Online Da'wah and Social Media Misuse:
Implications for Intra-Religious Peaceful Coexistence

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Abstract: The article examines the implications of social media misuse by Yoruba Muslim preachers (du'āt) on intra-religious peaceful coexistence. The research aims to highlight how the irresponsible use of online platforms by these preachers has led to increased hostility and division within the Muslim community. The study emphasizes the importance of adhering to Islamic principles that promote unity, tolerance, and mutual respect when conducting da'wah (religious outreach) online. To achieve this, the researchers used a descriptive survey design to analyze the social media activities of Yoruba, Nigeria du'āt. The study reveals that some preachers have engaged in behavior contrary to Islamic teachings, such as spreading misinformation, hate speech, and engaging in personal attacks. This misuse of social media has caused polarization, mistrust, and even led to legal actions, further harming the peaceful coexistence of the Muslim community. The paper concludes that du'āt must practice responsible and ethical online da'wah that aligns with Islamic values, particularly those that foster harmony and peaceful coexistence. The research calls for a return to the core principles of Islamic law to mitigate the negative effects of social media misuse.

*Keywords: **Online Da'wah; Peaceful Coexistence; Social Media Misuse; Yorubaland Nigeria***

Abstrak: Artikel ini meneliti dampak penyalahgunaan media sosial oleh para pendakwah Muslim Yoruba Nigeria terhadap kehidupan damai dalam komunitas agama. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyoroti bagaimana penggunaan platform online yang tidak bertanggung jawab oleh para pendakwah tersebut telah meningkatkan permusuhan dan perpecahan di dalam komunitas Muslim. Studi ini menekankan pentingnya mematuhi prinsip-prinsip Islam yang mendorong persatuan, toleransi, dan saling menghormati saat melakukan dakwah secara online. Untuk mencapai tujuan ini, peneliti menggunakan desain survei deskriptif untuk menganalisis aktivitas media sosial dari para pendakwah Yoruba. Hasil

penelitian menunjukkan bahwa beberapa pendakwah terlibat dalam perilaku yang bertentangan dengan ajaran Islam, seperti menyebarkan informasi yang salah, ujaran kebencian, dan serangan pribadi. Penyalahgunaan media sosial ini telah menyebabkan polarisasi, ketidakpercayaan, dan bahkan memicu tindakan hukum, yang semakin merusak kehidupan damai di kalangan komunitas Muslim. Artikel ini menyimpulkan bahwa para pendakwah harus menjalankan dakwah online dengan cara yang bertanggung jawab dan etis, sesuai dengan nilai-nilai Islam, terutama yang mendorong keharmonisan dan kehidupan damai. Penelitian ini menyerukan kembalinya ke prinsip-prinsip dasar hukum Islam untuk mengurangi dampak negatif dari penyalahgunaan media sosial.

Kata kunci*; **Dakwah Online; Hidup Berdampingan secara Damai; Penyalahgunaan Media Sosial; Yorubaland Nigeria***

INTRODUCTION

Da'wah, which literally and technically refers to the invitation to Islām or calling to the obedience to and worship of Allāh (SWT), has evolved significantly with the advent of the internet. The internet has provided new avenues for *da'wah*, allowing for a wider reach and more diverse methods of spreading Islamic teachings[1]. Through the internet, Shan-A-Alahi and Nazmul Huda argued that numerous online platforms such as websites, blogs and forums, wide range of online lectures and courses, digital media such as podcasts and YouTube videos, online communities, as well as social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter (now X platform), TikTok, and Instagram, have emerged thereby making it possible for individuals to share their beliefs, engage in discussions, disseminate Islamic teachings, and raise awareness about various issues and misconceptions related to Islām[2].

The emergence of social media as a digital technology has transformed how individuals communicate and exchange information online. Social media has become the twenty-first century's most powerful online communication tool.[3]. Its

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[1] Asma Fida, "Digital Dawah: The Impact of Social Media on Young Muslims", April 29, 2024, https://alquranclasses.com/digital-dawah-impact-social-media-young-muslims/.

[2] Ahmed Shan-A-Alahi, and Muhammad Nazmul Huda, "Role of Information Technology on Preaching Islam (Da'wah)," American International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences 17, no. 1 (2017): 1–5, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337972146_Role_of_Information_Technology_on_Preaching_Islam_Da%27wah.

