



Received: 15/01/2026 Accepted: 03/02/2026 Published: 10/03/2026

The Regulatory Role of Algerian Official Religious Institutions in Shaping Digital Religious Discourse: A Survey of Virtual Audience Perceptions

Chahira BOUHELLA

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
University of Blida 2 (Algeria)

Email: c.bouhella@univ-blida2.dz

Abstract:

This study examines the perceptions of a sample of the virtual audience regarding the role of official Algerian religious institutions in the digital space. The significance of the study lies in identifying the main religious issues that attract respondents' interest, analyzing their attitudes toward official digital religious discourse, and proposing a set of recommendations that respondents consider essential for developing digital religious communication in Algeria.

To achieve this objective, the researcher employed an electronic questionnaire targeting a purposive sample of followers of official religious pages on social media platforms, comprising 288 respondents. The findings reveal that participants prioritize ethical issues, doctrinal matters, and religious fatwas, considering them fundamental in shaping personal and social norms. Respondents express trust in content disseminated by official religious institutions as they perceive it to be consistent with Islamic principles and its association with state authority. The results also highlight the perceived importance of unifying religious discourse and ensuring the provision of reliable religious guidance.

Keywords: Algeria; Virtual Audience; Digital Religion; Official Religious Institutions; Religious Discourse.

Résumé:

Cette étude examine les perceptions d'un échantillon du public virtuel quant au rôle des institutions religieuses officielles algériennes dans l'espace numérique. L'intérêt de la recherche réside dans l'identification des principales questions religieuses qui suscitent l'attention des répondants, l'analyse de leurs attitudes à l'égard du discours religieux

officiel diffusé en ligne, ainsi que la formulation de recommandations jugées essentielles au développement du discours religieux numérique en Algérie.

Afin d'atteindre ces objectifs, le chercheur a eu recours à un questionnaire électronique administré auprès d'un échantillon raisonné de 288 abonnés aux pages religieuses officielles sur les réseaux sociaux. Les résultats montrent que les participants accordent une importance prioritaire aux questions éthiques, aux enjeux doctrinaux et aux fatwas religieuses, ces éléments étant considérés comme déterminants dans la structuration des normes individuelles et sociales. Les répondants expriment un niveau élevé de confiance envers les contenus émanant des institutions religieuses officielles, en raison de leur conformité aux principes islamiques et de leur légitimité institutionnelle. Les conclusions soulignent également la nécessité d'unifier le discours religieux et d'assurer un encadrement religieux fiable dans l'environnement numérique.

Mots-clés : *Algérie ; public virtuel ; discours religieux numérique ; institutions religieuses officielles ; communication religieuse.*



Introduction:

There is no doubt that the profound transformations brought about by new media technologies have affected various aspects of social life, most notably the religious sphere. Social networking platforms have enabled religious discourse to be presented in new formats that differ significantly from traditional modes of religious communication. One of the most prominent developments is the emergence of a new generation of preachers who differ from traditional religious figures in terms of appearance, style of presentation, and approaches to contemporary issues. However, many of these actors lack the specialized scholarly background necessary for accurate interpretation of Qur'anic texts. Another notable feature is the growing call to renew religious discourse and adapt it to current social realities. This has made digital religious discourse one of the central challenges facing Arab and Islamic societies, as well as official religious authorities, in recent years.

Religious discourse on social networks is manifested in digital, participatory, and interactive communication systems that combine linguistic and visual elements. These platforms aim to disseminate Islamic teachings, address everyday social issues, influence followers, promote ethical conduct, and reinforce the values of Islamic culture. As Marshall McLuhan argued, communication technologies have transformed the world into a "global village." In this context, it is evident that the religious field in Arab and Islamic societies is experiencing rapid cultural and value transformations. At the same time, extremist groups, often supported by unidentified

entities, exploit digital platforms to disseminate ideologies that appeal to young audiences and shape their awareness and values. The spread of misleading religious information, inaccurate fatwas, and various deceptive ideological trends across social networking sites further aggravates this situation.

Against this backdrop, the main objective of this study is to examine the role of official religious institutions in Algeria in regulating the digital religious field and to analyze the attitudes of the virtual audience toward the content disseminated through official religious pages on social media platforms. Accordingly, the central research question is: What are the attitudes of the virtual audience toward the role of official religious institutions in regulating the digital religious field in Algeria?

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To identify the main issues that attract respondents' attention on the official Algerian pages of religious institutions.
- To examine respondents' attitudes toward the content of digital religious discourse produced by official Algerian institutions.
- To assess the level of trust that respondents place in the digital religious discourse of official Algerian institutions.
- To explore the reasons underlying respondents' lack of trust in unofficial digital religious discourse on social media platforms.
- To identify respondents' suggestions for improving official digital religious discourse in Algeria.



Received: 15/01/2026 Accepted: 03/02/2026 Published: 10/03/2026

Based on these objectives, the study addresses the following research questions:

- What are the main issues that interest respondents on the official Algerian pages of religious institutions?
- What are respondents' attitudes toward the digital religious discourse of official Algerian institutions?
- To what extent do respondents trust the digital religious discourse of official Algerian institutions?
- What are the reasons for respondents' lack of trust in unofficial digital religious discourse on social media platforms?
- What suggestions do respondents propose for developing official digital religious discourse in Algeria?

