

DA'WAH PROGRAMMES ON RADIO STATIONS IN YORUBA COMMUNITIES: IMPACTS AND CHALLENGES

BY

Salihu Murtala Ottan

Department of Islamic Studies, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State

Email: talk2ottan@gmail.com

Abstract

Despite the varied approaches of some Muslim scholars, which result in diverse outcomes, the role of radio, among other electronic media, in conveying Islamic messages to contemporary society remains undeniable. Radio *Da'wah* has emerged as a crucial tool in modern Islamic propagation, offering a wider and more accessible platform to reach the public. This shift has significantly eased the burden of traditional face-to-face *Da'wah* activities, which were often limited in scope and time. This study appraises the impact of *Da'wah* programmes broadcasted on selected radio stations, such as Agidigbo FM, Eko FM, and Radio Kwara, on Muslims in Yoruba communities. These programmes have demonstrated notable social, economic, and educational influences, contributing to the moral and spiritual development of their listeners. However, the challenges facing *Da'wah* programmes on radio stations are substantial. Among the most pressing are inadequate funding, disunity among Islamic scholars, and competition from secular and Christian programming. Additionally, bias in the media, where Islam is sometimes misrepresented or criticized, further complicates the effectiveness of Islamic broadcasts. The study reveals that these challenges, if not addressed, can hinder the potential of *Da'wah* programmes to promote Islam accurately and unify the Muslim community. The importance of this study lies in its exploration of how radio, as a mass communication tool, has revolutionized the dissemination of Islamic teachings in Yoruba communities. By evaluating the impact and challenges of *Da'wah* programmes, this research provides insights into how Islamic scholars and media practitioners can collaborate to enhance the role of radio in spreading the message of Islam. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the need for strategic improvements in the organization, funding, and delivery of *Da'wah* content, ultimately contributing to the promotion of peaceful coexistence and religious harmony in Nigeria.

Keywords: Da'wah, Radio Programmes, Yoruba Communities, Media Impact

Introduction

Da'wah (propagation), the Islamic call to faith, has long been a central component of Muslim religious practice around the world. Traditionally, it involved personal, face-to-face interactions, with Islamic scholars and leaders conveying religious teachings directly to individuals and small communities. *Da'wah* refer to organized efforts and initiatives aimed at spreading the teachings of Islam, inviting people to understand and follow its principles. These programmes are typically designed to educate, inform, and inspire both Muslims and non-Muslims about Islamic beliefs, values, and practices. They often focus on spiritual guidance, moral education, and social welfare, in line with the principles outlined in the Qur'an and Sunnah (Ayub & Hussain, 2023). In the framework of radio broadcasts, *Da'wah* programmes consist of religious sermons, it can take the form of *wa'z*, which means "admonition, exhortation, or subtle appeasement to the minds of the people to make them to turn to good deeds." In other cases, it can take the form of *irshad*, which refers to pointing out or giving glad tidings about rewards of good deeds and repercussions of the opposite. Nevertheless, there is another form of *da'wah* that takes the form of *qisas*, which means "story telling" (Ali, 2023, September) Example of this approach includes the steadfastness of Prophet Ayub (Job) as stated in the Qur'an 38:4, Qur'an 7:176 supports this method:

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَمَسَّلَا كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ إِنْ تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثْ أَوْ تَتْرَكْهُ يَلْهَثْ ذَلِكَ مِثْلُ الْفُجُورِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
فَأَلْقَيْنَا لَهْطَهُمْ فِي النَّارِ

If We had willed, We would have elevated him with Our signs, but he clung to this life—following his evil desires. His example is that of a p2dog: if you chase it away, it pants, and if you leave it, it ‘still’ pants. This is the example of the people who deny Our signs.¹ So narrate ‘to them’ stories ‘of the past’, so perhaps they will reflect.

Technological advancements have significantly transformed *Da‘wah* methods, enabling global outreach through various media platforms. Radio has emerged as one of the most effective tools for Islamic propagation, particularly in regions with low literacy rates and limited access to other forms of media (Kahfi & Mahmudi, 2024). In Africa, radio has played a vital role in spreading Islamic teachings, especially in countries like Egypt, Sudan, and Nigeria. The growth of *Da‘wah* radio programs across the continent has addressed the need for religious education, countered extremist ideologies, and promoted peaceful coexistence among diverse religious groups. In West Africa, particularly Nigeria, radio bridges the gap between traditional religious practices and modern communication needs, despite the challenges posed by religious diversity and interfaith dynamics (Sule, 2024).

