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Digital Preaching: An Examination of Social Media Utilisation by Islamic Religious Movements in Metropolitan Kano, Northern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has transformed religious communication, offering new opportunities and challenges for Islamic preaching in Northern Nigeria. This study examines how Islamic religious movements in Metropolitan Kano utilise social media platforms, particularly Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp, for da'wah and community engagement. Guided by mediatisation theory, the study employed qualitative content analysis of selected sermons, posts, and digital interactions associated with Salafi (Izala), Sufi (Tijaniyya and Qadiriyya), and independent clerics. The findings identified four key dynamics: the reinforcement of traditional clerical authority through scriptural and scholarly grounding; the adaptation of religious messages to address contemporary social issues such as drug abuse, youth morality, and family life; visible audience participation through the interactive affordances of social media; and contestation between rival Islamic movements in the digital sphere. The study concludes that digital preaching in Kano extends mosque-based authority while adapting its presentation within a technologically mediated environment shaped by visibility, interactivity, and rivalry. The study contributes to scholarship on digital religion by extending analysis through a context-specific account of Islamic digital preaching in West Africa, while also underscoring practical implications for religious leaders, regulators, and policymakers navigating the intersection of faith, media, and society. The findings describe patterns within the purposively selected content and do not establish audience effects.

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INTRODUCTION

The emergence of digital communication technologies has changed how people communicate, share ideas, and create meaning across many areas of social life (Heeter, 2023). Religion, which has traditionally been associated with physical settings such as places of worship, cultural events, and communal gatherings, is no exception to these changes. Religious leaders and movements are increasingly turning to digital media to reach, mobilise, and inform adherents. Social networking sites such as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, and, more recently, TikTok have become platforms through which religious messages are communicated, sermons are transmitted in real time, and religious communities can remain connected across geographical boundaries (Winarni, 2022). This growing trend is frequently characterised in the literature as digital religion or online preaching. It raises important questions about authority, authenticity, and the mediation of spirituality within technologically mediated spaces.

Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa and one of its most religiously diverse societies, offers a rich environment for considering these developments. Rapid digital growth, a young population, widespread smartphone use, and rising internet engagement have created new forms of religious communication. Prominent uses of mass and digital media have been observed among Christian Pentecostal pastors, who have relied on television, radio, and, more recently, social media to disseminate teachings and extend their reach. Similarly, Islamic clerics and movements engaged in da'wah (Islamic proselytisation) have increasingly adapted to these changes by using social media to strengthen communities, disseminate religious messages, and engage competing interpretations. Although digital religion appears to be expanding across Nigeria (Ibrahim, 2024), the literature cited here includes substantial attention to Christian forms of digital religious practice (Aduloju, 2024; Kiamu & Musa, 2021), while Islamic contexts in Northern Nigeria have received comparatively less attention despite the region's strong historical and cultural Islamic traditions.

Kano, Northern Nigeria's major commercial and cultural centre, provides a distinctive setting for examining these developments. The city has long been recognised as a centre of Qur'anic studies, Islamic law, and religious leadership. Its large population, active religious life, and long-standing tradition of Islamic preaching make it an important location for understanding how Islam is practised and communicated in contemporary West Africa. As a major urban centre with a growing population of technology-oriented young people, Kano also has substantial engagement with mobile phones and online platforms. The intersection of religious heritage and digital innovation, therefore, makes Kano a relevant site for examining how Islamic religious movements navigate preaching in online spaces.

The expansion of digital platforms in Kano reflects broader socio-political and cultural processes. Social media has enabled preachers to move beyond the physical mosque or local gathering and communicate with audiences across wider geographical settings, including transnational Muslim audiences (Hasif, 2023). It has also created a new arena of competition in which preachers and movements compete for visibility, followers, and legitimacy in crowded online spaces. At the same time, digital preaching raises concerns about the credibility of online clerics, potential miscommunication, and the spread of harmful or extremist content in weakly monitored virtual environments. These complexities highlight the dual character of digital religion as both an avenue for expanding Islamic preaching and a space of tension around authority, regulation, and authenticity.

