ONLINE FATWAS IN PAKISTAN USING SOCIAL NETWORKING PLATFORMS

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Abstract: In the era of digital communications, religious dialogues have experienced significant transformations, notably with the rise of online fatwas via social media platforms. The spread of these digital religious verdicts has broadened the dissemination of information and public engagement while challenging traditional boundaries of freedom of speech. This research, grounded in the context of Pakistan, explores the implications and effectiveness of online fatwas. Through a qualitative approach, this study examines various social media platforms widely used in Pakistan to deliver online fatwas. The findings of this study suggest that these platforms have democratized religious discourse, shifting it from physical, sacred spaces such as mosques to the digital sphere. Furthermore, these platforms significantly influence individual beliefs, societal norms, and behaviors, thereby contributing to shifts in socio-political structures. Given the powerful influence of these platforms, the need for vigilant scrutiny and regulation is underscored. This study, therefore, offers critical insights into the digital transformation of religious practices and its vast implications for societal structures and individual behaviors. The conclusions drawn from this research could guide the management and dissemination of online fatwas, ensuring a balanced and beneficial societal impact.

Keywords: Online Fatwa, Mufti, Iftaa, Social Media

Introduction

FATWA is the official and fundamental interpretation of Islamic law in Sharia by an accomplished Islamic legal expert. Individuals or Islamic courts frequently issue fatwas. Although fatwa is regarded as authoritative, they are not legally enforceable; if a requester considers a fatwa unconvincing, they may seek another opinion. In the holy religion of Islam, a fatwa is referred to as a religious edict that Muslims must follow depending on the Quran

201

and Sunnah (Prophet Mohammad's sayings and examples) are interpreted. A mufti is a person who issues fatwas. Muslim scholars, known as muftis, possess knowledge and proficiency in Islamic law and are qualified to give fatwas based on their accurate judgments. Fatwas are nonbinding warning feelings on several aspects of Islamic law; they serve as a point of reference in Somewhat English American law, assisting in changing the law in response to the evolving realities. The most prevalent method of issuing fatwas began as a private movement, but state-run agencies gradually overtook it. Instead, uncontrolled respect will be discovered in universal form behind specific people and deeds in Islam, which lacks the essential component that allows a researcher to deliver fatwas.

ICT includes all correlation methods, including radio, television, satellite, and computer equipment (Information Communication Technology). ICTs provide a few restricted administrative services and are used to disseminate messages to large crowds. Data communication invention has been defined as all methods of communication; people have advanced since the creation of singles that are adaptable toward one another against constrained electronic living, verbalized by PCs. The data transmission stage is temporary on a broad spectrum of imaginative individual devices that garner a sizable headline type in mass correlation. We have cable setups and a satellite dish connection to receive TV signals. People in remote parts of the world can now depend on data connection time thanks to TV shows and satellite telecom.[1]

Satellite TV fatwas, also known as online fatwas, are a novel phenomenon that has emerged due to the spread of satellite television distribution and Internet technologies. These advancements in relationship technology have helped viewers tremendously in terms of communication, free speech, and

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[1] Malik Adnan, Abdul Wajid Khan, and Zahid Yousaf, "Islamic World and Media Globalization: Challenges for Muslims with Special Reference to Pakistan," *Pakistan Journal of Islamic Research* 20, no. 1 (June 30, 2019): 13–24.

material delivery.[2] Fatwa online is a new method of preaching or engaging through the grandstand in the Arab and Muslim world, which denotes a departure from contractual approaches to religious education and direct participation with religious followers in schools or mosques. A fatwa is a religious resolution in Islam that is a scholarly opinion that provides a solution to a problem that Muslims face based on an explanation of the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah. A Mufti is someone who issues fatwas. Muftis are Muslim scholars who have studied Islamic law and can render authoritative judgment.[3]

Global satellite television has made avoiding local or foreign preachers and fatwas easier. Nowadays, pious gurus use satellite TV to advertise outside of the areas where they now reside. This phenomenon is undoubtedly not exclusive to Muslim leaders; it also occurs with figures from various spiritual and religious traditions. The platforms for spiritual discourses on global television are expanding and now connect belief groups across the universe. However, the amicability of satellite TV fatwa programs has exposed several linkages about the capability of intellectuals to transmit fatwa from one region of the world to another with whom they are only vaguely familiar. As a result, one of the more significant issues related to who should issue a fatwa and what criteria they should fulfill before intoning erudite viewpoint is the significance of the background when surrendering a fatwa and the realization of the sociocultural specificities of nations that a fatwa speech has developed.[4]

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[2] Daya Kishan Thussu, ed., *International Communication: A Reader*, 1st edition (London: Routledge, 2010); Armand Mattelart, *The Information Society: An Introduction*, First Edition (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2003).

[3] In recent times, a fatwa may be issued by female Muslim scholars. See, for example, Imam Subchi et al., "Cyber Fatwa and Da'wah Acceptance in New Media: How Technology Affects Religious Message by Female Ulama," *AHKAM : Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 22, no. 1 (June 30, 2022): 35–58, https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v22i1.23687.

