

The Behavior of Sufi Adherents on Social Media and Their Interactions With Non-Sufi Muslims

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Abstract

Tasawwuf (Sufism) is a mystical Islamic tradition that emphasizes soul purification, sincere devotion to Allah, and fostering harmonious relationships across ideological divides. This study investigates the nature and challenges of online interactions between Sufi and non-Sufi Muslims in Nigeria. Utilizing a descriptive research design, data were collected through a Google Form questionnaire and analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. A multistage sampling approach ensured the inclusion of respondents from diverse Sufi and non-Sufi groups. The findings reveal that while interactions between Sufi and non-Sufi Muslims are frequent, particularly on platforms like Facebook, they are often marked by contentious exchanges. Provocative statements directed at Sufi Muslims occasionally lead to tensions, although most Sufi respondents prefer to avoid confrontation by ignoring such provocations. However, concerns were raised regarding the online behavior of some Sufi youth, which appears to deviate from traditional Sufi teachings as they engage in arguments to defend Sufism. This study underscores the importance of enhanced spiritual guidance for Sufi adherents to align their online activities with the principles of Tasawwuf. Promoting respectful digital discourse and fostering mutual understanding are essential strategies to mitigate tensions and strengthen harmony within the broader Muslim community.

Keywords: Sufism, Social Media, Nigeria, Muslims.

INTRODUCTION

The interaction between religious communities and the media started several decades ago, starting with printed media and electronic devices like magazines, newspapers, satellite television, audio cassettes, telephone dials, and the most cutting-edge cyber technology, where the Internet is the main network (Hidayati, 2022). Hence, scholars have written extensively on Sufism in West Africa and ample attention have been duly given to it. However, despite the extensive list of research works, very little attempt has been made by scholars to assess the engagement of Sufi adherents with non-Sufis on social media which have fractured the Islamic brotherhood. Sufism, as a mystical movement in Islam, trains its adherents on the essence of soul purification, and this training influences their interactions the society at large, leading to healthy living within the entire community. However, with the advent of social media, most especially during the lockdown period in Nigeria when the Federal Government ordered citizens to stay at home because of Covid-19, Islamic clerics took to social media as alternatives to continue their religious activities, among which are Sufi clerics and adherents. The lockdown period witnessed a huge evolution of religious netizens coming on social media unlike before, and this trend continued till present moment. Before Covid-19, we can mention Islamic personalities that were hosting religious activities on social media, most especially on Facebook, clerics like Saheed Shittu, Sheikh Labeeb Lagbaji, Rawdatul

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Received: September 15, 2024; Revised: October 28, 2024; Accepted: December 30, 2024

Abraar, Abu Mardiyi Oniyawo Meta, Sheikh Aribidesi, and among others (Abdulganiy, 2024). Post lockdown, we started witnessing incessant complexities by the Muslims netizens on social media, most especially Sufis with non-Sufi Muslims. These complexities are boundless and include, but are not limited to, excessive use of social media, which often leads to unhealthy arguments; online conflicts and disputes with Muslims of differing ideological views; celebrating indecency and advertising fetish activities; and deliberate interpolation of Islamic texts to suit their sinister action, and among others. Hence, without doubt, the porous nature of social media has not only derailed some Sufi adherents from their training but has also created many concerns for non-Sufi Muslims, leading them to regard Sufism as Unislamic activities. This is the result of how Sufi adherents manage their character traits while engaging with various complexities on social media. According to the teaching of Sufism, attaining righteousness and excellence in *Akhlāq* is contingent upon giving up immorality, while holding on to the highest standards of appropriate manners (Hassan, 2015). Furthermore, Sufism is comprised of honorable behavior displayed by a noble individual inside a noble community on a holy occasion (Al-Tusi, 2007).

Summarily, the conduct of some Sufi adherents on social media appears to contradict the core teachings of Sufism. Instances of provocative statements that often lead to occasional conflicts and other instances listed above are observed. Therefore, this paper seeks to assess the presence and behavior of Sufi adherents on social media and their interactions with non-Sufi Muslims.

This study employed descriptive survey research design to generate data to examine the presence and behavior of Sufi adherents on social media and their interactions with non-Sufi Muslims. The total sample population consists of 100 respondents who are Muslim netizens. This is divided into 2 categories. For the first category, 50 online questionnaires using Google Forms were administered to Sufi adherents, while the second category was another 50 questionnaires administered online to non-Sufi adherents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Administered to Non-Sufi Muslims

In terms of geographical distribution, many respondents are concentrated in Oyo State (38.0%) and Lagos State (26.0%), with smaller proportions residing in Ogun State (8.0%) and other states (22.0%). This indicates a significant regional focus, particularly in Oyo and Lagos. At the city level, most respondents are from Ibadan (36.0%) and Lagos (30.0%), reflecting the prominence of these urban centers in shaping respondents' social media interactions and potentially influencing their engagement with various Islamic groups.

Concerning Islamic group affiliation, 78.0% of respondents identify as Sunni Muslims, while only 2.0% identify as Shia, demonstrating that Sunni perspectives dominate the sample. The largest age group is 26–35 years (52.0%), followed by 36–45 years (30.0%), indicating that most respondents are in the working-age demographic and likely to be active on social media.

