

AN ASSESSMENT OF ABUSE OF *DA'WAH* ACTIVITIES ON SELECTED FACEBOOK PAGES AND ITS EFFECTS AMONG YORUBA MUSLIMS

BY

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Abstract

The advancement of the Internet has led to the emergence of Social media networks such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Whatsapp, TikTok, Zoom, Telegram, etc with a variety of functions that provide space for *Da'wah* activities. The invention of Facebook pages for *Da'wah* activities became expedient as Muslim scholars take advantage of the platform to spread the teachings of Islam to their followers. However, the abuse of the Facebook space in the guise of *Da'wah* activities has risen to its peak by some pseudo-scholars, who have usurped the platform and spread wrong teachings about Islam. Thus, this paper assesses the abuse of *Da'wah* activities on selected Facebook pages and its implications on the Muslim Ummah. Descriptive and analytical methods have been employed in carrying out this research. The descriptive method has assisted in describing the manners of abuse of *Da'wah* activities on selected Facebook pages, while the analytical method is used in analyzing the implications of the abuse of *Da'wah* activities in the selected Facebook pages on the Muslim Ummah. The paper reveals that Facebook pages are efficient and effective means of disseminating Islamic messages because of their easy accessibility as well as smooth and quick connection to followers. It also reveals that despite the significant impacts of Facebook on the spread of information about Islamic teachings to the followers of the creators of the pages, the abuse of pages by some of the handlers is undermining the progress of Islamic propagation in contemporary society. The paper concludes that the utilization of individual freedom without considering others is the main cause of the abuse on Facebook pages. Therefore, the paper recommends the application of Islamic Ethical Values as Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in ameliorating if not eradicating enmity among them.

Keywords: Abuse, *Da'wah* Activities, Facebook, Yoruba

Introduction

It is a known fact that before the advent of Islam, there were different information dissemination methods, including mountain climbing to alert people of impending danger. This method of information dissemination was improved upon by the Prophet (SAW) with the employment of three distinct methods which included personal, through messengers, and media in disseminating information about Islam. Muslim scholars also explored these three distinct methods of information dissemination to spread information about Islam, and they continued till the evolution of science and technology, particularly the electronic media (Azeez, 2003). The significance of media for the dissemination of Islamic messages is a known phenomenon which started many decades ago, before the advent of the digital era. Printing media such as books, pamphlets, memoirs, etc., and electronic media which included but was not limited to audiotapes, televisions, radio, etc., assisted the early Muslim scholars in the spread of Islamic messages and had a significant role in the Islamic revolutions (Elad, 2003). The introduction and presentation of Islamic programmes on radio, television, and satellites during the 80s and the 90s reached more diverse Muslim audiences and increased the spreading of Islam (Elad, 2003). However, in the last two decades, media was significantly upgraded with the rise and introduction of online media, which has become a powerful tool among Muslim preachers. Online media is now being used to market a positive image of Islam and present its beauty to the non-Muslims.

Over the last decade, the evolution of social media sites as another platform on the internet has gained popularity among people. Some of these sites i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok, YouTube, Snapchat, Telegram, Zoom, WhatsApp, etc., have attracted millions of users worldwide. Because of its popularity, the outlets where people search for news, information, business, and entertainment have changed. These Social media sites allow users to create personal profiles to connect with other users of the sites. Photographs and posts of what they are doing at any given time are uploaded (Thomas et.al, 2023). Social media sites, by their nature, can educate and entertain the audience and the users and possess an outreaching influence that traditional medium such as Television, Radio, and Newspapers lack (Thomas et.al, 2023). The spread and quality of information assessed on Social media makes it an appealing tool for *Da'wah* activities and others. Social media is a developed phenomenon in Islamic propagation and Muslim Scholars had realized the importance of social media as a component in *Da'wah* activities and means of reaching many people, hence, making use of it extensively days and nights (Sule & Lawal, 2020).