Against this backdrop, this study examines how Islamic religious movements in Metropolitan Kano utilise social media for preaching and religious engagement. Specifically, it explores the presentation of clerical authority, engagement with contemporary social issues, visible audience interaction, and contestation among movements in the selected digital content. By situating the analysis within Kano's socio-religious and cultural environment, the study helps address a gap in scholarship on Islam, media, and digital communication in Northern Nigeria.

Accordingly, the study is guided by the following research question: How do Islamic religious movements in Metropolitan Kano use social media to negotiate clerical authority, address contemporary social issues, enable visible audience interaction, and express inter-movement contestation?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital religion/digital preaching

The concept of digital religion reflects how religious belief, practice, authority, and community are increasingly networked across online and offline settings. Rather than treating online and offline religion as separate domains, contemporary scholarship emphasises their mutual construction within hybrid religious life (Evolvi, 2021). Earlier accounts often presented the internet as an alternative or virtual realm in which believers explored new identities and practices. More recent work suggests that religious practice is increasingly embedded in hybrid spaces in which smartphones, platforms, and algorithms form part of everyday devotional life. In this regard, digital religion draws attention to processes of mediation: religious experience is shaped not only by sacred texts and sites but also by interfaces, platforms, and data flows that influence visibility, interaction, and power.

More broadly, digital preaching can be defined as the use of digital tools and media to communicate religious messages, provide spiritual education, create emotional connection, and support community organisation (Battista, 2024). It includes livestreamed sermons, short exhortations, threaded reflections, podcast homilies, voice messages in messaging applications, and visually branded posts designed for sharing. Digital mediation also allows preaching to be searched, replayed, edited, and redistributed beyond the original congregational setting. It therefore expands potential audiences and introduces engagement metrics, such as views, likes, and shares, into the feedback available to religious communicators.

Social media and religious communication

Social media are socio-technical systems that support user-generated content, visibility, and interactive feedback. In religious contexts, they can support proclamation, instruction, debate, self-representation, and community interaction (Lombardo et al., 2021; Tsuria & Campbell, 2021). These affordances have important implications for how religious communication is produced and received.

Social media can compress conventional boundaries of time and space by allowing teachings and sermons to be accessed synchronously and asynchronously. A Friday khutbah, for example, can be livestreamed to remote followers, edited, and redistributed on demand. This flexibility can alter the temporal rhythms of religious engagement by supplementing scheduled devotional practices with shorter, recurring interventions through feeds and notifications. Social media also intensifies relationality (Willems, 2021). Comments, reactions, and direct messages can enable audiences to interact more directly with religious leaders, ask questions, share experiences, or seek spiritual guidance. Such interactivity can deepen engagement while also opening the same spaces to disagreement and contestation.

Social media platforms filter information through algorithmic curation (Gausen et al., 2022). Platform logics tend to reward highly engaging content, which may encourage emotionally resonant, visually vivid, or controversial forms of communication. Religious communicators may therefore adapt thumbnails, titles, hooks, and sermon segments to platform-friendly formats. These optimisations can influence religious rhetoric by encouraging simplification, personalisation, or spectacle, creating a continuing challenge of sustaining doctrinal nuance in attention-driven environments. Social media also contributes to networked gatekeeping: traditional gatekeepers such as editors, denominational boards, and mosque councils are no longer the only actors shaping visibility. Influencers, fan communities, automated curation, and platform governance can also affect which voices are amplified or restricted (Duffy & Meisner, 2023; Elkin-Koren et al., 2021). Religious communication is therefore increasingly intertwined with wider debates about platform governance, digital rights, hate speech, extremism, and religious offence.