Mass media, particularly radio stations, has become a platform for denigrating Islam in Nigeria, especially within Yoruba communities. For instance, Inspiration 100.5 FM in Ibadan aired derogatory remarks about the Muslim Eid-el-Kabir festival during a Yoruba-Christian program, Olufe Otito. The station's General Manager, Mrs. Olufunmilayo Olasogbo, described the incident as irresponsible and suspended the program. This followed a directive from the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) after the Muslim Media Practitioners of Nigeria (MMPN) requested sanctions for the station's actions (Oyo, 2024). In response to such media challenges, Quds Radio, the first Muslim-owned station in Nigeria, was launched in May 2012 by Jama'atu Ta'awun Muslimeen to promote Islamic teachings, counter misunderstandings, and provide accurate information based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. It is against this backdrop that this paper examines the impacts of Islamic *Da‘wah* programmes on radio stations in Yoruba communities (Rafiu, 2024). In realizing this goal, this paper is divided into sections, starting with abstract, introduction, and concept of *Da‘wah*, radio station as tools of Islamic propagation, background and Islamic *Da‘wah* programmes on selected radio stations in Yorubaland, impacts of Islamic *Da‘wah* programmes on radio stations in Yoruba communities, challenges, recommendations and conclusion.

Literature Review

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) provides a compelling lens through which the study of *Da‘wah* Programmes on Radio Stations in Yoruba Communities can be explored. This theory, originally developed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in the 1970s, seeks to understand how individuals actively seek out specific media to satisfy particular needs, interests, or desires. Unlike earlier communication models that viewed audiences as passive recipients of information, UGT emphasizes the active role of the audience in selecting media content that fulfills their psychological, social, and spiritual needs (Falgoust et al, 2022). The central premise of the Uses and Gratifications Theory is that media users are not merely influenced by the media, but rather, they make conscious choices about what media to engage with based on their personal motivations. These motivations may include the need for information, personal identity, integration and social interaction, and entertainment. In the context of religious programming, particularly Islamic *Da‘wah* programmes, media such as radio is not just a channel for dissemination but becomes a source of spiritual nourishment, cultural preservation, and community engagement. Applying this theory to the topic, *Da‘wah* Programmes on Radio Stations in Yoruba Communities: Impacts and Challenges, the Uses and Gratifications Theory helps in explaining why Yoruba Muslims tune in to religious radio broadcasts. These listeners may seek religious enlightenment, moral guidance, or communal connection with fellow believers. They may also use the content to reinforce their cultural and religious identity within a Yoruba and Muslim framework. Furthermore, the theory offers insights into the impacts of such programming, such as increased religious knowledge, moral reawakening, and social cohesion, as well as the challenges that might arise, including language barriers, ideological conflicts, time constraints, and limited access to broadcast facilities in rural areas. It also sheds light on differences in the reception and utilization of *Da‘wah*

programmes across various demographic groups within Yoruba communities, such as between youth and elders, or between literate and non-literate audiences.

Conceptual Clarifications

Concept of *Da'awah*

Da'awah is differently defined by several scholars including the theologians, jurists and *Mufasssirūn*, however, it is etymologically taken from '*Da'awah*' that implies: calling, communication or invitation accordingly (Saleh et al, 2022). Technically, *Da'awah* is described as conveying the correct path to people, guiding them towards Islam, and offering religious advice based on Allah's commands. It involves inviting both oneself and others to follow Allah's guidance and adhere to His laws, which have been communicated to humanity through a series of messengers and prophets (Ali, 2023). Generally, the term '*Da'awah*' interchangeably implies the act of calling onto Allah by His servant or the calling of Almighty Allah to His servants through His Prophets and Messengers (Shukri, 2021). Understandably, man inviting his fellow man to adhere and embrace Islam is undoubtedly refers to '*Da'awah*' as inherited from the Noble Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) through the pious past generations till today. This shows that the communication made between servant and his Lord (ﷻ) and as well as the introduction of Islam made by man to his fellow are by implication referred to as *Da'awah*. Meanwhile, the propagation of Islam is regarded as a collective responsibility upon the Muslim in line with the prophetic method of communication. As it is evident in *Sūratu Yūsuf*, verse 108, where Almighty Allah instructed the Noble Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to say, thus:

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

This is my way: I do invite on to Allah (ﷻ) with certain knowledge and whoever follows me. Glory to Allah (ﷻ) and never will I associate gods with Allah (ﷻ).

