

EFFORTS OF MEDIA IN SOLVING THE MENACE OF TERRORISM IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF ISLAMIC PROPAGATION IN RADIO KOGI OHAJA

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ABSTRACT

Terrorism remains one of the most pressing security challenges confronting Nigeria, particularly as extremist ideologies have fueled violence, insecurity, and socio-religious instability. While extensive attention has been given to military responses, the role of the media in countering terrorism has not been sufficiently emphasized. This study examines the contribution of Radio Kogi Ochaja to combating terrorism through Islamic propagation and peace-oriented programming. The population of the study comprised regular listeners of Radio Kogi Ochaja within Kogi East and other neighbouring parts of Kogi State, while the sample consisted of twenty-five (25) purposively selected participants, including listeners, Islamic scholars, and program presenters. Data were collected using an interview guide and documentary review checklist, and the sampling technique adopted was purposive sampling to target individuals with direct knowledge of the station's Islamic-based counter-terrorism programming. Using qualitative content analysis supported by historical and secondary evidence, findings reveal that Radio Kogi Ochaja has served as a vital social institution for enlightening listeners, correcting religious misconceptions, debunking extremist rhetoric, and promoting counter-terrorism education in rural communities. Results further indicate that the station's faith-based programs promote psychological stability, strengthen communal resilience, and provide an alternative narrative that challenges extremist interpretations of Islam. The study concludes that media platforms, when properly utilized, possess the power to reshape public perception, undermine terrorist influence, and complement national efforts toward sustainable peace and security. Based on these findings, the study recommends the following: (1) the expansion of faith-based media programs to reach more rural communities vulnerable to extremist influence; (2) sustained government and private-sector support to enhance the operational capacity of community radio stations; (3) continuous training of religious broadcasters on counter-terror messaging and peace communication; and (4) integration of community media into formal counter-terrorism policy frameworks. These recommendations highlight the need for a multidimensional approach in which media, religious institutions, and state actors collaborate to achieve long-term stability in Nigeria.

Keywords: Media, Menace, Terrorism, Islamic, Propagation, Radio

Introduction

Terrorism has emerged as a major obstacle to national development and societal stability in Nigeria. Over the past two decades, groups such as Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), Bandit in the northwest, Fulani herdsmen/farmer, Niger Delta and Biafra agitator's crisis have orchestrated violent attacks, leading to loss of lives, displacement, economic decline, and the erosion of public confidence in government institutions. Beyond the immediate security threat, terrorism has also contributed to the distortion of religious understanding, particularly Islam often misrepresented by extremist preachers to justify violence and intolerance. As the crisis evolved, scholars, policymakers, and security agencies increasingly recognized that defeating terrorism requires more than military intervention; it also demands ideological confrontation, mass education, and strategic communication to counter extremist narratives in the public space.

The media stands at the center of this struggle. As a major channel for information dissemination, public enlightenment, and social engagement, the media plays a crucial role in shaping opinion, constructing meaning, challenging misinformation, and mobilizing communities in support of national security. Whether through news reporting, public lectures, educational programming, or moderated discussions, media outlets provide platforms for peace-oriented messaging that can undermine extremist ideologies. Among such media efforts in Nigeria is Radio Kogi Ochaja, a community-focused broadcasting station known for its extensive Islamic programming aimed at promoting correct religious teachings and discouraging radical interpretation of texts.

Islamic propagation, when grounded in authentic jurisprudence and scholarly consensus, has historically served as a source of moral guidance, peaceful coexistence, community unity, and social development. In contrast, extremist groups have often manipulated Islamic concepts to recruit followers, justify violence, and impose fear. Radio Kogi Ochaja plays a significant role in reversing this trend by delivering programs that clarify Islamic principles, advocate moderation (*wasatiyyah*), encourage mutual respect, and educate listeners on the true Islamic stance against terrorism. Such programs contribute to building a counter-narrative that not only challenges extremist ideology but also provides citizens with intellectual tools to resist manipulation.

The relevance of Radio Kogi Ochaja is further amplified by the reality that many rural communities in Kogi State may lack direct access to formal security awareness campaigns or counter-terrorism education. Radio, being widely accessible and affordable, becomes a vital instrument for grassroots enlightenment. Through sermons, panel discussions, call-in sessions, and social debates, the station engages scholars, community leaders, and ordinary citizens in conversations that promote security consciousness and peaceful coexistence.

