

MUSLIM SCHOLARS AND CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA *DA'WAH*: CYBERBULLYING IN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: *Modern communication technology has advanced quickly, changing how social media channels are utilized for communication globally. This article focuses on Muslim scholars and the challenges of social media Da'wah focusing on cyberbullying of scholars on social media platforms. Most social media-based social interaction tools are user-generated, in contrast to traditional media. It enables the user to control the message's content without restriction or regulation. Some Muslims have been lured into using social media in violation of rules laid down by fundamental Islamic teachings because of their freedom to sign up for an account on any website and the freedom it involves. Accordingly, this study has identified cyberbullying behavior against Muslim scholars on social media and provided solutions according to Islamic teachings. Therefore, this paper aims to bring into the limelight some of the challenges Muslim scholars face when doing Da'wah on social media and proffer Islamic solutions. The study used a qualitative survey approach, interviewing seasoned social media users. Seven individuals were purposefully chosen for the study since they are Muslims and have knowledge of the issue under investigation. Some of the study's findings showed that Muslim scholars encounter cyberbullying difficulties when conducting Da'wah on social media. The paper concludes that in order to create a more peaceful and safer digital environment, social media users should communicate with good morals and manners, especially on online forums.*

Keywords: *Muslim Scholars, Challenges, Cyberbullying, Social Media, Da'wah*

INTRODUCTION

The industrial revolution has facilitated rapid development in the information and communication technology (I.C.T.) sector in the contemporary age. Numerous online tools and social media sites have advanced, improving human existence (Alim, 2019). The misuse of modern communication facilities to engage in actions that are against the principles of consumerism, civil law, and Islamic law is one way that this development inadvertently has a detrimental impact on virtual citizens. Cyberbullying, the spread of false information, defamation, and misleading information are a few of them, along with online transaction fraud.

The rise of modern communication platforms has improved society's quality of life. Many services may be conveniently accessed and handled online. However, not all users take full advantage of the development of modern communication channels. Some of them have been found to exploit cyberspace to



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commit crimes and profiteering, which adds to the horrific cybercrimes in contemporary society. The government has implemented efforts to boost awareness and promote the use of the Internet and computers constructively and ethically in response to the worrying rise in cybercrime (Harun, 2018).

The misuse of modern communication tools such as computers and smartphones aimed at bullying persons on social media is now increasing and evolving in various forms. Symptoms of cyberbullying are more prevalent nowadays due to the transmission viral of videos and photos, better known as trolls on social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, and so on (Ansong et al., 2013). Social media users often use the comments section to share pictures or make a post to vilify the victim because it is the most exposed and easily accessible space (Griffiths, 2014). Even while most users claim they are only doing it for fun and pleasure, most people frequently ignore the consequences suffered by the victims. For others, such incidents cause low self-esteem, a higher risk of mental health issues, depression, and suicide ideation. As a result of the potential threats to society, cyberbullying perpetrators are liable to punishment from an Islamic perspective.

Indeed, social media is a public forum where everyone can post remarks. Users can share their opinions on various topics, from frivolous ones like entertainment and sports to important ones like politics, economics, and religion. Some users need to pay more attention to conversational etiquette and ethics in communication. They are free to post rude comments on other users' accounts, even if the condemned people are total strangers, to the point where it damages the victim's reputation and dignity (Salga, 2015). Similar to how too much information makes it easy for users to disseminate rumors, defamation, and gossip, too much information can also have these adverse effects. Such behavior has repercussions and damages other people's reputations. In addition to these warning signals, internet addiction is currently causing worry among Malaysian online users. This is because they spend much time on social media. Such an act may impact their psychological well-being, and some people who engage in antisocial behavior may turn to solitude.

METHOD

In order to collect primary data from the participants for this paper, qualitative survey methodologies were used. Civil servants and students made up the study's population. The researchers used I.D.I.s (In-Depth Interviews) and non-participant observation to get the data. Purposive sampling was used in this study to help the researchers choose people for interviews and observations who had a thorough understanding of the topic under investigation. This is so that a qualitative study can focus on a small number of individuals and a specific phenomenon rather than a vast sample. The researchers purposefully chose seven people, and they were interrogated about the topic under investigation. Participants' elicited responses were verbatim recorded, categorized, and analyzed using a theme study. Similarly, information gathered through observations was combined with information obtained from interviews.