The above verse has shown that teaching the word of Allah and the tradition of His Prophet (ﷺ) with which the practice of Islamic religion is made understandable to the worldview is done through the *Da'awah* activities. Also, *Da'awah* is regarded as an avenue through which the Muslims do understand Islam further, while the non-Muslims also exposed to the beauty and light of Islam from the in-depth explanations of the *Du'āt* (propagators) in their *Da'awah* communication. Hence, the Muslims are generally encouraged to utilize the acceptable methods and skills to convey the message of Islam to their respective audience either Muslims or non-Muslims. This task is carried out in many occasions through the use of mass-media platforms where many audience are majorly converge and interact irrespective of their locations. However, the motive behind mandating *Da'awah* upon the Muslims is to sanitize their society and ensure the well-being of all by promoting what is acceptably good and forbidding evils at all cost. The sanity and chastity of the society begins with *tawhīd* (monotheism) which should be communicated by the *Du'āt* (propagators), as evidently mentioned in *Sūratu Āli 'Imrān*, verse 104, thus:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

Let there arise out of you, a band of people, inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong: they are the ones to attain felicity”

Radio Station as a Medium of *Da'awah*

Da'awah activities are aired by a large number of listeners. The reality is that radio stations are known to be the major accessible means of general communication through which socio-religious messages efficiently get to the hears of the general public within a time frame. Therefore, radio station plays a significant role in spreading the *Da'awah* message and sensitizing the general public on the beauty and teachings of Islam (Muhammad-Busayri, 2021). Radio

station as a medium of interaction and the sense of the society cannot be exonerated from religious congress because of its usefulness for propagating the Islamic practices and teachings. In addition, media is useful to the general public because of its credibility in social awareness and as a medium of educating people both young and old in the present world. It is medium with which the minds of the people are captured with vital information disseminated by various institutions accordingly (Kholili, Izudin & Hakim, 2024). Through radio station, the non-Muslims' understanding and wrong perception about Islam is easily reshaped, while some vital information about Islam are globally communicated to the Muslims especially during the Islamic special events such as Fridays, month of Ramadan, the day of *Arafah*, the two *eids*. Hence, Radio as a technological invention which is considered as an important tool of communication has aided *Da'wah* activities to flourish and rapidly spread to the world at large. More so, *Da'wah* activities have advantageously reinforced to grow the society religiously, rationally and ethically through the relentless efforts of the *Du'at* "propagators" (Thoyib, 2024).

The Yoruba Community in Nigeria

The Yoruba are one of Nigeria's three major ethnic groups, primarily residing in the southwestern region, with smaller communities found in Benin and northern Togo. By the early 21st century, their population exceeded 20 million. They speak a language belonging to the Benue-Congo branch of the Niger-Congo language family. Although the Yoruba share a common language and cultural heritage, they were historically never a unified political entity. It is believed they migrated from the east to their current territory, west of the lower Niger River, over a thousand years ago. Over time, they became one of the most urbanized groups in precolonial Africa, forming numerous independent kingdoms, each governed by a hereditary king, or *Oba*, and centered on a capital town or city. These towns eventually grew into today's cities such as Oyo, Ile-Ife, Ibadan, Ilorin, and others (Falola, 2024). Oyo emerged as the most powerful Yoruba kingdom in the 17th century, while Ile-Ife remained symbolically significant as the spiritual center of creation according to Yoruba mythology. However, the kingdoms began to decline in the late 18th and 19th centuries due to internal conflicts and external attacks by the Fon of Dahomey and the Muslim Fulani. Although traditional kingships still exist, their political influence is limited compared to the past (Usman, 2024). In typical Yoruba towns, the *Oba's* palace, once a grand structure, is located at the center, surrounded by family compounds. While these buildings are now often modernized, many traditional social structures remain. Inheritance and leadership continue to follow patrilineal lines, with lineage members sharing customs, taboos, and worship practices linked to their own deity and ancestral lands (Falola, 2024). Yoruba society also features a variety of voluntary associations, such as *egbe* (a men's social group), *aro* (a farmers' cooperative), and *esusu* (a savings and loan group). Political leadership is exercised by the *oba* and a council of chiefs, with subordinate town leaders reporting to the *oba*, who also serves as a sacred and ritual figure. While many Yoruba have embraced Christianity or Islam, aspects of their traditional beliefs, which include a hierarchy of deities led by a supreme creator and hundreds of lesser gods, continue to persist. The Yoruba language has a rich literary tradition, encompassing poetry, folktales, myths, and proverbs (Okogbe, 2024).