On social media usage, the combination of Facebook and WhatsApp (30.0%) is the most common platform used by the respondents. A significant percentage also use Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and WhatsApp, with a percentage of (22.0%). This shows how respondents use multiple platforms for different engagements. In addition, the frequency at which respondents use social media differs; 68.0% of respondents use it once a day, and 18.0%,

according to the generated data, use it multiple times in a day; this underpins how respondents use social media for their activities. Concerning the purposes of using media, the report indicates (42.0%) as a form of blending social activities with religious purposes, which includes socializing with friends and family, sharing religious content, debating religious topics, and following religious scholars.

Interaction with Sufi Muslims on social media varies, with 38.0% of respondents reporting frequent engagement, while 28.0% reported they rarely interact. These interactions are predominantly focused on debating religious differences (52.0%), with only 14.0% describing them as friendly or respectful. This suggests a tendency towards contentious rather than harmonious exchanges. Sufi Muslims primarily share religious teachings and quotes (78.0%), with fewer instances of debates or personal opinions, emphasizing their focus on disseminating religious knowledge.

Assessing the frequency of interaction with Sufi Muslims on social media, 38.0% of respondents have frequent engagements, while 28.0% were reported to interact rarely with Sufi Muslims. This indicates that the interaction with Sufi Muslims on social media varies. The data (52.0%) further suggests that the interaction is focused on debating ideological differences, while 14.0% describe the interactions as friendly and respectful. Thus, there is a tendency for the interaction to be more contentious than harmonious exchanges. Sufi Muslims primarily share religious teachings and quotes (78.0%), with fewer instances of debates or personal opinions, emphasizing their focus on disseminating religious knowledge.

62.0% reported encountering provocative statements from Sufi Muslims, which is significant, although the nature of the statements varies from one respondent to the other. 58.0% of the respondents chose to ignore, while 14.0% chose to report the contents, and 10.0% opted to engage in ideological debates. This indicates the choice of the non-confrontational approach of non-Sufi in handling the provocative statements they encountered from Sufi Muslims on social media. Regarding the perception of the respondents in interacting with Sufi Muslims, 54.0% indicated that their perception of Sufi Muslims remains unchanged, while 20.0% indicated a worsened perception. 12.0% indicated that their perception of Sufi Muslims has improved. This shows clearly that the respondents have different perceptions about the Sufi Muslims. Concerning the perception of authenticity of the online behavior of Sufi Muslims conforms to traditional Sufism, 52.0% of the respondents opted that they are not sure, while 34.0% believe it does not align, while 4.0% believe the online behavior of Sufi Muslims perfectly aligns with traditional Sufism. This reflects some ambiguity or skepticism about how Sufism is represented online. In terms of attitudes toward Sufi Muslims' online conduct, 44.0% of respondents rate it as fair, while 16.0% and 14.0% rate it as poor or very poor, respectively, indicating a generally critical view.

Lastly, while assessing if youthful exuberance impacts the behavior of Sufi Muslims on social media, it could be observed that (40.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed, (38.0%) of the respondents agreed while (12.0%) of the respondents stayed neutral. Finally, concerning the respondents' position on whether training and guidance for Sufi adherents should be conducted to achieve appropriate online behavior, it could be observed from the generated data that (46.0%) respondents strongly agree, 20(40.0%) of the respondents agreed with that more training and guidance should be initiated for young Sufi adherents to appropriate behavior online.

Data Administered to Sufi Muslims

On geographical location, the respondents spread across states and cities in Nigeria. It was shown that many of the respondents reside outside the major areas listed for the purpose of the study. From the generated data, 44.0% live in states other than the listed states in the study, while the data reveals 24.0% are from Oyo, with 14.0% from Ogun and Lagos with 12.0%. The variation in geographical location indicates that there was a diverse participant pool, with the largest participant from Oyo State. Concerning the cities, 24.0% represented a large portion of respondents from Ibadan, while 14.0% of respondents represented Abeokuta and Lagos with 12.0%. Many respondents who participated in the survey came from locations not primarily listed in the study. This shows that the study received responses from diverse locations.

On the affiliation of the respondents with Islamic group, 50.0% identify with Tijaniyyah Sufi Order, while 38.0% participants identified with the Qadiriyyah Sufi Order. A smaller percentage belong to other groups among which are: Jafariyyah 2.0%, Tebleegh 2.0%, while others indicate 8.0%. The data indicates that Tijaniyyah Sufi Order is predominant among the variables. On age distribution, the predominant age is between 26-35 (82.0%) which indicates that the largest respondents are youths. This shows that youth have the largest engagement with social media. In reference to gender distribution, it could be seen that 24 (48.0%) of respondents were male while 26 (52.0%) of the respondents were female.

On social media usage, the data shows the social media platform respondents use regularly. It could be seen that 26 (52.0%) of the respondents use Facebook, X formerly Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp while 10 (20.0%) of the respondents used only WhatsApp. This suggests a preference for platforms that facilitate both personal and group interactions. Furthermore, 92.0% of respondents use social media multiple times a day, indicating a high level of engagement, with only a small percentage using it less frequently, such as a few times a week or once a day.

From the data generated, it was observed that the primary purpose why respondents use social media vary from one another, data shows that 34 (68.0%) of the respondents used social media for socializing with friends and family; sharing religious content; debating religious topics; following religious leaders or groups while 7 (14.0%) of the respondents used it for socializing with friend and family only. This stipulates the significant role social media plays in personal and religious affairs of the respondents. In terms of engagement of Sufi with non-Sufi Muslims on social media, it could be gathered that 44 (88.0%) of Sufi Muslims engage with non-Sufi counterparts frequently on social media, this shows a high level of cross-gap interaction and communication and shows the potential for influence and conflicts. It could be observed as well that 4(8.0%) of the respondents occasionally engage with non-Sufi Muslims on social media. While a small fraction of 4.0% engage in disputes and conflicts with the non-Sufi Muslims.