RESULTS

Cyberbullying in Social Media

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying that happens on electronic platforms. Cyberbullying is an aggressive and intentional act done by an individual or group repeatedly and over time using an electronic platform against an individual or group that cannot defend themselves (Smith et al., 2008). Cyberbullying is an awful thing an individual or group does to another individual or group in cyberspace. Five significant indicators can measure cyberbullying: (i) flaming; (ii) slandering; (iii) identity theft; (iv) revealing others' secrets; and (v) deleting or blocking someone from the group.

According to Hasniza, Yusri, and Fatimah (2018), cyberbullying is harassing or intimidating someone online through technology-based communications such as social media, emails, instant messages, and mobile phones. Even more disturbing is that these warning signs multiply and change into new forms, necessitating definitive cautions. Due to the Internet's "anonymity" setting, it can sometimes be challenging to determine who the bully is. Because the contents of cyberbullying persist in cyberspace even after the bully takes them down, access to it is also persistent. This puts much stress on some bullied individuals, and in some circumstances, those individuals consider suicide due to the pressure (Hasniza et al., 2018).

In connection with the growth of social networks and the rising usage of social media, cyberbullying is a problem that is getting worse (Cohen, 2018). On social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, and others, the unchecked transmission (viral) of videos and photographs, better known as trolls, is one of the more widespread problems today (Ansong et al., 2013). Social media users frequently post in the comments because it is the most visible and convenient place to share images or make posts that denigrate the victim (Griffiths, 2014). Even while most users claim they are only doing it for fun and pleasure, many individuals frequently ignore the consequences suffered by the victims. For some, such incidents can cause low self-esteem, an increased risk of mental health issues, depression, and suicidal thinking. Ironically, more individuals are becoming bolder in the digital realm and speaking out against others in an unpleasant, insulting, and demeaning manner. Some individuals take advantage of the anonymity function, using it as a significant excuse to create a few bogus identities with nefarious intentions.

The culture of trolling is one of the prevalent types of cyberbullying in the context of today's social media. Trolling antagonizes other persons online by deliberately posting inflammatory, irrelevant, or offensive comments or disruptive content (Collins, 2019). The word "troll" derives from a fishing technique that anglers use to entice fish to the bait before gently withdrawing the rod from the water (Fragoso, 2015). Trolls intentionally or accidentally engage in provocative, ridiculing, insulting, and conversation-disturbing online behavior (Anuar & Nadia, 2019). This behavior is deemed to draw attention and engage others in pointless discussion. Stereotyping, politics, religion, racial prejudice, and entertainment-related issues frequently use trolls to lure people (Tijjani, 2013).

They typically behave out of boredom and only for their pleasure (Ansong et al., 2013). However, specific individuals prefer to disparage, humiliate, and slander an individual by making false charges or sending out fake messages to harm or tarnish his reputation because they are driven by anger towards that particular individual. The victim is motivated by resentment towards certain people. Therefore they choose to denigrate, humiliate, and defame the victim by making false accusations or sending out phony communications to damage the victim's reputation (Tijjani, 2013). This condition is more commonly referred to as the (T.P.S.) Tall Poppy Syndrome occurs when people post derogatory things on social media about others because they are upset about the accomplishments that are superior to theirs. Therefore, it is not unexpected that this malady is called "the politics of envy." This is related to human psychology and behavior, where most people struggle to recognize the accomplishments of others who have achieved more than they have because they dislike the idea of "tall poppies" (O'Neill, 2014). Such successful people will then be denigrated and assaulted with unjustified criticism and derogatory remarks that have nothing to do with their accomplishments.