Impacts of Islamic *Da'wah* programmes on Radio Stations in Yoruba Communities

1. Religious Impacts: Religion is a universal phenomenon that has played a great role in human culture, its complexity covers every aspects of life, because it includes not only patterns of behavior but also patterns of language and thought. Religion frames one's mind to adhere to the rules and regulation of the laid down by Almighty Allah which bond on all the inhabitants of every society. It helps to nurture the mind and make one a better member of his/her society through indoctrination (Siregar & Rangkuti, 2024). Radio broadcasting as medium of disseminating the religious messages to the targeted people of the society, is considered as one of the most effective means of communication. It has tremendously assisted religious groups to better the society and eliminate crime that has in recent times bedeviling the peace of the society (Dungcik, 2024). The main objective of *Da'wah* aims to encourage people to the path of Allah in a religious sense, so that people may follow and worship Almighty Allah. This purpose cannot be realised except through understandable medium of communication, as it is evident in *Sūratu Ibrāhīm*, verse 4 where Almighty Allah says:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانٍ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ

And We did not send any Messenger except (speaking) in the language of his people to state clearly for them

2. Social Impacts: The rapid growth of society, driven by technological advancements, has significantly influenced communication, including radio broadcasting, which plays a crucial role in disseminating Da'wah messages. Broadcasting Da'wah programs on radio offers a wide-reaching platform for spreading Islamic teachings and educating the public about religious perspectives on contemporary issues. This enhances community knowledge and fosters a peaceful, well-informed society (Sule & Mainiyo, 2023). Negative impacts also arise from radio Da'wah broadcasts. Variations in the approaches of Islamic preachers (du'āt) can lead to confusion and misinterpretation among listeners. Additionally, negative portrayals of certain groups, such as labeling Sufi followers as innovators, can lead to discrimination and prejudice, contrary to the teachings of Islam, as emphasized in *Sūratu Āl-Imrān* (3:103).

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءُ فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا

And hold firmly together to the rope of Allah and do not be divided. Remember Allah's favour upon you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts, so you – by His grace – became brothers.

3. Economic Impacts: Radio *Da'wah* program, as a means of conveying Islamic teachings, plays a crucial role in shaping the thoughts and behaviors of individuals within Muslim communities. One notable impact is its ability to transform economic attitudes and practices. In this regard, *Da'wah* shared through radio or other media platforms goes beyond simply teaching religious principles; it also imparts economic and social values that influence everyday actions. It educates people on the importance of conducting business with honesty, steering clear of harmful practices, and ensuring that profits are earned ethically (Choirin, Kamal & Iqbal, 2024). As it is evident in *Sūratu 'l-An'ām*, verse 152, where Almighty Allah says:

وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ لَا تَكْلَفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

And give full measure and weight in justice. We do not charge any soul except with that within its capacity

4. Islamic Educational Impacts: Radio broadcasting has greatly influenced Islamic education. Educational programs covering subjects like jurisprudence, Quranic sciences, tafsīr, and Islamic history have been integral to the broadcasting landscape for many years. These programs have provided valuable knowledge on various topics and have been especially beneficial for individuals who lack access to formal Islamic education. However, Islam encourages disseminating and receiving Islamic knowledge at every point in time. In line with this claim, Almighty Allah urges the mankind in various verses of the Qur'an to think, ponder, reflect and acquire knowledge that would bring them closer to Him (ﷻ) and His creations. Moreover, the act of teaching the Islamic knowledge and disseminating it to the people is a responsibility of the scholars especially those who saddle themselves with the *Da'wah* activities (Tarif & Kurniawan, 2021). This is evident in *Sūratu-t-Tawbah*, verse 122, where Almighty Allah says:

...قُلُوا لَا تَفَرُّوا مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ

...they could devote themselves to studies in religion, and admonish the people when they return to them, - that thus they (may learn) to guard themselves (against evil)

Challenges Facing Islamic *Daʿwah* on Radio Station in Yoruba Community

Generally, Islamic *Daʿwah* has been facing many challenges from all possible angles globally, among which are:

1. Disunity: The Muslim *Ummah* has struggled significantly to establish a cohesive policy regarding strategic objectives related to social, political, economic, legal, educational, and cultural matters, particularly concerning radio programs. Achieving unity or at least making progress toward it is a fundamental challenge in *Daʿwah*. While external factors contribute to this disunity, we must primarily recognize that the responsibility lies with us. Ultimately, efforts to unify Muslims should focus on our internal dynamics, available resources, and common goals.