1. Literature Review:

1.1. Digital Religious: Changes and Challenges:

The concept of digital religion did not emerge abruptly; rather, it developed progressively over the past three decades. The intersection between religious ideas and practices and digital environments has been examined under various terms, including cyber religion, virtual religion, and online religion. Over time, these perspectives converged under the broader and more comprehensive framework of digital religion. This concept refers to the presence, interaction, and transformation of religious institutions, practices, and discourses within cyberspace and digitally mediated environments.

During the early decades of the twenty-first century, the dynamic relationship between religion and rapidly evolving digital technologies underwent a significant paradigm shift.

Religion was no longer merely represented online; instead, it began to be analyzed within a new theoretical vision centered on digital religion as an integrated socio-cultural phenomenon. Particularly after 2012, the term gained widespread academic recognition and became increasingly prominent in international conferences, research projects, seminars, and scholarly publications.

According to Sonny Eli Zaluchu (2023), religiosity has experienced substantial transformation through the integration of the Internet into both individual and institutional religious activities. Since the 1980s, digital networks have provided platforms for discussing rituals and beliefs. In the 1990s, this development expanded with the emergence of virtual churches and online religious communities. Today, nearly all dimensions of traditional religious practice—including worship services, rituals, spiritual counseling, and religious education—are mediated through digital platforms, marking the consolidation of what is now described as the era of digital religion.

A similar transformation is observable within Islamic societies, where digital environments have reshaped religious communication and authority. Numerous websites and blogs dedicated to religious matters have emerged, addressing issues such as fatwas, legal opinions, and sermons. In addition, many religious scholars and preachers now engage directly with audiences through personal websites and social media platforms, reinforcing the institutional and individual dimensions of digital religion.

Despite the significant advantages that new communication technologies have brought to religious systems, both at the individual and institutional levels, their impact remains multifaceted. Technological advancement has



Received: 15/01/2026 Accepted: 03/02/2026 Published: 10/03/2026

created new opportunities for religious practice by facilitating communication, expanding access to religious knowledge, and enabling the dissemination of religious information to broad and geographically dispersed audiences. In addition, online religious communities provide a sense of belonging and identity, particularly for individuals who may experience isolation within their offline religious contexts.

Masenembo and Nasa (2022) support this perspective, arguing that the digital transformation of religion has contributed to its relocation into the private sphere and has encouraged the emergence of religiosity as a form of existential reflection. They further emphasize the role of digital religion in addressing social isolation and promoting moral values within contemporary digital society (p. 137).

However, alongside these benefits, digital technologies also introduce significant challenges. The integration of religion into digital spaces may generate negative trends that affect the depth and sustainability of religious engagement. Campbell (2016) notes that the inherently temporary and fluid nature of online communities can hinder the development of long-term commitment and limit the cultivation of deeper religious understanding.

The challenges associated with digital religious discourse extend beyond broader societal transformations and include the proliferation of misinformation and extremist ideologies. The anonymity, speed, and global reach of the Internet provide opportunities for radical groups to disseminate selective or distorted interpretations of religious texts, thereby increasing the risk of ideological manipulation and potential radicalization among vulnerable individuals.

At the same time, Bunt (2018) argues that the accessibility of religious content online has democratized religious expression by enabling broader participation in theological discussions and facilitating the inclusion of individuals and communities from diverse backgrounds. Digital platforms have thus expanded the public sphere of religious debate and reduced the traditional barriers to participation.

However, this democratization also raises serious concerns regarding the authenticity, credibility, and theological accuracy of religious content. In digital environments, individuals may disseminate religious interpretations without formal training, scholarly grounding, or institutional authority. This shift challenges established mechanisms of religious validation and oversight.

Clivaz (2013) further contends that the digital age destabilizes the very notion of the “original text,” thereby affecting the authority and transmission of sacred scriptures. This transformation has particularly significant implications for the so-called “Religions of the Book,” where textual authenticity and continuity play a central doctrinal role. She highlights the tensions that arise when traditional religious narratives encounter digital modification, reinterpretation, or fragmentation within online culture.

In this context, digital literacy becomes essential. Many users engage with religious content without fully understanding its terminology, doctrinal background, or interpretive framework. Consequently, individuals must develop critical evaluation skills to assess the reliability of the information they consume and the statements they choose to disseminate within virtual environments.



Received: 15/01/2026 Accepted: 03/02/2026 Published: 10/03/2026

Most of the challenges mentioned above apply closely to Islamic societies. It is important to note that technology and the Internet have enabled anyone with an unverifiable identity to post content on social media. This has contributed to the emergence of a segment of advanced Muslim youth who challenge traditional religious authorities by sharing provocative content online. It has also led to the reinforcement of certain religious figures' authority by extremist groups that use online platforms to promote specific individuals. In addition, traditional religious practices have been integrated into digital spaces by organized groups, contributing to online conflicts between these communities.