In terms of the nature of interaction that exist between Sufi and non-Sufi Muslims on social media. It could be seen that 38 (76.0%) of the respondents said friendly and respectful interaction exist between Sufi and non-Sufi on social media while 5(10.0%) of the respondents said debating religious difference and sharing religious teaching exist between Sufi and non-Sufi Muslims respectively. On the content non-Sufi Muslims often share on social media. It could be observed that 37 (74.0%) of the respondents affirmed that non-Sufi Muslims share religious teaching and quotes while 8 (16.0%) said that non-Sufi share debate and argument content on social media.

Survey shows the provocative statement made by non-Sufi Muslims on social media. It could be observed from the survey that 45 (90.0%) of the respondents indicated that they have encountered provocative statement from non-Sufi Muslims on social media while 5 (10.0%) said No, which indicated that they have not encountered provocative statement from non-Sufi Muslims on social media. The former indicates a pervading issue of contentious content between Sufi and non-Sufi in online interactions.

Furthermore, there are arrays of provocative statement from non-Sufi Muslim on social media, among which are:

1. Abusing the tenets and ideologies of Sufism and Calling the Sufi saints as innovators,
2. An Islamic scholar said there's nothing like Sufism in Islam,
3. Dr. Sharadeen Gbadebo Raji said the blessing of a mother cannot reach the child. It is only Allah that gives blessings

In response, the survey shows how respondents react to provocative statements from non-Sufi. It could be seen that 25 (50.0%) of the respondents report the-content, 13 (26.0%) of the respondents ignore them, while 9 (18.0%) of the respondents engage in debate as a way of responding to provocative statements from non-Sufi Muslims on social media.

The survey reveals if the respondents have ever posted or shared content that might be considered provocative or against the fundamental principles of Islam. It could be seen that 30 (60.0%) said Yes, meaning that they have posted or shared content considered provocative or against the fundamental principles of Islam, which indicates that they have been involved in several controversies over religious discussions with the non-Sufi. While 20 (40.0%) said No. This means they have less content online discussions with non-Sufi.

Moving on, the survey reveals how the social media activity of Sufis affected the relationships with non-Sufi Muslims. On this, 23 (46.0%) of the respondents said their relationship remains the same, 18 (36.0%) of the respondents said it has improved, while 5 (10.0%) said the relationship has worsened. Looking at the perception of online behavior of Sufi adherents. It could be deduced that the behavior of non-Sufi adherents on social media do not align with the teaching and training of Sufism as 28 (56.0%) of the respondents said No, while 11 (22.0%) of the respondents said Yes. This is an indication that there is no synergy or there is a perceived disconnection from the conduct of Sufi Muslims and the principles of Sufism.

Lastly, the survey presents the influence of youthful exuberance on behavior of young non-Sufi adherents online. It could be observed that 34 (68.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed that youthful exuberance influences their behavior, just as 11 (22.0%) of the respondents agreed as well. This points to the fact that age and maturity plays a significant role in online interaction.

Finally, the survey shows the training and guidance needed for Sufi adherents on appropriate online behavior. It could be gathered that 41(82.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed that more training and guidance are needed for Sufi adherents while 8 (16.0%) of the respondents agreed that more training and guidance are needed for Sufi adherents. The essence of the training highlights that, there is a perceived wide gap between maintaining decorum online and adhering to the guidelines of Sufism.

Muslims and Social Media

Islam is a comprehensive system that encompasses all spheres of life (Al-Banna,2006). It teaches moral uprightness and ethical standards in society. Such ethical standard extends to how a

Muslim relates with social media in dealing with his fellow Muslims, non-Muslims and the community at large. In recent times, social media has become much more than just a place for Muslims to socialize; it has developed into a potent weapon for Da'wah, which we use to promote truthfulness and discourage wrongdoing. Allah says:

"You are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind; you enjoin Al-Ma'ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam has ordained) and forbid Al-Munkar (polytheism, disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden), and you believe in Allah..." (Q:3:110)

Without a doubt, social media helps in spreading authentic message of Islam more effectively than traditional media, which, at best, portrays Islam as a tainted secular religion and, at worst, as nothing more than evil. Muslims can communicate their own stories since social media is an open forum (Sule and Lawal 2022, Sule & Aliyyu, 2019, Chowdhury, 2024). Social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter offer the opportunities to discuss Islam, exchange ideas, and correct misunderstandings about the religion (Ibahrine, 2014; Lawal & Dauda, 2022). Furthermore, the feature of social media that allows people to socially interact in an open space pave the way for Muslims to challenge people who distort the true nature of Islam. In turn, it encourages Muslims to maintain open dialogue with fellow Muslims (Sule & Aliyyu, 2019, Nurdin&Rusli,2013). Haron (2015) states that, primarily, right from the time of the Prophet, spreading the message of Islam has been known as Da'wah. However, the message about Islam during the Prophetic Era was delivered orally, and this is because of the reality of restrictions they lived with, unlike the present era of social media (Latepo *et al.*, 2021). The Masjids, educational institutions, and studying under imams and sheikhs were the primary places in the past to learn about Islam. There are still opportunities for traditional learning. Nonetheless, Muslims can now use social media platforms to network, study, ask questions, and impart knowledge. There many additional channels for acquiring knowledge about Islam. Islamic literature is now much more accessible because to the Internet, which has also provided the public with access to a wide variety of knowledge (Yahaya & Sule, 2018). Furthermore, Social media is an essential tool for a civil society and its members, since everyone wants to be informed about the most recent developments in Islam and other spheres of life. Nowadays, a lot of individuals use different social media platforms instead of relying on daily newspapers, periodicals, and journals (Ahmad, Ghani, & Khoso, 2021). By foregoing, Sufi adherents need to be meticulous of their conduct on social media and adhere strictly to the training they receive as Murids when dealing with people who do not share the same Sufi thoughts with them.