Social media also intensifies visual communication. Logos, colour schemes, typefaces, camera angles, and sound quality can contribute to perceived credibility and persuasive presentation (Jordan, 2020). Religious communicators may therefore use deliberate visual and production choices to position content for particular audiences. Visual austerity

may signal a scholarly or formal orientation, while more dynamic editing and urban vernacular may engage younger viewers. Social media also adds new genres to religious communication, including Q&As, explainers, devotional challenges, behind-the-scenes coverage, and micro-lectures. Short-form videos can present religious messages in compressed formats, while long-form podcasts and lectures provide greater depth. Cross-platform communication, combining messaging applications for smaller groups with public platforms for wider reach, can create multiple layers of religious engagement.

Gaps in the literature

Although substantial research has examined religion and digital media, important gaps remain in understanding Islamic digital preaching in Northern Nigeria and Metropolitan Kano. The literature reviewed here offers useful perspectives on Christian digital religious practice and broader processes of media adaptation, but provides limited detail on how established Islamic movements in Kano simultaneously negotiate clerical authority, platform interactivity, socially relevant preaching, and inter-movement contestation. The gap addressed here therefore concerns the combined expression of these dynamics within the digital content of a West African urban Islamic setting.

Theoretical framework

The study is guided by mediatisation theory. Mediatisation theory suggests that media are not merely channels of communication but can also shape social institutions, practices, and cultural forms. Hjarvard (2008) argues that media have become increasingly integrated into major social institutions and can influence how those institutions organise and communicate. In this sense, the affordances and logics of media technologies can alter institutional communication patterns and practices.

In relation to religion, mediatisation emphasises how religious messages, practices, and authority may be reshaped as they adapt to new technological environments. Sermons delivered in mosque settings, for example, can be reordered, simplified, subtitled, or segmented into shorter clips for platforms such as TikTok or YouTube. Clerical authority may also be renegotiated as preachers compete for visibility in algorithmically structured spaces, where engagement metrics such as likes, shares, and comments can influence visibility alongside established religious credentials. Media logic, therefore, intersects with religious practice, contributing to new hybrid forms of religious expression.

Mediatisation theory is useful in the Kano context for understanding how Islamic religious movements adapt preaching to digital platforms. Preachers do not simply use Facebook, YouTube, or WhatsApp as neutral tools; platform features can influence how sermons are produced, shared, and received. Features such as visually distinctive backgrounds, engaging titles, and subtitles provide clear points for examining how da'wah is presented in digital formats. Platform affordances also shape communication tactics: WhatsApp broadcast lists facilitate targeted circulation, YouTube recommendation systems affect discoverability, and short-form video formats encourage concise presentation. The analysis therefore uses mediatisation as an interpretive lens to examine continuity in scriptural authority alongside changes in presentation, interaction, and contestation. It does not directly measure algorithmic influence or audience retention.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed qualitative content analysis to examine how Islamic religious movements in Metropolitan Kano utilised social media platforms for preaching. This approach was appropriate because the study sought to interpret recurring communicative patterns, strategies, and meanings in digital religious content rather than estimate population parameters or test statistical relationships. The material comprised sermons, posts, audio recordings, and videos shared through Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube. A purposive sampling strategy was used to select pages, channels, groups, and clerical accounts that were prominent within Kano's digital preaching environment and that provided representation of Salafi/Izala, Sufi orders (Tijaniyya and Qadiriyya), and independent clerics. For analytical purposes, the individual sermon, post, audio recording, or video served as the unit of content examined. Coding focused on

recurring themes, rhetorical strategies, and visible forms of audience engagement, after which related codes were organised into broader thematic categories. The analysis was interpretive and comparative across the selected platforms and movements. It was not designed to measure audience effects, estimate the prevalence of particular practices, or statistically generalise to all Islamic digital preaching in Kano.

FINDINGS

The qualitative content analysis identified four recurring themes in the purposively selected Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp material. The themes characterise communicative patterns observed in the analysed content and are presented below with illustrative examples. They should not be interpreted as prevalence estimates or as evidence of changes in audience beliefs or behaviour.