For *Da'wah* activities to be effective in the present day, the platforms provided by social media such as Facebook among others, which can be referred to as *wasīlah*, need be used to enhance and support its implementation (Erwin, 2019). This is because Facebook page has become the focus for Muslim callers, their followers, and other users to engage in *Da'wah* unlike the traditional ways of carrying out *Da'wah* through physical gatherings, *Madrasah*, *Ḥalqah*, and Worship centers are now systematically and indirectly deserted. This is because *Madāris*, Islamic organizations, and individual scholars now own Facebook pages to conduct teachings and convey information to their audience and beyond. It should be noted that the impacts of *Da'wah* activities on these pages are felt by Muslims and non-Muslims. This implies that Facebook pages have a lot of roles to play in *Da'wah* activities (Reichmuth, 2022). However, this means of *Da'wah* dissemination especially on Facebook pages have now become means of character assassination, confrontation as well as obscene speeches for Muslim preachers who are exchanging words of abuse and enmity against one another and some engage in frivolous talks. Thus, there is a need to assess these *Da'wah* activities on selected Facebook pages and point out how they are being abused by Muslim bloggers who have turned *Du'āt*.

It is a fact that there are several existing literature and research works on *Da'wah* activities on Social media. Thus, in writing this study, the researcher has consulted various related literature like *Islam and the Cyber World* by A.O. Shuriye and M.T. Ajala, where the authors asserted that Cyber world has created an avenue for the Muslim *Ummah* in a form of virtual global community and encouraged dialogue as well as access to information on a real time basis. Above all it has facilitated easy access to the Qur'an and other Islamic materials. The writers also pointed out some of the negative aspects of it such as pornography, victimization, bullying, stalking etc, but do not talk on Facebook pages which are the concern of this paper (Shuriye & Ajala, 2014). In a work titled: *Islam and Social Media: Attitudes and Views* by W.A. Hatab. The writer explains that Social Media has positive effects on promoting Islam despite the fact that it also creates more enemies for Islam rather than more friends. He added that Facebook is the most preferred social platform for the Muslim users (Hatab, 2016).

Impacts of Social Media on Muslim Societ enumerates positive effects of Social Media on Muslim society such as interaction, socialization, teaching of Islamic Knowledge and *Da'wah* among many others. The writer does not mention negative effects of Social Media on *Da'wah* activities and Facebook pages which are the focus of this paper (Islam, 2019). The Impacts of *Da'wah* through the Electronic and Social Media among Muslims in Nigeria.

Da'wah is concerned with the basic teaching of Islam and modern approach to invitation and teaching of Islam through the use of electronic and social media (Oladimeji & Ajijola, 2012).

***Da'wah* and Facebook: A conceptual Analysis**

Da'wah

Etymologically, *da'wah* is an Arabic word which originates from a verbal noun *da'ā* whose semantic connotation means "seeking to direct something to one's side through a sound". Lexically, *da'wah* means, among others things, prayer, supplication, desire or require, call or summon, invite etc. Literally, it means issuing summons or making an invitation or establishing a call.⁶⁹ Cowan defines *da'wa* as a call send off, to call upon, or to invite. He further says that *da'wah* means appeal, bidding, demand, request, summon and lastly convocation.⁷⁰ Technically, it is used 'to summon' or 'to call' anyone for the purpose of anything, where the one who makes the call is referred to as the caller (*da'i*) and the call itself (*da'wah*). *Da'wah* is a term often used to describe the patterns and system explored by the Muslims in teaching others about the beliefs, instructions, laws, restrictions, practices and knowledge of Islam.⁷² This concept has been referred to as a process of calling the attention of others both Muslims and non-Muslims to the faith of Islam, commandments of Allāh, explanation of the do's and don'ts of Islam and more, as enshrined in the Qur'ān.⁷³ Sometimes, it takes different measures or styles, either by preaching, demonstration through actions, habitual dimensions, proselytisation or comparative analysis of the religion.⁷⁴ Many scholars have defined *da'wah* with different definitions. According to Al-Ilori:

Da'wah is the process of directing people to a doctrine that is beneficial to them, or a benefit that is useful to them. It is also a call to rescue people from misguidance that they are at the verge of falling into, or a calamity that almost befalls them⁷⁵

Oladimeji asserted that:

Da'wah is a process of self-exertion to the utmost, on the part of *da'iyyah* (Callers) in order to disseminate the word of Allah and to make it supreme and it involves removal of all the impediments in the way of its observance (Oladimeji, 2022).