[3] Desi Dwi Priyanti, Ika Rizki Yustisia, and Naqiyah Afifah Mulachelah, "The Transformation of Digital Technology: Its Impact on Human Communication," (eds.) (2023), Zambales, Philippines: FSH-PH Publications, https://fsh-publication.com/public.

various platforms and applications have allowed the audience to produce, share, and engage with information in a virtual social environment. The digital platforms have also allowed users to engage in real-time conversations, exchange photographs and videos, express their opinions, and stay up-to-date on current events and trends. [4] Through social media, people and audiences who were previously inaccessible now have access to information, the barrier between the originator and the recipient of a message is reduced, and speedy discussions and easy information transfer are promoted. Overall, using social media platforms has altered the global communication landscape.[5]

Social media has revolutionized the communication process and enhanced the availability, accessibility, and dissemination of political, economic, and socio-cultural information.[6]. As of 2019, there were 3.2 billion social media users worldwide, but by 2023, social media users have exponentially increased to 4.80 billion, accounting for roughly 60% of the world's population.[7]. In 2024, over five billion people are using social media worldwide, a number projected to increase to over six billion in 2028[8]. This demonstrates how digital media is increasingly prevalent in people's daily lives and interactions.

As argued by Dollarhide[9] Social media is a catch-all phrase used to describe various technologies that facilitate the sharing of ideas and information among their users, allow people to generate and transmit content, and connect with and engage with others. It has become one of the primary places for

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[4] Kazeem Oluwaseun Dauda, "Social Media Revolution and Trends of Da'wah Propagation in Ijebuland, Ogun State, Nigeria: An Empirical Survey", Islamic Communication Journal 8, no. 2 (2023): 171–186, https://doi.org/10.21580/icj.2023.8.2.18104.

[5] The Education Magazine, "How Social Media affects Communication?", 2023, https://www.theeducationmagazine.com/word-art/social-media-affects-communication/.

[6] University Canada West, "How has Social Media emerged as a Powerful Communication Medium?", April 25, 2023, https://www.ucanwest.ca/blog/media-communication/how-has-social-media-emerged-as-a-powerful-communication-medium/.

[7] Data Reportal, "Global Social Media Statistics", 2023, https://datareportal.com/social-media-users/.

[8] Stacy Jo Dixon, "Number of Global Social Network Users 2017–2028", Statista, May 17, 2024, https://www.statista.com/statistics/278414/number-of-worldwide-social-network-users/.

[9] Maya Dollarhide, "Social Media: Definition, Importance, Top Websites & Apps", February 23, 2024, https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/social-media.asp.

individuals to receive information, and it allows people to communicate and convey information in the form of photographs, videos, and audio, regardless of distance.[10]. Alawiye and Paramole[11] Quoting Muhammad (2015), averred that social media is a way for people to participate in virtual communities and networks by creating, sharing, and exchanging information and ideas. It is a web-based tool that facilitates the exchange of user-generated content. The influence of social media is becoming more sophisticated, glamorous, and powerful as it steadily transforms society, making it more complex than the traditional media system.[12].

Lawal and Dauda[13] Explained *Da'wah* to mean the summons made by Allāh (SWT) through His Prophets and Messengers to every individual Muslim and the *ummah* (Muslim Community as a whole) to warn them of God's punishment for disbelieving and to bring them good news of the benefits for ultimate surrender to His will. Umar[14] He described *Da'wah* as the process of propagating Islamic teachings and practices by Du'āt, as well as a means for Muslims to understand their religious practices and non-Muslims to be drawn to the beauty of Islām. He claimed further that *Da'wah* involves both a call from man to Allāh (SWT) and a call from man to man since the invitation of *Da'wah* is extended to both Muslims and unbelievers.

As Nazir Zargar has pointed out, *Da'wah* is the missionary activity and the fundamental purpose of the Prophetic mission. Prophet Muḥammad (SAAW) invited people with wisdom and eloquent preaching and argued with other

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[10] Lateef Omotosho Adegboyega, "Influence of Social Media on the Social Behavior of Students as Viewed by Primary School Teachers in Kwara State, Nigeria," Mimbar Sekolah Dasar 7, no. 1 (2020): 43–53, https://doi.org/10.17509/mimbar-sd.v7i1.23479.

[11] Adegoke Naheem Alawiye, and Kabir Olawale Paramole, "Abuse of Social Media by selected Yoruba Muslim Preachers and its implication for Muslim Ummah in Lagos State", Religions' Educator 20, no. 1 (2022): 72–93, https://ixtheo.de/Record/1851403388.

[12] Marwan Walid Mohammad Al-Quran, "Traditional Media Versus Social Media: Challenges and Opportunities", Technium 4, no. 10 (2022): 145–160, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/366177022_Traditional_media_versus_social_media_challenges_and_opportunities/fulltext/6394bc9911e9f00cda3578ce/Traditional-media-versus-social-media-challenges-and-opportunities.pdf.

[13] Manzoor Apena Lawal, and Kazeem Oluwaseun Dauda, "Islam, Social Media and the fallacy of Religious Proselytisation in Yorubaland", Religions' Educator 20, no. 1 (2022): 232–241, https://ixtheo.de/Record/1851403132.