Cyberbullying as Challenge to Social Media *Da'wah*

Muslim *Du'at*, in today's cyberspace, faces many challenges in carrying out *Da'wah* on social media. One such challenge is cyberbullying. Dayyabu Aminu Jahun evinced that Muslim *Du'at* is often trolled online not because of what they propagate but because they are abused because they do not belong to the same religious group. As a result, anytime they extend any message on certain Islamic teachings, they are attacked through insults, ranging from name-calling to character assassination. Bullying of Muslim *Du'at* is prevalent in the digital world today.

Bullying of Muslim *Du'at* is prevalent in the digital world today. Bukar Abdullahi posited that scholars are constantly insulted as they do *Da'wah* on social media, especially Facebook and Twitter. The *Da'i* is being harassed online for no offense. At times, the harassment and attack may be due to the method of scholar's approach to certain religious teachings, which either the bullied is guilty of. However, his name was never mentioned by the *Da'i* in the course presenting his message online. Muslim scholars are always victims of such acts in social media, from those who misuse modern communication platforms for their selfish interests.

Fauziya Yusuf Atakpe asserted that cyberbullying also occurs to Muslim scholars who are criticized online because of their stance on some Islamic rulings. For that, they are being trolled through Twitter or Facebook. An example is when a Muslim scholar was asked about holding Friday prayers by 12:30 pm, and the scholar's reply did not go down well with some social media users and, for that, resorting to bullying the Muslim scholar.

One of the significant causes of cyberbullying of Muslim scholars on social media, as observed by Uthman Muhammad Alkali, is the issue of a personality clash. He stressed that the idea that no one can do better than me is causing many problems among Muslim *Du'at* in cyberspace. Scholars attack each other on social media platforms, calling each other names or using derogatory

words about the personality of another scholar. Not only that but to the extent of accusing a particular of insanity, half-baked knowledge, etc.

Bullying for personal grudges in the real world is another challenge to *Da'wah* in social media by Muslim scholars. Jabir Hassan Gana asserted that a lot of Muslim scholars face a transfer of aggression from the real world to cyberspace from fellow Muslim social media users who see social media as a platform where they can settle specific grievances they had with a particular scholar and for which the scholar knows nothing. The bullied does not mind the message the scholars are trying to convey, but his main focus on the page or channel of the scholar is to find fault so that he can attack and troll the scholars. With this, some Muslim scholars find it challenging to cope with the situation because they feel traumatized.

The proselytization of the message of Islam is obligatory upon every Muslim, and therefore anyone carrying out such a task should expect criticism at all times. Ismail Khalid Omolori corroborates that Muslim scholars engaging in social media *Da'wah* find themselves in the center of cyberbullying because they themselves troll each other. In some cases, the bullying of Muslim scholars does not come from their ordinary followers on social media but from their fellow *Du'at* (Muslim scholars). These scholars attacked each other either because of sectarian differences between them or due to vested interests. They call themselves names, especially in the comment section of a particular scholar's page or channel, to the extent of referring to that particular scholar as having half-baked knowledge of the religion.

According to Baraatu Malam Harisu, some Muslims enjoy disparaging Muslim scholars on modern communication tools. Especially if they do not belong to their sect or religious group, this is done in an effort to damage the image of the scholar for no other reason than a simple religious difference that is uncommon among followers of other religions. For followers of religions other than Islam, it can be quite challenging to express their criticism of their leaders online. However, some Muslims think it's cool to disparage or criticize their religious or political leaders using modern communication tools.

The researchers have noted that Muslims are constantly fighting on social media, severing the ties of brotherhood that Islam has forged among Muslims. Another observation is that the majority of Muslim postings and comments on social media are negative remarks directed at one another, going against Allah's command for Muslims to be brothers to one another. A Muslim may sometimes use photo-shopping to depict a rival Muslim scholar as a *Fasiq* on social media by making the image of the scholar either naked or hugging a woman. Simply put, they are doing all of this because they disagree with the scholar on specific points regarding Islam. This then sets off a series of responses from the injured scholar's supporters in a similar fashion.

