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Dawah Discourse through Short Videos (Reels) Between the Need for Simplification and the Problem of Intellectual Superficiality

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ABSTRACT: The field of da'wah has undergone profound changes in terms of communication methods; digital development has led to the emergence of communication platforms that rely on short videos as a medium for engaging with the public, particularly young people. These platforms have provided vast opportunities and spaces for conveying the da'wah message in an engaging and rapid manner; however, they have also posed challenges regarding the extent to which da'wah discourse can maintain its intellectual depth and strike a balance between simplification and intellectual superficiality that undermines the message's purpose and meaning. This article therefore aims to examine the nature of da'wah through short videos, analyse the characteristics of its discourse, identify the boundaries between simplification and intellectual superficiality, and propose methodological guidelines to rationalise this form of digital da'wah.

Keywords: digital da'wah discourse, contemporary da'wah discourse, short videos, digital platforms, scientific simplification, intellectual suprficiality.

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Introduction

Technological advancements in the field of communication have given rise to new forms of interaction, with various media and platforms emerging as influential and widely used channels. One prominent example is short-form video, which has introduced a new style of da'wah discourse characterised by brevity, focus and immediate visual impact, supported by compelling imagery, rapid pacing and ease of consumption.This shift has been reflected in Islamic da'wah discourse, which has increasingly been disseminated through these platforms, taking advantage of their ability to reach audiences quickly and influence them directly. In doing so, it has adopted concise and focused approaches suited to the nature of digital audience.

While this shift has had a significant impact and yielded positive results, it has also raised fundamental epistemological questions regarding the nature of da'wah content within the constraints of short-form communication. The question is whether these short videos help to simplify Islamic legal concepts and make them more accessible to audience, or whether they reduce da'wah discourse to a level of simplification that deprives its meanings of depth and may distort religious understanding. This is the focus of the present study.

In light of the aforementioned points, this research aims to examine the phenomenon of da'wah discourse through short videos using a scientific and analytical approach. The objective is to provide methodological guidance for digital da'wah discourse and enhance its effectiveness without compromising its substance.

The main question of this article can therefore be formulated as follows: How have the structure of short videos (Shorts Reels) and their technical constraints influenced contemporary da'wah discourse? And what are the Sharia guidelines that ensure an engaging yet scientifically sound simplification without resorting to intellectual superficiality?

Research objectives:

This article aims to highlight the limits of acceptable simplification and the manifestations of negative intellectual simplification, and thereby assess the impact of this communication style on the audience, as well as to present scientific criteria for the rationalisation of short da'wah content.

Significance of the research:

The significance of this research lies in its role as a systematic scientific endeavour to keep pace with contemporary shifts in communication; in the fact that short videos have become the most widely used medium on digital platforms by new da'wah practitioners; and in the expanding audience base for this form of communication. It has therefore become imperative to conduct serious academic studies exploring ways to regulate and control these practices so that they do not descend into frivolity or simplification that undermines the intended message of da'wah.

Research methodology:

The study adopted a descriptive-analytical approach; monitoring the reality of da'wah discourse through short videos and describing its simplification and superficiality, whilst analysing the causes of this phenomenon and its cognitive and religious implications, in order to formulate Shari'ah guidelines capable of achieving a balance in da'wah discourse without compromising the depth and objectives of its message.

Research design:

The study is divided into four sections, following the outline below:

First: Conceptual Introduction

Second: Characteristics of short videos and the motivations for their use

Third: The communicative environment of short videos: Advantages and disadvantages

Third: Da'wah discourse through short videos: between constructive simplification and harmful intellectual superficiality – manifestations and applications

Fourth: Guidelines and criteria for rationalising proselytising discourse through short videos

Part One: A Conceptual Introduction

Preface:

Da'wah discourse has undergone numerous phases since the advent of Islam, during which it has influenced many people whilst also being shaped by the events and changes that have taken place; yet, despite all this, Islamic da'wah has preserved its fundamental principles, methods and purposeful message. In what follows, we shall review some of the concepts of da'wah discourse, and one of the most widely used contemporary media: short videos.

1. Definition of da'wah discourse:

1.1 Definition of discourse:

A. Linguistically:

The term 'khutbah' appears in linguistic dictionaries under the entry "خ ط ب", where it is defined as follows:

— According to Ibn Fāris in his dictionary "Maqāyīs al-Lugha": 'The letters khā, tā and bā are two roots; one refers to speech between two people. It is said: "He addressed him with khatābahu, and yukhatibuhu, khitaban derives from this; the khutbah is the speech delivered in khutbah.'[1]

Thus, linguistically, the term 'khitab' refers to the speech delivered in a sermon and the review of that speech."Khitab" is speech, whether written or spoken; if it is written, it is called a 'khitab', and if it is spoken, it is a 'khutbah'.

B – Terminologically:

The concept of 'khitab' varies according to the semantic context and sphere of usage; for this reason, definitions of the term by Arab and Western scholars and researchers have been numerous and varied. The following are some of these definitions:

– Taha Abderrahmane defined it as: 'Any utterance directed at others with the aim of conveying a specific meaning to them**'.**[2]

– Razan Mahmoud Ibrahim defined it as follows: "The term 'discourse' refers to speech that extends beyond a single sentence, whether written or spoken**..."**[3] **.**

From the above definitions, we see that Taha Abderrahmane focused on the functional aspect; he considers that discourse is based on intention and purpose, and on directing speech towards others to convey a meaning to them. Whereas Razan Mahmoud Ibrahim focused on the structural and formal aspects, considering that discourse extends beyond a single sentence, whether written or spoken.