Thus, Abdul Aziz Al Shaikh, Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, submits that, social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) disseminate lies and may destroy established relationship and Muslim families in the offline real world. He stated further, religious authorities in some Islamic countries issued fatwas against the use of social media, arguing for its incompatibility with Shari'ah because of trading accusations and promoting lies. While some of the Islamic religious leaders advise their followers not to use Social Media platforms, many scholars and preachers capitalize on the effectiveness and efficiency of social media in engaging with the community of believers and enhance their fidelity and loyalty of users (Ibahrine, 2014). Sanusi, Gambo, and HadiAshara (2014) claim that the various issues surrounding social media use have emerged as the primary global focus in recent years. Concerns about pornography, fraud, identity theft, and a host of other detrimental effects linked to social networking in general have worried academics and authorities

around the world. Concerns about social media being used for online crimes, such as hacking or recruiting terrorists, are growing. Thus, social media has become perceived as a source of negative influence on young people, especially students, in many nations, including Nigeria. Yahaya and Sule (2018) According to their study on Nasarawa Muslim Students, they submit that, the majority of Muslim students who participated in the poll were aware of both the advantages and disadvantages of social media platforms and were familiar with those that spread Islam.

Ismael (2023) holds that, social media has emerged as the most important instrument for spreading ideas to all corners of society in recent times. It is crucial to remember that if we want to fit in with this contemporary trend, we need to create a conceptual framework that will guide Muslims on how to utilize social media platforms in an appropriate and legal manner (Kurfi, 2018). Then, it can be emphasized that social media has ingrained itself into people's life. We have the freedom to choose whether to use them for good or harm. In the light of this, it is essential to balance social media and Islamic education so as to aid the way Muslims can utilize it for good purposes. The use of technology in Islamic education has seen a sharp increase in interest recently (Subiyakto et al., 2022). A variety of technology solutions, such as mobile applications, multimedia resources, and online learning platforms, have surfaced to improve teaching-learning procedures (Alsharbi, Et al., 2021). Despite the fact that social media and its education are not prohibited, Muslims must use it in accordance with Islamic principles.

In conclusion, it is unequivocal that social media offers many advantages for the progression of Da'wah among Muslims and enhances our social interactions with people and society at large. Social media provides a valuable avenue for amplifying various Sufi activities and connecting with other Sufi adherents across the globe. On the other hand, Muslims who are unaware of the possible drawbacks of social media also suffer greatly from its porosity. It is now a platform for propagandists against Islam, endangering the safety of Muslims in the media. While it can foster Islamic brotherhood, it can also destroy the minds of Muslims and tarnish the image of Islam if misused. Therefore, the choice lies with the users, and Muslims are urged to make the best choices (Aleem et al., 2023).

Online Interactions Between Sufi and Non-Sufi Muslims: Dynamics, Tensions, and Perceived Divergences

From the foregoing, the findings reveal that the online engagement between non-Sufi and Sufi Muslims is characterized by frequent interaction, which is occasionally marked by conflicts. Social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp are extensively used by respondents, with a significant majority engaging multiple times a day (Sule & Abdulkareem, 2022). This high frequency underscores the pivotal role these platforms play in facilitating personal and religious interactions. As digital spaces grow increasingly important, they serve not only as hubs for information exchange but also as arenas where diverse interpretations of religious beliefs are expressed and contested.

The interactions observed within these digital spaces are multifaceted. They include debates on theological issues, the sharing of religious content, and responses to provocative statements. These interactions reveal the dynamic and, at times, contentious nature of the relationship between Sufi and non-Sufi Muslims. Respondents frequently encounter statements from non-Sufi Muslims

that they perceive as provocative, often targeting specific practices or beliefs within Sufism. This highlights the underlying tensions and differing interpretations of religious principles within the broader Muslim community (Heritage Foundation, 2021; United States Institute of Peace, 2015). Despite these challenges, the predominant reaction to such provocations, as reported by respondents, is to ignore them rather than engage in confrontational debates. This strategy reflects a conscious effort to maintain harmony and avoid escalating conflicts, underscoring the resilience and adaptability of individuals navigating these digital spaces.

Incontrovertibly, social media platforms have assumed multifaceted roles in the lives of users, encompassing both personal and religious dimensions. For many, these platforms provide therapeutic spaces for expression, fostering a sense of community and belonging (Folami et al., 2020; Mala, 2015). The broad range of interactions observed on social media includes theological debates—both peaceful and contentious—sharing of spiritual teachings, and responses to challenges posed by differing viewpoints. The amplification of these interactions in digital spaces allows for the rapid dissemination of ideas, making ideological debates that were once confined to local communities accessible to a global audience.