Not only that, cyberbullying usually occurs when a scholar shares a *fatwa* on Facebook or other social media platforms, and if such *fatwa* does not suit the interest of other fellow Muslims, they resort to name-calling and even declaring persons who do not share in their *fatwa* as *kafr*. A fight soon ensues in the comment section with ugly replies to each other via social media. Islam, as a

religion, teaches morality and forbids calling a fellow Muslim brother an unbeliever. The Noble Prophet (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) says:

Ibn `Umar (May Allah be pleased with them) said: The Messenger of (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) says, "*When a person calls his brother (in Islam) a disbeliever, one of them will certainly deserve the title. If the addressee is so as he has asserted, the disbelief of the man is confirmed, but if it is untrue, then it will revert to him.*" (Riyad Us-Salihin, Book 18, Hadith 1732).

He also said,

Abu Dharr (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saying, "*When any Muslim accuses another Muslim of sin or of disbelief, the reproach rebounds upon the one who utters it, if the other person is not deserving of it*" (Riyad Us-Salihin, Book 18, Hadith 1560).

DISCUSSION

An Islamic Approach to Social Media Bullying

Humans are distinctively social creatures, and depending on the kinds of connections they make with one another, each one adds color to the lives of those around them. Social contact is the basis for interaction since it allows for the measurement of both parties' reactions, even in the absence of physical contact. When the parties involved get to know one another better, the original foundational relationship eventually evolves into a deeper connection in the form of communication. Allah, the Most-High, states in Surah al-Hujuraat:

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and Tribes, that ye may know Each other (Not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (He who is) the Most righteous of you. and Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things) (Surah al-Hujuraat, 49:13).

Islam is a religion that values diversity in people, thus it encourages people of all origins to get to know one another and maintain relationships with one another. Through the interchange and sharing of language, culture, knowledge, technology, talent, and professional expertise, this mutual partnership should be a means for beneficial sharing. Everything is now available at your disposal because to the rapid development of information and communication technologies during the contemporary age. Although there are numerous advantages to this growth, it is important to pay attention to the privacy and security needs of every internet user (Wahyuni & Ana, 2019).

Internet users' human values must not be compromised by technological expertise, which should not turn the Internet into a tool for manipulating and infringing on other people's rights. In actuality, social media and online applications used ethically make the Internet a fantastic platform for various tasks and modern demands. Because of this, Islam does not support any actions like cyberbullying that might harm relationships and violate human rights. As a result,

to protect human rights and dignity and build a peaceful and respectful social ecology, the Qur'an al-Sunnah outlines bans and affirmations on such behaviors.

Fabrication of Information

To get people's attention, the phenomenon of cyberbullying needs to contain an important component of falsehood. Since the facts and made-up stories are mixed up, the majority of these activities result in information being falsified. This is done intentionally to pull down and denigrate specific individuals. As a result, it is not unexpected that most of the material of phony communications is satire and outright lies. Making things up is forbidden in Islam and is seen as a grave sin. The offenders are also warned that they will face harsh punishment in the afterlife. It was narrated from Awsat (bin Isma'il) Al-Bajali that:

He heard Abu Bakr, when the Prophet (S.A.W.) had passed away, saying: *"The Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) stood in this place where I am standing last year." Then Abu Bakr wept and said: "You must adhere to the truth, for with it comes righteousness and they both lead to Paradise. And you must beware of lying, for with it comes immorality, and they both lead to Hell. Ask Allah for Al-Mu'afah, for no one is given anything after certainty that is better than Mu'afah. Do not envy one another, do not hate one another, do not sever ties with one another, do not turn your backs on one another and be, O slaves of Allah, brothers"* (Sunan et al., Vol. 5, Book 34, Hadith 3849).

Therefore, it is against Islamic teachings to create any components of untruth in interpersonal interactions, even if it is merely a jest. Narrated Mu'awiyah ibn Jaynah al-Qushayri:

The Messenger of Allah (may peace and blessings be upon him) said: Woe to him who tells things, speaking falsely, to make people laugh thereby. Woe to him! Woe to him! (Sunan Abi Dawud, Book 42, Hadith 4972).