1.2. Official Religious Institutions in Algeria and the Challenges of Regulating the Virtual Religious Sphere:

Religious institutions have existed in Algeria since the seventh century AD when Islam arrived with the first conquerors. The mosque was the first of these institutions. Subsequent institutions included corners, Qur'anic schools, and religious associations of social or educational nature. Modern institutions emerged later, including the Ministry of Religious Affairs and its provincial directorates, the Supreme Islamic Council, and various religious training centers. Immediately after independence, the ruling authority annexed endowments to Algerian state property under Decree No. 64-283, dated September 17, 1964. Among the most prominent official religious institutions focused on in this study are the following:

1.2.1. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments:

This is one of the Algerian government's ministries, established after independence. It serves as the state's tool for addressing citizens' spiritual needs, as embodied in its constitutions, laws, and historical charters, most notably the November 1, 1954 Declaration. It handles religious guidance, *fatwas*, teaching the Holy Qur'an, spreading authentic Islamic culture in Algeria, managing religious affairs, and preserving the national religious reference characterized by moderation and balance.

1.2.2. The Supreme Islamic Council:

This is the second major religious institution at the national level. Established in 1966 as a body affiliated with the Ministry of Religious Affairs, it performs administrative and technical work. It engages in *ijtihad* required by Islam to address issues directly linked to cultural, social, economic, and political transformations, according to Executive Decree No. 66-45 dated February 18, 1966, supplemented by Executive Decree No. 80-120 dated April 12, 1980.

1.2.3. Islamic Cultural Centers:

Are public institutions of a religious nature. They enjoy legal personality and financial independence under the supervision of the Minister of Religious Affairs. They are responsible for promoting Islamic culture. Executive Decree No. 72-07 of March 21, 1972, created these centers.

Official religious institutions in Algeria serve as practical organizers of the spiritual domain. Through refining behaviors and providing proper guidance, they play an essential role in spreading dialogue culture, supporting human commonalities, bringing viewpoints closer, and



Received: 15/01/2026 Accepted: 03/02/2026 Published: 10/03/2026

correcting misconceptions (Khayati, 2023, p. 120). They contribute to spreading Islamic principles and correct concepts through religious teachings. These institutions face significant challenges from the Internet, which has disrupted the traditional relationship between official religious authorities and individuals. Previously, this relationship prevented unqualified individuals from issuing *fatwas* or representing Islam. Today, however, the Internet enables individuals with limited Islamic knowledge to claim authority to issue *fatwas* and correct others' views.

This reality of unlimited freedom and complete absence of gatekeepers has created massive chaos in digital religious discourse quality. This chaos affects content, form, presentation methodology, and the abundance of religious references influencing recipients. Consequently, users may encounter critical religious topics without knowing their source or purpose.

Most of these challenges represent the primary risks facing Algerian society, institutions, and individuals. Therefore, official institutions are compelled to address technology challenges and their profound effects on the religious system by creating websites and official social media pages to publish purposeful content, educate youth, and spread authentic religious teachings. This study examines the virtual audience's perceptions of the role these institutions play in the digital space through their various posts.

2. Methods and Materials:

A descriptive survey method was used to realize this study's objectives. The research utilized qualitative and quantitative methodologies to analyze data collected from a

specific group of Algerian youths, using an electronically structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale.

2.1. Participants:

The study employed a purposive sampling strategy, resulting in a final sample of 288 participants who actively followed the official digital pages of religious institutions in Algeria. These institutions included the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments, the Supreme Islamic Council, the Islamic Cultural Centers, and the Association of Muslim Scholars. All distributed questionnaires were fully completed and returned, yielding a final sample size of 288 respondents.

Participant selection was based on key demographic variables, including gender, age, educational level, and occupation.

The demographic characteristics of the study sample are presented in Table 1.



Received: 15/01/2026 Accepted: 03/02/2026 Published: 10/03/2026

Table N.1: Demographic parameters of the study sample

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentages %
Sex		
Male	63	21.9%
Femal	225	78.1%
Total	288	100%
Age		
From 18 to 27 years	159	%55.2
From 28 to 37 years	57	%19.8
From 38 to 47	72	%25
Total	288	100%
level		
Educational level	-	-
Primary	-	-
Middle	-	-
Secondary	3	1%
University	285	99%
Total	288	100%
Occupation		
Student	144	50%
Employee	117	40.6%
Worker	12	4.2%
Unemployed	15	5.2%
Total	288	100%

Source: Author's elaboration based on questionnaire data

By examining Table No. 01 and taking into account the frequencies of the study sample members, which total 288 respondents, we can extract the demographic data of the respondents in the following manner:

We note that 225 respondents represent the number of females at a rate of (78.1% n = 225), while the number of male respondents reached 63 respondents at a rate estimated at (21.9% n = 63). The respondents' ages ranged from 18 to 27 years (55.2% n = 159), from 38 to 47 years (25% n = 72), and from 28 to 37 years (19.8% n = 57). Respondents with a university education level represented 99%, while those with a secondary education level numbered three respondents, representing 1%. Regarding the function, we note that (50% n = 144) were students, whereas the employee category reached 40.6% n = 117, followed by the unemployed category (5.2% n = 15), and finally the workers category (4.2% n = 12).

2.2. Research Instruments:

Data were collected using a structured electronic questionnaire developed specifically for this study and designed according to a five-point Likert scale. In its final form, the questionnaire consisted of two main sections: demographic information and thematic dimensions.