[14] Kabiru Adam Umar, "Mass Media as Essential Instrument for Da'wah (Islamic Propagation)" Journal of Humanities and Social Science 19, no. 6 (2019): 204–322, https://www.hummingbirdpubng.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/HUJHSS_204-211.pdf.

religious preachers in the best and most gracious ways, as enjoined in Al-Qur'ān 16:125. In this verse, three basic principles of *Da'wah* are identified, serving as a guide to Islamic preachers. They include, *ḥikmah*, *maw'idhati al-ḥasanah*, and *jādl billatīy hiya aḥsan*. Da'wah in Islām depends upon a clear understanding of these approaches.[15]. However, *Da'wah* serves as a means of inviting non-Muslims and educating individual Muslims about the teachings of Islām. It allows Muslims to convey their faith's values, principles, and beliefs to those who may not be aware of or have misconceptions about it. In other words, one can address misconceptions and promote accurate knowledge regarding Islām through da'wah. *Da'wah* also plays a pivotal role in establishing positive relationships and fostering understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims. Individuals can build bridges of mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance by engaging in dialogue, contributing to a more harmonious and inclusive society.[16].

Online *Da'wah* or, electronic *Da'wah* (e-*Da'wah*), or digital *Da'wah*, is one of the categories of *Da'wah* involving the practice of spreading Islamic teachings and principles through the internet. It involves using various online platforms, such as social media, forums, websites, and online communities, to educate and engage people in discussions about Islam. Online *Da'wah* is a digital missionary work that promotes understanding, tolerance, and acceptance of Islamic beliefs and practices. Online *Da'wah* often involves sharing articles, videos, and other educational content that explains Islamic principles, responds to common misconceptions, and provides resources for those interested in learning more about the religion. The rise of the internet and social media has made it

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[15] Nazir Ahmad Zargar, "Da'wah of Islam: A Study of its Ways and Means", AFKĀR Journal of Islamic & Religious Studies 7, no. 2 (December 2023): 1–16, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Nazir-Zargar-2/publication/378852776_Da'wah_of_Islam_A_Study_of_its_Ways_and_Means/links/65ed83ebb7819b433bf2aee3/Dawah-of-Islam-A-Study-of-its-Ways-and-Means.pdf.
[16] Bello Ali, "Da'wah in Islam: Core Tenets and Contemporary Challenges", The Faces of Islam: International Conference of Bkmt and As-Syafiiyah Islamic University, Jakarta, February 20, 2023, 494–515, https://uia.e-journal.id/proceeding/article/download/3397/1659/.

easier for individuals and organizations to reach a wider audience and share their religious beliefs.[17]

The adoption of social media for *Da'wah* has gained momentum in recent years. Social media has recently become a powerful instrument that has dominated the spread of *Da'wah* globally. Muslim leaders, preachers, and organizations, as well as individual Muslims, have embraced social media channels to propagate and disseminate Islamic teachings as well as acquire relevant knowledge and information about Islām.[18] Since the social mediatisation of *Da'wah* is constantly evolving, there are scanty existing studies in this regard. Such studies have explored social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube as tools for *Da'wah* initiatives. A study by Tarequl Islam[19] They demonstrated that in the case of *Da'wah*, all prophets did not utilize the same tools and procedures but rather employed distinct methods and techniques dependent on their context and situation.

In this modern age of technological advancement, social media platforms such as Facebook, X, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Skype, WhatsApp, IMO, Telegram, Zoom, among others, have become practical tools and more adaptive means of spreading Islamic teachings anywhere in the world than traditional modes of communication.[20] According to Ibahrine[21], social media has become an

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[17] Muhamad Faisal Asha'ari, Abdul Ghafar Don, Razaleigh Muhamat, Salasiah Hanin Hamjah, et al., "The Model of Online Al-Dacwah Al-Fardiyyah: A Hybrid Model of Doing Al-Dacwah on the Internet", Advances in Natural and Applied Sciences 6, no. 4 (2012): 511–520, https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/32880879/The_Model_of_Online_Al-Da%60wah_Al-Fardiyyah_A_Hybrid_Model-libre.pdf.

[18] Imran Khan Keerio, Krishan Kumar Luhana, and Asadullah Shah, "Understanding the Impact of Promoting Da'wah Using Social Media Platforms among Pakistani Muslims," Al-Kashaf: Research Journal for Social Sciences (Miscellaneous) 3, no. 3 (2023): 1–14, https://www.researchgate.net/ publication/379268118_Understanding_the_Impact_of_Promoting_Da%27wah_Using_Social_Media_Platforms_Among_Pakistani_Muslims.

[19] Muhammad Tarequl Islam, "The impact of social media on Muslim society: From an Islamic perspective," International Journal of Social and Humanities Sciences (IJSHS) 3, no. 3 (2019): 95–114, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338533726_THE_IMPACT_OF_SOCIAL_MEDIA_ON_MUSLIM_SOCIETY_FROM_ISLAMIC_PERSPECTIVE.

[20] Muhammad Fachran Haikal, and Muhammad Faizul Akbar Surbakti, "Utilization of Management in Disseminating Da'wah using Social Media", World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews 17, no. 1 (2023): 1271–1274, https://wjarr.com/sites/default/files/WJARR-2023-0208.pdf.