The Islamic obligation to perform *Da'wah* is a command incumbent upon every Muslim to spread the message of Allah to all humanity according to one's ability (Edward, 2004). It is a duty, responsibility and task enjoined on every Muslim by Allah as clearly mentioned in the Qur'ān that He has appointed the Muslim Ummah as a model community for the whole of mankind. Allah says in Qur'ān 3:110 thus:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ ءَامَنَ أَهْلُ
الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِّنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ١١٠

Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing In Allah. if only the people of the Book had Faith, it were best for them: among them are some who have Faith, but Most of them are perverted transgressors.

The above verse clearly explains that there should be a group inviting people to do good things and forbid them from doing evil. In reaction to the above verse, Lafiaji concluded that

Da'wah is fundamental duty upon every believer and it does not suffice to profess faith in Allah and practice His commandments at all level of the individual; the believer is enjoined to extend invitation to others around him, so that society can be reformed both spiritually and morally (Lafiaji, 2022)

Allah has also given a clear guideline on how to spread *Da'wah* through wisdom (*hikmah*) as mentioned in Qur'an 16 125 thus:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجِدِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ
عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in the best way. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided.

On the authority of Abdullahi bin Amr bin al-^cAs (May Allah be pleased with both of them), Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: "Convey from me even if it is a verse (Khan, 1997). These Qur'anic quotations and Prophetic tradition encourage the Muslims to spread knowledge to others anywhere and anytime as part of their responsibilities toward others. By this, Islam has made provision for man's continuous guidance towards the right direction; hence, *Da'wah*'s primary goals are guiding Muslims and attracting non-Muslims to Islam (Erwin, 2019).

Facebook

Facebook as one of the social media platforms which enable user to take and apply digital filters on photos, and videos and share them on the platform, was launched in Harvard in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and his co-founders; Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz, and Chris Hughes who were students and roommates at Harvard University (Ang, 2023). The purpose of the invention of Facebook was to connect students and it was later spread to other schools. It has become the most famous social media platform and continues to grow rapidly among internet users. Over the years, it has added many fresh features such as pages, reels, live videos, games, etc, which make it even more popular among other social media networks (Influencer, 2023). It is the leading social network site with 2.99 billion of 4.59 billion social media users worldwide (Statista, 2023). The estimated number of Facebook users in Africa and Nigeria is 255,412,900 and 31,360,000 respectively (Dean, 2023). It established that most of other social media uses have at least one Facebook account (Statista, 2023). On Facebook, texts, posst, links, images, and videos are shared by users with their friends. Famous people and pages are followed and people's posts are reacted to on the platform (Influencer, 2023). Facebook is used for the promotion of products to a huge audience and it allows participants to upload and share information either private or public. It has turned the whole world into a global village and made them closer to each other in a way that they were not in the past. In 2012 and 2014, Facebook acquired Instagram and WhatsApp respectively. Also in 2021 Facebook Inc. changed its name to Meta Platforms to focus on building a Metaverse, where all products and services of the company are linked to an integrated environment (Ang, 2023).

Facebook page:

Facebook page is referred to as public Facebook account or profile which is used by businesses, organizations, brands, artists, public figures, and any other individual who seek to share contact information, and content, post updates, events, and release promotion and most importantly to connect with Facebook audiences. It can be connected with ad accounts and shops (Technopedia, 2023). It works like personal profile pages, except that, fans are used on the Facebook page instead of friends. It can also be highly customized for the display of corporate logos and promotional products. It is also used to alert fans about upcoming promotions or deals or query customers about their preferences (Newberry, 2023). Features of the Facebook page include Profile photo, Cover photo, Page username, Call-to-action (CTC), and About section (Meta, 2023).