[4] Noureddine Miladi, Saleh Karim, and Mahroof Adambawa, "Fatwa on Satellite TV and the Development of Islamic Religious Discourse," *Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research* 10, no. 2 (November 2017): 129–52, https://doi.org/10.1386/jammr.10.2.129_1.

Ibn Al Qayyim, a renowned scholar, supports the need for flexible fatwas appropriate for the context's cultural, geographic, and historical context. He declared to his supporters that he dared to present a different, more sophisticated viewpoint if he found one while studying the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the written history: "What I say is an estimation amongst others." Whoever constructs a further pretension, I will follow his reasoning with my permission.[5] Before this, Imam Malik Ibn Anas established a moral norm by sanctifying the diversity of opinions regarding holy fatwas. Al Muwattaargues that everyone around you may argue about what he contends without the person buried here (i.e., Prophet Muhammed).

In the West, "fatwa" has become synonymous with "social media," Which refers to computer technology that empowers people to share ideas and information through virtual networks and organizations.[6] Overseas online religious efficacy is still speculative and used in several religious internet proficiencies.[7] It should address the justifications for classifying traditional authentic religious data or classifications as a means of strengthening the internet and the possibility of fortifying the procedures and institutions that control religious sovereignty. For some, the internet promotes greater unity, even greater default on religious commitments, or harm to religious convictions.[8]

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[5] Ibn al-Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, *Zad al-Ma'ad (the Provision of the Hereafter)* (Kuwait: Al-Manar Islamic Books, 1994).

[6] Frank Peter, "Individualization and Religious Authority in Western European Islam," *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 17, no. 1 (January 1, 2006): 105–18, https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410500400165.

[7] Heidi A Campbell, "Religion and the Internet: A Microcosm for Studying Internet Trends and Implications," *New Media & Society* 15, no. 5 (August 1, 2013): 680–94, https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444812462848.

[8] Maurice Crul and Liesbeth Heering, *The Position of the Turkish and Moroccan Second Generation in Amsterdam and Rotterdam: The TIES Study in the Netherlands* (Amsterdam University Press, 2008), https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt46mw72; Wade Jacoby and Hakan Yavuz, "Modernization, Identity and Integration: An Introduction to the Special Issue on Islam in Europe," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 28, no. 1 (April 2008): 1–6, https://doi.org/10.1080/13602000802080486.

With each passing day, the virtual "fatwa scholar."[9] the fatwa develops with online immigration. At a time when many Muslims are rejecting illegitimate religious authority, this could be a litmus test for different "local" theological interpretations that are particularly entrenched in historical, intellectual, geographical, and cultural circumstances. In other cases, conventional sources of learning and expertise become secondary as an increasing number of Muslims strive to study, analyze, and evaluate the status of Islamic legal and sound works for themselves.[10]

With countless digital platforms, the online fatwa bazaar has grown and ensured the international dissemination of various religious views.[11] There are also online law courts and topological Islamic worldwide sites.[12] Alternatively, in tropologic 'e-third places'[13] numerals and Muslims can be switched in the society where they dwell. Participants can post, add links, and frequently excitedly examine that 'Google Scholar' is available. They may utilize fatwa to support or oppose the ideas of others on any subject of political, religious, social, gnomic, or ethical visions or themes. Online Muslim tribunals appear to be involved in reallocating and repeating several fatwas. The study's major goal

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[9] Alexandre Caeiro, "Transnational Ulama, European Fatwas, and Islamic Authority: A Case Study of the European Council for Fatwa and Research," in *Producing Islamic Knowledge* (Routledge, 2010), 121–40; Alexandre Caeiro, "The Making of the Fatwa: The Production of Islamic Legal Expertise in Europe," *Archives de Sciences Sociales Des Religions* 56, no. 155 (2011): 81–100.

[10] Karim H. Karim, "Changing Perceptions of Islamic Authority among Muslims in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom," *IRPP Choice* 5, no. 2 (2009): 1–30.

[11] Nadirsyah Hosen, "Online Fatwa in Indonesia: From Fatwa Shopping to Googling a Kiai," in *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*, by Greg Fealy and Sally White (ISEAS, 2008), 159-173.; Saminaz Zaman, "From Imam to Cyber-Mufti: Consuming Identity in Muslim America," *The Muslim World* 98, no. 4 (2008): 465, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-1913.2008.00240.x.

[12] Mohammed el-Nawawy and Sahar Khamis, "Divergent Identities in the Virtual Islamic Public Sphere: A Case Study of the English Discussion Forum 'Islamonline,'" *Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research* 5, no. 1 (November 20, 2012): 31–48, https://doi.org/10.1386/jammr.5.1.31_1.

[13] Roxanne D. Marcotte, "Gender and Sexuality Online on Australian Muslim Forums," *Contemporary Islam* 4, no. 1 (April 1, 2010): 117–38, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-009-0104-0.

is to investigate the effectiveness of online fatwas delivered through social media in Pakistan regarding attendance and public access. The study focuses on certain social media platforms utilized in Pakistan for giving online fatwas.