This serves as a reminder that, in addition to making an effort to be a good Muslim, everyone must exercise self-control to avoid normalizing deception under the guise of humor. Lying tramples one's integrity and dignity and causes anarchy and disarray in society, and breeds strife between groups at odds.

Defamation Character

Allah has given every person the priceless possessions of dignity and honor. Islam, therefore, places a strong focus on the necessity to safeguard one's reputation, which tries to prevent any behavior from undermining a person's honor. Every human being is forbidden from harassing, demeaning, making fun of, or otherwise harming the honor of any other person because doing so is considered to be a violation of the value of human dignity, which is one of the reasons why people were created (Sule & Yahaya, 2020).

The harassment that frequently occurs on social media is directed at public figures and other influential people to damage their reputations and cause them to lose their respect. Because this act involves shame and dignity, which should serve as the limits of every person's social relationship, Islam strongly forbids it. Almighty Allah states in Surah al-Hujuraat 49:11.

O you who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): nor let some women laugh at others: it may be that the (latter is better than the (former): nor defame nor be sarcastic to Each other, nor call Each other by (offensive) nicknames: Ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness, (to be used of one) after He has believed: and those who do not desist are (indeed) doing wrong. (Qur'an; Surah al-Hujuraat 49:11).

Islam approaches this matter from a different angle, despite some perpetrators' use of the defense that they were merely making a joke, so what they do would not be taken seriously. This place must remain off-limits to any aggressiveness and behavior that can subject the people to humiliation and degradation. The ban on such act is actually designed to preserve human dignity and honor. Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stated:

The Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) ascended the *Minbar* and called out with a raised voice: *'O you who accepted Islam with his tongue, while faith has not reached his heart. Do not harm the Muslims, nor revile them, nor spy on them to expose their secrets. For indeed, whoever tries to expose his Muslim brother's secrets, Allah exposes his secrets wide open, even if he were in the depth of his House.'*" He (*Nafl*) said: 'One day Ibn 'Umar looked at the House- or – *Ka'bah* and said: 'What is it that is more honored than you, and whose honor is more sacred than yours! And the believer's honor is more sacred to Allah than yours (Jami` at-Tirmidhi, Vol. 4, Book 1, Hadith 2032).

Mockery and Derision

In the Glorious Qur'an, particularly in Surah al-Hujurat, there are bans concerning social interaction socially with individual Muslims. This, for example, is a Mockery of individuals and referring individuals with unwanted names, which such individuals hatred. Allah says in the Glorious Qur'an;

O you who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): nor let some women laugh at others: it may be that the (latter is better than the (former): Nor defame nor be sarcastic to Each other, nor call Each other by (offensive) nicknames: Ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness, (to be used of one) after He has believed: and those who do not desist are (indeed) doing wrong. (Qur'an; Surah al-Hujuraat 49:11).

Mickey doesn't just mean making fun of someone verbally; it also means imitating them, making snide remarks about them, laughing at their words, their creative work, their appearance, or their clothing, or drawing attention to some flaw or imperfection in them so that others can make fun of them in general and not just on social media. Mocking incorporates all of this. The act of making fun of and mocking someone is essentially forbidden since doing so invariably hides thoughts of self-righteousness and the other person's abasement and disdain, which are morally unacceptable for a gentleman (Sule & Yahaya, 2020).

Additionally, it causes harm to the other individual, which spreads trouble in the community. Allah's command states that a person shouldn't be referred to by a name or title that might bring him shame, such as calling someone a sinner, hypocrite, *Kafir* (disbeliever), or calling them lame, blind, or one-eyed, or giving him a nickname that alludes to a flaw or flaws in him, his parents, or his family, or calling a person a Jew or a Christian even after being fully aware that he is a Muslim, or using such moniker to describe a person, relatives, neighbors, or anything else that could bring shame or condemnation onto it.