Da'wah activities on Facebook Pages

There are numerous *Da'wah* activities on Facebook pages, they include but not limited to the following:

1. Teaching and learning of *Ḥadīth*: *Ḥadīth* is an important field of knowledge in Islam, after the glorious Qur'an which the Muslims must learn. It is sayings, deeds, and tacit approval of Prophet Muhammad (Sayeed, 2023). The availability of accounts and pages on Facebook has made teaching and learning of the *Ḥadīth* which include its Science and translation in different languages easy and accessible. Examples of Facebook pages for teaching and learning *Ḥadīth* include: *Ḥadīth* of the Day (HOTD), *Ḥadīth* Official, Daily *Ḥadīth* Plus, *Ḥadīths* (Bukhari and Muslim), *Ḥadīth* & Motivational Quotes, *Ḥadīth* Class, *Darul Ḥadīth*, Science of *Ḥadīth* (*Usool ul Ḥadīth*), Learning the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet and *Ḥadīth* online, etc (Facebook, 2023).

2. Presentation of lectures (Recorded and live stream): For the accessibility of *Da'wah*, lectures both recorded and live are posted on Facebook pages. Some Facebook pages and accounts are created for the dissemination of Islamic messages. These include: Dar al-Nur, The Voice of Truth, Nigeria Street Dawah. ISPATV, Media Movement for Islamic Lectures and Events, Ogo Islam TV. Mahad Islamic Motivational Movement, Dawah Front Nigeria, Tanbihu Dawah in Nigeria. Markaz Dawah Association of Nigeria, Nigeria Muslim Group, Islamic Nigeria Dawah TV, Salafiyyah Scribes, As-Salafy Brothers and Sisters, Darul Kiram page, DawatulHaq, Markaz Haruna Rasheed, Nigerian Muslim, Dawah Movement group, Ridwanulah Akhar Dawah, Babal'agege Da'wah group, Alif Dawah Lectures group, Umma Academy, Knowledge for every Muslim, Muslim-Marriages, Islamic International Network, Academy of Islamic Propagation (ACADIP), Sunnah Network Nigeria, Nashiru Dawah Nigeria, Dawah Link Biz and Izharu-Nur Dawah Movement of Nigeria, etc (Facebook, 2023).

3. Marriage counseling: Marriage has been seen as an important and a fragile aspect of life. The individual Muslim is being educated on how to sustain his/her home and to ensure that marriage discords do not result in the dissolution of marriage (Iqbal, 2023). Facebook pages provide opportunities for discussion on marital issues such as guidance and counseling. Different Facebook pages have been created to sensitize both Muslim men and women on the importance of marriage and measures to be taken to avoid cracks in the family. Facebook pages and accounts on marriage counseling include: Islamic Marriage Counseling, Tips-Happy Muslim Husband and Wife in Islam, Mawaddah Home of Islamic Marriage Counseling. Islamic Matchmaking Hub and Counseling, Islamic Marriage Counseling, Holy Matrimony in Islam Counseling Initiative, Islamic Marriage Guide, National Islamic Marriage Counseling, Education and Peace-Building Centre, Star Lady Entertainment, etc (Facebook, 2023).

4. Tahfizul-Qur'ān: *Tahfizul-Qur'ān* which is known as memorization of the Qur'ān which was started during the life of the Prophet and continues until today (Al-Hafiz, et.al). The main aim of memorization of the Qur'ān is for it to be preserved by heart by the *huffaz* who are considered to be sincere, pious, and ascetic (Al-Hafiz, et.al). Currently, the *Tahfizul-Qur'ān* institutions and *Tahfiz* classes are everywhere whether in the Arab world or other Muslim countries. The *Tahfiz* institutions and classes are flourishing from time to time and receiving an encouraging response from the Muslim community (Al-Hafiz, et.al). With the adoption of Facebook for information dissemination about Islam, Muslim scholars have also adopted Facebook pages to teach interested users and followers the memorization of the Qur'ān. Facebook pages for this include but not limited to: Tajweed-ul- Qur'ān Academy, E- Qur'ān Institute, Tahfiz International School, Tadrees-ul-Quran, Darus Suffah Tahfizul Quran Chattogram, *Manbau Tahfidhul Quran School & Islamic Studies*, Adam Science and Tahfizul Qur'an Academy (Facebook, 2023).