1.2 – Definition of Da'wah:

A. Linguistic:

– According to Ibn Manzur: 'A single instance of supplication; when people call out to one another until they gather; and the da'ah are those who call people to pledge allegiance to guidance or misguidance. One of them is a da'i, and a man is a da'iyah if he calls people to a heresy or a religion; the letter "ta" is added to it for emphasis'[4] **.**

B. Terminologically:

– Al-Ghazali's definition: "It is a comprehensive programme encompassing all the knowledge people need to discern the purpose of their existence and to discover the landmarks along the path that brings them together as people of sound judgement**."** [5]

– Abu al-Fath al-Bayyani's definition: "Conveying Islam to people, teaching it to them, and applying it in real life**."** [6]

Islamic da'wah is therefore the communicative process through which the message, principles and rulings of Islam are conveyed to people, using all lawful means of communication.

1.3. Definition of da'wah discourse:

It is clear from the above definitions that 'discourse' is not merely a string of words, but rather a directed communicative message with the intention and aim of informing and guiding the listener. When this message relates to religion and the reform of society, we are faced with what is known as 'da'wah discourse'. The following are some definitions formulated by researchers to clarify the meaning of this term.

– Omar Bouqroura defined it as **follows:** 'Dawah discourse must be underpinned by a relationship of faith that links the caller to God with the cultural norms that qualify him to be a capable role model, indeed a responsible witness to his own conduct before those being called and before God on the Day of Judgement, when deeds are brought to account'[7] .

This definition addresses the components and objectives of da'wah discourse and clarifies its function, combining the pillars of da'wah discourse with its functional and purpose-driven aspects (role modelling, cultural transformation and moral responsibility), thereby providing a comprehensive definition of the characteristics and essential elements of da'wah work. This definition offers an integrated vision of da'wah discourse; it is not intended merely as a means of conveying a message, but is defined as a faith-based,

civilisational project in which eloquence of speech is integrated with sincerity of action and awareness of reality, so that the da'iyah serves as a witness through his conduct before his words.

— Da'wah discourse is also defined as: "Addressing the two realms—humankind and the jinn—and calling them to Tawhid and the true religion, Islam; the discourse varies according to the condition of those being addressed, their time and place, and the condition of the preacher, so that at times the discourse is through words, at other times through deeds, and through setting a good example."

This definition represents a comprehensive and Maqasid-orienter vision of da'wah discourse, extending it beyond verbal proclamation to the realms of civilisational endeavour and integrated behavioural practice. It mentions other forms of discourse, such as proclamation through action and setting a good example; He also established the universality and comprehensiveness of the message by targeting all those accountable, both humans and jinn, and then linked this scope to the fundamental doctrinal objective, which is the call to Tawhid and the true religion. The definition highlighted the flexibility and realism of da'wah discourse by taking into account the circumstances of the audience and the varying contexts of time and place, It also emphasised the comprehensiveness of the means, which are not limited to spoken words, but rather made righteous deeds and setting a good example two fundamental pillars of influence; this makes the definition a comprehensive formulation that combines the authenticity of the principle with the flexibility of the means.

2. Definition of short videos:

Short video technology is the latest, most widespread and easiest-to-use media dissemination technology; in a short space of time, it has succeeded in disseminating a wealth of ideas, information and diverse intellectual content. The following are various definitions of this medium and this modern form of communication.

– **It is defined as**: 'An electronic medium for recording, copying, playing and displaying visual, audio and animated media; it is also a powerful and rich medium used in interactive e-learning, with the aim of presenting information in an engaging manner and within a short space of time'.[8]

– It is also defined as: "video clips typically ranging in length from 15 seconds to two minutes, produced and broadcast via social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts and Facebook Reels, with the aim of conveying a marketing message, promoting products or services, and increasing engagement with the target audience".[9]

— It is : "a collection of short video clips that allow users to watch them repeatedly or scroll through them quickly and easily on social media platforms, much like the speed with which a person moves from one tree to another in search of enjoyment whilst killing time with the least possible physical effort; Studies have also shown that watching these clips releases 'happiness hormones' – serotonin and dopamine – in the brain, which stimulates feelings of happiness; this is why we find ourselves drawn to them."[10]

— **It is** : "video clips circulating on social media, which initially lasted 15 seconds and subsequently ranged in length from 10 to 90 seconds, and their content varies between entertainment, religious, medical, political and educational topics, which may be meaningful or superficial. These clips are characterised by the fact that they enable both their users and viewers to share them with others, which has helped them to spread and be viewed by all sections of society."[11]

Based on the above, short Reels can be defined as: short-form videos published via social media apps that convey various ideas and information; these videos are designed to be quick to consume and easy to share, and they primarily use a vertical aspect ratio (9:16) to suit smartphone screens.