[21] Mohammed Ibahrine, "Islam and Social Media", 2014, https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2014/10/28/islam-and-social-media/.

excellent tool for promoting the path of *Da'wah* through sharing Islamic views and values to the target audience. Through social media, *Da'wah* can reach millions of people who would not have been reached through traditional means. Platforms like Facebook, X, Instagram, and YouTube provide unique opportunities for Muslims to share Islamic knowledge, engage in dialogue, and dispel misconceptions about Islām.[22]. Sule and Lawal[23] noted that social media can be used to spread Islamic lectures, inspirational Islamic stories, video clips of religious songs, wise sayings, and interpretations of the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*.

Qayyum and Mahmood[24] argued that social media provides a tremendous opportunity to reach out to people unfamiliar with Islām or Muslims. Proselytisation by Islamic preachers is a significant use of social media in Islām. Regular Muslims utilize social media to communicate with one another. In the Muslim world, social media expands learning chances. Muslims use social media to share Quranic passages and *Aḥādīth*, attend lectures given by Islamic scholars and possibly contact them if necessary. Muslims and non-Muslims can hear and watch sermons based on Islamic teachings through social media.

Ibahrine[25] While explaining the impact of social media on religious proselytization (*Da'wah*), they maintained that social media platforms are widely prevalent among contemporary Islamic preachers. At the same time, some deceased scholars have social media accounts in their names, and others have taken social media to be their new Mosque or madrasa (i.e., a place where they could learn about Islamic belief and practice). The scholar stated further that

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[22] Kazeem Dauda, "Social Media Revolution and Trends of Da'wah Propagation in Ijebuland, Ogun State, Nigeria: An Empirical Survey".

[23] Muhammad Maga Sule, and Abdulkareem Lawal, "Social Media and its Utilisation for Da'wah by selected Muslim Scholars in Northern Nigeria", Al-Risalah 13, no. 1 (2022): 132–156, https://doi.org/10.34005/alrisalah.v13i1.1761.

[24] Abdul Qayyum, and Zaid Mahmood, "Role of Social Media in the light of Islamic Teaching", Al-Qalam, (2015): 27–36, http://www.documents.pk/file/Punjab%20University%20(PU)%20-%20ROLE%20OF%20SOCIAL%20MEDIA%20IN%20THE%20LIGHT%20OF%20ISLAMIC%20TEACHING%20by%20Dr.%20Abdul%20Qayyum,%20Zaid%20Mahmood.pdf.

[25] Mohammed Ibahrine, "Islam and Social Media", 2014.

religious leaders and du'āt do not only use social media; regular Muslims equally tweet and post Hadīth (prophetic sayings) and verses from the Qur'ān. Religious contents typically often reach its height during Ramadān in the form of tweets and posts. In addition, some Hajj pilgrims, throughout their Makkah trips, tweet feeds on Twitter and post and upload pictures and videos on Facebook and Instagram to give their families and other Muslims a sense of spirituality. The way the Islamic faith is spread among Muslims and non-Muslims has been altered by the social media revolution. Mohsin Jafri[26] They were submitted that digital media provides additional opportunities for Islamic groups to carry out *Da'wah*. Traditional media, he claims, makes it impossible to spread true Islām. Thus, social media is preferable due to its open platform, open communication, and rich content. The scholar concluded that social media has aided Muslim scholars in their attempts to spread the valid message of Islām. Shehu, Othman, and Osman[27] Notes that Islām accepts social media but encourages Muslims to avoid behaviors that contradict Islamic beliefs. According to these scholars, the opportunities provided by social media are enormously positive. Still, they may also have terrible consequences if not properly utilized and regulated, thereby posing risks to Islām and the Muslim world. When used appropriately by the principles contained in *Sharī'ah*, social media has a significant positive impact on Islām; it helps spread the cause of Allāh (SWT), which could improve the condition of humanity and helps minimize vices in society.

Lawal and Dauda[28] In their analysis of how some Islamic preachers in Yorubaland have utilized social media to promote religious proselytization established that social media have been exploited to propagate Islām through uploading of offline and live stream public lectures, Jumu'at *khutbah* (every

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[26] Mohsin Jafri, "Islamic Propagation in the Age of New Media", May 12, 2016, https://www.aimIslam.com/Islamic-propagation-in-the-age-of-new-media/.

[27] Mohammed Isah Shehu, Muhammad Fuad Bin Othman, and Nazariah Binti Osman, "The Social Media and Islam", Sahel Analyst: Journal of Management Sciences 15, no. 4 (2017): 67–80, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mohammed-I-S/publication/323546940_THE_SOCIAL_MEDIA_AND_ISLAM/links/5a9c028e45851586a2ae1912/THE-SOCIAL-MEDIA-AND-ISLAM.pdf.