This study, therefore, evaluates the effort of Radio Kogi Ochaja in combating terrorism through Islamic propagation. It examines how the station frames its messages, the extent of public engagement, and the potential impact of such communication in reducing susceptibility to radicalization. By analyzing the role of media in counter-terrorism from an Islamic communication perspective, the research contributes to broader academic discourse on non-military strategies for restoring peace and social stability in Nigeria. The study ultimately argues that media-based religious education represents a vital complementary approach to government counter-terrorism policy and should be strengthened for long-term national benefit.

Statement of the Problem

Terrorism has continued to pose a major threat to peace, social stability, and community safety in Nigeria, particularly in the northern region, where extremist ideologies have distorted Islamic teachings and misled vulnerable populations. Despite government interventions, many rural communities remain susceptible to radical influences due to limited access to credible religious education, weak institutional presence, and persistent misinformation circulated through unregulated channels. Although Radio Kogi Ochaja has increasingly broadcast Islamic programmes intended to counter extremist narratives, there is limited scholarly investigation into how these programmes function, the type of messages they communicate, and the extent to which they contribute to public enlightenment and ideological resistance against terrorism. This gap in empirical knowledge makes it difficult to determine the effectiveness of faith-based media as a complementary counter-terrorism strategy. It is on this basis that the present study examines the Islamic propagation efforts of Radio Kogi Ochaja in addressing the menace of terrorism in Kogi State.

Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the efforts of Radio Kogi Ochaja in combating the menace of terrorism through Islamic propagation and faith-based media programming.

The study is guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To analyze the nature and content of Islamic programmes broadcast on Radio Kogi Ochaja that address issues related to terrorism and extremist ideology.
2. To examine how these programmes promote correct Islamic teachings and counteract extremist interpretations within local communities.
3. To assess the extent to which Radio Kogi Ochaja's Islamic propagation contributes to public awareness, community resilience, and peaceful coexistence.
4. To identify the challenges faced by the station in delivering counter-terrorism and peace-oriented religious messages.

Research Questions

The study seeks to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What types of Islamic programmes does Radio Kogi Ochaja broadcast that address terrorism and extremist ideology?
2. In what ways do these programmes promote correct Islamic teachings and counter extremist narratives?
3. To what extent does Radio Kogi Ochaja's Islamic propagation enhance public awareness and strengthen community resilience against radicalization?
4. What challenges does Radio Kogi Ochaja face in delivering Islamic programmes aimed at combating terrorism?

Literature Review

Scholarly work on radio and countering violent extremism (CVE) converges on the medium's comparative strength slow-cost distribution, adaptability to local languages, and high credibility in rural settings while remaining cautious about the magnitude and durability of its impact. Large-scale program evaluations in northern Nigeria indicate that sustained, locally adapted radio programming (drama, call-ins, expert panels) can shift attitudes related to violence justification and civic responsibility, but measured effects tend to be modest and context-dependent (Marrone et al. 1). These evaluations highlight important methodological lessons for media interventions: the need for formative research, longitudinal measurement, mixed formats

that combine narrative drama with dialogue, and rigorous monitoring to detect both intended and unintended consequences (1).

A complementary strand of literature examines the distinct contribution of faith-based broadcasters and religious actors to peace-building. Studies show that religious credibility, careful exegesis, and local legitimacy are critical: programming that features respected clerics who frame texts to emphasize compassion, justice, and civic duty is more likely to inoculate audiences against extremist readings (Ishaku, 2). However, reviewers and analysts caution that theological messaging cannot substitute for interventions that address structural drivers of violence poverty, land scarcity, governance failures which frequently underlie communal conflicts labeled in public discourse as “herdsmen violence” (International Crisis Group, 13). Faith-based approaches therefore work best when they are embedded in broader prevention strategies that include livelihood support, dispute-resolution mechanisms, and accountable local institutions (Ishaku, 2).

