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THE ROLES OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN DAᶜWAH ACTIVITIES: FACEBOOK IN FOCUS

PERANAN MEDIA SOSIAL DALAM AKTIVITI DAKWAH: FOKUS KEPADA FACEBOOK

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Abstract

The invention of social media platforms has revolutionized the human interaction. The proliferation of *daʾwah* activities on social media became expedient as Muslim scholars took advantage of the platform to spread the teachings of Islam. However, the abuse of the Facebook space in the guise of *daʾwah* activities has risen to its peak by some pseudo-scholars, who have usurped the platform to spread wrong teachings about Islam. Thus, this paper examines the roles played by social media in *dawah* activities with a focus on Facebook, as one of the social network sites commonly adopted by many scholars for spreading Islamic knowledge and information. The paper uses the qualitative research method to examine the roles played by social media in *daᶜwah* activities to use Facebook as a case study. The paper reveals that social media is an effective tool for the propagation of Islam because of its easy accessibility and quick connection to others. It also reveals that despite the significant roles social media, particularly Facebook, plays in spreading information about Islamic teachings, *daᶜwah* activities are facing some challenges which are undermining the progress of Islamic propagation in contemporary society. The paper concludes by recommending the application

of regulations to guide against the misuse of Facebook for *da'wah* activities to reduce the misrepresentation of both Islam and Muslim scholars.

Keywords: da'wah, social media, Facebook, Muslim

INTRODUCTION

Recently, human interactions have changed tremendously due to the emergence and evolution of science and technology which has resulted in the invention of computers and other technological devices for improvement in the quality of research, teaching, and learning among others. Social relations among humans on electronic platforms started at the beginning of the development of websites through the Internet (Thomas, et.al, 2022). Presently, social media is adopted and used in a wide range of every section of human life. The emergence of social media network sites has become popular among people over the last decade. Some of these sites such as Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Snapchat, Telegram, Zoom, WhatsApp, etc, have attracted millions of users worldwide. Given its popularity, the outlets where people search for news, information, business, and entertainment have changed (Thomas, et.al, 2022). They allow people to create personal profiles which enable people to connect with other users of the sites. Users can upload photographs and post what they are doing at any given time. The connection is regardless of religion, status, ethnicity, and literacy. They give free access to anything wishing to be done by the users (Erwin, 2019).

Before the advent of Islam, people were used to various ways of disseminating information to one another either in the same place or at different places, especially in alerting people of an impending danger. In some places, climbing a mountain to shout was their method as in the Arabian Peninsula. This method of information dissemination continued, until the time of the Prophet, who also adopted this method when he declared his prophethood to the people as commanded by Allah (Azeez, 2003). He invited his friends and relatives through personal contacts, but when he was commanded to declare himself openly as the last Prophet sent to the world, he resorted to this traditional method. People believed that any sound made on top of a high mountain traveled farther than one made on flat ground or

valley (Kamorudeen, 2017). Later, to expand the spread of Islam to some other territories, he started sending people to provinces like Abyssinia and Taif. He also sent letters to Ethiopia, Byzantium, and Persia informing them about the religion of Islam (Rahim, 1992).

The early Muslim scholars followed the methods used by the Prophet to disseminate the message to his people through three personal methods messengers and media in disseminating information about Islam. These three distinct methods of information dissemination in Islam continued till the evolution of science and technology particularly the electronic media. The Muslims made use of printed media in its early stage where information about Islam was printed and dispatched to different countries (Azeez, 2003). This allowed Islam to spread to the nooks and crannies of the world, which changed the negative impression the West had about Islam and they later contributed to the spread of knowledge of Islam through the writing of books on Muslims and Islam (Azeez, 2003).

The evolution and introduction of modern electronic technology which ushered in the World Wide Web (www) and social media apps through the internet has been explored by the Muslims to disseminate information about Islam. It should be noted that Muslims are not different from other people and societies who have adopted and increased their use of social media trends for knowledge dissemination. It has brought significant changes that have impacted individual Muslims and society. Social media is easy in terms of usage and learning and has allowed users to communicate and be heard universally with speed (Sule, and Lawal, 2020).