3. The concepts of simplification and intellectual superficiality , and the difference between them:

3.1 **Definition of simplification in da'wah content:**

Simplification in the da'wah message is of paramount importance, particularly when it relates to concepts of creed and jurisprudence; however, simplification may undermine this message by causing it to lose its significance, meaning and expressive power. Below, we shall present a definition of the term 'simplification' to clarify its meaning and outline its boundaries and guidelines.

A. **Linguistically:** To 'simplify' something is to explain it and make it straightforward and uncomplicated.[12]

The term 'simplification' thus refers to making something easier; for example, one might say that a teacher has worked to simplify a lesson, meaning to make it easier to understand.

B. Terminologically: The concept of simplification in technical terms does not deviate from its linguistic meaning; it has therefore been defined as: "a tendency to view things as simpler than they actually are, which often leads to generalisations or erroneous judgements, and which involves an innate predisposition in those in whom this tendency prevails". [13]

Simplification in da'wah content, therefore, involves making the meaning accessible and easier to understand, thereby removing complexity and ambiguity for the recipient; in this way, it contributes to conveying the da'wah message and enabling it to be correctly grasped and understood.

3.2 Definition of intellectual superficiality:

A. Linguistically:

Returning to the linguistic root of the term 'superficiality', we find that it refers to the levelling and flattening of a surface so that it becomes a single, uniform form[14], and thus carries the same meaning and technical connotation in the context of cultural and da'wah content.

B. Terminologically:

Dr Yahya Ahmad al-Qabali noted that intellectual superficiality involves rendering texts flat and devoid of depth; in other words, texts are abridged to suit the size of screens and the tastes of readers who are in a hurry.[15]

intellectual superficiality is the process of stripping knowledge of its content and epistemological value and transforming it into a commodity devoid of any message or purpose.

Among the meanings associated with the concept of the intellectual superficiality is **the 'superficiality of minds'**, which refers to: the reduction of individuals' capacity for critical and analytical thinking, turning them into passive recipients of information without questioning it or reflecting upon it; it is a stripping of thought of its depth, transforming people into consumers of easy knowledge, rather than producers or critics of it.[16]

3.3 The difference between scientific simplification and intellectual superficiality:

Based on the definitions provided for both terms, it becomes clear that there are fundamental differences between them, which lie in their purpose, epistemological value and impact on the recipient.

A. In terms of purpose and objective:

— Simplification seeks to make knowledge and meanings accessible, to remove complexity and ambiguity for the recipient, and to help them correctly understand the communicative message, particularly where it forms the basis for a legal ruling or a matter of faith.

— Whereas intellectual superficiality seeks to strip knowledge of its content and value, trivialising and commodifying texts to suit the pace of consumption and the size of screens, thereby reducing knowledge to a mere commodity devoid of any message or vision.

b. In terms of epistemic value:

— Simplification: preserves the essence and content of knowledge whilst making it more accessible to the recipient's understanding and removing ambiguity, so that its meaning becomes clear and easy to grasp without compromising, distorting or losing its substance.

– intellectual superficiality: This leads to the production of texts that are shallow and devoid of depth, and may result in misleading generalisations and erroneous judgements that cause the message to lose its meaning and the power of its implication.

C. In terms of its impact on the recipient:

— Simplifying information helps the reader to grasp and understand the idea, engage with it, and apply its provisions easily and effortlessly.

– intellectual superficiality leads to the dumbing down of minds, which in turn reduces the capacity for thought, analysis and critical thinking. This results in intellectual stagnation, the ossification of the human mind and a cessation of the functions of reflection, contemplation and the generation of ideas; thus, the individual is transformed into a machine that consumes information rather than producing it.

Secondly: The advantages of short videos and the reasons for using them

1. **Advantages of short videos:**

The most important features of short videos can be summarised as follows:

A. Editing tools: The three main platforms provide user-friendly editing tools, such as tools for enhancing text overlays and effects, and visual filters for videos[17] .

This demonstrates just how easy and accessible it is for anyone to create short videos, as content creators no longer need complex editing software or powerful computers. Thanks to the editing tools built into these platforms, anyone can edit their video and produce a professional-looking result using their smartphone in just a few minutes. Automatic subtitling is also available, with the words you speak in the video automatically appearing on screen and synchronised with your voice. You can also convert text to speech by typing text on the screen and having an AI voice pronounce it for you.

These tools make the process of creating short videos quick, interactive and accessible to any ordinary user, enabling them to become a content creator without the need for prior technical expertise. Consequently, the first and most important feature of short videos is the ease with which they can be worked on and the speed of editing and production, without the need for specialised software or technical assistants.

B – Integration of music: Music plays a vital role in short videos, and users can add a variety of audio clips to their videos, which often contributes to the content's popularity.[18]

The use of music in digital content is no longer merely a background sound; it has become a fundamental expressive element that reinforces the intended message and supports the semantic context of the visual clip. This harmony between sound and image has been driven by recent technological developments, prompting content creators to select music carefully to deepen the emotional impact on the viewer and increase the video's chances of going viral and gaining popularity.