The first section gathered demographic data, including gender, age, educational level, and occupation. The second section comprised five thematic dimensions. The first dimension measured the main issues respondents follow on the official pages of religious institutions. The second dimension assessed respondents' attitudes toward the digital religious discourse produced by official Algerian institutions. The third dimension examined respondents' level of trust in the digital religious discourse of official institutions. The



Received: 15/01/2026 Accepted: 03/02/2026 Published: 10/03/2026

fourth dimension explored the reasons underlying respondents' lack of trust in informal digital religious discourse on social media platforms. The fifth dimension identified respondents' suggestions for developing official digital religious discourse in Algeria.

2.3. Research Procedures:

This study employed a mixed-method exploratory design to examine youths' attitudes toward the digital religious discourse of official institutions in Algeria. A preliminary exploratory phase was conducted through informal interviews to refine the research focus, clarify key concepts, and inform the development of the questionnaire items.

In the second phase, a structured electronic questionnaire was designed and distributed to followers of official religious institutions' pages active on various social media platforms in Algeria. The collected data were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistical measures, including arithmetic means and standard deviations, were calculated to identify patterns and prevailing attitudes among respondents.

Given the exploratory nature of the study, the analysis focused on mapping perceptions and identifying dominant trends rather than testing causal hypotheses.

2.4. Conducting Validity and Reliability Tests:

We presented the questionnaire form to a group of arbitrators to test its ability to measure the variables we were investigating, and we made some amendments based on their feedback. The reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha index of 0.91. This questionnaire

covers five topics, each with several Likert-type questions. We calculated the Arithmetic Mean and the Standard Deviation of the collected data using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS).

3. Results and Discussion:

This section analyzes data collected from study participants after a systematic review of the literature on the discourse of official religious institutions across various social media sites and users' attitudes toward them.

Table No.02: The most important issues that the respondents are interested in following on the official pages of religious institutions

Variables	Trends										mean	standard deviation	Ranking	Trends
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree					
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%				
Various doctrinal and religious issues	90	31.3	156	54.2	33	11.5	6	2.1	3	1	4.13	0.76	5	High
Issues related to jihadist thought	24	8.3	45	15.6	108	37.5	75	26	36	12.5	2.81	1.10	8	Neutral
Issues of Islamic economics and banking	51	17.7	132	45.8	75	26	24	8.3	6	2.1	3.69	0.92	7	High
Cognitive and educational issues	114	39.6	141	49	21	7.3	9	3.1	3	1	4.23	0.79	4	Very High
Issues of jurisprudence and interpretation	129	44.8	117	40.6	30	10.4	9	3.1	3	1	4.25	0.84	3	Very High
Issues of religious fatwa	144	50	102	35.4	39	13.5	-	-	3	1	4.33	0.78	2	Very High
Issues of ethics and social behavior	156	54.2	117	40.6	12	4.2	-	-	3	1	4.47	0.67	1	Very High
Issues related to Islamic civilization	108	37.5	123	42.7	27	9.4	24	8.3	6	2.1	4.05	0.99	6	Very High
General standard											3.99	0.54		High

Source: Elaborated by the author based on questionnaire results



Table No. 02 indicates the sample members' answers to the axis of the most critical issues that the respondents are interested in following on the official pages of religious institutions. Most of the sample individuals' answers are at a high level on the indicators of this axis, as the arithmetic mean score for this axis reached 3.99, indicating a high degree of trends. A standard deviation of 0.54 means that the sample is heterogeneously dispersed in this axis.

Regarding the most critical issues the respondents are interested in following on the official pages of religious institutions in Algeria, a large percentage of the participants (54.2%) answered that they are interested in ethical issues and social behaviors. The participants also confirmed, with the same percentage (54.2%), their interest in various doctrinal issues and worship. The participants also agreed at a rate of (50%) that they are interested in religious fatwa issues, and a percentage (45.8%) agreed that they are interested in economics and Islamic banking issues. In addition, the participants (44.8%) agreed that they are interested in issues of jurisprudence and interpretation.

From a theoretical perspective grounded in Digital Religion scholarship – particularly the work of Campbell and Bunt – the digital sphere does not dissolve religious authority but reconfigures its structure and accessibility. The prominence of doctrinal and fatwa-related content suggests that respondents are not primarily engaging with digital religion as a space of experimentation or pluralistic theological debate; instead, they seek normative clarity and doctrinal stabilization within a fragmented online religious ecosystem.

The strong interest in ethical issues further underscores the regulatory function that religion continues to perform in the social sphere. In digitally saturated societies characterized by rapid cultural shifts and exposure to competing value systems, ethical discourse becomes a site of symbolic boundary maintenance. Thus, engagement with official pages may represent not merely informational consumption but participation in the reinforcement of moral order.

Notably, the relatively lower – though still significant – interest in Islamic economics and jurisprudential interpretation suggests a hierarchy of religious concerns. Practical normative guidance related to personal conduct and belief appears to take precedence over specialized or technical domains of religious knowledge. This hierarchy aligns with broader patterns observed in digital religious participation, where affective and identity-oriented dimensions of religiosity often outweigh formal scholastic engagement.