However, the role of social media in shaping perceptions of religious identity is not without controversy. Respondents expressed skepticism about whether the online behaviors and activities of some Sufi Muslims align with traditional Sufi teachings. This skepticism stems from the belief that certain online practices diverge from the core principles of Sufism, which emphasize spiritual purity, devotion, and ethical conduct (Piraino, 2016; Rosowsky, 2017; Rozehnal, 2023). Respondents highlighted specific cases where Sufi clerics and their followers were perceived to engage in behaviors that could be viewed as controversial or inconsistent with Islamic teachings. Examples include claims of supernatural abilities, actions perceived as undermining Islamic law, or behaviors that could be interpreted as compromising the principle of tawhid (monotheism) (Bala, 2006; Haruna Isa, 2022; Piraino, 2016).

These observations suggest that the intersection of traditional Sufi values and modern digital interactions creates a complex landscape. On one hand, social media provides a platform for Sufism to reach new audiences, share spiritual teachings, and engage in dialogue. On the other hand, the visibility of certain practices and behaviors online opens them to public scrutiny, sometimes leading to criticism or misinterpretation. The tension between preserving the integrity of traditional Sufi teachings and adapting to the realities of digital engagement underscores the broader challenges faced by religious communities in the modern age.

It is essential to note that the findings presented here reflect the views and perceptions of respondents and do not represent the entire Sufi community. They highlight the need for further research to examine the evolving dynamics of religious representation and interaction in digital spaces. Such research could explore the ways in which Sufi communities balance their adherence to traditional values with the opportunities and challenges posed by online platforms. By fostering a nuanced understanding of these dynamics, scholars and practitioners alike can contribute to more inclusive and informed discussions about religion in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

Revisiting the teachings of traditional Sufism offers valuable guidance for navigating modern challenges. By reconnecting with foundational principles, Sufi adherents can find

greater spiritual clarity, enabling them to dedicate their actions sincerely to Allah and respond to online provocations with patience and restraint. Such an approach can help minimize conflicts and foster peaceful interactions with non-Sufi Muslims in digital spaces. Additionally, integrating broader Islamic knowledge into the practice of Sufism is essential, as it reinforces the connection between Sufism and its Islamic roots, ensuring authenticity in spiritual practices amidst contemporary digital interactions.

Leaders of Sufi communities in Nigeria have a crucial role in guiding their followers toward respectful and constructive behavior in modern digital spaces. By prioritizing education and sensitization on ethical digital engagement, Sufi leaders can empower adherents to navigate online environments with decorum and uphold the values of Sufism. This balanced approach, combining traditional values with a modern understanding of digital dynamics, can enable Sufi communities to thrive while preserving their spiritual heritage and promoting harmony within the broader Muslim community.

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Appendix

QUESTIONNAIRE

The Behavior of Sufi Adherents on social media and their interactions with Non-Sufi Muslims.

1. Questionnaire Administered to Non-Sufi Muslims

Demographic Data

Demographic characteristics include: (State, Town/City, Religious group, Age, Gender) of the respondents were analyzed using frequency counts and percentage and the result is given below:

State	Frequency	Percentage %)
Kaduna	1	2.0
Kano	2	4.0
Lagos	13	26.0
Ogun	4	8.0
Oyo	19	38.0
Others	11	22.0
Total	50	100.0

Distribution of the respondents by State of Origin

Distribution of the respondents by City/Town they reside

City/Town	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lagos	15	30.0
Abeokuta	2	4.0
Ibadan	18	36.0
Kaduna	2	4.0
Kano	2	4.0
Others	11	22.0
Total	50	100.0

Distribution of the respondents by Islamic group respondents belong to

Islamic Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sunni	39	78.0
Shia	1	2.0
Ahmadiyyah	0	0.0
Others	10	20.0
Total	50	100.0

Distribution of the respondents by Age

Age range (years)	Frequency	Percentage(%)
18-25	7	14.0
26-35	26	52.0
36-45	15	30.0
46-55	1	2.0
56 & Above	1	2.0
Total	50	100.0

Online Behaviour and Engagement of Respondents to Social Media Usage

Social Media Platform	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	2	4.0
Facebook; Instagram; WhatsApp	5	10.0
Facebook; WhatsApp	15	30.0
Facebook; X (Twitter); Instagram; WhatsApp	11	22.0
Facebook; X (Twitter); Instagram; WhatsApp; Thread	1	2.0
Facebook; X (Twitter); Instagram; WhatsApp; Tiktok and Thread.	1	2.0
Facebook; X (Twitter); WhatsApp	5	10.0
WhatsApp	3	6.0
X (Twitter); Instagram; WhatsApp	1	2.0
X (Twitter); WhatsApp	6	12.0
Total	50	100.0

Frequency use of social media by respondents

Social Media Usage	Frequency	Percentage
A few times a week	5	10.0
Multiple times a day	9	18.0
Once a day	34	68.0
No Response	2	4.0
Total	50	100.0