Theme 1: preservation of traditional religious authority

A dominant theme identified across the sampled platforms was the preservation and reinforcement of traditional clerical authority through digital preaching. Preachers in the selected material framed their sermons around Qur'anic verses, Hadith traditions, and references to classical Islamic scholarship, thereby presenting themselves as custodians of established religious authority. Within the selected content, this pattern suggested that digital media often functioned as an extension of mosque-based preaching, enabling religious leaders to maintain established forms of authority within a new communicative environment.

For instance, sermons by Sheikh Aminu Daurawa, regularly shared on Facebook, opened with recitations from the Qur'an, followed by exegesis contextualised to everyday life in Kano. This approach retained the structure of traditional preaching while presenting online sermons as a continuation of mosque-based religious instruction. Similarly, *Izala* TV's YouTube channel reinforced the *Salafi* orientation of 'returning to pure Islam' by combining oral preaching with symbolic visuals such as Arabic calligraphy, Qur'anic text overlays, and uniform backgrounds that evoked the atmosphere of religious seminaries. Such strategies appeared to anchor digital content in familiar forms of religious legitimacy.

The selected content showed that established preaching methods were frequently adapted rather than radically replaced in digital spaces. The emphasis on scripture and tradition could also differentiate established clerics from other religious voices circulating online. By foregrounding Qur'anic and Hadith-based authority, these clerics sought to reaffirm their status as theologically grounded guides within an increasingly plural and contested digital environment.

Thus, social media did not simply replace mosque sermons but repositioned religious authority within digital spheres. The online presence of clerics enabled them to sustain their roles as authoritative voices while extending their reach beyond the immediate mosque audience. In this way, digital preaching functioned as both a continuation of established practice and an adaptation to the demands of new media.

Theme 2: addressing contemporary social issues

Another significant theme that emerged from the analysis was Islamic clerics' use of social media platforms to address contemporary social challenges in Kano. In the selected digital material, preaching extended beyond ritual and spiritual obligations to address everyday societal concerns. This pattern suggested that clerics were adapting their messages to remain socially relevant and to address issues affecting their audiences, particularly young people, who are prominent users of online platforms.

For example, in a selected YouTube sermon, Sheikh Kabiru Gombe addressed drug abuse in Kano, particularly the misuse of codeine and tramadol among young people. He framed drug addiction not only as a health concern but also as a moral and spiritual problem associated with neglect of Islamic discipline. By combining Qur'anic injunctions against intoxicants with contemporary examples of families affected by addiction, the sermon presented religion as a framework for addressing both spiritual and social problems. Comments on the video indicated visible engagement with the topic, although they did not establish how viewers interpreted or acted on the message.

Similarly, WhatsApp audio messages shared by *Tijaniyya* preachers warned against the 'Westernisation' of marriage ceremonies and lifestyles, highlighting concerns about extravagance, indebtedness, and the erosion of traditional Islamic values. In one instance, a cleric encouraged families to return to the simplicity associated with the Prophet Muhammad's example, contrasting this with modern weddings characterised by ostentation and waste. Circulation through WhatsApp groups provided semi-private spaces for dialogue and instruction, illustrating how social media can support both public and group-based forms of preaching.

These examples highlighted the broader function of digital preaching in presenting Islam as a practical framework for navigating contemporary challenges. By engaging with topics such as unemployment, gender relations, drug abuse, and family life, clerics demonstrated how Islamic teachings were being related to contemporary realities. In doing so, the selected content presented religion as both spiritually significant and socially relevant within urban Kano.

Theme 3: audience engagement through digital interactivity

A third theme emerging from the content analysis was the use of social media's interactive features to facilitate more dialogical and participatory forms of religious preaching. Unlike the largely one-directional format of conventional sermons, digital platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube provided opportunities for followers to respond, ask questions, and participate in religious discussion. These features enabled visible exchanges around sermons and provided opportunities for interaction between preachers and online participants.

