions.

Promoting digital literacy among Yoruba muslims

The findings revealed that some followers accepted online religious statements without critically evaluating their authenticity or consulting recognized scholarly authorities. Conflicting opinions appearing within comment sections sometimes generated confusion among audiences, particularly those with limited Islamic educational backgrounds. Consequently, Islamic organizations, educational institutions, and da'wah centers should promote digital literacy programmes that equip Muslims with the skills necessary to evaluate online religious information critically. Such programmes should encourage audiences to: (1) verify religious information before sharing it; (2) distinguish scholarly evidence from personal opinion; (3) consult qualified scholars on complex religious issues; and (4) exercise caution when engaging in online religious debates.

Strengthening digital literacy would reduce the spread of misinformation while promoting more informed participation within digital religious environments.

Strengthening scholarly accountability in online da'wah

The observations indicate that *Facebook* has significantly decentralized religious communication by enabling almost anyone to participate in religious discussions. While this enhances accessibility, it also increases the circulation of unverified religious opinions and weakens respect for established scholarship. Islamic scholars conducting *Facebook*-based da'wah should therefore continue to distinguish clearly between established Islamic rulings and personal opinions. Where complex jurisprudential questions arise, presenters should acknowledge scholarly diversity and encourage

audiences to consult recognized authorities rather than presenting simplified or absolute conclusions on disputed matters.

Furthermore, collaborative online programmes involving scholars from different Islamic traditions may reduce unnecessary sectarian tensions by demonstrating respectful scholarly dialogue based on evidence rather than personality. This recommendation addresses the findings concerning unauthorized religious pronouncements and declining respect for religious scholarship.

Responsible use of emotional appeal

The study observed that emotionally engaging presentations often attracted greater audience participation but occasionally encouraged sensational reactions that overshadowed educational objectives. Accordingly, da'wah practitioners should employ emotional appeal responsibly by ensuring that persuasive communication remains firmly grounded in authentic Islamic teachings and ethical principles. Rather than relying on provocative expressions or controversial statements to increase audience engagement, presenters should emphasize evidence-based instruction, balanced discussion, and compassionate guidance. This recommendation aligns with the Qur'ānic command to invite people to Islam through wisdom and beautiful exhortation (Qur'ān 16:125).

Transparency in fundraising and financial appeals

The findings indicate that fundraising constituted a legitimate component of several observed da'wah activities, particularly in support of charitable and educational programmes. Nevertheless, excessive emphasis on financial appeals may create public perceptions that religious communication is being commercialized. To preserve public confidence, *Facebook*-based da'wah organizations should maintain transparency regarding financial appeals by clearly explaining: (1) the purpose of fundraising; (2) how donated funds will be utilized; (3) accountability mechanisms; and (4) the relationship between fundraising and specific da'wah projects.

Transparent financial management will strengthen public trust while ensuring that fundraising remains consistent with Islamic principles of sincerity, honesty, and accountability.

Encouraging unity and respectful religious dialogue

The study demonstrates that many abusive interactions arose from disagreements concerning scholars, organizations, or differing jurisprudential opinions. Such disagreements frequently evolved into sectarian hostility within comment sections. Islamic organizations should therefore encourage programmes promoting *Adab al-*

Ikhtilāf (the ethics of disagreement), emphasizing that legitimate scholarly differences have long existed within Islamic intellectual history and should not become sources of hostility or division.

Joint online seminars involving respected Yoruba Muslim scholars from different backgrounds may further demonstrate that religious disagreement can occur respectfully without compromising Islamic unity.

The recommendations proposed above emerge directly from the empirical findings of this study rather than representing abstract ideals. Observations from *Star Lady Entertainment, Save Your Soul TV, and Yesaloonaka* demonstrate that the principal challenges associated with Facebook-based da‘wah arise less from the technological platform itself than from the ways in which users communicate within that environment. Consequently, improving the ethical quality of digital da‘wah requires behavioural, educational, and institutional interventions rather than merely technological solutions. These recommendations are also consistent with broader scholarship on digital religion, which emphasizes that effective online religious communication depends upon responsible participation, ethical moderation, and credible religious authority (Bunt, 2018; Campbell & Tsuria, 2021; Cheong, 2013; Al-Rawi, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The rapid expansion of digital communication technologies has fundamentally transformed contemporary da‘wah by providing Muslim scholars and Islamic organizations with unprecedented opportunities to disseminate religious knowledge beyond conventional physical settings. Among these technologies, *Facebook* has emerged as one of the most influential platforms for Islamic communication among Yoruba Muslims because of its accessibility, interactivity, and capacity to facilitate real-time engagement between preachers and audiences. The findings of this study demonstrate that *Facebook* continues to serve as an effective medium for religious education, spiritual counselling, dissemination of Qur'ānic teachings, public enlightenment, and community mobilization.

However, the study equally reveals that the interactive nature of *Facebook* has introduced significant ethical challenges that increasingly affect the conduct and effectiveness of contemporary da‘wah. The analysis of *Star Lady Entertainment, Save Your Soul TV, and Yesaloonaka* showed that although these platforms contribute substantially to Islamic propagation, audience interactions occasionally generate abusive language, sectarian hostility, misinformation, emotional manipulation, cyberbullying, public humiliation, and excessive emphasis on digital popularity. These communication patterns contradict the Qur'ānic principles of wisdom (*hikmah*), moderation

(*wasatiyyah*), sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*), justice (*'adl*), and respectful dialogue that should characterize Islamic da'wah.

The study further demonstrates that abusive *Facebook*-based da'wah extends beyond the digital environment by influencing religious understanding, weakening ethical communication, encouraging sectarian polarization, diminishing respect for qualified religious scholarship, and, in some cases, contributing to tension within the wider Yoruba Muslim community. These findings indicate that the effectiveness of digital da'wah should not be evaluated solely in terms of audience size, online engagement, or technological reach but also by its adherence to Islamic ethical principles and its contribution to spiritual development and communal harmony.

The study, therefore, argues that the future of *Facebook*-based da'wah among Yoruba Muslims depends upon a balanced integration of technological innovation with Islamic communication ethics. Digital platforms should remain instruments for promoting authentic religious knowledge, peaceful dialogue, moral reform, and social cohesion rather than becoming spaces for hostility, sensationalism, and ideological conflict. Achieving this objective requires greater collaboration among Muslim scholars, da'wah organizations, educational institutions, digital media administrators, and *Facebook* users themselves to cultivate responsible online religious engagement grounded in the teachings of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

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