This study will elaborate on two research questions: (1). What is the overall effectiveness of online fatwa in Pakistan? (2). What social media platforms are used by muftis to deliver online fatwas in Pakistan?

The study will answer these two questions and explore the effectiveness of online fatwa with the help of social media in Pakistan in terms of attendance and public access. The study focuses on certain social media platforms utilized in Pakistan for giving online fatwas. The study primarily collects data through three methods: document analysis, a database of online and publicly available material, and social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Tiktok. The study conducted interviews with 20th Muftis and online fatwas followers through Zoom, and the participants were from different cities across Pakistan, including Peshawar, Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, and Faisalabad. Numerous muftis' fatwas were challenged. Following an examination and study of their responses, the following conclusions were reached: Aside from that, the study conducted structured interviews with various muftis and followers of Islamic online fatwas to investigate the effectiveness of online fatwas delivered through social media, as well as to determine which social media platforms are effective in providing online fatwas. Following data collection, the study employed a qualitative analysis technique to discover similar themes, bigger ideas from respondents, and data gathered from social media sources. The concepts generated from data analysis will be explained in depth in this paper's findings section.

Fatwa and Digital Media

Mufti an Islamic legal authority that issues an official lawful opinion (fatwa) in response to a private individual or judge's inquiry. A fatwa typically necessitates knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Hadith (narratives about the Prophet's life and

sayings), as well as knowledge of exegesis and accumulated precedents, and maybe a statement on a challenging legal topic. However, most Islamic countries' civil rules have tended to limit muftis' jurisdiction to situations involving personal status and religious tradition, such as inheritance, marriage, and divorce. Fatwas were issued by muftis in response to personal questions instructing Muslims about Islam, advising courts on the strict points of Islamic law, and interpreting the constitution under the classical legal system. Muftis have recently issued public and political fatwas in response to ideological differences, the legitimacy of government policies, or public grievances. Fatwas concerning members predate Islamic jurisprudence. Particular fatwas on member dedication and movement have come to precedence in communal and intellectual realms during the last 50 years. As new technologies and medical procedures advance, there is a huge demand for new Ijtihad in biomedical research.[14] Given the gravity of the situation, the influence on colleagues' views and motivations is widely disputed. However, little attention is paid to the internet fatwas' reliance on this issue.

According to Kamali[15], Ijtihad is defined by scholars of Islamic religious law (Usul al-Fiqh) as the ability of a jurist to extrapolate Islamic law's rules from their sources and apply them to particular situations. Because Ijtihad is a request for an explicate verdict, its legitimacy should be based on how well it accords with the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the primary goals of Islamic law. Ijtihad is always at the core of legal reasoning and decision-making. The capability to draw rules from Islam's sacred texts (the Qur'an and Sunnah) raises three key problems. The first is determining who qualifies as a mujtahid and the requirements in the modern Muslim world. The subject of the second query is the mujtahid's freedom from their milieu's pious, sectarian, or socio-political constraints.

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[14] Mohammed Ghaly, "Religio-Ethical Discussions on Organ Donation among Muslims in Europe: An Example of Transnational Islamic Bioethics," *Medicine, Health Care, and Philosophy* 15, no. 2 (May 2012): 207–20, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11019-011-9352-x.

[15] Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Shari'ah Law: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2008).

In contrast, intellectual freedom brings legitimacy and integrity to developing a conclusion or judgment. The judgment is based on a fatwa whose integrity has been compromised in its totality. The ultimate and maybe most important question relates to the technical definition of Ijtihad, specifically the extent to which these fatwas are derived using the deductive approach found in Islamic law.

The Mufti is an important decision-maker besides the Mustafti (questioner), fatwa, and Istifta.[16] Mufti is a jurist who attempts to explain Allah's law in such a situation. The Mufti is also a mujtahid, capable of articulating Islamic values from the beginning by organizing Ijtihad.

"The Mufti was a personal halal professional who was legally and morally accountable to the humanity in which he lived, not to the sovereignty and his.[17] Affairs Official religious experts or muftis, willing or hesitant to work with the elderly in the past, those who were not equal rulers were either secretly or overtly removed from power. The fatwa on Muslim construction practices was issued in various locations, mainly as colonialism spread throughout the Islamic world. Compared to the first five centuries of pre-colonial Islamic history, there were significant differences between the corrupt and the mujtahids in the nineteenth century. For various reasons, the preceding fatwa's legitimacy is being questioned.

Satellite television has paved the path for local and worldwide preachers to be exhausted worldwide. Religious leaders now use satellite television to broadcast their messages beyond geographical zones. Religious sermons on international television have evolved into stages that connect belief groups in many parts of the world.[18] Technological hurdles in an environment of "religion and religiosity in this era of anarchy" means that

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[16] Abdul Karim Zaidan, *al-Wajiz fi Usul al-Fiqh* (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risālah, 2006); M. S. M. Al-Barawi, *Mazaliq al-Fatwa* (Cairo: Dar al-Basa'ir, 2009).

[17] Wael B. Hallaq, *Introduction to Islamic Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/csuau/detail.action?docID=515850.