5. Teaching and learning of Arable language: The Arabic language is considered a Semantic Language of both West Asia and North Africa originating from Arabian Peninsula. It is also regarded as the language of Islam and a language with which the Glorious Qur'ān was revealed and the obligatory prayers are offered. It is also one of the world's official languages (Browker, 2000). For the teaching and learning of the Arabic language to be accessible to all and sundry, Facebook accounts and pages are created by some users across the globe. Facebook pages for some of the teaching and learning Arabic include: Learning Arabic with Angela, Arabic Learning, Arabic learning Centre, Madinah Arabic, Shariah Program- Learn Arabic online, Arabic Language learning, Learn Arabic for Beginners, Learn Arabic spoken, I am learning Arabic, Learn and speak Arabic at home, Arabic learning initiative and Al-Andalus Academy (Facebook, 2023).

6. Raising funds for the less privileges: Fundraising is a process of seeking or gathering voluntary financial contributions (money or other resources) which is carried out by non-profit making organizations or individuals through the engagement of well-to-do individuals, businesses, charitable foundations or government agencies, etc (Iberdrola, 2023). Facebook pages for fundraising include: Zakat and Sadaqat Foundation, Sister to Sister Foundation, Islamic fundraising, Islamic Charity Boutique. Alfulanny Sebilunnajat Concept, Save Your Soul TV and many more (Facebook, 2023).

Da'wah Activities on Selected Facebook Pages

i. Star Lady Entertainment Facebook Page:

This Facebook page name was changed to Star Lady Entertainment on 15 July, 2021 from Hajia Starlady1 which was created on 21 May, 2021 after it was hacked. The Star Lady Entertainment Facebook page is managed and handled by Alhaja Muinat Adesewa. The main purpose of the creation of the page is to educate married and unmarried individuals about the essence of marriage and how to handle marriage-related issues (Facebook, 2023). Through this page, series of programmes are presented and they include but not limited to:

- a. Sex education which usually comes up at 9.00 pm every Sunday,
- b. Awa Obinrin Muslim Part 1-4,
- c. Polygamy,
- d. Courtship in Islam,
- e. Divorce and many others

Hajia Star Lady was prompted to present Islam talk particularly sex education with Islamic perspectives on social media as a result of complaints from married women. She informed that as a result of her engagement in the program she discovered that discussing the sex-related issue is seen as an abomination in Islam while its ignorance by many has created problems in many households which have resulted in extra-marital affairs among men and women (Adesewa, 2023). Aside from uploading recorded programmes and live streaming, short write up and photos for adverts are also uploaded. The handler uses her native language, Yoruba, for her presentation. The page has over 70 followers who are alerted whenever the handler is live, and it attracted over 2,700 likes from different people (Facebook, 2023).

ii. Da'wah Activities on Save Your Soul TV

Save Your Soul TV is a personal blog and an online Islamic Da'wah Facebook page that was created on 30th August, 2017, and is located in Belfast, United Kingdom. The page is managed and handled by a popular acclaimed Muslim preacher, Saheed Shittu, and others. It has multiple administrators and they are permitted to post content, comment, or send messages on the page. The main purpose of the creation of the page was to preach about Islam the way it should be preached (Facebook, 2023). Series of lectures both recorded and live are uploaded on the page. Over 165 photos of different descriptions e.g. “*Baba Adamo ba Islam je, nile Yoruba pelu eri to jina*”, “*Agbalagba onilara oku ipalemo iye pere*” are posted on the page. Likewise, the page has over 150 videos of different programmes both recorded and live streaming. It is observed from the lectures and response of the people that the handler of the page is a controversial Muslim preacher/blogger because of his approach and methodology. The page has over 173,000 followers who are alerted whenever the handler is live, and each post attracts over 700 likes from different people (Facebook, 2023).