Muslims have not been naïve in utilizing the opportunities provided by these new and modern devices of the internet. Muslim preachers (*Du^cat*) have also identified the importance of media, particularly social media in the propagation of *Da^cwah* activities. Thus, *Da^cwah* through social media is presently more accepted by the people because it is devoid of elements of coercion (Folami, 2020). For *Da^cwah* activities to be effective in the present day, the platforms provided by social media, which can be referred to as *wasīlah*, should be used to enhance and support its implementation (Erwin, 2017). This is because Social media especially Facebook, has a lot of roles to play in *Da^cwah* activities. Thus, there is a need to expose these roles for better usage of Facebook in promoting *Da^cwah* activities online.

To achieve this, the paper has been divided into eleven parts; abstract, introduction, a conceptual analysis of *Daʿwah* and Social media, forms of Social media, *Daʿwah* activities on Social media, position of Muslim scholars on the use of Social media for *Daʿwah* activities, guidelines for the use of Social media for *Daʿwah* activities, challenges facing *Daʿwah* activities on Social media, probable solutions and conclusion.

DAᶜWAH AND SOCIAL MEDIA: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

It is pertinent to briefly explain some concepts that are important to this discussion for a proper understanding of the way they will be used in this research as well as to establish their relationship with the topic. The concepts are *daʿwah* and social media.

Daᶜwah

Etymologically, *Daʿwah* is an Arabic word that originated from a verbal noun *daʿa* whose semantic connotation means "seeking to direct something to one's side through a sound" (Ibn Manthŭr, 2007). Lexically, *Daʿwah* means, among other things to, pray, supplicate, desire or require, call or summon, invite etc (Esposito, 2005). It means issuing a summons making an invitation or establishing a call. Cowan (1974) defines *Daʿwah* as a call send off, to call upon, or to invite. He further says that *Daʿwah* means to appeal, bid, demand, request, summon, and lastly convocation. Technically, it is used 'to summon' or 'to call' anyone for anything, where the one who makes the call is referred to as the caller (*Dāʿi*) and the call itself (*Daʿwah)* (Cowan, 1974).

Daʿwah is a term often used to describe the patterns and systems explored by Muslims in teaching others about the beliefs, instructions, laws, restrictions, practices, and knowledge of Islam (Edward, 2004). This concept has been referred to as an aspect of calling the attention of others both Muslims and non-Muslims to the faith of Islam, commandments of Allah, explanation of the do's and don'ts of Islam, and more, as enshrined in the Qur'an (Edward, 2004). Sometimes, it takes different measures or styles, either by preaching, demonstration through actions, habitual dimensions, proselytization, or comparative analysis of the religion (Erwin, 2017). Many scholars have defined *Daʿwah* with different definitions. Al-Ilori (2019) defined *Daʿwah* as:

> *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 on the verge of falling into or a calamity that almost befalls them*

According to Al-Qardawi (1983), it is viewed as "*an attempt to attract others to Islam and implement all the provisions of Allah, encourage people to do the good things and avoid evil also striving in His way*". According to Arisa and Hassan (2016), Al-Bayumi explained that it is the role of religious teachers to teach others about Islam so that they can understand that particular religion deeply in the right way. *Da*ᶜ*wah* is a duty, responsibility, and task enjoined on every Muslim by Allah as mentioned in the Qur'an that He has appointed the Muslim *Ummah* as a model community for the whole of mankind. Allah says in Qur'an 3:110 thus:

> *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 was best for them: among them are some who have Faith, but most of them are perverted transgressors.*

On the authority of Abdullahi bin Amr bin al-'As (May Allah be pleased with both of them), Prophet Muhammad (May the peace of Allah be upon him) said: "*Convey from me even if it is a verse*" (Khan, 1997). These Qur'anic quotations and Prophetic tradition encourage the whole Muslims to spread knowledge to others anywhere and anytime as part of their responsibilities towards others. Islam as a universally recognized religion and complete way of life makes provision for man's continuous guidance toward the right direction which is done through the sending of divine messages to the world. *Da*ᶜ*wah* is considered a continuous and core task of scholars (the heirs of prophets). All the prophets of Allah strove to convey and disseminate the messages of Allah to their people. Despite the insults and humiliation received from their people, they were not deterred from carrying out the divine assignment instead divine *Da*ᶜ*wah* methodology was incorporated into their activities and displayed of highest moral character (Suraju, 2017).