[28] Manzoor Lawal, and Kazeem Dauda, "Islam, Social Media and the Fallacy of Religious Proselytisation in Yorubaland".

Friday sermon) and inter-religious debates on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Sule and Lawal's study[29] They established that Muslim scholars find it convenient to offer their teachings electronically and to upload videos and audio of their lectures on various social media platforms. *Da'wah*, through social media, unlike conventional media, allows face-to-face contact between the du'āt and the audience. Du'āt delivers the *Da'wah* message to their target audience via social media outlets, such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, Zoom, and Telegram.

However, while social media platforms provide a convenient and wide-reaching platform for sharing knowledge and promoting religious values, there are potential risks associated with its misuse. Social media misuse refers to the inappropriate or harmful use of social media platforms, which often manifests in various forms, including cyberbullying, spreading false information or rumors, promoting hate speech or discrimination, privacy violations, harassment, and online scams. However, the constant misuse of this digital platform for *Da'wah* remains a concern to scholars. In their study, Qayyum and Mahmood[30]."

Identified some harmful usage of social media, such as promoting crudity and sloppy comments, character assassination, and hate speech, all of which are prohibited in Islām. These scholars, however, urged using social media for constructive purposes, as advocated by the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

In Yorubaland, recent trends point to the unfortunate incidents of social media abuse among some Muslim preachers. Existing studies have established how those preachers have misused social media in the course of religious propagation, despite the significant efforts made by notable Islamic scholars and leaders to spread the religion and win the hearts of many unbelievers to the fold of

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[29] Muhammad Maga Sule, and Abdulkareem Lawal, "Social Media and its Utilisation for Da'wah by selected Muslim Scholars in Northern Nigeria".
[30] Abdul Qayyum, and Zaid Mahmood, "Role of Social Media in the light of Islamic Teaching

Islām by employing various strategies. For instance, Lawal and Dauda[31] They observed that some Yoruba Muslim du'āt have not maintained decorum, balanced, and methodological preaching over the years in their da'wah engagement. They concluded that these preachers' *Da'wah* practice did not follow the instructions of Allāh (SWT) and His noble Messenger (SAW). However, they may have wisdom and knowledge but lack fair preaching and could not convey their messages in a way that is better than divinely instructed. Most also lack patience, persuasion, perseverance, and humility during proselytization.

Equally, Alawiye and Paramole[32]." In their examination of various cases of abuse of social media by selected Yoruba Muslim preachers and its implications for the Muslim ummah in Lagos State, they posited that Yoruba Muslim preachers misuse social media by misrepresenting Islam as a result of a lack of knowledge by verbally abusing rival scholars without restraint, by reacting to unverified information, and by using social media without restraint to pursue personal fame and favor. According to these scholars, the effects of social media abuse include a poor representation of Islām among non-Muslims, the abolition of Muslim brotherhood and unity, a rise in theological disagreements among Muslims, a deterioration of the Muslim faith, and the emergence of social conflicts among Muslims.

A similar observation was raised in Kolawole and Hashim's study[33]. These scholars were miffed at how social media misinformation was promoted among religious adherents in Lagos State. It is noted that there has been malicious information spread with the help of social media outlets among religious adherents in the state, which includes character assassination, wrong thinking, and idleness due to monetary or material gains, and this has invariably led to breaking

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[31] Manzoor Apena Lawal, and Kazeem Oluwaseun Dauda, "Islam, Social Media and the Fallacy of Religious Proselytisation in Yorubaland".
[32] Adegoke Alawiye, and Kabir Paramole, "Abuse of Social Media by selected Yoruba Muslim Preachers and its Implication for Muslim Ummah in Lagos State
[33] Hakeem Adeyinka Kolawole, and Olanrewaju Shuarau Hashim, "Social Media Misinformation among Religious Adherents in Lagos State: Islamic Recipe", Religions' Educator 20, no. 1 (2022): 135–146, https://ixtheo.de/Record/1851403345.

of tie, grudges, hostility, retaliation, and physical confrontation, all which contradict the teachings of Islām on peaceful coexistence.

The preceding reveals that none of the reviewed literature specifically looks into the implications of social media misuse for intra-religious peaceful coexistence in Nigeria, let alone the Yorubaland. It then suggests some Islamic preachers in this part of the world have used social media in violation of the divine directives on *Da'wah* methodology as stipulated in the glorious Qur'ān (AnNahl 16:125), and exemplified by Prophet Muhammad (SAAW) in his divine mission to spread the message of monotheism to the people to bring them out of darkness (*kufr*) into the light (Islām). The preceding situation calls for urgent attention from all stakeholders and timely interrogation for possible conflict prevention, resolution, and peaceful coexistence.