C – Trends and Challenges: Short video platforms are characterised by viral trends that inspire users to create content around specific topics or hashtags.[19]

Viral trends and challenges are a key feature of short videos, as they are a fundamental driver of engagement on these platforms; as they lower the creative barrier for content creators by providing ready-made templates that encourage them to participate in content creation across social media platforms, supported by hashtags and audio clips as highly effective algorithmic aggregation and filtering tools. It has become a go-to option for brand owners, influencers and thought leaders when presenting their projects and showcasing their content, yet they face acute challenges, including the risk of monotony and boredom

resulting from repetitive content, as well as the ethical, psychological and legal risks associated with the emergence of challenges that may threaten public safety.

D – Algorithm Recommendations: The algorithms on these platforms curate content tailored to individual user preferences, encouraging continuous engagement and discovery.[20]

Algorithms on social media platforms increase the visibility of short videos favoured by the user and encourage them to share them, thereby increasing the user's exposure to such content.

E. Interaction and engagement: Users can like, comment on, share and follow content creators, which fosters a sense of community and social interaction.[21]

One of the advantages of short videos on social media platforms is the ease with which users can interact with the content – by liking, commenting or sharing – thereby helping to spread the content.

2. Motivations for using short videos:

Short videos are considered the most influential and rapidly growing media phenomenon in the contemporary digital landscape; this extraordinary public appeal and rapid proliferation did not arise out of nowhere, but rather as a natural response to the artistic and technical advantages unique to short videos, which have shaped their visual identity; these very qualities have consequently become the key drivers fuelling this proliferation, as the nature of the content and the way it is presented align with the behavioural changes of the modern audience, the drivers of which can be examined in detail below:

— Among the most prominent motivations cited in studies examining the reasons and motivations for using short videos apps is the **'chan'** study**,** which showed that motivations for use are determined by the fulfilment of four basic needs: knowledge, access to information, social interaction and entertainment.[22]

Furthermore, the study by **'Allison** Lawrence' highlighted the main motivations for users of short videos apps, noting that users seek entertainment when using the app; it also enables them to alleviate their feelings of loneliness to some extent, particularly in light of the lockdown measures imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the app's ease of use.[23]

Meanwhile, a study by **Wang** revealed that entertainment is not the only motivation for users of short videos apps, citing other reasons including the fulfilment of users' social needs. A study **by Ethan Bresnick** showed that, in addition to these other reasons, the aesthetic features of these apps play a role, as they offer audio and visual enhancements, alongside an increasing range of features available in the content library, such as colours and music, Furthermore, a study **by Tongyue Wang** identified other motivations for use related to internet celebrities or influencers, namely profit, as they capitalise on their millions of fans and followers through advertising revenue and e-commerce.[24]

Based on the aforementioned motivations for using short videos apps, it is evident that studies addressing this topic are diverse and varied, and that users' motivations for using these apps range from entertainment and leisure to fulfilling social needs and alleviating feelings of loneliness, in addition to the aesthetic features of these apps that attract users to follow them.

Third: The communicative environment of short videos: Advantage and disadvantage

1. The advantage of short videos and their role in facilitating intellectual superficiality:

- Short videos platforms offer enormous potential to transform viewing habits, as they provide short, engaging videos that capture and hold the viewer's attention.[25] They enable rapid dissemination and reach among non-followers.
- Their main mechanism for attracting viewers is personalised feeds that often prioritise content similar to what users have previously watched, which can boost current viewership; consequently, they significantly increase the amount of content a user views, thanks to an algorithm that promotes content tailored to the user.
- It provides access to news and informative content.

- Producing short videos is easy and inexpensive, which lowers the barrier to entry into the content creation industry.[26]

It is clear from the above that the communication benefits offered by short videos — namely, a wider visual reach, higher reach rates, the ability to target audience preferences efficiently, as well as visual appeal and cost-effective production — constitute an ideal environment that enables actors in the advocacy sphere, particularly new advocates, to adopt them as a strategic option. The importance of these advantages is evident in their functional role, which necessitates and facilitates constructive simplification of knowledge; as the nature of these clips requires the condensation of ideas, the stripping away of complexity and verbosity from the da'wah material, and the presentation of the intellectual essence in a smooth and engaging style that preserves the depth and scientific accuracy of the message, without compromising its ability to spread and influence the modern digital audience.

2. The disadvantages of short videos that lead to intellectual superficiality:

- Recommended content is becoming increasingly extreme over time, due to the dominance of algorithms prioritising entertainment and viewership at the expense of scholarly depth.
- Cost-effectiveness has turned short-form video apps into a space where anyone with a mobile phone can participate, even if they lack ideas or meaningful content.
- Users describe them as addictive and, in some people, they trigger neurological effects mimicking addiction; one user described TikTok's recommendation algorithm as knowing him better than he knows himself. Recent studies show that these platforms are conduits for right-wing political information and hate speech.
- This body of literature has raised concerns regarding data privacy, content moderation and the potential negative impact on mental health, alongside the app's rapid growth. Research has shown that short videos have a significant impact on user behaviour, and their addictive nature can lead to increased screen time, raising concerns about digital wellbeing.[27]