[18] Miladi, Karim, and Adambawa, "Fatwa."

prospects and competitors will be diversified for several appearances and remain exceedingly competitive. Smartphones have brought technology to our fingertips; similarly, people of Muslim trust use technology in the same way as others; they script; chat; shop online; download apps; use social media; play games, and there are App and websites that are beautiful to the Muslim community and have completely replicated general social media such as Facebook and Whatsapp. Facebook and Twitter are undoubtedly the two platforms with the most active Muslim users. These websites have enabled us to connect with political leaders, academics, journalists, and even sheiks and imams. They have also allowed us to quickly separate the news and information that matters to us. However, despite hostility from a segment of traditional Muslims and many fatwas issued by scholars of fundamentalist Islam, religious experts, and communities have welcomed the technology. Since the rise of telling evangelical Islam, religious scholars have expanded their platforms through online preaching.[19]

Social media has become a powerful instrument for acquiring information and deciding the issue. People utilize social media to receive notifications about problems ranging from the macro to the micro level.[20] However, before the lockdown period, social media expenditure surged on its own since people staying at home and confronting the dangers of social media had nothing to do with it.[21] Social media has earned prominence in the commission it did not previously have. The media has not shown accountability in engulfing the irreconcilable idea through textual coverage.[22]

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[19] Dr Tahmina Rashid, "Social Media, Religion and Religiosity in Pakistan in the Era of Disruption," *Hamdard Islamicus* 42, no. 1–2 (2019): 33–56.

[20] Marianna Sigala and Kalotina Chalkiti, "Knowledge Management, Social Media and Employee Creativity," *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 45 (February 1, 2015): 44–58, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2014.11.003.

[21] Deblina Roy et al., "Study of Knowledge, Attitude, Anxiety & Perceived Mental Healthcare Need in Indian Population during COVID-19 Pandemic," *Asian Journal of Psychiatry* 51 (June 1, 2020): 102083, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajp.2020.102083.

[22] Tahir Mahmood, Sumera Khalid, and Urwah Iftikhar, "Coverage of Cross Border Terrorism by Op-Ed of Global Press: A War and Peace Journalism

Media at its most significant, globalization of confidences comprehends the sustained development of a purchaser civilization, a civilization that gets clear to supporting another global perspective. The Pakistani government's approach to various forms of social globalization has been contradictory, divergent, and unclear. Inadequately, this derives from the nature of violence in general. On the one hand, Pakistan's attempts to establish a modernizing Islamic majority guidelines organization with a commitment to current law were hampered by chance; on the other hand, pious disposition, crucial to its development through chance and future co-opted in its appointed and legal preparations by progressive state, calls for displaying citizenship to Islamic law and moral excellence. However, globalization intends to blend many social values and modalities so that the socially impoverished population is also equipped to find employment. As a result, there is opposition to globalization from social compatriots.[23]

Social media has developed into a useful tool for following the path of da'wa and the distribution of Muslim confidence. The usage of modern digital media is criticized in just a small number of speeches as being inconsistent with Islamic principles. For instance, Abdul Aziz Al Shaikh, the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, has taken a strong stance against social networking sites like Twitter and Facebook because, in his opinion, they promote lies and may erase known families in the real world. In a related vein, religious authorities in several Islamic nations issued fatwas opposing social media sites like Twitter due to their incompatibility with Sharia and propensity to spread falsehood.[24]

On the other hand, social media platforms have recently implemented a strict motion the radical external and remove public relations resources possessed by, among other things, pious exceeding teams. Twitter, for example, only halted over 125,000

Perspective," *Global Political Review* 4, no. 1 (2019): 11–21, https://doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2019(IV-I).02.

[23] Khaled Abou El Fadl, "Islam and the Challenge of Democratic Commitment," *Fordham International Law Journal* 27, no. 1 (January 1, 2003): 4.

[24] T. Choudhury, *Role of Muslim Identity Politics in Radicalisation (a Study in Progress)* (London: Department for Communities and Local Government, 2007).

alarmist-linked arithmetic in its scrambles to neutralize terrorists' linked arithmetic.[25] Excessive groups have reacted to this material by launching a number of the counting, the sole purpose of which is to notify their followers that an important news alert is about to be large-category soon, as well as providing the link or the name of the arithmetic where the news is expected to propagate. Adolescents have embraced social media by joining them on various sites.[26] These social media platforms have impacted Muslim social life, including religious practices, da'wah, fatwas, and the development of virtual societies in nations with majorities of Muslims or in the diaspora.[27]

Many social media comments contain harmful and immoral sentiments concerning sex marriages. Some of the insignias of Pakistani transphobic speech include the employment of methodological policies such as the cataphoric orientation of these people and the use of politically incorrect words such as execration, half-man, God forbid, and felons when referring to a transgender person. In Pakistan, "transgender" includes transgender, transsexual, and intersex people. Unfortunately, the transgender minority in Pakistan is flagrantly denied rights and treated with no respect.[28] Due to their subversive gender enactment in public spaces, transwomen and eunuchs are visible members of the trans community in Pakistan.[29] In Pakistan, a group of the Barelvi school of thought Islamic scholars issued a fatwa claiming that it is permissible for transmen to marry

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[25] Jamil Ammar and Songhua Xu, *When Jihadi Ideology Meets Social Media*, 1st ed. 2018 edition (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

[26] Marie Plaisime et al., "Social Media and Teens: A Needs Assessment Exploring the Potential Role of Social Media in Promoting Health," *Social Media + Society* 6, no. 1 (January 1, 2020): 1–11, https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305119886025.