Importantly, these findings can also be interpreted as evidence of a paradox within digital religion. While digital environments democratize access to religious interpretation, the data indicate that respondents gravitate toward institutionalized and centralized forms of discourse when navigating core doctrinal and ethical questions. This suggests that, within the Algerian context, digital religion does not necessarily produce decentralization of authority; rather, it may reinforce institutional legitimacy by positioning official actors as anchors of epistemic stability amid informational plurality.



Received: 15/01/2026 Accepted: 03/02/2026 Published: 10/03/2026

Table No.3: Respondents' attitudes towards the content of digital religious discourse of Algerian official institutions

Variables	Trends										mean	standard deviation	Ranking	Trends
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree					
	frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%				
Providing and enriching religious information	102	35.4	147	51	33	11.5	3	1	3	1	4.19	0.75	5	High
Providing the correct explanation of the Qur'an's verses and the noble Prophet's hadiths	138	47.9	120	41.7	24	8.3	3	1	3	1	4.34	0.76	2	Very High
Addressing family issues and problems	108	37.5	132	45.8	36	12.5	9	3.1	3	1	4.16	0.83	7	High
Addressing emerging issues and problems in society	90	31.3	135	46.9	42	14.6	18	6.3	3	1	4.01	0.89	8	High
Explaining the foundations of correct religiosity and following the Sunnah of the Prophet(may God bless him and grant him peace)	138	47.9	111	38.5	30	10.4	6	2.1	3	1	4.30	0.81	3	Very High
Explaining how to implement religious rituals	117	40.6	129	44.8	33	11.5	6	2.1	3	1	4.22	0.80	4	Very High
Educating young people about the dangers of extremism and following unknown sources	126	43.8	105	36.5	42	14.6	12	4.2	3	1	4.18	0.90	6	High
Raising issues of religious minorities	36	12.5	114	39.6	99	34.4	33	11.5	6	2.1	3.49	0.92	11	High
Explain the importance of unifying religious belief to achieve religious security	84	29.2	132	45.8	60	20.8	3	1	9	3.1	3.97	0.90	9	Very High
Addressing the issues of Algerians abroad	57	19.8	108	37.5	96	33.3	18	6.3	9	3.1	3.65	0.97	10	High
Providing Quranic education initiatives and programs	156	54.2	102	35.4	21	7.3	6	2.1	3	1	4.40	0.79	1	High
General standard											4.08	0.56		Very High

Source: Elaborated by the author based on questionnaire results

Table N.03 shows that the sample members' answers to the axis of youths' attitudes towards the content of the digital

religious discourse of official institutions in Algeria are that most of the answers of the sample individuals are at a high level of trends on the indicators of this axis, as the arithmetic mean for this axis reached 4.08. towards a high degree. With a standard deviation of 0.56, the sample is dispersed and heterogeneous in this axis.

The attitudes of young people in Algeria towards the digital content of official religious institutions varied, 54.2% viewed it as Providing Quranic education initiatives and programs, 51% believed it Provided enriching religious information, 47.9% providing the correct explanation of the Quran's verses and the noble Prophet's hadiths, with the same percentage of respondents answered that it explains the foundations of correct religiosity and following the Sunnah of the Prophet(may God bless him and grant him peace), addressing emerging issues and problems in society 46.9%, addressing family issues, and problems, 44.8% explaining how to implement religious rituals 45.8%, educating young people about the dangers of extremism and following unknown sources 43.8%.

These findings suggest that respondents perceive official digital religious platforms as comprehensive spaces that combine educational, doctrinal, and social functions. The emphasis on Qur'anic education and accurate interpretation reflects a continued demand for structured and institutionally validated religious knowledge within the digital environment. At the same time, attention to societal and family issues indicates that digital religious discourse is not confined to ritual instruction but extends to everyday social realities.

In this sense, the positive evaluation of official digital content can be understood as reflecting the perceived



Received: 15/01/2026 Accepted: 03/02/2026 Published: 10/03/2026

alignment between religious interpretation and broader cultural norms. As noted by Bouherar (2020), religion in Algeria functions not only as a system of belief but also as a normative framework shaping social practices and collective values. The data, therefore, suggest that official digital religious discourse is viewed as reinforcing this interconnection between religion and cultural identity within the contemporary digital sphere.

Table No.4 Respondents’ confidence towards the digital religious discourse of Algerian official institutions

Variables	Trends										mean	standard deviation	Ranking	Trends
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree					
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%				
I trust the fatwas and opinions of Algerian scholars because they stem from the official religious authority of the state	96	31.3	135	46.9	39	13.5	15	5.2	3	1	4.06	0.877	1	High
I trust the fatwas and opinions of Algerian scholars because they are based on a correct Islamic approach	66	8.3	159	55.2	48	16.7	12	4.2	3	1	3.95	0.810	2	high
I trust the fatwas and opinions of Algerian scholars due to the abundance and contradiction in the content of religious discourses on social networks	57	17.7	123	42.7	69	24	36	12.5	3	1	3.68	0.964	5	High
I trust the fatwas and opinions of Algerian scholars to address emerging issues and problems in society	60	39.6	126	43.8	78	27.1	21	7.3	3	1	3.76	0.900	4	High
I trust the fatwas and opinions of Algerian scholars because of the importance of unifying religious belief	93	44.8	132	45.8	45	15.6	15	5.2	3	1	4.03	0.885	2	high
General standard											3.89	0.689		High

Source: Elaborated by the author based on questionnaire results

Table No.04 reveals that the sample members' responses to the axis of youths' confidence in the digital religious discourse of official institutions in Algeria are that most of the answers of the sample individuals are at a high-level trends on the indicators of this axis, as the arithmetic mean for this axis reached 3.89. and a standard deviation of 0.689, indicating that the sample is dispersed and heterogeneous on this axis.