Primary reasons of respondents for using social media

Purpose of Social Media Use	Frequency	Percentage
Listening to lecture	1	2.0
Sharing religious content	1	2.0
Sharing religious content; Following religious leaders or groups	2	4.0
Sharing religious content; News	1	2.0
Socializing with friends and family	8	16.0
Socializing with friends and family;	1	2.0
Socializing with friends and family; Debating religious topics	1	2.0
Socializing with friends and family; Following religious leaders or groups	3	6.0
Socializing with friends and family; Sharing religious content	5	10.0
Socializing with friends and family; Sharing religious content; Debating religious topics	1	2.0
Socializing with friends and family; Sharing religious content; Debating religious topics; Following religious leaders or groups	21	42.0
Socializing with friends and family; Sharing religious content; Debating religious topics; Following religious leaders or groups; To promote my business	2	4.0
Socializing with friends and family; Sharing religious content; Following religious leaders or groups; Getting information about academics	1	2.0
Socializing with friends and family; staying informed	1	2.0
Total	50	100.0

Respondents' interaction with Sufi Muslim on social media

Engagement of Non-Sufi with Sufi Muslims	Frequency	Percentage
Frequently	19	38.0
Never	6	12.0
Occasionally	11	22.0
Rarely	14	28.0
Total	50	100.0

Respondents' interaction with Sufi Muslims on social media

Interaction of Non-Sufi with Sufi on Social Media	Frequency	Percentage
Friendly and respectful	7	14.0
Debating religious differences	26	52.0
Sharing religious teaching	14	28.0
Dispute and conflict	1	2.0
Others	1	2.0
Total	50	100.0

Content Sufi Muslims Often Share on Social Media Encountered by Respondents

Content Sufi Muslims Share on Social Media	Frequency	Percentage
Religious teaching and quotes	39	78.0
Personal opinions and thoughts	4	8.0
Debate and arguments	5	10.0
Personal updates	1	2.0
Others	1	2.0
Total	50	100.0

Exposure of Respondents to provocative statement made by Sufi Muslims on social media

Provocative Statement	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	31	62.0
No	11	22.0
Maybe	8	16.0
Total	50	100.0

Examples of provocative statement	Frequency	Percentage (%)
A cleric saying one can eat dog	1	2.0
A Sufi leader from among the Qādiriyyah, Sheikh Ahmad Rufai Abdullah Salaty (Naqeebul Ashraaf) to the students of Arabic and Islamic Studies Schools that it is not wrong to use voodoo to marry the daughters of the wealthy people in the society.	1	2.0
A Sufi leader saying that he would turn to chicken in the presence of Allah on the last day, and he would turn his followers to corn, he would swallow them all. When he enters the paradise he would go and vomit them. So, they would enter paradise without any accountability.	1	2.0

A Sufi scholar said that if you want to make it in life, you will have to turn back to Allah, when you make the money, you will now face Allah that you are back.	1	2.0
Can't remember	1	2.0
Claiming that Shaykh Ibrahim called on Ahmad Tijani to refill the fuel of Aircraft	1	2.0
Denial of some Qur'an teachings like referring to solar in the Qur'an as ordinary prayer,.	1	2.0
Engaging in fetish act, innovations etc	1	2.0
Finding other means to attain wealth besides the halal	1	2.0
I can't recollect	1	2.0
I witnessed a situation where Yes'aloona was calling some Sunni scholars boko haram, such as Sheikh Alaro, Sheikh Dhikrullah Shafi, Mallam Yusuf Adepoju etc.	1	2.0
If labeeb is considered sufi telling us to use seven	1	2.0
It much	1	2.0
Jack Mal comments. He recently published a video that Sheikh Adam Al Ilory is knowledgeable than Ibn Baz, Uthaymeen and other Saudi scholars. This is an academic issue but he discussed with provocative words.	1	2.0
Jakmal said someone who is menstruating can fast.	1	2.0
On the issue of Shaykh Jâmiu Bulala	1	2.0
Praising zazu and cults to be good people.	1	2.0
Prophet Eesa being crucified.	1	2.0
Providing heretic contents that rarely comply with pristine Islamic teaching	1	2.0
Respect your Sheikh more than your parents	1	2.0
Saying that wife should always wash cloth for husband that that is the way of the prophet	1	2.0
Sheikh Adam eating bread and Akara in the day during Ramadan.	1	2.0
Someone said when the Prophet went Isra wal Miraj, he met a lion that forcefully collected his Prophetic ring and disappeared. When he came back from that journey, a woman came to	1	2.0

visit him to return the ring to him, stipulating that the Prophet met witches during his journey.		
Someone said they were inside a plane and the diesel finished while on air, so one of the disciples mentioned the name of Ibrahim Niyass and the plane tank filled up immediately.	1	2.0
Statements involving worshipping other than Allah. Worshipping scholars and false attribution to the prophet.	1	2.0
Sufi people saying it's Sheikh Ahmad Tijani and Ibrahim Niyass that will rescue them in front of Allah	1	2.0
That Salat al-Faith equals the five times daily prayers	1	2.0
The saying that "olohun dogbon saye..."	1	2.0
Trying to rewrite the Islamic history	1	2.0
No Response	21	42
Total	50	100.0

How Respondents react to provocative statement from Sufi Muslims

Reaction to Provocative statement	Frequency	Percentage
Ignore them	29	58.0
Report the content	7	14.0
Engage in debate	5	10.0
Share counter-arguments	4	8.0
Other	5	10.0
Total	50	100.0

Perception of Respondents' interaction with Sufi Muslims on social media

Provocative Statement	Frequency	Percentage
Improved	6	12.0
Remained the same	27	54.0
Worsened	10	20.0
Other	7	14.0
Total	50	100.0