2. *Ghuluw* or *Ifrāt waTafrīt*: The second challenge facing *Daʿwah* is the increasing prevalence of *Ghuluw* within the *Ummah*. *Ghuluw* refers to the tendency to either exaggerate certain aspects of Islam beyond their intended limits or to minimize them below their intended significance. Unfortunately, some *Daʿwah* radio practitioners concentrate on specific areas of Islam—such as religious, legal, social, political, or economic matters—while neglecting other equally important teachings. Islam offers essential guidance for every aspect of human life. Thus, calling others to Islam means adhering to Allah's instructions across all facets, encompassing religious, legal, social, economic, and political issues.

3. The Islamic knowledge deficit: The third major challenge facing *Daʿwah* today in most cases on radio station is an educational one. The key to progress and excellence lies in a knowledge-based society that engenders a fair and equitable economy and a just and ethical state. A dynamic commitment to and knowledge of Qur'an and *Sunnah* must be deeply embedded in the social fabric but this requires that accurate and authentic Islamic knowledge be disseminated amongst the Muslim masses. This does not exist today and this deficiency is a handicap that must be fixed.

4. Methodology: The fourth challenge facing *Daʿwah* pertains to methodology. Many individuals involved in *Daʿwah* activities on radio stations participate only when they have the time outside of their professional responsibilities. This approach would be acceptable if these individuals recognized that Islam does not separate life into “religious” and “worldly” spheres. Thus, the behavioral and ethical standards required of Muslims, particularly in *Daʿwah*, apply equally whether one is at work, engaged in street *Daʿwah*, or involved in a structured *Daʿwah* initiative. The Qur'an and *Sunnah* promote a holistic view of life, where one's career and mission are interconnected rather than distinct. Additionally, this challenge includes a common misconception that *Daʿwah* is solely about inviting others to Islam. Influenced by this mindset, some dedicated *duʿāt* travel great distances to engage with fellow Muslims while neglecting *Daʿwah* efforts aimed at non-Muslims.

5. Scholars exchange words of abuse on radio: In Nigeria, *Daʿwah* programs on radio have played a key role in spreading Islamic teachings. However, a troubling trend has emerged where some Islamic scholars engage in public verbal disputes on air. These confrontations often involve abusive language and personal attacks, which undermine the core values of *Daʿwah*, such as wisdom, good counsel, and peaceful dialogue. Such misuse of radio not only damages the credibility of *Daʿwah* workers but also fosters division and confusion among listeners. This behavior contradicts the Qur'anic teaching in Surah An-Nahl (16:125), which advocates inviting others to Islam with wisdom and good instruction. These confrontational broadcasts contribute to a growing perception of disunity within the Muslim *Ummah*.

Conclusion

Radio is an important media platform for many reasons which include the process of conveying vital information, educative views, good ideas and interaction by using the communication gadgets to reach a large audience at a wider range which could not be at the same time frame. It was noted at the inception of this research that radio have tremendously changed the accustomed way disseminating the *Daʿwah* messages which was a solely a responsibility

of the parents, religious and community leaders which used to happen as a face to face interactive section. However, the study also identifies critical challenges that hinder the effectiveness of *Da'wah* on radio, such as disunity among scholars, inadequate funding, ideological extremism, knowledge deficits, and unprofessional methodologies. Additionally, the misuse of radio platforms for divisive debates further undermines the goals of *Da'wah*. The study emphasizes the need for collaboration among Islamic scholars, media practitioners, and the Muslim community. Strategic improvements in funding, content delivery, and adherence to professional and ethical standards are essential to maximize the potential of radio *Da'wah*. By doing so, radio can continue to serve as a vital tool for promoting religious harmony, accurate Islamic teachings, and peaceful coexistence in Nigeria and beyond.

Recommendations

Having identified that radio stations greatly play a vital role in disseminating *Da'wah* message to the world, hence, for a remarkable *Da'wah* activities on radio and stemming the bane of incessant confusions and conflicting opinions on religious matters in Yorubaland and Nigeria at large. The paper recommends the following key elements for effectively carrying out *Da'wah* activities.

1. Calling people to the way of Allah is a good thing yet it is not expected to be handled by non-professionals especially on radio and other media platforms.
2. The methodology of calling to the way of Allah as entrenched in the various religious books need to be strictly adhered to.
3. Those hiding under the cover of religion to spread controversial matters in religious affairs should be identified and they should not be supported in whatever way by other *Da'wah* workers.
4. *Da'wah* workers should be straight, objective and truthful in their preaching especially when there is the need for them to contribute to national issues on radio:
5. *Da'wah* workers should give constructive criticism to scholars whose statement can mislead the audience in the community;
6. The *du'āt* are encouraged to adhere to the ethics of journalism.

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