On Facebook, clerics such as Sheikh Aminu Daurawa frequently posted short video clips with questions or provocative statements, such as "What is your opinion about youth attending night parties?" These posts invited followers to respond in the comments, sparking lively debates that often extended beyond the initial sermon. The comment sections sometimes became "mini-sermons", where lay participants quoted Qur'anic verses, cited Hadiths, or offered personal testimonies that reinforced the cleric's stance. In some cases, followers challenged interpretations, creating a dynamic space in which religious meanings could be negotiated visibly through audience responses.

Similarly, YouTube channels such as Darul Hadith Kano incorporated subtitles in both Hausa and English to broaden accessibility and engagement. These subtitles offered access in both languages, although the analysis did not establish the composition or size of the audience reached. The videos also used multimedia elements such as Qur'anic slides, infographics, and background nasheeds, presenting religious instruction in visually varied formats. For example, sermons on women's dress codes were accompanied by illustrative slides that contrasted 'Islamic modesty' with 'Western influence', making the message more visually explicit and accessible.

On WhatsApp, interactivity was expressed through short audio clips in group chats, with members often replying with voice notes, emoticons, or follow-up questions. These semi-private digital spaces enabled a more personal form of engagement, providing opportunities for exchanges within a bounded group.

Theme 4: contestation and rivalry among movements

Another significant theme was contestation and rivalry among Islamic movements in Kano, which became highly visible on social media platforms. The digital environment provided an open arena in which doctrinal disputes and ideological differences could circulate beyond their original settings. Clerics and followers from different movements, particularly the Salafi-influenced *Izala* and the Sufi-oriented *Tijaniyya*, used Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp to articulate, defend, and challenge religious positions, making social media a visible site of theological debate and identity negotiation.

For example, *Izala* preachers frequently uploaded video sermons on YouTube and Facebook where they criticised practices associated with Sufism, such as celebrating Mawlid (the Prophet's birthday), visiting saints' graves, or using devotional music in gatherings. These practices were denounced as bid'ah (religious innovations) that deviated from the "pure" Islam that *Izala* claimed to uphold. One striking case was a Facebook video clip in which a Salafi cleric condemned the use of musical instruments during Sufi religious ceremonies, arguing that such practices distracted believers from authentic worship.

In response, *Tijaniyya*-affiliated WhatsApp groups circulated counter-audio messages defending these practices as legitimate expressions of devotion rooted in established Islamic traditions. For instance, a selected audio sermon argued that devotional songs (qasidas) were permissible and spiritually uplifting, reinforcing communal bonds and love for the Prophet. By framing Salafi criticisms as 'intolerance', these groups positioned themselves as custodians of spiritual depth and inclusivity, thereby reinforcing their religious identity in contrast to the positions advanced by the *Izala* preachers in the sampled material.

These digital exchanges demonstrated how social media functioned as more than a platform for religious instruction; it also served as a contested space where competing movements sought to assert legitimacy and mobilise followers. Online formats enabled clerics and lay followers to engage in polemics directly and visibly. This rivalry illustrated shifting dynamics of authority in Kano's Islamic landscape, where social media amplified intra-religious contestation and made competing interpretations more visible.