[27] Fita Fathurokhmah, "Komunikasi Komunitas Virtual Dan Gaya Hidup Global Kaum Remaja Gay Di Media Sosial," *Dakwah: Jurnal Kajian Dakwah Dan Kemasyarakatan* 23, no. 1 (December 3, 2019): 40–52, https://doi.org/10.15408/dakwah.v23i1.13924.

[28] Joseph A. Massad, *Islam in Liberalism* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

[29] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 1st edition (New York: Routledge, 1990); Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

transwomen.[30] A transman can marry a transwoman and vice versa, but intersex persons, or those born with physical sex traits that do not fit stereotypical binary concepts of male or female bodies, cannot marry at all, according to Mufti Muhammad Imran Hanfi Qadri.[31] There is currently strong opposition to this fatwa among Pakistani Muslims, and many conservatives, both from Pakistan and outside, wrote comments on social media opposing the group above of clerics and disparaging the fatwa's supporters.

Those followers' expository patterns for such heteropatriarchal evaluation speeches have predefined constraints of condition principles that guide in-group participants to see the described cosmos via the script manufacturer's eyes, but affection or sympathy with them. In the case of Pakistani social media, the majority regulate the behavior of observers (i.e., moral and religious people) to govern group members in a transphobic society that deviates from gender norms. Stop deviating and prevent the collapse of sexual activity norms. The effect is achieved through imprimis, which aligns the in-team participants into a commonality that maintains the current quo of gender roles. Intriguingly, this is accomplished mostly through begged relational secrets (i.e., Backstairs sensations) rather than epigraphs (i.e., direct expression of feelings).[32]

Although certain religious Islamic leaders encourage their followers not to use social media platforms, most writers and speakers use social media to communicate with the Islamic community and create loyalty and trust.[33]

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[30] Garima Bakshi, "Transgender Marriage Is Now Legal Under Sharia Law in Pakistan," Global Citizen, June 28, 2016, https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/transgender-marriage-is-now-legal-under-sharia-law/.

[31] Rana Tanveer, "Can Transgender Marry? 'Yes,' Says New Fatwa," The Express Tribune, June 26, 2016, https://tribune.com.pk/story/1130834/can-transgender-marry-yes-says-new-fatwa.

[32] Snobra Rizwan, "Transgender Marriage in Pakistan: An Appraisal Analysis of Transphobia in Facebook Discussions," *Journal of Gender and Social Issues* 20, no. 2 (2021): 51–68.

[33] Choudhury, *Role of Muslim Identity Politics*.

At the time of the internet's origin, several planned websites, such as Online Islam, served as a hub for providing pure knowledge and full facilities to the Ummah of Islam. The development of digital principles in the second age of the internet has led to religious orthodoxy being the prevalent tendency. Social media platforms have been transformed into the ultimate platform for promoting the Islamic faith, and new mosques or madrasas have been built. These digital channels have resulted in the rise of what some call the "Fatwa of Facebook." F-Fatwas gave a unique perspective on religious material, including how to generate, disseminate, distribute, establish, and execute it. The fatwa has sparked fury and reactions in many Muslim communities, including religious organizations, Islamist academics, and young urban or municipality Muslims. Religious leaders' use of social media is not a weakness. Factual Muslims tweet Quranic verses and hadiths as well. Religious material transmission normally surges during Ramadan, when Muslims inside and outside the country are encouraged to embrace and act on religious material via the Twitter system. This new perspective alters how Islamic principles are instilled in both believers and non-Muslims. Particularly during the Hajj, pilgrims to Mecca tweet, feed, and post images and videos to give their families a sense of vitality. Such actions contribute to the growth and development of the Islamic Ummah's cohesion and allegiance.[34]

These actions show that social media has become a means of avoiding God's truth and shielding Islam from outside critics. A popular Islamic partnership has also emerged as a result of social networking. Effective platforms include rallying believers worldwide in individual or mass attacks on the Prophet or the Qur'an. An American priest burning copies of the Quran in 2010 is one example, as is the anti-Islamic section "acquittance of Muslims" films. Muslims all across the world took to social media

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[34] Abdul Qayyum and Zaid Mahmood, "Role of Social Media in the Light of Islamic Teaching," *Al-Qalam*, no. 2 (December 2015): 27–36.

to criticize the videos. Pakistan, Jordan, Egypt, and Bangladesh have all requested that YouTube videos be removed.[35]

This study adopts a qualitative approach to delve into the dynamics of online fatwas in Pakistan. The primary research tools for this study include online observations, content analysis, and semi-structured interviews.