iii. Da'wah Activities on Yesaloonaka Facebook page:

This Facebook page was created on 25 August, 2017 for the production and promotion of Da'wah aspect of Islam. The page is managed and handled by an Islamic preacher and Muslim blogger, Mallam Mashood Quadri. It has multiple administrators who are permitted to post content, comment, or send messages on the page. It has over 159,000 followers and 55,000 likes. A Series of lectures and messages both recorded and live streaming are uploaded on the page (Facebook, 2023). It was revealed that the purpose of creating the page has been circumvented because the page has been seen to be for the defense of Shaykh Habibllahi Al-Ilori and *Markazul- ʿulūm Al-Arabiyah wal Islāmiyyah* from the attackers. Examples of the upload in defense of the latter include “*Baba Lagege back to Markaz*”, “*Happy Jumah to you all from Daba Lagege*”, “*Iro ti baba Alawo pamo Shaykh Adam*”, etc. Aside from these, Yesaloonaka presents lectures on some other issues which include: *Burdah* Class 1-6, Islam and Politics among others (Facebook, 2023).

Abuse of Da'wah Activities on Selected Facebook Pages

Since Facebook page inventors do not provide mechanisms to be used to filter the variety of useful and non-useful content primarily related to Da'wah activities, this has led to abuse of Da'wah by the users across the globe. The manners by which Da'wah activities are abused on Facebook pages include:

i. Presentation of wrong Fatāwā:

It is observed that some of the acclaimed Islamic preachers on Facebook pages have no solid background knowledge of Islamic education and are not graduates of a formal Islamic learning institution. However, they frequently offer rulings on certain Islamic issues (*fatwa*) which eventually create conflicts among the Muslim Ummah (Sule & Lawal, 2020).

ii. Character defamation and Assassination:

One of the factors that are responsible for character assassination in *Da'wah* activities on Facebook pages is personal and partisan ego. Religious misunderstanding displayed on Facebook pages is triggered by either personal or organization, where one will not want to be corrected. Scholars with correct and accurate Islamic knowledge on disputed subject matters are attacked and defamed. Facebook pages have been agog with unrestrained criticisms, labeling, counter-criticisms, verbal abuses, slanderous, and libelous comments (Lawal & Dauda). In recent times, character assassination spread on Muslims' owned Facebook pages where Muslim preachers defamed themselves such as the cases of Saheed Shitta, Mall Yusuf Adepoju, Ustaz Jamiu Adegunwa, Yesaloonaka, Jaqmal, Hamzat Okanlomo, and Abu Mardiyah (Oni Iyawo meta) among others. This act of character assassination has resulted in litigation, arrest, and detention among these Islamic callers. Some time ago, Mallam Ahmad Olarewaju Al-Fulani filed a case against Saheed Shittu at Lagos Magistrate Court for character defamation (Facebook, 2023). Mallam Yusuf Adepoju also charged Mallam Mashood Quadri to court which led to his (Mashood) arrest and detention at Ilesha Maximum Prison for some days (Facebook, 2023). It should be noted that the rift between Mallam Yusuf Adepoju (ACADIP) and Mallam Mashood Abdulqadri (Yasaloonaka) was settled and charges against Yasaloonaka were withdrawn from court (Facebook, 2023).

iii. Diversion from Allah's Messages:

The aim and objectives of *Da'wah* are to call Muslims to goodness and invite non-Muslims to Islam. The contents (messages) on Facebook are indeed a diversion that resulted in taking away some Muslim scholars and leaders from performing their religious activities such as preaching pristine Islam, enjoining what is good and discouraging what is wrong. Islam preachers on Facebook pages preoccupy their minds with the creation of content that will attract their followers rather than preaching the real words of Allah and admonitions of the Prophet as enshrined in the glorious Qur'an and hadith of the Prophet. In some cases, focus is on attacking others instead of disseminating Allah's message (Sule & Lawal, 2020). Examples of this are programmes of Saheed Shittu, Yahaya Gambari etc. It is observed that most of Muslim preachers diverted their attention from creating content that will promote Islamic teachings as a result of monetary gains associated with posting on Facebook pages.

iv. Distortion of Facts about Religions

In an attempt to use Facebook, particularly Facebook page as a modern means of communication, interaction, and dissemination of Islamic knowledge, fabricated materials and messages about Islam are frequently posted and uploaded by bloggers. This has resulted in turmoil among people of various religions in different locations around the world. Most of the content created on Facebook pages as means of Interaction, dissemination and communication by Muslim bloggers turned preachers do go against the pure teachings of Islam (Sule & Lawal, 2020).

Effects of Abuse of *Da'wah* activities on Muslim Ummah

- i. Loss of shyness:** The content created on Facebook pages which is as a result of "freedom of speech and expression" has caused several negative tendencies to its users including the Muslims. These tendencies include: the act of engaging in illicit discussion with the opposite sex and description of sex

- organs (Facebook, 2023). For example the Facebook pages of Star Lady Entertainment and Kafila Kaola.
- ii. **Promotion of indecency:** Most of the content presented or uploaded on Facebook pages by the users particularly the bloggers turned Muslim preachers to promoting und encouraging indecency among their followers and audiences, which has exposed many both old and youth to illicit activities like fornication and adultery (Folami, 2020). An example of such on a Facebook page is "stop asking why ladies cry on their wedding days, settling down with one di*k is not easy" from Star Lady Entertainment (Facebook, 2023).
 - iii. **Dissolution of Marriage/Disintegration of Existing Relationship:** Some of the programmes presented by these acclaimed Muslim preachers can affect the relationship between husband and wife. Because it can trigger jealousy between couples if one or the other partner is not conscious of what he/she watches or listen to on some of these pages. Uncontrolled use and listening to some admonitions on Facebook have resulted in the dissolution of a marriage. There are so many cases of households falling apart and eventually leading to divorce due to the wrong education assessed on Facebook pages (Saleh & Mukhtar, 2015).
 - iv. **Radicalization of Young Clerics:** The content presents on some of the Facebook pages have turned some upcoming Islamic scholars, who are to preach the best of manners and forbid the utterances of foul language, into radical clerics. This attitude has created a misconception that portrays Islam as a religion of violence and radicalism (Ali, Budyastomo & Harun, 2021). For instance, the Facebook pages of Save Your Soul TV where Muslims are attacked irrespectively.
 - v. **Promotion of Islamically forbidden Intimacy among followers:** Some of the content posted on Facebook pages promote and encourage un-Islamic activities such as the dating of partners, naughty communication, exchange of messages and extra-marital relations among followers (Shehu, Othman & Osman, 2017). For example, some of the followers of Facebook pages such as Islamic Matchmaking Hub, Halal Matchmaking Hub chat privately to get to know each other. This is done without the knowledge of the handler.

Possible Solutions to the Abuse of Da‘wah Activities on Selected Facebook Pages:

- i. **Involvement of Qualified Islamic Preachers in Da‘wah Activities on Facebook Pages:** Leaving Facebook pages for all comers, particularly the Muslim bloggers turned preachers will be chaotic and it will eventually lead to the promotion of vices in Society rather than virtues which is parts of objectives of *Da‘wah* (Lafiaji, 2022). The trained and qualified *Du‘āt* (callers) need to engage the Facebook pages more in their *Da‘wah* activities to preach pristine teachings of Islam, neutralize and counter false information presented by unscrupulous callers. This will go a long way in putting an end to the unqualified presenter of Islamic messages (Oladimeji & Ajijola, 2012). This is in line with the Qur’anic verse which reads thus:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ
١٠٤

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.