Social Media

Social media is one of the modern technologies that have revolutionized the entire human life. It is a technology that allows people of different backgrounds, colors, tribes, and nations to post or share information with others on social webs and applications (social networking) like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, WeChat, TikTok, and many more. Social media with the presence of the Internet presents a new model of social interaction in modern society and its existence has become a new identity in the current era (Thomas, 2020). According to Kapoor (2018):

> *Social media is made up of various user-driven platforms that facilitate the diffusion of compelling content, dialogue creation, and communication to a broader audience. It is essentially a digital space created by the people and for the people, and it provides an environment that is conducive for interactions and networking to occur at different levels (for instance, personal, professional, business, marketing, political, and societal)*

Kaplan and Heinlein explained that social media include web-based and mobile technologies that are used in turning communication into interactive dialogue (Kaplan and Heinlein, 2010). It is a group of internet-based applications that are built on ideological and technological foundations which are termed and referred to as Web 2.0 for the creation and exchange of user-generated content. It exists to provide communication among people regardless of the distance, making it open to people to easily share; information, files, photos, videos, etc (Kaplan and Heinlein, 2010). The users usually download services or applications that offer social media functionality to their smartphones or tablets. They create interactive platforms where individuals, organizations and communities can discuss, participate, co-create, share and modify user-generated content or self-curated content which are posted online (Brian, 2021). The number of people using social media is over 4.48 billion worldwide, with the average user accessing 6.6 social media platforms on a monthly basis. Number of people using social media in Africa is estimated to be 590,296.163 while the estimated number of social media users in Nigeria is put at 154,301,195 (Brian, 2021).

FORMS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

There are different types of social media platforms, and they include magazine, web blogs, social blogs, podcast, pictures and internet. Social media is further classified into six distinct categories namely: Collaborative project (Wikipedia), Blogs and Micro blogs (Twitter), Virtual Social Worlds (Second life), Social Networking Sites (Facebook), Content Communities (You Tube) and Virtual Game worlds (World of Warcraft) (Sulaiman, 2016).

Facebook

Facebook, which is one of the social media platforms, enables users to take, apply digital filters on photos, videos and share them on the platform. Users can also use private messaging as well as add various posts to their walls. It is even easier for them to change the settings of their account based on their discretion. Anyone who wants to add any account as a friend must go through the approval process first by requesting for friendship (Siddiqui and Singh, 2016).

Facebook was launched in Harvard in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and his co-founders; Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz, and Chris Hughes whom were students and roommates at Harvard University. The Facebook was invented to connect students with each other and it spread to other schools.In 2008, it becomes the most famous social media platform and it still continues to grow rapidly. Over the years, it has added many fresh features which make it even more popular among other social media. It is the leading social network site with 2.85 billion of 4.48 billion social media users worldwide (Statista, 2022). The estimated number of Facebook users in Africa and Nigeria is 255,412,900 and 31,860,000 respectively (Dean, 2021).It is established that most of other social media users have at least one Facebook account. On Facebook, text posts, 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, 2021). Facebook is used for promotion of products to a huge audience and it gives participants the opportunity to upload and share information either private or public. It has turned the whole world into global village and made it 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 metaverse, where all products and services of the company are link to an integrated environment (Ang, 2021).

Da'wah **Activities on Social Media**

1   Teaching and learning of the Glorious Qur'ân: Al-Qur'an is an important book of Islam that is obligatory for Muslims to learn. One of responsibilities of Muslim parents is to ensure that their wards are taught how to read the Qur'an from their childhood (Aleri, 2014). Recitation of the glorious Qur'an is impossible without learning it. The availability of platforms on social media has made teaching and learning of the Qur'an, Science of Qur.an, *Tajweed*, Translation in different languages and Quranic memorization easy and accessible. Example of Facebook pages for teaching and learning of Quran include: E-teaching of Quran, online Quran teaching and learning, teach Quran play, online Quran for all, online Quran learning and Islamic teaching, learn the holy Quran etc.

2   Presentation of Lectures (recorded and live stream): For the accessibility of *Da'wah*, lectures both recorded and live are posted on social media. Some Facebook pages and accounts are created for the purpose of dissemination of Islamic messages, and they include: Dar al-Nur, The Voice of Truth, Nigeria Street Dawah, Smile Dawah Concept etc (Facebook, 2022).