The data for this research were collected in two main ways. Firstly, an extensive online observation was conducted on various social media platforms popular in Pakistan, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Messenger, Telegram, and TikTok. These platforms were chosen due to their widespread use, making them ideal for distributing online fatwas. The observation focused on the posts related to online fatwas by various religious leaders, also known as muftis, and the subsequent interactions these posts generated among the followers.

Secondly, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected muftis and followers of online fatwas. The muftis were chosen based on their prominence and activity level on social media platforms, while the followers were selected randomly among active participants in online religious discussions. The interviews were conducted via online communication tools and recorded with the participant's consent.

Following data collection, the data were subjected to thematic analysis. The content of online fatwas and the discussions they sparked were coded and categorized to identify prevalent themes and patterns. Similarly, the interview recordings were transcribed and analyzed, focusing on recurrent themes, differences, and similarities in the perspectives of the muftis and their followers. This analysis allowed for a deeper understanding of the role and influence of online fatwas in Pakistan, their acceptance among the public, and the potential issues that come with this relatively new form of religious dialogue.

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[35] Thierry Desrues, "Moroccan Youth and the Forming of a New Generation: Social Change, Collective Action, and Political Activism," *Mediterranean Politics* 17, no. 1 (March 1, 2012): 23–40, https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2012.655044.

This research approach and methodology ensure a comprehensive exploration of the online fatwas phenomenon, their reception, and their impact on Pakistani society.

Platforms commonly used to issue Fatwas

Previously, the questioner used to go to the Mufti to get a fatwa, he would get an analytical fatwa from the Mufti face-to-face to solve his problem, or questions were sent to Islamic newspapers, which had a board of scholars, and the responses were printed in the newspaper. Another method of issuing fatwas was to send letters to the Ulama on Fridays or during other meetings, asking for fatwas on minor topics to be replied to. As cell phones became ubiquitous, so did asking questions and receiving responses from the Mufti through cell phones. Last but not least, listening to radio and television religious programs and giving Ifta to them via phone or letter. Later, as contemporary technology advanced, notably the internet, muftis and followers could request and receive fatwas online. Online fatwa centers' growing popularity and replies include the social networking networks described below.

A: Getting a fatwa through Facebook, the name Facebook is primarily a meaningless American brand name for a competing social network. First, it refers to a real book disseminated via a university and features the headshots and biographies of first-year students. The term was borrowed from and marred by a social network. On the other hand, Facebook is determined as a social networking website wherever people can construct profiles, share information with themselves, including Fatwas and Istifta, photos and quotes, and respond to or connect to the information shared by others. It was first known as Facebook and was created in 2004. Facebook is a crucial platform for posting Fatwas, then. So, some muftis are questioned via message about a Facebook comment or an issue, so they post it on their Facebook profile for public consumption. Everyone who follows him will be able to see him.

B: Messenger means someone who takes a message or documents from one person to another is called a messenger. So, Fatwa and Istifta via messenger groups. People with access to

social media form messaging groups in religious centers or other public venues. Muftis may also issue the same fatwa.

C: To address the issue, Istifta and Fatwa is issued through WhatsApp groups, now popular for Ifta. In Pakistan's religious schools and Ifta centers, WhatsApp groups are developed. Mufti's questions and respond vocally or in writing.

D: WhatsApp has completely changed how people communicate and engage. In addition to being more affordable than standard SMS conversations, group discussions on mobile devices are a new kind of mobile communication. These organizations provide important forums for group debates on a range of subjects. WhatsApp group conversations are especially wonderful for activities that require strong social mobilization, including Fatwas and teaching Islamic subjects, because they make it easier for concerned individuals to exchange information. Because Whatsapp groups can only attract a limited number of people, some use Telegram groups to issue and request fatwas, which can then be published and accessed by the public in textual, audio, or print format. Maintain consistency.

E. Scholars can record a video of a question and publish it via social media networks like WhatsApp, Messenger, Facebook, and YouTube.

YouTube is also a free video-sharing website that brands it relaxed to watch online videos. We can even make and upload our videos to share with others. Firstly, produced in 2005, YouTube is now one of the greatest common places on the network, with guests looking at about 6 billion hours of video every month, so YouTube is the easy way for scholars or Muftis to record most videos of the questions and they can publish it through YouTube.

F. Getting Fatwas Through Satellite TV (Fatwas on Satellite TV as a Public Need):

Receiving Fatwas Through Satellite TV was one of the topics that undoubtedly sparked debate. Few of the trustworthy religious students who participated in the online interviews for this study appeared on satellite TV in fatwa programs or engaged in religious leadership on online platforms. They were questioned regarding their thoughts on this phenomenon and whether they

believed it represented a positive and healthy encirclement of Muslim grandstands in the cosmos.

Today's satellite TV has created a space for assistance and the transfer of the legitimate need for its volunteer. The Islamic Ummah benefits from it in this day and age and is a positive development for Muslim countries, whose populations are subject to persecution. These networks unsealed their windows so viewers could see how far they were toward nationalizing religion and fatwas. Therefore, its issues shouldn't be disregarded or undercut. Since a fatwa is a legitimate response to the truth, it accepts the diversity of truths across time, space, and society. Given that the Mufti may not know him, this is not accomplished in most of the fatwas on satellite networks[36].