This paper argues that promoting peaceful coexistence among the diverse groups or sects in Islām is essential. Intra-religious peaceful coexistence describes the harmonious coexistence of different groups within a religious community. Achieving this requires acknowledging and appreciating the diversity within the Muslim ummah. This involves recognizing that different interpretations and practices can coexist without undermining the unity and common values Muslims share. To foster intra-religious peaceful coexistence, dialogue, and open communication are vital. Hence, it is necessary to engage in respectful conversations, exchange ideas, and seek common ground to bridge gaps in understanding. This allows for a deeper appreciation of the various perspectives within the religious community and promotes tolerance and mutual respect.[34]

Religious leaders, scholars, and individual Muslims play a crucial role in promoting intra-religious peaceful coexistence. Muslims can create an atmosphere

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[34] Kabuye Uthman Sulaiman, "An Islamic Perspective on Peaceful Coexistence", European Journal of Theology and Philosophy 1, no. 5 (2021): 29–43, http://dx.doi.org/10.24018/theology.2021.1.5.50.

of unity, harmony, and cooperation by promoting inclusivity, encouraging dialogue, and actively addressing conflicts or divisions. Furthermore, realizing that while there may be differences, there are also shared values and goals that can help foster intra-religious peaceful coexistence in Islām. Islamic principles of love, compassion, justice, and peace should be able to unite the diverse groups in Islām and strengthen their bond. Therefore, intra-religious peaceful coexistence requires dialogue, understanding, and appreciation of diversity among Muslims, recognizing common values, addressing conflicts, fostering inclusivity, and promoting unity among the existing different groups or sects in Islām.[35]

Meanwhile, prior research has concentrated chiefly on the positive and harmful use of social media platforms for *da'wah*. Few such research examined the effects of Islamic preachers abusing social media on *Da'wah* practices. None of these studies, however, have considered investigating the effects of online *Da'wah* through social media misuse on intra-religious peaceful coexistence in Nigeria, let alone Yorubaland. This is the scholarly gap that this study aims to fill. The specific objectives of this paper were to: 1) Highlight the forms of social media misuse in the course of *da'wah* engagement by Yoruba du'āt; 2) Identify the causes of social media misuse by Yoruba du'āt, and 3) Outline the effects of social media misuse on intra-religious peaceful coexistence among Muslims in Yorubaland.

To achieve the aforementioned objectives, this paper is structured into five sections. The first part covered the introductory segment; the second section focused on the literature review. The third section concentrated on research methodology. The fourth section was concerned with results and discussion, while the conclusion formed the last section of the paper. This research is crucial because it significantly advances the body of knowledge in the fields of Islamic Studies as well as Peace and Conflict Studies. The study also benefits Islamic

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[35] VaffiFoday Sheriff, "The Concept of Peaceful Co-Existence in Islamic Theology: Lessons for the Muslim Youths in Nigeria", Journal of Islam in Nigeria 3 no. 2 (2018): 228–239, https://iwf.com.ng/journal/vol_3_no_2/the_concept_peaceful_co_existence_in_islamic _theology_lessons_for_the_muslim_youths_in_nigeria.pdf.

leaders, preachers, academics, Muslim organizations, and peace advocates since it examines the implications of social media misuse for intra-religious peaceful coexistence and how to use digital technology effectively and efficiently for *da'wah* activities.

METHOD

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. This design combines qualitative and quantitative data to examine the implications of social media misuse by Muslim preachers for intra-religious peaceful coexistence within the Yoruba communities. The population of the study was made up of all Muslims in Yorubaland. Yorubaland constitutes the states that are currently occupying the South-West geo-political zone, comprising Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo and Lagos states, as well as a substantial part of Kwara, Kogi and Dahomey. Since the researcher could not find accurate figures on the population distribution according to religion, all literate adult Muslims were considered for this study. However, due to the large size of the population, fifty (50) respondents each were purposively selected from the nine (9) states/areas. This implies that 450 served as the sample size for the study. A validated questionnaire with closed-ended items designed in line with Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), was used as an instrument of data collection. The copies of questionnaires were administered using Google digital form. The collected data were analyzed using simple percentage statistics and frequency distribution tables. A personal observation technique was also adopted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section concerns the presentation, analysis, and discussion of the results collected through the administered questionnaire. Out of 450 copies of the administered questionnaire, four hundred and fifteen (415) were valid for

statistical analysis, covering 92 percent of the sample size. The collected data were presented using frequency distribution tables based on the three identified research objectives.

The analysis of the first objective, which sought to highlight the forms of social media misuse in the course of *Da'wah* engagement by some Yoruba Du'āt, is presented in the table below.