3   Marital discourse: Marriage has been seen as one important and fragile aspect of life. The individual Muslim is been educated on how to sustain his/her home and to ensure that marital discords do not result in dissolution of marriage. Social media provides platform for discussion of marital issues. 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 marital discourse include Marital Affaires, Holy Matrimonial in Islam, Starlady Entertainment etc (Facebook, 2022).

4   *Dhikr*: *Dhikr* means, literally, remembrance, reminder, and mention. It is an act of meditation in which phrases and prayers are continuous and repeatedly mentioned to remember Allah (Sajed, 2022). There are verses of glorious Qur'an which encourage Muslims to engage in remembrance of Allah, (Qur'an 18:24, 33:41, 13:28). *Dhikr* is not limited to mentioning or chanting names of Allah it involves good deeds, prayer, recitation of Qur'an and reminding people about Allah and many more. However, social media provides platforms to carry out remembrance of Allah through creation of

accounts and group pages for this purpose. Facebook accounts on Dhikr include but not limited to Dhikr Allah, Ask the people about Dhikr, Remembrance of Allah (Dhikr), Dhikr Du'a, Dhikr of Allah for Success and Blessing, Weekly Dhikr, Dhikr, I love Islam and many more.

5   Match-making: Match**making** is the act of joining two or more people together for the purpose of marriage or romantic relationships (Walter, 2013). A lot of sites have been created to join people together as a result of inability of matured man or woman to find a suitable suitor. As a result of development of social media, Muslim match-making sites have been created for this purpose of assisting Muslim brothers and sisters to find husband and wife. Theses Facebook pages include but not limited to Halal Matchmaking, Muslim Matchmaking/Marriage, The Muslim matchmaking and marriage advises, Muslim widow, divorce and single matchmaking forum, Muslim single ladies, Muslim Halal Marriage/Nikkah, Muslim Single Connect, Muslim Singles and Married and many more.

Roles of Facebook in *Da^{c}wah* Activities

Facebook as one of social media platforms encourages *Da^{c}wah* activists to be more active and creative in the delivery of *Da^{c}wah* and gives space for the delivery of more contextual *Da^{c}wah* according to the taste of millennials, which can be delivered at all-time and can be accessed anytime and by anyone. It makes *Da^{c}wah* more attractive to young and old people who are busy with a variety of activities but still connected with the virtual world to interact and find more about knowledge of religion through post (Erwin, 2019). Nowadays, *Da^{c}wah* dissemination method is no longer in the form of group discussion or in open space forum, it is now done in a more modern way with the use of technology through Facebook pages such as live-stream, and reel (Al-fulaniy, 2023). Various Islamic messages are posted on Facebook by scholars and preachers which are accessed by the public for personal, educational, religious, and business interests. The called (*Mad^{c}u*) who are Facebook users do not only look for information but also share what they receive and add other religious messages through explanation according to what they understand (Rosidi, Wifaq and Abdul-Majid, 2021).

Due to features such as ability to share photos and videos, the Muslim scholars take advantages provided by the Facebook to carry out *Da^{c}wah* activities in accordance with dynamics of times and being a perfect way to

reach a wider range of audience. Series of topic related to Islam and Muslims such as Islamic Jurisprudence, *Shari^cah*, Marriage, Islamic Faith and Belief and many more are posted on the platform. Live and recorded Islamic teachings are shared which are also reshared to others through share click. Some of the friends reacted by commenting on the lecture through comment space. In recent times, many people have started creating group room where members of the group are interacted with (Nurdin, 2013). This also attracts the attention of Muslim Scholars who also created group room on which Islamic teachings are posted. Different groups with different topics are created for proper dissemination of Islamic messages. Interested users are requested to join or follow the group by clicking on join/follow option provided under the title of the group (Erwin, 2019).