In comparison to other creations, Allah S.W.T. created humans as the best and most revered creatures. One person is not superior to another just because of their physical characteristics, complexion, or tribal affiliation. In fact, piety, or how much a person devotes himself to Allah, is one of the factors that determine how glorious a person is. Islam prohibits any acts of harm, insult, humiliation, and slander, including the use of abhorrent and hateful language, which is all too common in today's social media. This restriction aims to prevent animosity between the offender and the victim as well as to safeguard the person's personality. Abu Umamah narrated that the Noble Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

Al-Haya' and Al-Iy are two branches of faith, and Al-Badha (obscene talk) and Al-Bayan (too much talk) are two branches of Hypocrisy (Jami` at-Tirmidhi, Vol. 4, Book 1, Hadith 2027).

The worst sins, and those that Allah expressly forbids, are calling someone a name, insulting them, or making them feel inferior. In addition to causing a divide between people, such heinous deeds make the perpetrators feel overwhelmed by negative traits like *Riya*, where they believe they are more honorable and that it is acceptable to insult and make fun of others who are inferior to them. This kind of behavior falls far short of the ideal Islam describes as honorable. Narrated 'Abdullah bin Umar that the Messenger of Allah (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

Allah's Apostle states, "A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim, so he should not oppress him, nor should he hand him over to an oppressor. Whoever fulfilled the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfill his needs; whoever brought his (Muslim) brother out of discomfort, Allah will bring him out of the discomforts of the Day of Resurrection, and whoever screened a Muslim, Allah will screen him on the Day of Resurrection (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 3, Book 43, Hadith No. 622).

It is against Islamic communication principles for some social media users to expose, humiliate, and denigrate others while making jokes or having fun. For the sake of enjoyment, jokes cannot contain even the slightest amount of lies or insults that violate the honor and dignity of others without considering the consequences suffered by each victim. Narrated Al-Ma'rur;

At Ar-Rabadha, I met Abu Dhar, who was wearing a cloak, and his slave, too, was wearing a similar one. I asked about the reason for it. He replied, "*I abused a person by calling his mother bad names.*" *The Prophet said to me, 'O Abu Dhar! Did you abuse him by calling his mother with bad names You still have some characteristics of ignorance? Your slaves are your brothers and Allah has put them*

under your command. So, whoever has a brother under his command should feed him of what he eats and dress him of what he wears. Do not ask them (slaves) to do things beyond their capacity (power) and if you do so, then help them.' " (Sahih al-Bukhari: Vol. 1, Book 2, Hadith 30).

Exposure of People Secrecy

Islam strongly opposes interfering with people's privacy, which extends to our interactions on social media as well as with them in their private residences. Muslims are attempting to impose themselves or snoop on the private lives of others with the goal of discovering their flaws and publicising them on Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and other social media platforms (Sule & Yahaya, 2020). Researchers have found that some Muslims online have a habit of breaking into other people's profiles on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. with the goal of downloading their pictures or taking screenshots of their messages and sharing them without the owner's consent or with the intention of revealing their secret to the public. Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam*) says in a *Hadith*:

It was narrated by Hudhaifah (may Allah be pleased with him) said I heard the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam*) saying "A *Qattat* will not enter Paradise (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol. 8, Hadith No. 82).

A *Qattat* is a person who conveys disagreeable, false information from one person to another with the intention of causing harm and enmity between them. It is forbidden for a Muslim to look into someone's private conversation, browser history, and private photo collection on social media without their permission. One has no right to discover people's secrets and expose them to the world. Islam is against thinking badly about a fellow Muslim because it is the worst type of lie. Many Muslims are in the habit of doing that on social media.

Social engagement on online platforms has become simpler and faster because of Information and Communication Technology (I.C.T.) tools and the growth of social media. However, the abuse of this medium has resulted in a rise in such conduct, either directly or indirectly, through the actions of irresponsible people who disseminate these immoral habits. This behavior has unintentionally resulted in slander (*al-ghibah*) and gossip (*al-namimah*), both of which are prohibited by Islam. Allah, the Most-High, said;

O you who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible): suspicion in some cases is a sin: and spy not on Each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of His dead brother? Nay, ye would abhor it...But fear Allah. Allah is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful (Qur'an; Surah al-Hujuraat 49:12).