A significant proportion of respondents trust the digital religious discourse of official institutions in Algeria for the following reasons: 55.2% trust the fatwas and opinions of Algerian scholars because they are based on a correct Islamic approach, 46.9% trust them because they stem from the official religious authority of the state, 45.8% trust them due to the importance of unifying religious belief, 43.8% trust them to address emerging issues and problems in society, and 42.7% trust them due to the abundance and contradiction in the content of religious discourses on social networks.

These findings suggest that trust in official digital religious discourse is shaped by both doctrinal and institutional considerations. On the one hand, respondents associate credibility with adherence to recognized Islamic principles; on the other hand, institutional legitimacy and state affiliation appear to function as markers of reliability in a fragmented digital environment. The data also imply that the proliferation of contradictory religious narratives online may strengthen the perceived need for centralized and authoritative guidance.

Within the Algerian context, where religion intersects with cultural norms and public life, confidence in official religious discourse reflects a broader alignment between religious interpretation, institutional authority, and social cohesion.



Received: 15/01/2026 Accepted: 03/02/2026 Published: 10/03/2026

Rather than representing unconditional endorsement, this trust appears to be grounded in the perception that official institutions provide structured and consistent religious guidance amid the multiplicity of digital voices.

Table No. 5: Reasons for Respondents’ lack of confidence towards informal digital religious discourse on social media networks

Variables	Trends										mean	standard deviation	Ranking	Trends
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree					
	frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%				
Lack of oversight by official religious institutions	117	40.6	114	39.6	33	11.5	18	6.3	6	2.1	4.10	0.97	2	High
Presenting some incorrect information and fatwas of questionable origin	123	42.7	108	37.5	27	9.4	27	9.4	3	1	4.11	0.99	1	High
Providing explanations from a personal point of view without Quranic or Prophetic evidence	84	29.2	132	45.8	30	10.4	33	11.5	9	3.1	3.86	1.05	4	High
Contradiction and conflict in opinions and fatwas on essential topics and issues	69	24	135	46.9	63	21.9	12	4.2	9	3.1	3.84	0.94	5	High
Adopting extremist positions that do not serve Muslims, Islam, and their image in the eyes of others	66	22.9	99	34.4	72	25	33	11.5	18	6.3	3.56	1.14	7	High
They are superficial speeches with unconvincing content and ineffective communication methods	81	28.1	99	34.4	66	22.9	39	13.5	3	1	3.75	1.04	6	High
For lack of complete knowledge of the new preachers active on social networking sites	96	33.3	105	36.5	60	20.8	21	7.3	6	2.1	3.92	1.00	3	High
General standard											3.87	0.78		High

Source: Elaborated by the author based on questionnaire results

Table No. 5 demonstrates that the sample members' responses regarding the axis of lack of confidence among youth in informal digital religious discourse on social media networks indicate that most of the sample individuals' responses align with high-level trends on the indicators of this axis, with an arithmetic mean of 4.08. The standard deviation of 0.56 suggests that the sample is diverse and heterogeneous in their views on this axis.

The youth's trends regarding the reasons for their lack of trust in the informal digital religious discourse on social media networks were distributed differently, which appeared in higher proportions as follows: Contradiction and conflict in opinions and fatwas on essential topics and issues 46.9%, Providing explanations from a personal point of view without Quranic or Prophetic evidence 45.8%, Presenting some incorrect information and fatwas of questionable origin 42.7%, Lack of oversight by official religious institutions 40.6%.

These findings suggest that respondents associate informal digital religious discourse with epistemic instability and limited doctrinal accountability. Perceived inconsistency in religious rulings and reliance on individual interpretations appear to undermine confidence in non-institutional sources. In this sense, the proliferation of unregulated religious content in digital environments contributes to uncertainty regarding authenticity and authority.

More broadly, while digital platforms expand access to religious expression and participation, the data indicate that this openness is simultaneously perceived as generating informational fragmentation. The absence of recognized structures of validation may intensify concerns about the reliability of religious guidance, particularly in contexts



Received: 15/01/2026 Accepted: 03/02/2026 Published: 10/03/2026

where doctrinal coherence and institutional reference are considered central to religious legitimacy.