It also allows individual people to carry out *Da^cwah* without depending on the formal requirements for preachers that apply in society. As long as they can see opportunities related to interesting preaching material and are able to understand the intended preaching segment, then *Da^cwah* can be developed and posted on the platform (Nurdin, 2013). Blogs and Micro blogs, Social Networking Sites and Content Communities are commonly used by the Muslim preachers (*Du^cat*). On the use of Facebook for *Da^cwah* activities, Rashid (2018) said:

> *Facebook also gave me chance to interact with prominent scholars of Peace TV like Nisar Nadiadwala, Assim Alhakeem, Areeb Islam etc. I believe lot of Dawah work is yet to be done, as Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: "Whoever hides knowledge, Allah will brand him with the branding iron from the hellfire." [Tirmidhi].*

Oladimeji (2022) pointed that "social media platforms are used in one way or the other to convey the message of Islam, provide guides on Islamic sciences, broadcast of Islamic calendars, Ramadan moon sighting, messages and many others in such a sophisticated manner". Based on the above discussion, the significant role of Facebook has brought about various numbers of Facebook accounts that are created for the purpose *Da^cwah* activities. Some of these accounts are created by groups while some by individuals. It is apposite to discuss some of these Facebook accounts and their *Da^cwah* activities for

documentation and proper guidance of the Muslim users of Facebook. They are as follows:

i   Dar al-Nur: Dar al-Nur Islamic Foundation is religion organization Facebook page which is managed and handled by Alfa Adam Alfanla. Dar al-Nur page was created on 23rd October 2019. The handler usually presents *Tafsīr* on some verses of the Qur'an (titled Qur'an digest) and some topical issues such as, Kiniiwulo re, Ikoja aye, Owo Haram, Asiri, Bi won se pa Husain, Abamo (Regret), and Nitori Olohun.
The handler uses his native language, Yoruba, for the presentation and it usually comes up on Fridays. The page has over 450, 000 followers who are alerted whenever the handler is live, and it attracted over 10,000 likes from different people (Dar al-Nur, 2019).

ii   The Voice of Truth: This is another Facebook page created for the purpose propagation of religion of Islam and it is an education research/religion centre. The page has over 64,000 followers and it is liked by over 21,000 people. Both live and recorded video are shared on the page and the handler usually post lectures delivered by Abdulhakim Al-Kutubi. Major issues related to the knowledge of Islam are presented on the page. Such as: Muslim, CAN and upcoming (2023) election, Special Q&A section (instead of *Humdatul-Ahkam*), Importance of *Tawheed*, Imoran fun awon akeko Imo (Etiquettes of Knowledge for students), The difference between the *Auliyaa'* of Allah & the *Auliyaa'Shaiton*, and Aqeeqah (Naming ceremony). However, the page does not give non-Yoruba-speaking Muslims access to the series of lectures posted on it because the presentations are made in Yoruba Language (The Voice of Truth, 2020).

iii   Dr. AbdulHakeem AbdulLateef: This Facebook account page is individually owned and it was created to spread knowledge of Islam to nook and cranny of the world. Live, recorded video and photos of lectures presented by Dr. Abdul Hakeem Abdul Lateef are shared on the page. Recently, Dr. Abdul Hakeem Abdul Lateef announced on his Facebook page that individual Muslim and communities should invite him to deliver lecture at no cost. This has taken him to different states, cities and towns to deliver lectures and educate people about religion of Islam. For the maximum use of the page to educate and encourage Muslims on some fundamental aspects of religion, he introduces Morning *Adhkaar* and Prayers where he leads

Muslims in chanting recommended *Adhkaar* and they are streamed live. *Da'wah* activities on this page include: *Tafsīr-l-Qur'ân* in three different languages i.e. Yoruba, Hausa and English languages, Responsible Parenthood, how to observe salat Fajr, Salat Zuhr Practical Demonstration, Importance of Knowledge in Islam, The Etiquette of relating with Allah, If Today is your last day, and The Nineteen Lessons from Suratul Furqan (Q:25:63-77). This page, among personal Facebook pages, created by Muslims scholars is considered accessible, interactive, educative and flexible as it provides up-to-date information on both religious and current issues as they affect Muslims (Abdulhakeem Abdullateef, 2022).