Table 1. Summary of themes and illustrative content

Theme	Description	Example from Content
Preservation of Traditional Religious Authority	Clerics reinforced authority by grounding messages in the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical scholarship, extending established preaching into digital spaces.	Sheikh Aminu Daurawa's Facebook sermons opened with Qur'anic recitation; Izala TV YouTube content emphasised Salafi orthodoxy using Qur'anic verses and Arabic calligraphy.
Addressing Contemporary Social Issues	Preachers used digital platforms to address contemporary challenges such as drug abuse, unemployment, and moral concerns.	Sheikh Kabiru Gombe on YouTube linked codeine abuse to moral decay; Tijaniyya WhatsApp sermons cautioned against Westernised marriage customs.
Audience Engagement through Digital Interactivity	Social media enabled visible interactive communication and multimedia engagement, providing opportunities for visible participation.	Facebook posts invited comments (e.g., "What is your opinion about youth attending night parties?"); Darul Hadith Kano YouTube channel used subtitles and slideshows for accessibility.
Contestation and Rivalry among Movements	Rival Islamic groups used social media as visible arenas for debating and criticising each other's practices.	Izala clerics condemned Mawlid as bid'ah on Facebook; Tijaniyya WhatsApp groups responded with audios defending devotional songs and traditions.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that, within the selected material, Islamic religious movements in Metropolitan Kano use social media as both an extension and an adaptation of established preaching practices. This interpretation is consistent with scholarship on digital religion, which suggests that religious authority and communication practices can be reconfigured through digital mediation (Tsuria & Campbell, 2021). By grounding messages in the Qur'an and Hadith while also addressing contemporary concerns such as moral conduct, drug abuse, and youth unemployment, the sampled preachers illustrate a key proposition of mediatisation theory: media are not merely channels but environments whose affordances can shape the presentation and circulation of institutional communication (Hjarvard & Petersen, 2013). In this context, Islamic preaching is not simply transferred online; its presentation becomes adapted to platform visibility, interactivity, and multimedia formats.

The preservation of traditional religious authority is one of the main themes identified in the findings. Comparable scholarship on digital religion likewise indicates that digital media can extend and reshape religious authority rather than simply displace it (Tsuria & Campbell, 2021). In the Kano material, Facebook and YouTube sermons commonly opened with Qur'anic recitation and used Arabic calligraphy, reinforcing familiar markers of clerical legitimacy. This suggests that mediatisation can provide new modes through which established religious authority is presented and authenticated in digital environments.

The findings on clerics addressing contemporary social challenges are also consistent with research on digital religion in Northern Nigeria. Ibrahim (2024) documents the rise of Islamic cyber practices in the region, while Mannerfelt (2022) shows, in a different religious context, how digital mediation can reshape the preaching event through visualisation, editing, and other communicative practices. The present study extends this discussion by showing how Islamic movements in Kano combine sacred texts with issues that matter to their constituencies. This reflects a twofold logic of mediatisation: religious subject matter is adapted to media formats while also responding to contemporary socio-cultural concerns.

The findings on audience engagement are consistent with the interpretive framework of mediatisation. Clerics can use social media affordances to encourage participation through comments, WhatsApp group discussions, and question-and-answer exchanges. Hutchings (2017) demonstrates how digital design can shape religious engagement with mediated texts, while Tsuria and Campbell (2021) emphasise the broader interactive dimensions of digital religion. The Kano material shows a related pattern in which followers and other online participants can become more visible contributors to religious discourse through digital responses. In this sense, media do not only transmit sermons but can also facilitate new practices of participation and community-building.

Finally, rivalry among Islamic groups shows that digital space can also become a site of religious contestation. Broader scholarship on digital religion notes that online visibility and participation can intensify negotiations over authority and identity (Tsuria & Campbell, 2021). The Kano case similarly suggests that mediatisation is not neutral: greater visibility and interactivity can also amplify doctrinal disagreement, contestation, and competing claims to religious legitimacy.