Respondents' position on online behavior of Sufi Muslims

Overall behavior of Sufi Muslims	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	2	4.0
No	17	34.0
Maybe	26	52.0

Other	5	10.0
Total	50	100.0

Online Conduct of Sufi Muslims Respondents Interact with

Online conduct of Sufi Muslims	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	1	2.0
Good	2	4.0
Fair	22	44.0
Poor	8	16.0
Very poor	7	14.0
Total	50	100.0

Influence of youthful exuberance on behavior of young Sufi adherents online

Online Behaviour of Young Sufi Adherents	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	20	40.0
Agree	19	38.0
Neutral	6	12.0
Disagree	2	4.0
Strongly Disagree	3	18.0
Total	50	100.0

Respondents' position on training and guidance for Sufi adherents to achieve appropriate online behaviour

Online Behaviour of Young Sufi Adherents	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	23	46.0
Agree	20	40.0
Neutral	3	6.0
Disagree	3	6.0
Strongly Disagree	1	2.0
Total	50	100.0

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2. Questionnaire Administered to Sufi Muslims

Demographic Data

Demographic characteristics include: (State, Town/City, Religious group, Age, Gender) of the respondents were analyzed using frequency counts and percentage and the result is given below:

Distribution of the respondents by State of Origin

State	Frequency	Percentage
Kaduna	2	4.0
Kano	1	2.0
Lagos	6	12.0
Ogun	7	14.0
Oyo	12	24.0
Others	22	44.0
Total	50	100.0

Distribution of the respondents by City/Town they reside

City/Town	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lagos	6	12.0
Abeokuta	7	14.0
Ibadan	12	24.0
Kaduna	2	4.0
Kano	1	2.0
Others	22	44.0
Total	50	100.0

Distribution of the respondents by the Islamic group respondents belong to

Islamic Group	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Ja'fariyyah	1	2.0
Qadirriyyah	19	38.0
Tijaniyyah	25	50.0
Tebleegh	1	2.0
Others	4	8.0
Total	50	100.0

Distribution of the respondents by Age

Age range (years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18-25	2	4.0
26-35	41	82.0
36-45	0	0.0
46-55	7	14.0
56 & Above	0	0.0
Total	50	100.0

Distribution of the respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	24	48.0

Female	26	52.0
Total	50	100.0

Online Behaviour and Engagement of Respondents to Social Media Usage

Social Media Platform	Frequency	Percentage (%)
WhatsApp	10	20.0
Facebook; WhatsApp	3	6.0
Facebook; X (Twitter); Instagram; WhatsApp	26	52.0
Facebook; X (Twitter); Instagram; WhatsApp; Tiktok	7	14.0
Facebook; X (Twitter); Instagram; WhatsApp; Tiktok	4	8.0
Total	50	100.0

Frequency Use of Social Media by Respondents

Social Media Usage	Frequency	Percentage
A few times a week	2	2.0
Multiple times a day	44	92.0
Once a day	2	2.0
No Response	2	2.0
Total	50	100.0

Purpose of Social Media Usage by Respondents

Purpose of Social Media Use	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sharing religious content	3	6.0
Sharing religious content; Debating religious topics	1	2.0
Sharing religious content; Debating religious topics; Following religious leaders or groups	1	2.0
Socializing with friends and family	7	14.0
Socializing with friends and family; Sharing religious content	2	4.0
Socializing with friends and family; Sharing religious content; Debating religious topics	1	2.0

Socializing with friends and family; Sharing religious content; Debating religious topics; Following religious leaders or groups	34	68.0
Socializing with friends and family; Sharing religious content; Following religious leaders or groups	1	2.0
Total	50	100.0

Engagement of Sufi with non-Sufi Muslims on Social Media by Respondents

Engagement of Sufi with non-Sufi Muslims	Frequency	Percentage
Frequently	44	88.0
Never	1	2.0
Occasionally	4	8.0
Rarely	1	2.0
Total	50	100.0

Respondents' interaction with non-Sufi Muslims on Social Media

Interaction of Non-Sufi with Sufi on Social Media	Frequency	Percentage
Friendly and respectful	38	76.0
Debating religious differences	5	10.0
Sharing religious teaching	5	10.0
Dispute and conflict	2	4.0
Others	0	0.0
Total	50	100.0

Content non-Sufi Muslims Often Share on Social Media Encountered by Respondents

Content non-Sufi Muslims Share on Social Media	Frequency	Percentage
Religious teaching and quotes	37	74.0
Personal opinions and thoughts	4	8.0
Debate and arguments	8	16.0
Personal updates	1	2.0
Total	50	100.0

Exposure to Provocative Statements

7a. Have you encountered provocative statements made by non-Sufi Muslims on social media that go against the fundamental principles of Islam?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Provocative Statement	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	45	90.0
No	5	10.0
Maybe	0	0.0
Total	50	100.0

If yes, please provide examples:

Examples of Provocative Statement from non-Sufi Muslims on Social Media

Examples of provocative statement made by non-Sufi Muslims on Social Media	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1. Abusing the tenets and ideologies of Sufism 2. Calling the Sufi saints as innovators	1	2.0
A fellow Tijaniyyah adherent said it is Prophet Muhammad that gave Sheikh Ahmad Tijani the prayer of Salatul Faatih as a way of seeking praise for the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), not through the dream, but the Prophet appeared to him bodily.	1	2.0
A fellow Tijaniyyah Sufi adherent said all the litanies we do in Tijaniyyah Sufi was order was dictated by the Prophet to Sheikh Ahmad Tijani. The Prophet appeared to him live and sat him down to teach him.	1	2.0
A Sufi cleric said that smoking cigarettes is permitted in Islam	1	2.0
A sufi said there is not wali of Allah again after Sheikh Ahmad Tijani	1	2.0
A Sufi young scholar said Shaytan is not worthy of cursing	1	2.0
A tijaniyah cleric said Prophet Muhammad (saw) is Ahmad Tijani and Ahmad Tijani is equally Prophet Muhammad (saw).	1	2.0
A Tijaniyyah sufi cleric said that Prophet Muhammad appeared in body to Ahmad Tijani and taught him to be doing Jawharatul Kamal prayer for him.	1	2.0
Abusing the sahaba	1	2.0
Alfa Jabata said anybody that dies on Sufi practices would enter hellfire. He said his own father	1	2.0

too died on Sufi practices, so he would enter hellfire		
Alfa Labeeb once said there's nothing bad for an Islamic cleric to use fetish ring to safeguard himself.	1	2.0
An Alfa saying smoking cigarettes is not haram	1	2.0
An example of Jakmal saying that a student of knowledgeable from Markaz that has never seen Sheikh Adam in his dream to teach him Arabic and Islamic knowledge is not a good Markaz student.	1	2.0
An example of Jamiu Adegunwa said it is allowed in Islam to eat dog.	1	2.0
An Islamic cleric said it is not good for a wife to use washing machine to wash the clothes of her husband, if she does so, he children would not be successful in life.	1	2.0
An Islamic scholar said Hijab is not compulsory	1	2.0
An Islamic scholar said there's nothing like Sufism in Islam	1	2.0
Attacking the personality of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)	1	2.0
Blasphemy against the Prophet (saw)	1	2.0
Dr. Sharadeen Gbadebo Raji said the blessing of a mother cannot reach the child. It is only Allah that gives blessings.	1	2.0
I rather not share.	1	2.0
If Allah uses a washing machine to wash her husband's clothes, the children would not have the blessing of Allah	1	2.0
Issues of tawassul	1	2.0
It is allowed to smoke in Islam, it doesn't go against what Allah says, according to Jakmal	1	2.0
JAMIU Adegunwa said it is allowed to eat dog in Islam	1	2.0
Like the negative words which are totally different from Islamic tenets from some particular Muslim themselves.	1	2.0
Mudir Markaz said that the Hijab is not compulsory	1	2.0
Muslims are terrorist and they hate non Muslims	1	2.0
Muslims can eat Christmas and Eat New Year food without restrictions.	1	2.0
One Islamic Sufi cleric said Muslim brothers can use fetish/charm to marry sisters from rich family.	1	2.0
One Muslim cleric said that Sufi people are misguided set of people.	1	2.0
Positively and socially	1	2.0

Some scholars do say Sufi Muslims are idolators	1	2.0
Some sunni brothers do say that Sufism is a waste of time in Islam	1	2.0
Somebody said Hijab is not compulsory	1	2.0
Someone said is own religion is Sufism	1	2.0
Sufis Muslims are on the wrong path in Islam	1	2.0
Sunni scholars always say no SUFI in ISLAM	1	2.0
That any woman that uses washing woman to wash the clothes of her husband, her children would not be successful in life. It is meant to be washed with hand so the children can make it in life.	1	2.0
The example of the African Traditional Worshippers abusing Islam and the Muslims	1	2.0
The issues of men having virgin girls in Jannah	1	2.0
When Jakmal said a lady menstruating can pray and fast.	1	2.0
When Sheikh Habeeb of Markaz said it was not Abubakar that was in the Cave of Thawri with the Prophet, it was Felix of Nola	1	2.0
Your God Allah is devil	1	2.0
No Response	6	12.0
Total	50	100.0

How Respondents react to provocative statement from non-Sufi Muslims

Reaction to Provocative statement	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Ignore them	13	26.0
Report the content	25	50.0
Engage in debate	9	18.0
Share counter-arguments	3	6.0
Other	0	0.0
Total	50	100.0

Sharing of provocative statement against principles of Islam

Sharing of provocative statement against principles of Islam	Frequency	Percentage (%)
YES	30	60.0
NO	20	40.0
Total	50	100

How Social Media Activity of Sufi Affect the relationship with non-Sufi Muslims

Sufi's Social Media relationship with non-Sufi Muslims	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Improved	18	36.0
Remain the same	23	46.0
Worsened	5	10.0
Other	4	8.0
Total	50	100.0

Respondents' position on behavior of Sufi adherents on social media if it aligns with the teachings and training of Sufism

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	11	22.0
No	28	56.0
Maybe	11	22.0
Total	50	100

Do you think youthful exuberance influences the online behavior of young non-Sufi adherents?
Influence of youthful exuberance on behavior of young non-Sufi Muslims

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	34	68.0
Agree	11	22.0
Neutral	2	4.0
Disagree	3	6.0
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
Total	50	100.0

Do you believe more training and guidance are needed for non-Sufi adherents on appropriate online behavior?
Respondents position on training and guidance for non-Sufi adherents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	41	82.0
Agree	8	16.0
Neutral	1	2.0
Disagree	0	0.0

Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
Total	50	100.0

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSda6GhJufnchrk6H9h3Z164pJx4NhNv9rhWWdYW0rEsoWTi6Q/viewform>

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