iv   Marital Affairs Facebook Page was created on 22nd May, 2021 and it is managed and handled by Ifeoluwa and the purpose its creation is to support individuals and couples in learning vital skills for relationship. The handler uses his native language, Yoruba, for the presentation and it usually come up Sundays. Some of the marital topics discussed included but not limited to Purpose of marriage, How to communicate with each other, Responsibility of a mother, Common cause of domestic violence Ojuse obinirin ninu Ramadan, Sex in marriage, Forgiveness in marriage, Imo toto ninu igbeyawo, Giveaway, giveaway, giveaway, Your marriage or your kids, and Yiyan okotabi aya ninu Islam etc. All these are streamlining in order allow people to contribute by calling in either to ask questions or answer questions. Muslim scholars are invited to discuss issues relating to marital life. The page has over 3,400 followers who are alerted whenever the handler is live, and it attracted over 2,700 likes from different people (Marital Affaires, 2022).

v   Starlady Entertainment Facebook account was created on 21st May 2021 after the first one named Hajia Star lady was hacked. This account is managed and handled by Alhaja Muinat Adesewa and 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 such as Sex education, Single motherhood, Polygamy, Courtship and Islam, and Divorce among others.

The handler uses his native language, Yoruba, for her presentation. The page has over 3.319 followers who are alerted whenever the handler is live, and it attracted over 2,700 likes from different people.

vi   Holy Matrimonial in Islam is another Facebook page created to bring to the notice of the Muslims and also to remind them about the teachings, rules, regulations, principles and ways of living a comfortable and a pious marital life. It is managed and handled by Mrs. Salihu Tawakalitu Okikiola, Mrs. Mobolaji Babs, Mrs. Sherifat Abiodun Azeez, Mr. Abiodun Oba and Prince Sulaiman Babatunde Al-Usmany. Members of the group are allowed to post questions, comments and answer questions posted by others. The page has over 3.500 followers and it attracted over 6,700 likes from different people (Starlady, 2022).

Position of Muslim Scholars on The Use of Social Media For *Da^cwah* Activities

There are divergent views of Muslims scholars on the use of Social media in general and its use for *Da^cwah* activities. Each of the scholars brings reasons to justify his position. One of the scholars who supported the use of social media for *Da^cwah* activities is Isaam Abdul Haleem Hashish, a Professor in the Department of Information Technology, University of Cairo who asserted that:

> *For this purpose, we have the internet today, a marvelously effective means. The world will know about Islam only with what we upload on the internet. As a result, our religion shall remain intact against the disinformation and the malicious propaganda being done by the media on a worldwide scale. In fact, the right kind of information about Islam has to be offered to the world through the Net so that the people may get benefit from it to the maximum (Abdullah, Abdullah and Haruna, 2020)*

It is important to mention here that some Muslim scholars have argued the use of Social media for *Da^cwah* activities. The argument was based on its being the source of disseminating lies, destroying an established relationship and that it is not in line with shari^cah. Oladimeji and Ajijola (2012) pointed that:

> The platform is being used as a window to ventilate anger, throw brick bats at some scholars on ideological issues, initiate un-Islamic social interaction between male and female, thereby promoting the very opposite of what *Da^cwah* in

> Islam is out to achieve- "Enjoining what is right
> and forbidding what is wrong in the society"

In a nutshell, this paper is of the view that *Daʿwah* activities on Social media are a step of renewing the *Daʿwah* pattern in accordance with the dynamics of the times to reach a wider range of audience. With it, *Daʿwah* plays its role in spreading information about Islam to all directions without knowing the time and place, where people from various ethnicities and religions can access it easily, and the audience (viewers) are proactive in opposing (dislike), approving (like) or discussing (comment) on a religious thought (Nurdin, 2013).*Daʿwah,* when utilizing social media, can be actual, factual, and contextual because this is in accordance with current conditions so that it becomes a solution to current problems. This makes it apparent that social media is a *Daʿwah* field that is very broad with great potential which must be developed. *Daʿwah* through Social media is what is termed as *Daʿwah* without boundaries, it reaches everywhere and anywhere. Muslim Scholars are encouraged to engage in Social media *Daʿwah* because of the constraint of moving about that is present in physical *Daʿwah* (Nurdin, 2013).

Guidelines For the Use of Social Media For *Daʿwah* Activities
Muslim scholars who support the use of social media for *Daʿwah* activities have laid down some regulations to serve as guide in the use of Social Media for *Daʿwah* purpose. This is to regulate the activities of sending and receiving information on social media. The guidelines include:

.i   Information Verification: Islam encourages Muslims to verify the information received and know what to circulate, what not to circulate and conditions for each. On this Allah says in Qur'an 49 verse 6

> *"O ye who believe! if a wicked person comes
> to you with any news, ascertain the truth, Lest
> ye harm people unwittingly, and afterwards
> become full of repentance for what ye have
> done"*

Every user of social media is expected to verify the information he/she receives before he/she rebroadcast or share it. Verification of information which prevent harming one another and regret as a result the post.