Taken together, the four themes suggest that continuity in clerical authority and adaptation to digital media coexist. The contribution of the Kano case is not to claim a uniform transformation of Islamic preaching, but to show how scriptural grounding, socially relevant messages, visible audience participation, and doctrinal rivalry can operate within the same mediated communication environment. This supports a context-sensitive reading of mediatisation in which established religious authority is selectively reformulated through platform affordances rather than simply displaced by them.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This paper examined how Islamic religious movements in Metropolitan Kano use social media platforms to preach and engage in religious activities. Qualitative content analysis of purposively selected Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube material identified four recurring themes: preservation of authority through Qur'anic and Hadith-based preaching; adaptation to contemporary social concerns; visible audience interaction; and inter-movement contestation. The analysis suggests that digital media extend the circulation of mosque-based preaching while also encouraging changes in presentation, interaction, and visibility. Mediatisation theory helps interpret this process by showing how religious communication can be shaped by platform affordances without assuming that digital media uniformly replace established religious authority. Given the purposive qualitative design, the findings represent patterns within the selected content rather than the full range or prevalence of digital preaching practices in Kano.

The implications of these findings are both academic and practical. Academically, the study contributes a context-specific account of Islamic digital preaching in Northern Nigeria and shows how mediatisation can be used to interpret

the coexistence of continuity and adaptation in religious communication. The study also highlights the value of analysing authority, social relevance, audience visibility, and doctrinal contestation together rather than as isolated features of digital religion.

In practical terms, the analysis highlights both opportunities and challenges for religious leaders and policymakers. Digital platforms may broaden access to younger and more digitally oriented audiences and provide channels for guidance on social and moral issues. At the same time, the findings indicate that the same platforms can make inter-movement rivalry more visible. Religious leaders and regulators therefore face the challenge of balancing the benefits of wider digital communication with measures that encourage responsible media use and inter-group tolerance.

Limitations and future research

The purposive selection of sources limits transferability beyond the material examined. Visible comments and group exchanges cannot be treated as representative audience opinion, and content analysis alone cannot establish motivations, persuasion, behavioural effects, or causal influence. Differences between public platforms and semi-private WhatsApp groups also constrain direct comparison. In addition, because the study does not employ a probability-based corpus, the frequency of a theme should not be interpreted as its prevalence across Kano's wider digital religious environment. Future research should specify a fixed observation period and corpus size, document inclusion and exclusion criteria in greater detail, and combine content analysis with interviews, digital ethnography, or audience research to examine how religious messages are interpreted across platforms.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for government, religious leaders, and media stakeholders to support constructive use of digital media for Islamic preaching in Metropolitan Kano. These are practical implications of the analysis rather than interventions evaluated by this study.

1. **Government and Regulatory Bodies: Rele**vant public agencies should support media literacy and dialogue on responsible digital religious communication. Any consideration of content governance should distinguish doctrinal disagreement from harmful conduct and respect freedom of religion and expression. The present analysis does not establish the prevalence of harmful content or evaluate the effectiveness of regulatory interventions.
2. **Religious Leaders and Movements:** Islamic clerics and religious movements in Kano should adopt best practices in digital preaching that align with ethical communication and Islamic values. Training workshops on responsible media engagement could help preachers understand the dynamics of online audiences, the risks of misinterpretation, and the potential of digital tools for constructive engagement. Efforts should be made to discourage divisive rhetoric between groups and emphasise themes of unity, moral guidance, and social responsibility. Collaboration between rival movements on shared concerns such as youth morality, drug abuse, and poverty would further demonstrate the unifying potential of digital platforms.
3. **Media and Technology Stakeholders:** Social media companies and local technology organisations should develop partnerships with religious institutions to promote safe and constructive use of their platforms. Accessible reporting mechanisms and context-sensitive moderation may help address harmful content while preserving legitimate religious discussion. Media literacy campaigns should also be expanded in Kano to help audiences critically engage with digital sermons, discern credible sources, and avoid manipulation.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflict of interest related to this publication.

ETHICS STATEMENT

This study analysed digital religious content from selected social-media sources and did not involve direct interviews or surveys with human participants. No personally identifying information from ordinary social-media users is reported in the manuscript. Because WhatsApp groups are semi-private communication spaces, the analysis is reported at the level of recurring themes and movement-level practices rather than identifying ordinary group participants or reproducing personally identifiable exchanges.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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