It is clear from the above that these limitations and risks combine to reveal the other side of the disadvsntage and the structural challenge facing short videos platforms; their drawbacks are not limited to the psychological and behavioural effects on users — such as digital addiction, increased screen time, privacy breaches, and algorithmic bias towards extremism, hate speech and misleading content — but extend to cast a direct shadow over the nature of da'wah content, pushing it towards harmful intellectual superficiality. The dominance of algorithms designed for entertainment and continuous viewing creates an environment that prioritises sensationalism and superficiality at the expense of scholarly rigour; this compels the da'wah producer — in response to the desire to reach — to reduce complex legal and intellectual issues to superficiality rulings that border on inaccuracy, stripping them of their contexts and jurisprudential conditions. Furthermore, low production costs and ease of use have opened the door for non-specialists or those lacking a well-established da'wah perspective to delve into religious issues; this has led to a fluidity of knowledge and a casual approach to issuing fatwas and presenting da'wah content, dominated by the pursuit of viral fame at the expense of quality and scholarly responsibility. Furthermore, the addictive nature of these platforms trains the consumer's mind to switch rapidly between clips and weakens their capacity for comprehension and sustained critical thinking; this renders sober da'wah discourse based on argumentation and reasoning unattractive in this environment, unless it compromises its in-depth analysis in favour of quick, consumerist soundbites.

Thirdly: Da'wah discourse via short videos: between constructive simplification and harmful intellectual superficiality – manifestations and applications

Contemporary da'wah discourse has undergone a transformation in its tools and modes of expression, shifting from traditional spaces such as the pulpit, scholarly gatherings and books to open digital environments. With the dominance of short-form videos (Shorts and Reels), the digital platform is no longer merely a neutral vessel for conveying Islamic knowledge, but has become a shaper of the content itself.

The technical nature of these platforms—which are based on attention-grabbing algorithms, require extreme brevity (with content often not exceeding 90 seconds), and involve competition for engagement—

has compelled preachers to adapt to these changing conditions. As a result of these technical constraints, da'wah discourse has found itself compelled to keep pace with the demands of digital transformation and its accelerating imperatives; this has given rise to a duality of intellectual superficiality and scientific simplification.

This crisis is evident in the transformation of religious and intellectual knowledge from a cumulative body of knowledge based on the examination and interpretation of religious texts into quick-fix da'wah 'servings'; where civilisational and intellectual crises are reduced to single causes, and authoritative jurisprudential interpretations are sidelined in favour of rulings and contentious issues that attract engagement, and calm conceptual analysis is replaced by emotional agitation and visual appeal.

Consequently, it becomes easy to identify instances of scientific simplification and intellectual superficiality, not merely as isolated errors on the part of certain preachers, but as an inevitable consequence of the combination of the fast-paced nature of digital media and the desire for mass reach; the following sections of this study address the manifestations of this phenomenon.

1. Manifestations of scientific simplification in da'wah discourse through short videos:

Contemporary da'wah discourse has been characterised by a sincere desire to make religious knowledge accessible, to connect with people's everyday realities, and to address them directly and fluently in the language of our times; These characteristics align with the advantages offered by short videos as a digital medium, which are primarily: conciseness, effective brevity, rapid delivery of the message, and the elimination of repetition.

To analyse the manifestations of scientific simplification in contemporary da'wah discourse across short videos platforms (Reels), methodological rigour requires that we do not begin directly with the technical shortcomings, but rather investigate how simplification arises from the dual interaction between the characteristics of contemporary da'wah discourse and the advantages of the digital medium. On this basis, the most prominent manifestations of this scientific simplification are evident in the following points:

A. Condensation and conciseness:

Condensation and conciseness are among the most prominent advantages of short videos on which digital da'wah discourse relies; through this technical feature, it seeks to provide direct and rapid answers that meet the audience's daily needs in a smooth, accessible and easy-to-understand manner.

This conciseness should not be viewed as a spontaneous reduction; but rather, da'wah discourse through short videos is a deliberate, purposeful and non-random endeavour, through which the preacher conveys the da'wah message in a focused manner; it incorporates all the intended interventions aimed at achieving pre-defined changes in the overt, ongoing or hidden behaviour of the target audience[28] . Consequently, condensation becomes a methodological tool for producing a precisely crafted discourse that addresses a single issue or specific matter without distraction, making it well-suited to the nature of the digital audience and directly targeted at those for whom it is intended.

This digital conciseness complements the function of scientific simplification with a fundamental characteristic of advocacy discourse, namely purpose'; for one of the reasons for the success of da'wa discourse is that it makes clarity a fundamental requirement in both purpose and content, thereby avoiding ambiguity, misunderstanding and confusion in the listener's mind. What helps the discourse to achieve this clarity and, in parallel, this condensation of knowledge is: adopting the language of those being addressed and using modes of expression that are familiar to their understanding, in accordance with the Qur'anic guidance in the words of Allah, the Exalted: {And We did not sent any Messenger except in the language of his people, to taste clearly for them, and Allah sends astray whom He wills and guides whom He wills, and He is the Exalted in might, the Wise} [Ibrahim: 4]. This da'wah discourse culminates in sensible simplification by avoiding convoluted speech and steering clear of terminology laden with obscure philosophical connotations that the general public cannot grasp; in accordance with the well-known saying

attributed to 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him: "Speak to the people according to thrie level of understanding; do you wish that Allah and His Messenger to be denied?" [29]

Thus, the conciseness and brevity of the short videos serve the purpose of accessibility and act as a means of bringing religion closer to people in their own words and contemporary language.

