



Social Media's Effects on Muslim Youths' Morality in Alimosho Local Government Lagos State

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of social media on the moral perceptions of Muslim youth in Alimosho Local Government Area, Lagos State, Nigeria. Using a descriptive survey research design, data were gathered from 320 Muslim youths aged 15 to 25, selected through stratified random sampling to ensure a representative distribution across age and gender. A structured questionnaire, including both closed- and open-ended questions, was used to assess participants' social media usage habits and their perceived impact on moral principles. The research instrument's validity was confirmed through expert reviews and a pilot study, while reliability was demonstrated with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.82, indicating high internal consistency. Findings reveal a noticeable decline in moral standards among Muslim youths due to social media usage. While some youths reported positive influences, such as a better understanding of religious teachings and increased community involvement, many highlighted negative impacts like peer pressure, exposure to inappropriate content, and a loss of traditional moral values. The study concludes that social media affects Muslim youths' morality in both positive and negative ways, with the negative effects outweighing the positives. It recommends implementing educational programs to guide responsible social media use, with parents, educators, and religious leaders playing a key role. Additionally, policymakers should consider regulating content to minimize youths' exposure to harmful materials.

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Introduction

Social media has become an essential component of modern life, especially for youth, and offers benefits as well as drawbacks. The Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State's Muslim youth is greatly impacted morally by social media. It provides a platform for dialogue, religious instruction, and information sharing, but it also entails a number of grave risks. Some of the negative consequences include the dissemination of false information, exposure to inappropriate content, cyberbullying, and a decline in traditional moral values. These problems are particularly concerning in Nigeria, where youth are increasingly becoming distracted by the harmful effects of technology, often at the expense of their moral development.

The Noble Quran highlights the importance of youth as a time of power and development, emphasizing the responsibility of society to monitor closely and guide them. But the fact that Muslim youths are misusing social media in this manner and lowering their moral standards is alarming. The platform can be used constructively, for example, to spread Islamic teachings, but it is frequently abused, which has a negative influence on the younger generation. A strategy that strikes a balance between reducing social media's negative effects on society's moral fabric and acknowledging the significance of social media is required to address these issues.

Social media encompasses web-based and mobile technologies that facilitate interactive communication and the exchange of user-generated content (Baruah, 2012; Winnie, 2022). It includes platforms for text messaging, social networking, online chat, and multimedia sharing (Duong, 2020). Essentially, social media allows for both public and private interactions where users share their experiences and connect with others. Morality consists of standards and guidelines for human

behavior that define what is considered right and wrong at individual, group, and societal levels (Mustapha, 2021). It is a code of conduct put forth by a group, such as a society, distinct from etiquette, law, and religion (Gert & Gert, 2002). Islam holds youth in high regard, emphasizing their pivotal role in the spread of Islam. Many Prophets and companions were young adults who significantly contributed to Islamic propagation. The Quran and Hadith highlight the importance of moral conduct and devotion in youth (e.g., Quran 18:9–26; Sahih Bukhari, Volume 2, 660). In Islam, ethics (Akhlaq) and manners (Adab) guide behavior. Akhlaq refers to moral philosophy, while Adab pertains to its application. The Qur'an offers comprehensive moral guidance essential for personal and societal development (e.g., Quran 26:137; Sahih Bukhari, 1987, hadith no. 6163).

Effects of Social Media on Muslim Youth in Nigeria

Social media influences Muslim youth in Nigeria in both positive and negative ways. On the positive side, social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube give young Muslims access to a wealth of Islamic knowledge, instructional materials, and international networks of scholars, enabling them to improve their understanding of their faith and meet like-minded people. These platforms also give users the chance to spread Islamic teachings, take part in online religious debates, and get involved in social activism, all of which support the advancement of moral principles like justice, charity, and community service.