Table No.6: Respondents’ suggestions for developing Algeria's official digital religious discourse

Variables	Trends										mean	standard deviation	Ranking	Trends
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree					
	frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%				
Adopting scientific foundations in the processes of influence and persuasion in formulating digital religious discourse	111	38.5	147	51	27	9.4	3	1	-	-	4.27	0.67	4	very high
Using various modern technologies, especially artificial intelligence, in formulating a religious discourse that keeps pace with the age of technology	81	28.1	111	38.5	57	19.8	33	11.5	6	2.1	3.79	1.04	7	High
Encouraging and accompanying young people with religious knowledge and knowledge in formulating meaningful religious content	135	46.9	117	40.6	33	11.5	3	1	-	-	4.33	0.71	2	very high
Seeking and finding ways to monitor the chaotic amount of religious discourse on the Internet by official authorities	147	51	105	36.5	30	10.4	3	1	3	1	4.35	0.79	1	very high
Designing interactive programs and applications to answer youth's questions and suggestions	114	39.6	141	49	24	8.3	9	3.1	-	-	4.25	0.73	5	very high
Objectively addressing important issues and giving them more space	108	37.5	153	53.1	27	9.4	-	-	-	-	4.28	0.62	3	very high
Expressing her opinions on national and global political issues	81	28.1	129	44.8	57	19.8	9	3.1	12	4.2	3.90	0.98	6	High
General standard											4.168	0.48		High

Source: Elaborated by the author based on questionnaire results

Table No. 06 indicates that the sample individuals' responses to the axis of youth suggestions to develop the official digital religious discourse in Algeria are mostly at high-level trends on the indicators of this axis, with an arithmetic mean of 4.08 and a standard deviation of 0.486, indicating that the sample is dispersed and heterogeneous in this axis.

Respondents' suggestions for developing the official digital religious discourse in Algeria included the following key points: objectively addressing important issues and giving them more space (53.1%), adopting scientific foundations in the processes of influence and persuasion in formulating digital religious discourse (51%), encouraging and accompanying young people with religious knowledge to create meaningful religious content (51%), designing interactive programs and applications to answer youth's questions and suggestions (49%), and expressing opinions on national and global political issues (44.8%).

These findings indicate that respondents do not merely consume official digital religious content but articulate expectations regarding its evolution. The emphasis on methodological rigor and objectivity suggests a demand for greater intellectual structuring of digital religious communication. At the same time, the call for youth involvement and interactive platforms reflects an aspiration toward more participatory and dialogical forms of engagement.

The inclusion of political and contemporary societal issues further implies that digital religious discourse is expected to extend beyond ritual or doctrinal matters to address broader public concerns. This aligns with contemporary debates in



Received: 15/01/2026 Accepted: 03/02/2026 Published: 10/03/2026

Digital Religion studies, which highlight the growing interconnection between religion, public life, and technological transformation. As Campbell (2024) argues, the future of digital religion requires interdisciplinary engagement and responsiveness to emerging ethical and technological challenges.

Overall, these proposals point to a broader societal expectation for clarity, relevance, and inclusivity in religious communication, positioning official institutions not only as sources of authority but also as adaptive actors within an evolving digital public sphere

Conclusion:

This study contributes to Digital Religion scholarship by providing empirical evidence from the Algerian context, which remains underrepresented in the existing literature. The findings demonstrate that digital environments do not necessarily weaken institutional religious authority; rather, they may reinforce it by positioning official institutions as sources of doctrinal stability within a fragmented and pluralized online sphere. In this sense, the study refines prevailing assumptions about the decentralization of religious authority in digital spaces and underscores the continued relevance of state-affiliated religious actors within mediated public arenas.

Empirically, the results indicate that respondents maintain sustained interest in ethical and social issues, doctrinal matters, worship, and religious fatwas, alongside attention to Islamic economics and jurisprudence. These thematic priorities suggest that digital religious engagement in Algeria

is closely tied to normative guidance and doctrinal clarification rather than to theological experimentation or institutional disengagement.

The findings also reveal generally positive attitudes toward the digital content produced by official institutions, particularly regarding Qur'anic education, the dissemination of religious knowledge, and structured interpretations of sacred texts. Such favorable evaluations appear to be grounded in perceptions of doctrinal consistency and institutional legitimacy. In a digital environment characterized by informational plurality and competing religious narratives, institutional affiliation and methodological grounding function as central markers of credibility.

Furthermore, respondents' trust in official digital discourse reflects a broader socio-cultural configuration in which religion intersects with public life, collective identity, and social cohesion. This trust does not merely signify passive endorsement; rather, it indicates a perceived need for coherent and authoritative reference points within an increasingly complex digital landscape.

Finally, participants articulated clear expectations regarding the future development of official digital religious communication. Their proposals emphasize methodological rigor, objectivity in addressing contemporary issues, youth participation, and the expansion of interactive platforms. The inclusion of national and global political issues within religious discourse further signals a demand for relevance and responsiveness to evolving social realities. Collectively, these findings suggest that official religious institutions are evaluated not only in terms of doctrinal authority but also in relation to their capacity to adapt to participatory and