B – Ease of publication and rapid dissemination:

Short videos are characterised by their ease of use and the ease of creating content through them; they are also distinguished by their ability to spread widely in record time, this is precisely what contemporary digital da'wah discourse seeks to achieve, in an effort to keep pace with digital developments and convey its message to the widest possible audience worldwide. The algorithms of short videos apps and the rapid spread of shares help to convey the simplified da'wah message to millions of people in a matter of moments, thereby ensuring the message's universality and inclusivity. Scientific simplification thus becomes a means of presenting a message that is concise yet far-reaching, spreading the tenets of the religion and its tolerance at a pace commensurate with the times.

Da-wah outreach via these modern digital media facilitates communication with Muslims and non-Muslims across the globe through text, audio, and both moving and still images, thereby enabling easy communication through a variety of approaches.[30] This highlights the importance of integrating the capabilities of digital media with the fundamental da'wah principle of facilitating matters and removing hardship; for ease of communication is no longer merely an abstract technical possibility, but has become a systematic means of achieving scientific simplification in its positive sense.

The stylistic diversity (visual and audio) of short videos appeals to the various cognitive levels of the audience, thereby alleviating the burden on those engaged in da'wah in explaining and conveying the idea, whilst at the same time paving the way for recipients to access and assimilate accessible Islamic knowledge effortlessly. It combines the aesthetic appeal of the presentation with ease of distribution and rapid dissemination.

Thus, ease of use, rapid dissemination and widespread reach emerge as factors supporting scholarly simplification, whereby technology becomes a tool that broadens the scope of accessibility and ensures the message is conveyed to a wide audience.

C – Appropriate and precise language:

The preacher's language should be engaging, accessible and simple; neither obscure, harsh nor dry, nor vulgar or clumsy colloquialism, but rather a middle ground – a language that does not create barriers between the preacher and the audience, a language that dissolves and breaks through barriers, a language that is easy, straightforward and accessible to the understanding and minds of the listeners or viewers. Preachers must therefore speak the language of their own time; they must not address people as if they were from bygone eras and centuries, [31]

Dr Ali al-Danaf says: "How much we need to present our religion in an accessible manner and to make our discourse straightforward and simple! Yet some of us—whether speakers, teachers or preachers—resort to using obscure terminology in order to show off their linguistic prowess, making their speech convoluted and contrived to the point of grandiloquence and philosophising, as if they were speaking in riddles and cryptic phrases!! They believe this elevates their standing… Yet a simple, accessible word, if well chosen, has a profound effect on people's minds and penetrates hearts even before the call to prayer."[32] .

This linguistic simplification is evident in the way the preacher explains complex doctrinal and jurisprudential concepts using powerful, contemporary terms that are close to everyday language, without resorting to vulgarity or distorting the meaning, and by utilising the characteristics of short videos, which rely on visual impact to bring abstract concepts closer to the viewer through real-life examples and short explanatory sentences, thereby making the language audible and the concept visible.

Thus, linguistic simplification becomes a manifestation of scientific simplification in da'wah discourse through short videos and a necessity dictated by the digital age; for it removes the linguistic barriers that hinder the audience's understanding and facilitates their assimilation of religious knowledge, and this fulfils the purpose of linguistic expression, which is the fundamental reason for the sending of the messengers and the conveyance of the message.

Based on the aforementioned manifestations of scientific simplification, this digital approach is, in essence, at odds with complexity, rigidity and verbal vulgarity; for it represents a systematic response to the requirements of the contemporary audience by achieving the integration of the da'wah characteristics of the da'wah discourse with the technical elements of the short videos. This simplification is evident in the extreme conciseness and brevity that focus the idea and shape it into a direct message that meets the needs of an audience seeking content that is both brief and impactful, and in the ease and speed of dissemination and reach, which facilitate access to knowledge, ensure the message's comprehensiveness and universality, and enable the preacher to disseminate their content and achieve effectiveness in a short time and at minimal cost, as well as the use of easy, simple, and precise language that breaks down the rigidity of technical terms and penetrates the psychological and cognitive barriers of the recipient, thereby making da'wah discourse via short videos a bridge that brings religion closer and facilitates its understanding without compromising its substance.

2 – Manifestations of intellectual superficiality in da'wah discourse via short videos

Whilst intellectual superficiality is a positive requirement that elevates religious discourse to a universal level, meets the needs of the audience, and utilises digital tools professionally and methodically whilst upholding the norms and conditions of religious discourse, intellectual superficiality is its antithesis, diverting religious discourse from its rightful course, and leads it towards dogmatism and imitation, stripping the discourse of its content, substance and message, thereby causing it to lose its distinctiveness and legitimacy. The unregulated proliferation of short videos, coupled with the preacher's lack of a methodological vision, transforms scientific simplification into intellectual superficiality. The methodological approach in this section requires a deconstruction of the manifestations of this superficiality, based on the sharp convergence between the drawbacks and constraints of the digital medium—as represented by short videos—and the drawbacks and challenges of contemporary da'wah discourse. The following are the most prominent manifestations of the intellectual superficiality of da'wah discourse through short videos:

A. The commodification of religion:

The most significant manifestation of the danger of intellectual superficiality in da'wah discourse via short videos is evident in the commodification of religious content; under the weight of this intellectual narrow-mindedness and the constraints of digital algorithms, digital da'wah discourse deviates from its mission of guidance and clarification to become a consumer product in which the image dominates the word, governed by the mechanisms of supply and demand and the pursuit of engagement.