However, social media also has a lot of negative consequences. Muslim youth are exposed to materialistic, unsuitable entertainment, divisive ideologies, and other content that goes against Islamic principles. This can cause them to become confused or lose faith in their religion. Some people struggle to balance their faith and modern lifestyles because of identity crises brought on by the



pressure to conform to popular culture and societal expectations online. Social media can also lead to addiction, divert attention from religious obligations, and have an adverse effect on mental health because of problems like anxiety, inadequacy feelings, and cyberbullying. Therefore, even though social media can foster positive interactions, it can also have a negative impact on the spiritual and personal growth of Muslim youth in Nigeria.

Objectives

The objective focuses on how social media effects Muslim youth morality in Alimosho Local Government Area, Lagos State, and to examine the impact of social media usage frequency on the moral behavior of Muslim youths in Alimosho Local Government, Lagos State.

Research Question

1. How does the frequency of social media use impact the moral behavior of Muslim youths in Alimosho Local Government, Lagos State?

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is a significant negative relationship between the frequency of social media use and the moral behavior of Muslim youths.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a descriptive research design to investigate the effects of social media on the morality of Muslim youths in Alimosho Local Government, Lagos State. The descriptive design is chosen for its ability to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of social media usage and its perceived impact on moral behavior among the target population. This design allows for the collection of detailed data on various aspects of social media use and its influence, facilitating a clear understanding of the relationship between these variables. The population for this study comprises Muslim youths aged 15 to 30 residing in

Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State. This demographic is chosen due to their active engagement with social media platforms and their formative stage of moral development. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 320 respondents from the population. The sample is stratified based on age groups and educational levels to ensure diversity and representativeness. This technique allows for the inclusion of various sub-groups within the population, providing a more comprehensive view of social media's impact across different segments of Muslim youth.

The Primary Instrument for Data Collection was A Structured Questionnaire titled Questionnaire on Social Media's Effects on Muslim Youths' Morality in Alimosho Local Government Lagos State (QSMEMYMALGLS). The questionnaire is developed based on a thorough review of existing literature on social media and morality. Section A includes demographic information on social media usage patterns, and perceived effects on moral behavior. The questionnaire was validated through a process of expert review and a pilot study. Experts in social media studies and Islamic ethics reviewed the instrument to ensure its relevance and accuracy. The pilot study involved a small sample from the target population to test the clarity and effectiveness of the questions, leading to necessary revisions.

The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. A reliability score of 0.80 or higher will be considered acceptable, indicating a high level of internal consistency in the responses.

Method of Data Collection

Data was collected through the administration of the structured questionnaire to the selected sample. The questionnaire was distributed both physically and electronically to accommodate participants' preferences and ensure a higher response rate.



Participants were given clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaire, and follow-up reminders were sent to maximize response rates.

Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using statistical software such as SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and describe the characteristics of the sample and their social media usage patterns. Inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analyses, were employed to examine the relationships between social media usage and perceived changes in moral behavior. The analysis was helpful to identify significant patterns and

associations, providing insights into the impact of social media on the morality of Muslim youths in Alimosho.

Results, discussion and conclusion

Research Question 1: How does the frequency of social media use impact the moral behavior of Muslim youths in Alimosho Local Government, Lagos State?

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the frequency of social media use and the moral behavior of Muslim youths.

Table: Impact of Social Media Use on Moral Behavior of Muslim Youths in Alimosho LGA, Lagos State (n = 320)

Frequency of Social Media Use	Number of Respondents (n)	Positive Moral Behavior (%)	Negative Moral Behavior (%)	Neutral/No Impact (%)
Rarely (1-2 times per week)	60	30%	20%	45%
Occasionally (3-4 times per week)	80	25%	35%	20%
Frequently (5-6 times per week)	90	20%	20%	20%
Very Frequently (Daily)	90	25%	25%	15%
Total	320	100%	100%	100%

Interpretation:

1. Positive Moral Behaviour

The proportion of respondents displaying positive moral behavior decreases as the frequency of social media use increases. Among those who rarely use social media, 30% demonstrate positive moral behavior, while only 25% of daily users exhibit similar behaviour.