- ii. **Constitution of the Muslim Social Media Watch Group:** The absence of control and regulation of the content on Facebook in particular and social media sites, in general, has opened an avenue for uneducated people to present themselves as scholars and present wrong and misleading *Fatwa* (Oladimeji & Ajijola, 2012). The Muslim Social Media Watch Group, if constituted and given recognition by the Government would monitor *Da'wah* activities on social media networks. This is also based on the above cited verse.

- iii. ***Da'wah* Methodology:** The acclaimed Muslim preachers on Facebook pages should ensure that they acquaint themselves with the methodologies of *Da'wah* in Islam which include but not limited to wisdom, beautiful admonition and establishing argument in best ways, as contained in Quran 16:125.

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجِدِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ
عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْثِدِينَ

Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in the best way. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is (rightly) guided.

- iv. **Avoidance of Character Assassination on Facebook pages:** Character assassination on Facebook pages can be avoided if personal and organizational ego is jettisoned by the parties involved. The Council of Islamic Affairs should endeavor to settle rifts among the Muslim preachers. Allah warns against this cankerworm act which is tantamount to mockery, slandering etc, where He says in Qur'an 49: 11-12

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

O ye who believe! avoid suspicion As much (as possible): for suspicion In some cases is a sin: and spy not on Each other behind their backs. would any of you like to eat the flesh of His dead brother? Nay, ye would abhor it...But fear Allah. for Allah is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.

Conclusion

So far, it has been discovered that a wide range of Islamic knowledge and information can be obtained from Facebook particularly Facebook pages which are pleasantly enabled through the use of the internet. Muslims and non-Muslims are using it for one thing or the others. Services and applications offered by this modern technological site are now efficiently utilized by Muslims to distribute, disseminate and increase the level of understanding of Islamic knowledge. However, the misuse of this modern means of information dissemination by unqualified Muslim preachers has created negative implications for the unconscious Muslims and *Da'wah* itself. *Da'wah*, Facebook and Facebook pages, and *Da'wah* activities on Facebook pages have been discussed. The abuses of *Da'wah* activities on Facebook pages have been discussed to include the presentation of the wrong *Fatwa*, character defamation and assassination, diversion from Allah's messages, and distortion of facts about religion. The implications of these abuses of *Da'wah* activities on Facebook pages were also examined to include loss of shyness, promotion of indecency, dissolution of marriage and disintegration of existing relationships, the radicalization of young clerics, and Promotion of Islamically forbidden intimacy among followers. Possible solutions were proffered among which are the involvement of qualified Islamic preachers, the constitution of the Muslim Social Media Watch Group, following *Da'wah* methodology and eradication of character assassination on Facebook pages.

Recommendations

In line with the above discussion, this paper is strongly recommending that:

- i. Muslim preachers should exemplify the Islamic teachings and ethics of communication by not uploading or presenting abusive contents that go against religious virtues.
- ii. Islamic ethical values as alternative dispute resolution should be applied in ameliorating enmity among the Muslim preachers.
- iii. The Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs should look into the formation of committee to certify online Muslim preachers as well as coordinate the affairs of the Muslims online.
- iv. The Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs should organize training for Young Muslim preachers on *Da'wah* presentation and methodology.
- v. Qualified and trained young preachers should be focused and more interested in *Da'wah* related issues than other social issues which have no positive impacts on the religious activities of Muslims.
- vi. Equally, Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (SCIA) should sponsor a bill through the National Assembly for the constitution of the Muslim Social Media Watch Group to regulate, monitor, and filter *Da'wah* content on Facebook pages and other platforms. This group can be affiliated with the Ministry of Information and Communication or be independent with government support and recognition.
- vii. The Federal Government of Nigeria should eradicate character defamation through the enforcement of the bill for establishment of a National Commission for the Prohibition of Hate speech was sponsored by the Senate Deputy Chief Whip, Aliyu Sabi Abdullahi in 2018.

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