"This is considered one of the most dangerous contemporary phenomena, as it links the spread of da'wah to the number of views and commercial advertisements; this may lead to a shift in the discourse's intention from serving the message to serving the self, which contradicts the sincerity of da'wah."[33]

His Eminence Sheikh Hassan Al-Saffar says: 'The world today is witnessing an unprecedented explosion of knowledge, with sources of knowledge now widely available via electronic devices, and people are now bombarded daily with a deluge of information and opinions, He explained that this reality has contributed to a dumbing down of knowledge across various fields – religious, political, cultural and social – as the culture of in-depth research and careful reading has declined, replaced by 'fast food' information, which is consumed without reflection or scrutiny.[34]

To meet the requirements of platform algorithms that reward sensational and controversial content, da'wah discourse has shifted from its function of clarification and guidance to the logic of profitable digital content creation. Consequently, religious issues and profound theological matters are addressed with an eye to mass

appeal, and controversial, unusual or bizarre topics are raised simply to ride the wave of trends, thereby stripping da'wah of its ethical objectives and transforming the discourse into a short-lived consumer commodity.

We also find that contemporary preachers are turning to such digital media in pursuit of financial gain, "Da'wah has thus become a 'business', with the 'profit-driven' nature dominating da'wah and media work"[35] . The danger of this profit-driven shift lies in the reshaping of the digital da'i's priorities; the aim of guidance and clarification takes a back seat to the logic of supply and demand and the pursuit of engagement. Consequently, the criterion for the success of a da'wah video becomes dependent on the extent to which it generates financial returns and viewership figures. This encourages the production of superficial religious content that relies on sensationalism and attention-grabbing headlines to suit the algorithms of these websites and apps, whilst catering to the preferences of the digital audience, thereby stripping the da'wah message of its intellectual depth and its moral and ethical substance. This turns da'wah discourse into a form of spectacle, transforming acts of worship and ethics into visual displays aimed at attracting attention and garnering likes and comments, rather than instilling reverence.

B. Using controversial issues to generate public sensationalism

The content of da'wah discourse in short videos is becoming increasingly sensational and charged over time, due to the dominance of algorithms designed to maximise entertainment and viewership at the expense of scholarly depth. The pursuit of superficial mass appeal, a fascination with rare and outlandish opinions, and the neglect of the principles governing the management of doctrinal differences and consideration for the interests of da'wah have trapped contemporary da'wah discourse on digital media in a web of intellectual superficiality.

In recent years, social media platforms have been flooded with certain contentious issues that recur frequently on the pages of imams and da'wah preachers, such as: the ruling on celebrating the Prophet's birthday, the recitation of the 'Wird', the Qur'an and dhikr in congregation, and other issues where differences of opinion take precedence and overshadow the pressing concerns of the Muslim community.[36]

This phenomenon manifests itself in an over-reliance on controversial jurisprudential issues and their digital reproduction as attention-grabbing headlines designed to attract views; for jurisprudential knowledge based on ijtihad is, at its core, founded on consideration of the underlying objectives, an analysis of the consequences, and a gradual approach to presenting differences of opinion to both specialists and the general public. However, the characteristics of short videos—namely, time constraints and the pressure to make an impact in the opening seconds—combine with the shortcomings of contemporary da'wah discourse to produce a simplistic, fundamentalist treatment of the contentious issue, resulting in the fragmentation of fatwas and their severance from their foundational context; where an unusual or less-preferred jurisprudential opinion is extracted and presented as a cognitive shock without citing its conditions or the corresponding evidence, thereby giving the viewer a superficial impression that Sharia is merely a collection of conflicting opinions not governed by scientific rules.

Consequently, the reliance on controversial issues merely to attract views transforms from a fleeting digital practice into a glaring manifestation of the dumbing down of the Muslim mind and the fragmentation of its jurisprudential awareness.

C – Non-specialist preachers and the transformation of the preacher into an influencer:

Sharia knowledge is, at its core, a revelatory science that requires a firm grounding in the principles of Islamic jurisprudence and mastery of its methodological tools. However, the culture of short videos and their technical characteristics have imposed new standards of legitimacy, with popular authority and visual charisma replacing scholarly and institutional authority. This has trapped da'wah discourse in a web of intellectual superficiality, as evidenced by the following aspects:

– Non-specialist preachers are taking the lead in da'wah work:

The digital medium has provided direct channels that have made mastery of editing techniques and visual appeal a substitute for years of scholarly study and precise specialisation. This has opened the door for non-specialists to delve into, for example, jurisprudential issues and complex doctrinal matters, presenting them in a superficial manner that lacks depth andshariah compliance.