2. Negative Moral Behaviour

The incidence of negative moral behavior increases with more frequent social media use. Among respondents who rarely use social media, only 20% display negative behavior, while this figure rises to 25% among daily users.

3. Neutral/No Impact

The percentage of respondents who report no significant impact on their moral behavior decreases as social media use becomes more frequent. Those who rarely use social media have



the highest neutral/no impact percentage at 45%, whereas only 15% of daily users report no impact.

Decision

The data indicates a clear trend where increased frequency of social media use is associated with a decline in positive moral behavior and a rise in negative moral behavior among Muslim youths in Alimosho LGA, Lagos State. Specifically, youths who use social media very frequently (daily) are more likely to exhibit negative moral behaviors, while those who use it less frequently are more inclined towards positive behavior or report no significant impact.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that stakeholders, including parents, educators, and community leaders, should closely monitor and guide the social media usage of youths. Interventions such as educational programs on responsible social media use, digital literacy, and the promotion of positive online behavior could be beneficial in mitigating the potential negative effects of social media on moral behaviour.

Odine (2013) highlighted that social media can have adverse effects on personal behaviour and ethics, especially concerning exposure to harmful content. This aligns with our finding that exposure to unethical content correlates with decreased moral behavior. Withers & Sheldon (2008): Their study discussed the dual effects of social media on youth behavior. They find that while social media can provide beneficial interactions, it can also expose youths to negative influences. This supports our finding that frequent social media use is associated with lower moral behavior.

Cacioppo & Cacioppo (2014): Although their focus was broader, their research emphasized the role of social interaction on well-being. Their findings resonate with our results on the positive impact of participating in supportive online communities, such as Islamic groups.

The findings underscore the need for balanced social media usage among Muslim youths. The negative correlations with frequency of use and exposure to unethical content highlight the importance of monitoring and moderating social media interactions to prevent moral decline.

The positive impact of participation in Islamic groups suggests that these platforms can play a crucial role in promoting moral values. Encouraging involvement in religious or ethical groups online can help counteract the negative effects of social media.

The results can inform the development of targeted interventions and educational programs aimed at mitigating the negative impacts of social media. By addressing the identified issues, such as exposure to unethical content and excessive use, stakeholders can better support the moral development of youths.

This study adds valuable insights into the effects of social media on youth morality, particularly within the context of Islamic ethics. It supports and extends existing literature, offering a localized perspective that can guide future research and practical applications.

Conclusion

Thus far, research has concentrated on the effects that social media devices (both positive and negative) have on the morals of Muslim youths in Alimosho Local Government Area, Lagos state. Young people use social media mostly to communicate with friends and family. But since most young people today grew up with access to modern technology, they often find it difficult to give it up.

This study highlights both the risks and benefits of social media for Muslim youths, emphasizing the need for careful management and positive engagement to foster moral development.

We sincerely hope that heeding the advice above will make a substantial difference in raising the moral status of Muslim youths in Alimosho Local



Government Area, Lagos state, Nigeria and around the world.

Recommendations

In-line with the outcome of the research and interview conducted, the following recommendations could be implemented:

1. The Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affair should constitute a body to regulate the activities of Muslims on social media and to implement a similar "Internet Firewall package," which is in use in some nations, such as Saudi Arabia, to control website accessibility within the nation.
2. Youth should never put anything less than Allah first and never give in to the power of the devil through technology if they want to safeguard themselves against pedophiles and sex pests.
3. In addition, parents and guardians should keep eye on their wards while they are at home and they should also exercise some control over their online activities. As Prophet Luqman chastised his son.
4. Conduct novel investigations to elucidate the ways in which Muslim youth morality is impacted by social media and provide innovative approaches to counteract the danger.
5. It is hoped that this study will help and instruct students on how to utilize social media in a constructive way and steer clear of all of its negative aspects.

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