.ii   Avoidance of manipulation or distortion of information: Islam admonishes the Muslims to ensure that information sent or retrieved is not distorted or manipulated.

.iii   Avoidance of content creation trap: The trick employed by the most social media influencers is to create content regularly and give followers a constant, daily stream of content in order to maintain their interest and engagement with their pages or brands. As a result, Islam encourages that wisdom and knowledge, silence, contemplation and taking oneself to account should be explored. *Da^{c}wah* is about calling people to Islam not about giving your opinion about everything. In a situation where a subject matter is not clear or there is no enough knowledge about it, a constructive public discussion should be encouraged about it (Husain, 2022).

.iv   Avoidance of destructive contribution: *Da^{c}wah* as a distinct method of proselytization of Islam has its traditions, responsibilities, etiquettes, and objectives that must be observed. If the objectives of *Da^{c}wah* are not being fulfilled, then it amounts to wasting time and misleading of followers which may result to incurring sin.*Da^{c}wah* is carried to correct or change a certain attitude from bad to good in a situation where the objective of such effort is not met such is regarded as a destructive effort. Any information which leads to evil acts should be avoided. Information or contribution to be pasted or posted on social media should not destruct the life of readers.

Challenges Facing *Da^{c}wah* Activities on Social Media
Da^{c}wah through this medium has been facing many challenges. Some of the challenges faced *Da^{c}wah* on Facebook and other social media include:

i   ***Da^{c}wah* Practitioners:** One of the major challenges facing *Da^{c}wah* activities on social media is practitioners. This is because some of *Du^{c}ât* are not qualified to be calling people to Islam. It is expected of a caller to possess distinct qualifications which include sound and deep knowledge, good moral and personal ethics, such as sincerity, truthfulness, honesty, patience, purity of heart, good relationship with others, and good methods of calling (Husain, 2022). However, these are lacking in some of the callers as they create problems upon problems.

ii   **Neglect of Methodology of *Da'wah:*** For Islamic knowledge or messages to be effectively delivered by the callers and accepted by listeners, methodology of *Da'wah* has to be observed. The methodologies of *Da'wah* as contained in the prophetic model of *Da'wah* include wisdom and good admonition, gentle approach, moderation, leniency, planning, establishment of relationships and creation of enabling atmosphere among many others. This is in line with Q6: 125. However, these methods are not largely being observed while disseminating Islamic messages on Facebook by some Muslim callers and the youths and adults.

iii   **Lack of Adequate Knowledge of Islam:** A caller is expected to know the religion. A caller is like a teacher, and he/she is expected to know what he wants to teach. It is important to note that when an incompetent and unknowledgeable caller preaches, he creates misconceptions on social media which will create problems if it is accepted by people who have shallow knowledge about Islam.

iv   **Character Assassination:** This is an act of saying false things about a person usually in order to make public stop liking or trusting such a person. It involves various kinds of defamatory attacks such as abusive and circumstantial attacks. This reveals itself in a variety of forms and methods in every political and social environment (Samoileko, 2001). One of the factors that are responsible for character assassination in *Da'wah* activities on social media is personal and partisan ego. Religious misunderstanding displayed on social media is triggered by either personal or organizational where one will not want to be corrected. Scholars with correct and accurate Islamic knowledge on the disputed subject matters are attacked and defamed. In recent times, character assassination spread on all social media platforms, particularly on Facebook where Islamic preachers defamed themselves. For example, issues among Yesaloonaka and ACADIP among others. This act has resulted in litigation, arrest, and detention among Islamic callers (Facebook, 2021).

v   False Information: It has been observed that some social media bloggers present Islam according to their views and available information rather than present it in the light of Islam.