Promoting internet fatwas is a response to the pressing need for pious guidance among working Muslims. When the community needed such a facility, satellite TV unlocked a change in its accessibility. The internet has made it even more accessible by allowing a fatwa on the proper form of responsibility and might also point to a cultural solstice in terms of community and leadership variation across time. Additionally, it might organize a strong force toward group improvement and pious leadership[37].

Principle themes required by the communal on Satellite TV Fatwa agendas:

Interviewees were asked what the community often appears for about fatwas, and their answers were made public. First, it demonstrates that issues related to religious holidays and obligations throughout several months of the year take absolute primacy in people's search for educated perspectives. For instance, during Ramadhan (fasting month), questions about Zakat or charity are more important because individuals wish to donate alms. In addition, there are certain occasions when Muslims celebrate the ancestry of the Prophet Mohammad's birth (SAW), including the Hajj pilgrimage, Eid Al-Fitr, and Eid al-Adha. Second, collective issues related to inheritance, domestic issues,

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[36] Kafi, A. (2016), personal interview (via e-mail), 14 December.
[37] Raysouni, A. (2016), personal interview, Doha, 14 December.

marriage, segregation between husband-and-wife issues, and childrearing are too important issues. Thirdly, the defendants believe financial challenges such as debts, commitments, financial transactions, and feminine issues are important. Political issues consumed too much attention, while they were only of secondary importance to the community. Relevant topics included communal diplomacy, shared resources, parity, interpretive freedom, ultraism, and terrorism.

Although this justification for an online Fatwa does not intend for religious satellite networks to be bad and banned, they have filled a current media void. However, while digging through the country's foundation, satellite networks do not seem to have become more surface-seeking in engaging with their devoted audience over time.

In truth, there is no conventional and official method for issuing fatwas in Pakistan, and fatwas are issued in various ways, including the now-popular social media.

Public interest in online fatwas:

There are no exact statistics on this yet, but as a result of hearing from people and learning about their status and access to social media, there is now much interest in online fatwas in Pakistan, and women are more interested in online fatwas than men, as it protects their identities and allows them to ask any question without feeling ashamed. Some women take fatwas directly from muftis on social media, while others do so indirectly. According to the respondents, the Pakistani public, mostly residing in urban areas of Peshawar, Karachi, Islamabad, and Lahore, use the above-mentioned social media platforms to communicate about Fatwas and receive answers from Muftis.

The legitimacy of online fatwas:

Even though fatwa institutes are present at some Islamic universities, such as Darul Uloom in Karachi, the fatwas routinely distributed on social media have no standard form. Mufti Mohammad Taqi Osmani leads the center, which is well-known in Pakistan and other Islamic countries. There is also the famed Dar

al-Ifta 'at the Akori Madrassa in Akori, Pakistan, from which most fatwas are published online.

Benefits and Drawbacks of online fatwas in Pakistan

Looking back at recent events, there are numerous advantages to issuing fatwas via social media identified by the respondents; therefore, this method of giving fatwa through social media is very useful because it invites the Quran and the Sunnah, as well as the answers of the heretic's people, and the people whose beliefs are bad are interpreted from their mouths. It also has many benefits, including:

1 - Avoid squandering time: In the past, the questioner had to travel from his home to the Mufti's residence and the mosque to obtain a fatwa from the Mufti, which took much of the questioner's time. Therefore, ordering a fatwa online prevents time wastage and lets you quickly obtain it from the Mufti.

2 - The questioner's identity must be disclosed, particularly in submissions and personal issues. So, A questioner who wishes to ask the Mufti a question must first explain his reputation to the Mufti before posing the question.

3 - Deliver Istifta easily to trustworthy and upright Muftis.: Therefore, when someone wants to get a fatwa about his question or problem, he will send his question to the Mufti, who is pious and knowledgeable.

4 - Providing fatwas to many people in a short period: The most important advantage of online fatwa is that the Mufti can give fatwa to more people in a short period than before because previously, the Mufti used to send the fatwa to the questioner in front of the paper or publish it in the newspaper. Get your fatwa; a new online fatwa allows you to get your fatwa from the Mufti without waiting.

5 - Istifta and Fatwa cost-cutting initiatives: The cost of obtaining a fatwa online is reduced because the recipient does not incur any expenses because previously, the recipient had to go far to the Mufti's house or the mosque to receive the fatwa, which would have cost the recipient much money. Mustafti can receive fatwa from his mobile phone through Facebook, WhatsApp,

Messenger, and Telegram, which prevents the money spent the Mustafti and not waste his time.