Through his remarks, Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also explained this behavior:

Do not envy one another, and do not inflate prices for one another, and do not hate one another, and do not turn away from one another, and do not undercut one another in trade, but [rather] be slaves of Allah and brothers [amongst yourselves] (Sahih Muslim, no 6541).

As a result, those responsible for such behavior, whether as the primary culprit or propagandist, will face punishment from Allah in the afterlife. If the information they distribute comes from reliable and trustworthy sources, then yes. Because Islam forbids any libelous behavior, the culprit or propagator could face a worse penalty if they just made up the material and conveyed it to others, even for amusement or fun. Since their acts negatively impact the victim's life, the propagator aiding in such behavior is subject to the same level of punishment as the perpetrator. Allah, the Most-High declares in Surah al-Nur;

Verily, those who like that (the crime of) illegal sexual intercourse should be propagated among those who believe they will have a painful torment in This world and the Hereafter. Moreover, Allah knows, and you know not (Surah al-Nur, 24: 19).

Social engagement is made simple and quick with social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp. However, using the Internet unethically to the point that addiction is sparked can hurt a person's health but also the health of the entire society (Lanaj et al., 2014). Additionally, this advancement has unintended adverse effects on the digital populace, mainly when tools are misused for illegal or unethical activity. Cyberbullying is prevalent among people who spend more time online (Akbulut et al., 2010).

Because of this, all individuals using social media should exercise restraint so as not to invade the privacy or dignity of other users. Even though cyberspace has no boundaries, users of social media nevertheless need to respect the rights and privacy of others. Everyone is responsible for fostering a secure atmosphere wherever they are by showing respect and always abiding by communication principles, whether the interaction is physical or through the digital world. Indeed, it is unethical and has to be discouraged from harassing people online and intruding on their personal space. The rights and restrictions imposed by the government on the use of social media must be understood by each party.

CONCLUSION

Everyone has a strong need to use social media, especially in the contemporary age. On the other hand, its immoral use leaves society open to social media exploitation. One of the most recent trends among social media users and those who use it more frequently is to engage in cyberbullying. These actions may have detrimental effects on society if they are not stopped. Even though the perpetrators of this cyberbullying seem to enjoy it, this behavior is wrong and against the law. Islam forbids it as well, irrespective of the victim's background. In order to foster a more peaceful and safer digital ecosystem, digital media users should conduct themselves with ethics and good manners when communicating, particularly on cyber platforms.

As a result, this study adds to the corpus of current knowledge on cyberbullying in Nigeria concerning social media. The critical value of this paper is that it offers guidelines for peaceful interaction on digital platforms from an Islamic viewpoint. Islam upholds the right to free speech only when predetermined rules carry it out. A tolerant and cohesive digital society can be created by upholding moral, ethical, and religious principles. Future research

should evaluate Malaysia's grasp of the effects of cyberbullying behavior. This significant discovery advances the national cybersecurity agenda and the cohesion of Malaysia's digital society.

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List of Informants

Bara'atu Malam Hariusu (40 Years), Civil Servant, interviewed at Kafin Hausa, Jigawa State, Nigeria on 17/03/2023.

Bukar Abdullahi (34 Years), Civil Servant, was interviewed at Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria, on 12/2/2023.

Dayyabu Aminu Jahun (45 Years), the Teacher, was interviewed at Hadieja, Jigawa State, Nigeria, on 09/2/2023.

Fauziya Yusuf Atakpe, (29 Years), Student, interviewed at Kawo, Kaduna, Nigeria on 21/2/2023.

Ismail Khalid Omolori, (49 Years), Teacher, interviewed at Anyingba, Kogi State, Nigeria on 17/03/2023.

Jabir Hassan Gana (51 Years), Businessman, interviewed at Bukuru, Jos, Nigeria on 08/03/2023.

Uthman Muhammad Alkali (37 Years) was interviewed at Aliero, Kebbi State, Nigeria, on 05/03/2023.