Possible Solutions to The Challenges Facing *Da'wah* Activities on Social Media

i   Qualification: The callers to Islam should ensure that they are academically, morally, and practically qualified to carry out *Da'wah* on social media. There should be a specific but minimum qualification for whoever wants to be presenting Islamic messages.

ii   Da'wah Methodology: They should ensure that they are acquitted with the methodologies of *Da'wah* which include but are not limited to wisdom, beautiful admonition, and establishing argument in the best ways, as contained in Quran 16:125.

iii   Deep Research: The callers should possess adequate knowledge of Islam in order to avoid posting and sharing information that will cause problems which will eventually lead to misconceptions about Islam in cyberspace. These misconceptions will be very dangerous to Islam and Muslims if they are accepted by people who have shallow knowledge about Islam. It is incumbent on callers to acquit themselves with basic *Da'wah* resources which include but are not limited to; religion (Qur'an and its exegesis, thematic study, stories, Prophetic traditions, Islamic Jurisprudence, Islamic legal theory, Islamic creed and Islamic institution), Historical, Linguistic and Literary, Humanity, Scientific and Current affairs (Arikewuyo, 2022).

iv   Eradication of Character assassination: Character assassination on social media can be eradicated if personal and organizational ego is avoided by the parties involved. Allah warns against this cankerworm act, which is tantamount to mockery, and slandering etc., where He says in Qur'an 49: 11:

> *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.*

In his observation of current trends in *Da'wah* activities, particularly on social media, Shamsideen Ope, as quoted by Adunola (2022), said:

> *Many of our scholars who are champions of Da'wah seem to be at loggerheads with one another, their Da'wah messages in recent times are replete with invectives directed at fellow Muslims. The effect of this development is that Da'wah messages are now contain more abuses than constructive admonitions and glad-tidings*

v   **Participation of scrupulous scholars:** Involvement of knowledgeable and erudite scholars in *Da'wah* activities on social media to preach pristine teachings of Islam and counter false information presented by unscrupulous callers will go a long way in putting an end to unqualified presenter of Islamic messages. This is in line with the Quranic verse which reads thus:

> *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.*

On this Sanusi (2022) submitted that:

> *it is imperative for trained and qualified Du^{c}āt to engage the Social media more in order to neutralize the impact of negative information on pristine teachings of Islam.*

While supporting the participation of scrupulous scholars, Oladimeji (2022) asserted that:

> *To leave the social media space for all comers will be a dangerous trend that will eventually promote vices rather than virtues in the Society……"*

CONCLUSION

So far, it has been discussed that a wide range of information on Islam can be obtained from social media networks which are pleasantly presented using the internet. People, particularly Muslims, from all walks of life are using social media webs/apps for one thing or another. Services and applications offered by this modern technology enabled by internet are now efficiently utilized by the Muslims in order to distribute, disseminate and increase the level of understanding of Islamic knowledge. Conceptual analyses of *Da^{c}wah* and social media, forms of social media, *Da^{c}wah* activities on social media and the roles of Social media in *Da^{c}wah* activities have been highlighted. The guidelines for the use of social media for *Da^{c}wah* activities such as verification of information, avoidance of manipulation and distortion of information, avoidance of content creation trap are extensively discussed. Challenges and possible solutions to them such qualification of the callers, following *Da^{c}wah* methodology, eradication of character assassination and involvement of knowledgeable scholars in *Da^{c}wah* activities on social media are elaborated. It is important to note here that the paper has contributed to knowledge by assessing the activities of some platforms which are disseminating Islamic messages. This has in turn drawn the attention of Islamic bodies and authorities to some of the contents of some platforms which are not in line with the tenets of Islam for proper correction and address.

In line with above discussion, this paper is strongly recommending that the Muslim scholars should ensure maturity in their *Da'wah* activities on social media. This will allow them to be mindful of what they post/share in order not to mislead people particularly unconscious Muslims and it will prevent character assassination or defamation on the callers and listeners/viewers. It is also recommended that there should a special Council for regulation of *Da'wah* activities on social media. This is in support of Oladimeji's submission that there should be a body of Muslims in Nigeria to evolve machinery to scrutinize the intellectual, moral capacity and disposition (to Islam) of those engaged in *Da'wah* activities. Equally, methodology of *Da'wah* should not be compromised in carrying out propagation assignment, thus, the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (SCIA) should put in place a *Da'wah* methodology course with certificates across the states for all intended Muslim callers either on social media or not. This will serve as part of the qualification's requirement.

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