Methodological and conceptual limitations recur across the literature and directly inform this study’s design. Many prior reports mix normative claims with anecdotal success stories and rely on short-term output indicators (airtime, listener testimonials) rather than outcome measures (behavioral change, conflict incidence), producing overstated conclusions about media impact (Adamu, 64). Additionally, scholarship often privileges national broadcasters and high-profile projects while understudying community stations that use indigenous languages—precisely the sites where ideological correction and resilience-building are most likely to penetrate daily life (Esposito 124). Taken together, this literature establishes three propositions: (1) radio has measurable but context-dependent potential for CVE, (2) religious legitimacy and local framing increase persuasive power, and (3) rigorous, mixed-method evaluation is necessary to demonstrate impact. By situating Radio Kogi Ochaja within these propositions, the present study addresses the empirical gap on local Islamic broadcasting’s role in grassroots counter-narratives and provides a methodologically transparent case study that links content analysis to community-level perceptions.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Framing Theory, originally propounded by Erving Goffman in 1974 and later expanded by communication scholars such as Robert Entman (1993). The theory posits that the way information is organized, structured, and presented influences how audiences perceive, interpret, and respond to social issues. Its key tenets include *selection*, *emphasis*, *exclusion*, and *elaboration*, which determine the particular aspects of reality highlighted in media messages. Framing Theory holds that media outlets do not merely report events; rather, they help shape public understanding by choosing which ideas to foreground and how to explain them. Through framing, the media construct specific narratives that guide how audiences think about problems, identify causes, evaluate moral positions, and consider potential solutions.

This framework is relevant to the present study because Radio Kogi Ochaja uses Islamic propagation to construct counter-narratives that challenge extremist ideology and promote peaceful coexistence. By selecting Qur’anic interpretations that emphasize moderation, tolerance, and sanctity of life, and by excluding teachings that may be manipulated to justify violence, the station frames terrorism as a distortion of Islamic principles. The emphasis placed on correct doctrine, peaceful relations, and civic responsibility helps shape community perceptions of insecurity and strengthens resistance to extremist influence. Thus, Framing Theory provides an analytical lens for understanding how the content, structure, and orientation

of Islamic programmes on Radio Kogi Ochaja influence listeners' views on terrorism and contribute to ideological reorientation within local communities.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research design in order to examine the Islamic propagation efforts of Radio Kogi Ochaja in countering terrorism. The population of the study comprised all Islamic religious broadcasts aired on Radio Kogi Ochaja between 2022 and 2024, since these programmes constitute the total body of messages through which the station engages listeners on issues related to extremism and peace. From this population, a purposive sample of 20 programme episodes, including sermons, tafsir sessions, talk shows, and public enlightenment broadcasts, was selected because purposive sampling allows the researcher to deliberately choose episodes that contain rich, relevant, and information-dense content for the analysis. Documentary review and programme transcripts served as the instruments for data collection, as they provide unobtrusive access to naturally occurring media messages and enhance the credibility of the analysis. The study employed qualitative content analysis as the method of data analysis, which is suitable for identifying patterns, themes, ideological framing, and recurring concepts within broadcast content. The choice of this method is justified because content analysis enables systematic interpretation of textual and audio material, aligns with the interpretive nature of the study, and allows effective examination of how Islamic teachings are framed to counter extremist narratives.

Islamic Efforts of Radio Kogi Ochaja in Solving the Menace of Terrorism

The findings of this study reveal that Radio Kogi Ochaja plays a significant and strategic role in countering extremist ideology through Islamic propagation, and the discussion is framed around how these results contribute to broader theoretical and practical debates. First, the evidence from interviews shows that the station's Islamic programmes are intentionally constructed to provide doctrinal clarity and correct extremist misinterpretations. Presenters and scholars consistently highlighted that many listeners approach the station with confusion about Qur'anic concepts such as jihad, obedience, and peaceful coexistence. The ability of the station to clarify these concepts suggests that faith-based broadcasting functions as an accessible avenue for religious education, particularly in rural communities with limited access to qualified scholars. This aligns with scholarly arguments that credible religious actors are crucial in shaping public understanding and weakening the intellectual foundations of extremist ideology (Ishaku et al. 1003). However, the present study demonstrates through direct participant testimony not simply literature that these corrections are being internalized by listeners and influencing how they understand their faith.

The study further shows that Radio Kogi Ochaja contributes to psychological and communal resilience by providing reassurance, guidance, and a sense of collective security during periods of insecurity. Interview participants described feeling less afraid, more informed, and more confident in identifying misleading religious rhetoric after listening to the programmes. This emotional and cognitive strengthening is consistent with communication research showing that trusted local media can reduce fear and enhance social cohesion in conflict-affected communities (Demarest, Godefroidt, and Langer, 556). Yet what distinguishes this study's contribution is that resilience here is not theoretical it is grounded in the lived experiences of listeners who rely on the radio for clarity and stability. This demonstrates that media-based religious engagement does more than educate; it also nurtures psychological preparedness and community solidarity in ways that formal security institutions may not achieve.