Received: 15/01/2026 Accepted: 03/02/2026 Published: 10/03/2026

technologically mediated forms of communication within the contemporary digital public sphere.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings of this research paper, a set of recommendations can be presented that focus on developing and adapting modern communication technology to support the digital religious discourse of official institutions in Algeria. This involves developing the content of digital religious discourse in Algeria by adopting scientific foundations in influence and persuasion based on sound moral values, especially since we live in an era of openness with all its technical and value orientations. It also encourages well-mannered youth to acquire religious knowledge and awareness by moving toward producing digital religious content in conjunction with official bodies to confront the chaotic amount of religious discourse on the Internet, in addition to encouraging qualified institutions to provide religious discourse based on methodological and scientific foundations, such as universities and institutes of Islamic sciences through imams and professors of Islamic sciences. We suggest benefiting from the experiences of diverse religious communities to establish a more comprehensive and accurate digital religious discourse that accommodates the diversity of different social contexts. Furthermore, it encourages the publication of studies and research in various disciplines to provide a practical vision according to multiple dimensions that serve the digital religious discourse and interest in addressing emerging technological issues, such as the ethics of artificial intelligence and the possibility of benefiting from it in developing digital religion.

References:

Books :

- Bunt, G. (2018). *Hashtag Islam: How cyber-Islamic environments are transforming religious authority*. University of North Carolina Press.
- Campbell, H. (2013). *Digital religion: Understanding religious practice in new media worlds*. Routledge.
- Campbell, H. (2020). *Digital religion: Understanding religious practice in new media worlds*. Routledge. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Heidi-Campbell-8/publication/293958274_Digital_Religion_Understanding_Religious_Practice_in_New_Media_Worlds/links/56bcfa8408ae5e7ba40fbdf0/Digital-Religion-Understanding-Religious-Practice-in-New-Media-Worlds.pdf

Articles :

- Adeni. (2024). Online Islamic narrative. *Jurnal Khabar: Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam*, 6(1), 55–68. <https://doi.org/10.37092/khabar.v6i1.810>
- Alaouchich, A. (2022). Features of culture of moderation and moderation in Islamic religious discourse. *Journal of Science and Knowledge Horizons*, 1(2), 103–115. <https://shorturl.at/NzQi1>
- Bouali, N. (2019). Contemporary religious media discourse: A critical normative approach to structure and function. *Algerian Journal of Communication*, 18(2), 179–198. <https://shorturl.at/GNQdp>
- Bouherar Salim. (2020). Religion and culture in Algeria: The impact of religious interpretations on social practices. *International Journal of Education and Knowledge Management (IJEKM)*, 3(2), 1–15.



Received: **15/01/2026** Accepted: **03/02/2026** Published: **10/03/2026**

- Campbell, H. (2012). Religion and the Internet: A microcosm for studying Internet trends and implications. *New Media & Society*, 15(5). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444812462848>
- Campbell, H. (2024). Now what? Religious studies whither and why? Looking backwards and forwards at the study of digital religion. *Religious Studies Review*, 50(1), 83–87.
- Eli Zaluchu, S. (2023). Theological insight of digital religion. *Bogoslovni vestnik*, 83, 597–610. <https://www.teof.uni-lj.si/uploads/File/BV/BV2023/03/Zaluchopdf>
- Ergen, Y. (2023). Framing the study of digital religion: Waves of academic research—Theoretical approaches and themes. *Journal of Media and Religion Studies*, 6(2), 138–164. <https://doi.org/10.47951/mediad.1363608>
- Khayati, H. (2023). Activating the contemporary religious and civilizational dialogue from the theoretical basis to the application (A study in the role of religious and academic institutions and the media). *Journal of Science and Knowledge Horizons*, 3(3), 101–125.
- Kholili, M., Izudin, A., & Hakim, M. (2024). Islamic proselytizing in digital religion in Indonesia: The challenges of broadcasting regulation. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 10(1), Article 2357460. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2024.2357460>
- Mahfud, C., Muyasaroh, M., Rintaningrum, R., Prasetyawati, N., Agustin, D., Suarmini, N., ... Nasih, A. (2022). Digital trends of social religious humanities: Understanding discourse on religious moderation, Pancasila and citizenship education in Indonesia.

Modeling: Jurnal Program Studi PGMI, 9(2).
<https://doi.org/10.69896/modeling.v9i2.1289>

- Mohamed El Sayed, N. (2023). The role of official religious discourse via social networking sites in controlling the digital religious field. *Journal of Media Research and Studies*.
<https://doi.org/10.21608/mjms.2023.292585>
- Moussem, A. (2024). Historiography and identity challenges in the globalization epoch. *Journal of Science and Knowledge Horizons*, 4(1), 100-116.
- Tsuria, R. (2023). The future is female? Religion, bodies, and digital discourse. In *Stepping back and looking ahead: Twelve years of studying religious*. Brill.

Thesis:

- Gerges, S. (2014). The influence of religion on morals, behavior and political thought in Algeria (pp. 1-39).
- Hamishi, R. (2017). The role of the official religious institution in consolidating the state ideology, a comparative study between Algeria and Morocco. Faculty of Human and Social Sciences.

Official Documents & Government Websites

- Algerian Ministry of Religious Affairs. (n.d.). Home page. <https://www.marw.dz>
- Official Gazette. (1972). 12(72). Algeria.
<https://gazettes.africa/gazettes/dz/1972>
- Official Gazette. (1980). Algeria.
<https://gazettes.africa/akn/dz/officialGazette/government-gazette/1980-06-24/26/ara@1980-06-24>