Table 1. Forms of Social Media Misuse by some Yoruba Du'āt

ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
Spread of misinformation or rumors.	219 (52.8%)	161 (38.8%)	24 (5.8%)	11 (2.7%)
Hate speech & name-calling.	258 (62.2%)	128 (30.8%)	16 (3.9%)	13 (3.1%)
Harassment, intimidation or humiliation.	227 (54.7%)	144 (34.7%)	20 (4.8%)	24 (5.8%)
Condemnation of fellow Muslims.	226 (54.5%)	139 (33.5%)	18 (4.3%)	32 (7.7%)
Declaring fellow Muslims as unbelievers.	231 (55.7%)	127 (30.6%)	19 (4.6%)	38 (9.2%)
Defamation of character.	218 (52.5%)	133 (32%)	28 (6.7%)	36 (8.7%)

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 1 presents the analysis of the respondents' responses on the forms of social media misuse by some Yoruba du'āt. It reveals that out of the total respondents, 91.6% agreed that misinformation is one of the forms of social media misuse perpetrated by those preachers, while 8.4% disagreed. Also, 93% thought that hate speech was exhibited as a form of social media misuse by the preachers, but 7% thought otherwise. While 88% agreed with name-calling, 10% disagreed, 88% agreed with condemnation of fellow Muslims, and 12% disagreed. Equally, over 86% of respondents believed that some Yoruba Muslim du'āt declared some fellow Muslims as unbelievers, while little over 13% believed otherwise. Little above 84% of the total respondents agreed on defamation of character as a form of social media misuse by some Yoruba Muslim preachers, 15.4% declared otherwise. The implication of the preceding results is that misinformation, hate speech, name-calling, condemning fellow Muslims, declaring fellow Muslims as

unbelievers, and character defamation were considered forms of social media misuse committed by some Yoruba Muslim preachers in the course of *Da'wah* engagement. This finding is in tandem with the observations earlier made by Qayyum & Mahmood (2015), Alawiye & Paramole (2022), Kolawole & Hashim (2022), and Lawal & Dauda (2022).

The analysis of the second objective, which sought to identify the causes of social media misuse by some du'āt in Yorubaland, is presented in the table below.

Table 2. Causes of Social Media Misuse by Some Yoruba Du'āt

ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
Inadequate knowledge about *Da'wah* propagation.	196 (47.2%)	135 (32.5%)	33 (8%)	51 (12.3%)
Clash of interests among different religious sects/ denominations.	212 (51.1%)	129 (31.1%)	28 (6.7%)	46 (11.1%)
Rivalry among the Muslim leaders/ scholars.	228 (55%)	106 (25.5%)	34 (8.2%)	47 (11.3%)
Reaction to unverified information.	243 (58.6%)	122 (29.4%)	20 (4.8%)	30 (7.2%)
Personal fame and patronage.	238 (57.3%)	118 (28.4%)	22 (5.3%)	37 (8.9%)
Hatred and envy.	230 (55.4%)	127 (30.6%)	24 (5.8%)	34 (8.2%)
Misunderstanding.	241 (58.1%)	125 (30.1%)	21 (5.1%)	28 (6.7%)

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 2 presents the analysis of the respondents' responses on the causes of social media misuse by some Yoruba du'āt. It reveals that out of the total respondents, 89.7% agreed that inadequate knowledge about *Da'wah* propagation is one of the causes of social media misuse by Muslim preachers, and 20.3% disagreed. Also, a little above 82% believed in the clash of interests among different religious sects/denominations as the cause of social media misuse, but 18% believed otherwise. Whereas 80.5% of respondents agreed that rivalry among Muslim leaders/scholars is the cause, 88% agreed with reaction to unverified information, 19.5%, and 12% disagreed respectively. Moreover, over 85% of the respondents agreed with personal fame and patronage, and 14%

disagreed. Over 85% of respondents believed that hatred and envy are one of the causes, but over 14% believed otherwise. Above all, 88.2% agreed with misunderstanding, but 11.8% declared otherwise. The preceding results imply that inadequate knowledge about *Da'wah* propagation, clash of interests among different religious sects/denominations, reaction to unverified information, personal fame, and patronage, hatred, and envy, and misunderstanding were considered causes of social media misuse by some Yoruba Muslim preachers. This finding is by the extant investigation conducted by Alawiye & Paramole (2022), and Kolawole & Hashim (2022).

The analysis of the third objective, which sought to outline the effects of social media misuse by some Yoruba du'āt on intra-religious peaceful coexistence, is presented in the table below.

Table 3. Effects of Social Media Misuse by Some Yoruba Du'āt on Intra-Religious Peaceful Coexistence

ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
Constant hostility and confrontation.	256 (61.7%)	114 (27.5%)	19 (4.6%)	26 (6.3%)
Polarisation among religious sects.	230 (55.4%)	128 (30.8%)	17 (4.2%)	40 (9.6%)
Growing mistrust among Muslims.	241 (58.1%)	125 (30.1%)	22 (5.3%)	27 (6.5%)
Tension, fear and intimidation.	262 (63.1%)	109 (26.3%)	25 (6%)	19 (4.6%)
Intra-religious conflicts.	226 (54.5%)	105 (25.3%)	34 (8.2%)	50 (12%)
Islamophobia (fear of Islām & Muslims)	254 (61.2%)	127 (30.6%)	11 (2.7%)	23 (5.5%)
Online radicalization and extremist ideologies.	219 (52.8%)	109 (26.2%)	36 (8.7%)	51 (12.3%)
Arrest and detention.	198 (47.7%)	73 (17.6%)	60 (14.5%)	84 (20.2%)