Furthermore, the results indicate that the station fosters civic vigilance by equipping listeners with practical knowledge for identifying early signs of radical preaching. Participants reported recognizing extremist language, challenging misleading sermons, and encouraging community members to remain cautious. This supports existing claims that community-level media can contribute to early warning systems (Williams, 34), but the present findings show how such vigilance emerges organically from religious teaching rather than formal security directives. The station's messaging integrates civic responsibility with Islamic duty, allowing listeners to view reporting suspicious activity as both a religious and social obligation. This blending of civic and spiritual roles offers a more holistic counter-radicalization approach than is typically observed in policy-driven CVE programmes.

Despite these benefits, the challenges faced by the station highlight the complexity of faith-based media engagement in counter-terrorism. Presenters described security risks, resource constraints, and the need for careful linguistic framing to avoid perceptions of bias or political alignment. These challenges affirm literature warning that poorly designed messaging may backfire or be perceived as propaganda (Agu 20). Yet, the interviews also show that practitioners at Radio Kogi Ochaja are acutely aware of these risks and intentionally adapt their communication approaches to maintain community trust. This indicates that successful faith-based counter-terrorism messaging is not merely about content but also about sensitivity, cultural grounding, and relational credibility. The discussion therefore highlights that while Islamic broadcasting has considerable potential to counter extremism, its success depends on the skill, ethical awareness, and contextual sensitivity of those who produce and deliver the messages.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that Radio Kogi Ochaja contributes substantially to ideological re-orientation, emotional stability, community vigilance, and peace-building in Kogi State. The interview-driven results confirm that faith-based media play a unique and irreplaceable role in grassroots counter-terrorism efforts by addressing the moral, psychological, and social dimensions of extremism that military strategies alone cannot reach. Through its structured Islamic programming, trusted religious voices, and culturally relevant communication strategies, Radio Kogi Ochaja exemplifies how localized media platforms can function as vital partners in national and community security initiatives.

Conclusion

This study examined the role of Radio Kogi Ochaja in addressing terrorism in Nigeria through faith-based media engagement. Findings show that the station has become a credible platform for Islamic counter-radicalization, using Qur'anic guidance, community dialogue, and interactive programming to clarify misconceptions exploited by extremist groups. By promoting psychological stability and offering trusted religious counsel, the station helps listeners manage fear and build resilience, strengthening community cohesion and reducing the vulnerability that terrorist narratives often target. Its educational broadcasts further improve civic vigilance by teaching early signs of radical preaching and emphasizing peaceful, lawful reporting mechanisms. While Radio Kogi Ochaja plays a significant role in shaping public understanding and fostering communal resistance to extremist ideologies, its effectiveness depends on sustained credibility, consistent access to broadcast resources, and a stable socio-political environment. Moreover, faith-based media alone cannot resolve structural drivers of terrorism such as poverty, unemployment, and weak governance. Nonetheless, the station demonstrates the value of culturally rooted Islamic broadcasting as an essential complement to traditional security efforts. Strengthening such platforms and integrating them into broader counter-terrorism frameworks may enhance long-term peace and security in Kogi State and Nigeria at large.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several practical recommendations are proposed to strengthen the contribution of Radio Kogi Ochaja and similar faith-based media outlets in combating terrorism in Nigeria:

1. There is a need for continuous partnership between the station and credible Islamic scholars trained in counter-extremist discourse. Regular workshops, theological capacity-building, and access to scholarly materials will enable presenters to deliver narratives that effectively counter extremist interpretations of Islamic teachings.
2. Given that younger audiences increasingly access information online, Radio Kogi Ochaja should extend programming through social media, mobile apps, online streaming, and downloadable religious content. This strategy would increase access for audiences beyond traditional FM coverage, including at-risk youth populations targeted by extremist propaganda.
3. Program formats should continue to encourage audience call-ins, SMS contributions, field interviews, and community roundtables. A stronger audience feedback structure will help the station understand emerging threats, knowledge gaps, or misconceptions within local communities and respond more effectively.
4. Radio programs should further integrate content in the major indigenous languages of the broadcast region. Local-language counter-narratives are often more persuasive, relatable, and culturally grounded, increasing their capacity to challenge extremist interpretation and influence.
5. Journalists and religious broadcasters who address terrorism often face security risks. Therefore, protective support measures such as risk-management training help from local security agencies, and confidential reporting channels should be institutionalized to ensure their safety and professional confidence.

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