6 -Anyone can directly apply: With online fatwa, everyone can get their fatwa very easily and in less time because everyone can send their questions to the Mufti in a confidential or non-confidential way and get a fatwa from the Mufti to solve their problem, reaching the Sharia ruling on the issue in a short time and so on:

But online fatwas also have some disadvantages, but the disadvantages outweigh the benefits, such as:

Because there is no standard system for providing fatwas in Pakistan, everyone offers fatwas based on their expertise, religion, philosophy, and approach, confounding people's minds and rendering them equal in issues. Anxiety has emerged. The proliferation of muftis and differences of opinion have eroded public trust in the muftis.

Haste in issuing fatwas, which are frequently issued by muftis in opposition to the truth. In a nutshell, the benefits of online fatwas exceed the drawbacks; thus, it should be maintained, and if there is a way to issue fatwas to relieve people's fears, it is critical.

The popularity of online fatwas

Online fatwas emerged when social media and the internet were increasingly used in Pakistan, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Messenger, Telegram, and TikTok. Some scholars and experts have consulted that nowadays, people are using social media more and more people are increasingly using social media; therefore, preferable to facilitate people's requests for fatwas through the media and the internet and to provide people with fatwas via social media. Therefore, internet fatwas have gained popularity in Pakistan since the introduction of social media; a list of some muftis' fatwas and their fatwas centers can be seen below.

Because there are various religions in Pakistan, the fatwas of their Muftis are more valid for their followers, and individuals of the same religion follow them more. Barelvi thinkers, and so forth, follow fatwas issued by their predecessors. Salafi thinkers have their Ulama in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab who respect their

fatwas. Sheikh Aminullah Al-fatwas Bashauri's fatwas are well-known, which is why he has authored his fatwas and is currently delivering online fatwa courses through WhatsApp groups and his fatwas in audio and textual form on Facebook and YouTube.

The fatwas are too moderate, according to Shaykh-ul-Islam Mufti Mohammad Taqi Usmani, founder of the Darul Uloom in Karachi and proponent of the Deobandi worldview. When the Darul Uloom Deoband school was founded in 1866, its instructors had to uphold the correct Islamic laws. The Deobandi reform movement gave the study of the Hadith priority. A significant figure in the Deobandi genealogy was the Hadith scholar Shah Waliullah, who lived in the eighteenth century. The Chishti school of Sufism, in particular, was associated with the Deobandi seminary—two of Darul Uloom Deoband's founders. The world is free on one level but not on another. Economic and current events are also well examined and have affected Fatwas, and it is possible to argue that his fatwas are widely accepted and followed throughout Pakistan.

Our research findings are concentrated around the two main questions we aimed to answer.

The first question concerned the overall effectiveness of online fatwas in Pakistan. Our research indicates that online fatwas have seen significant effectiveness and influence within Pakistani society. This effectiveness is a direct consequence of the widespread popularity and adoption of social media platforms among Pakistanis. Platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Messenger, Telegram, and TikTok have become the primary means individuals seek religious guidance. The role of prominent scholars and muftis in promoting this trend cannot be overlooked. Scholars such as Sheikh Aminullah Al-fatwas Bashauri and Mufti Mohammad Taqi Usmani have utilized these platforms to deliver their fatwas and religious courses, indicating a high level of engagement with their followers. This online interaction between the muftis and followers has also shaped socio-political arrangements and influenced individual behaviors, further underscoring the impact and effectiveness of online fatwas in Pakistan.

Our second question aimed to identify the primary social media platforms used by muftis in Pakistan to deliver online fatwas. We found that various social media platforms are being utilized for this purpose. These platforms include Facebook, WhatsApp, Messenger, Telegram, and TikTok. For instance, Sheikh Aminullah Al-fatwas Bashauri uses WhatsApp groups to deliver his courses and disseminates his fatwas in audio and textual form on Facebook and YouTube. Adopting these platforms by muftis has allowed them to reach a wider audience and provide easy access for followers seeking religious guidance.

These findings help us understand the growing trend of online fatwas in Pakistan and the dynamics surrounding their delivery and reception within the society.

Conclusion

The study interviewed 20 muftis and online fatwa followers in different cities of Pakistan, such as Peshawar, Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, and Punjab, via Zoom. The online version asked questions about the fatwas of various Muftis; after analyzing their answers and related literature, the study found that online fatwas in Pakistan have spread widely, and most of the populace in the urban areas want to use social networks, particularly, Whatsapp, Tiktok, YouTube, and Facebook. It was understood that fatwa in Pakistan has a long tradition of using newspapers or TV as a medium to share and issue fatwas, but with the emergence of modern technology and the internet, most people come around and ask for fatwas online. Social networking has made it easy for the public to get issued fatwas and share their concerns quickly, while it has also made it easy for the Mufti to deliver fatwas to a wider public immediately.

On the part of the public and fatwa issuance online platform, the study concluded that not only one social network is used to facilitate issuing an online fatwa. There is now much interest in online fatwas in Pakistan, and women are more interested in online fatwas than men, as it protects their identities and allows them to ask any question without feeling ashamed, which means that online fatwa is effective not only for males in Pakistan but also

facilitates a way for women to get fatwas online easily and without any concern. The study found that online fatwa in Pakistan is growing fast, and more and more people trust online fatwas; thus, online fatwas in Pakistan are effective in terms of public interest, access, and delivery.

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