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 3 presents the analysis of the respondents' responses on the effects of social media misuse by some Yoruba du'āt on intra-religious peaceful coexistence. It reveals that the majority of the respondents (89.2%) identified constant hostility and confrontation, 10.9% disagreed; 86.2% believed that social

media misuse by Muslim preachers widens disunity among religious sects, while 13.8% believed otherwise; 88.2% identified growing mistrust among Muslims while 11.8% disagreed. Also, 89.4% supported that misuse aggravates tensions, fear, and intimidation, and 10.6% disagreed. Whereas 79.8% believed such misuse promotes intra-religious conflicts, 20.2% believed otherwise. As much as 91.8% insisted that social media misuse intensifies Islamophobia (fear of Islām and Muslims). But 8.2% disagreed. Moreover, 79% of the total respondents agreed that such abuse has led to the spread of online radicalization and extremist ideologies, and 21% disagreed. Above all, little over 65% agreed with arrest and detention, but 34.7% disagreed.

The foregoing findings imply that Yoruba Muslim preachers' misuse of social media has resulted in constant hostility and confrontation, disunity among religious sects, mistrust among Muslims, tensions among respective preachers' followers, intra-religious conflicts, Islamophobia (fear of Islām and Muslims), physical attacks and counter-attacks, and arrest and detention. It was also observed that while early Islamic scholars who spread Islām to the general public advocated strongly for religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence, contemporary *Da'wah* propagators have little to no consideration for these critical components. As a result, non-Muslims begin to question Islamic scholars' understanding of *Da'wah* propagation, the feasibility of their messages, and even the degree of religious tolerance in Islām.

CONCLUSION

The preceding analysis of the misuse of social media by some Yoruba du'āt in the course of *Da'wah* propagation reveals that those du'āt have failed to strictly adhere to certain Islamic ethics and principles that seek to ensure responsible and effective *Da'wah* operations capable of promoting peaceful coexistence. *Da'wah* is expected to be conducted by the divine instruction on *Da'wah* methodology as outlined in the Glorious Qur'ān thus: *Invite (mankind, O Muhammad) to the Way*

of your Lord (i.e., Islām) with wisdom and fair preaching, and argue with them better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided (Qur'ān 16:125).

The above Quranic verse enjoins *Da'wah* practitioners to possess such qualities as wisdom (*ḥikmah*), fair preaching (*maw'izati al-ḥasanat*), and conveying the message of Islām in a better way (*al-jidāl bil-latī hiya aḥsan*). Traditions exemplified by Prophet Muḥammad (SAAW) equally emphasize that every dā'i possesses certain qualities like the logic of reasoning, patience, persuasion, perseverance, humility, balanced preaching, and sound knowledge of the Qur'ān and *Aḥādīth*. However, social media have been employed by these du'āt to promote misinformation, hate speech, name-calling, condemnation of fellow Muslims, defamation of character due to inadequate knowledge about *Da'wah* propagation, clash of interests among different religious sects/denominations, reaction to unverified information, personal fame, and patronage, hatred and envy, and misunderstanding. Such abuses have, among others, mainly resulted in constant hostility and confrontation, disunity, mistrust, tensions, fear and intimidation, Islamophobia, arrests, and detention. The study, therefore, concludes that social media misuse by du'āt has had significant negative effects on intra-religious peaceful coexistence, especially among Muslims in Yorubaland.

Based on the previous conclusions, this study recommends that contemporary du'āt ensure that their online *Da'wah* adhere strictly to the Islamic framework and principles on *Da'wah* that promote peace, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence. Du'āt should endeavor to acquire adequate understanding and training in *Da'wah* operations. This is critical to guaranteeing the successful spread of Islamic teachings and establishing a balanced connection with the audience on social media. Such training programs should strive to provide preachers with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to express Islamic teachings successfully, address modern global concerns, and guide the Muslim ummah in the best way possible.

In addition to the above, du'āt should learn to use persuasive and logical arguments to transmit the message of Islām to build understanding and promote dialogue. They should engage in constructive conversations rather than confrontations or spreading enmity, identify and accept the diversity of viewpoints and backgrounds, and respect others' perspectives, even if they differ. It is also critical that the du'āt preserve Islamic ethical values in not only their preaching but all of their online interactions. These include refraining from abusive language, personal assaults, and gossip and promoting religious tolerance. Furthermore, they should use their position, knowledge, and teaching to develop a sense of oneness among Muslims in Yorubaland. By adhering to these principles, individual dā'i can use social media for *Da'wah* responsibly, thereby contributing to the positive representation of Islām and inviting others to explore its teachings respectfully and meaningfully.

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