The reason for this shift lies in religious satellite channels' preference for religious figures who meet the needs of the younger generation. In this context, **Dr Abdul Hamid Al-Ansari** highlighted the reasons for employing non-specialist preachers, stating: "There was a near-consensus that official religious institutions had failed to develop themselves, keep pace with societal changes or renew their methods of da'wah. Consequently, the traditional da'wah discourse has become one that does not meet the needs of the new generations of young people, does not reflect the aspirations of society and is incapable of addressing contemporary challenges. This has led to the emergence of a new category of preachers from outside religious institutions, who did not acquire their religious education through these institutions, but who have mastered the art of mass communication, are skilled in utilising new media technologies, and address issues of a different nature from the usual traditional ones, A new generation that does not grow beards, wears the latest fashions, pays attention to colour coordination, and uses colloquial expressions in the language of young people. They have transformed the preaching discourse—which was based on instilling fear of Hell and promising Paradise—into a discourse that endears young people to life and happiness, spreading joy and love, listening to music and enjoying the arts, They recount folk tales about the Prophet, peace be upon him, the Companions, the Imams and historical figures in a way that suits contemporary life, whilst also offering practical advice relevant to the everyday concerns of young people.[37]

Responding to the needs of the public and keeping pace with digital developments is not a flaw in itself, but when this response becomes a concession and submission to the demands of trends and view counts, it renders the da'wah discourse trite and superficial, reducing it to levels that distance it from its legitimate function and strip it of its objectives and spirit, until it becomes a danger and a reprehensible deviation.

The accessibility of these digital media has enabled anyone with a mobile phone to wade into religious matters, speak in the name of Sharia, and interpret Qur'anic texts according to their own whims and intellectual background. This has led to a disregard for the requirements of scholarly competence and methodological rigour necessary for elucidating religious rulings and engaging in da'wah and issuing fatwas.

The danger of non-specialists engaging in da'wah discourse lies in the transformation of Islamic jurisprudence from well-founded knowledge, governed by the rules of deduction and the objectives of Sharia, into individual impressions and fragmented assertions; whereby these new preachers presume to interpret Qur'anic verses without possessing the tools of exegesis or an understanding of its methodologies, schools of thought and linguistic sciences, and to circulate Prophetic hadiths without knowing their degree of authenticity; indeed, some of them have gone so far as to disseminate weak or fabricated hadiths, and to disparage or re-evaluate narrators without methodological basis, not to mention taking the lead on contemporary fiqh issues and matters of creed without familiarity with the principles of fiqh or the implications of such discourse. This has resulted in a chaos of digital fatwas and has caused confusion and turmoil amongst the general public; it perpetuates a state of widespread intellectual superficiality that strips Islamic discourse, across its various disciplines, of its scholarly depth and methodological authority.

– The transformation of preachers into influencers:

Islamic influencers have emerged as a new model of religious actors; they often do not belong to traditional institutions and may lack a deep grounding in Islamic jurisprudence. Although technology has played an important role in disseminating religious culture, it has reduced the individual to a mere recipient of information; however, this situation changed with the advent of the internet, as the pace of technological advancement in the dissemination of religion took a quantum leap, This trend has led preachers, self-styled scholars, and ordinary educational preachers to embrace the use of technology in spreading religious messages and culture in order to reach the widest possible audience and achieve the highest viewership

figures; every individual has become a producer of religious information and a source[38] , and this has given rise to a new generation of preachers in the guise of influencers.

"The preacher has been transformed into a religious marketer who adopts a modern style of discourse: casual attire, colloquial language and English terminology. He avoids traditional preaching based on intimidation, focusing instead on superficial spirituality, self-development and happiness to attract the audience, thereby subjecting religion to the logic of supply and demand in the media market. The preacher's attention is now, for the most part, fixed on the number of these followers, to the extent that pleasing them has come to rely on a conventional discourse taking the form of snippets of quotes or short videos."[39]

The 'influencer' model forces the preacher to conform to a platform culture based on entertainment and visual spectacle; scholarly dignity is thus replaced by theatrical performance, and Sharia rulings are reduced to fit the format of light-hearted videos, causing the preacher to lose his authority, his purpose and his sincerity towards God in his preaching.

Contemporary influencers who present themselves as new preachers have revealed their lack of educational grounding in Islamic jurisprudence during debates or discussion sessions, and have revealed a populist culture mixed with ideas of globalisation, presented in a pseudo-Islamist guise under the banners of humanity and universal ethics, without any sound Islamic basis, whilst relying heavily on personal stories and experiences, whilst neglecting the Prophetic hadiths and the sayings of the Companions.

D – Superficiality and emotional exaggeration:

These new influencers rely more on emotional appeal than on rational discourse, a phenomenon known in communication studies as 'emotional rhetoric', whereby da'wah content is framed in a narrative or humanistic style to attract engagement. Whilst this approach helps to broaden the audience, it may upset the balance between scientific and emotional content.[40]

This argument highlights one of the most prominent manifestations of intellectual superficiality in contemporary da'wah discourse via short videos; namely, the prioritisation of emotional preaching and emotional appeal over intellectual rigour and scholarly grounding. The danger lies in the excessive use of emotional rhetoric in the digital environment, transforming the da'wah message from a means of building awareness and consolidating Islamic concepts into a tool for stirring momentary emotions and generating fleeting engagement—as this engagement and emotional response are tied to transient emotional triggers. For whilst this narrative and showy style is capable of expanding the follower base and garnering engagement, it instils in the recipient a form of religiosity based on temporary emotional influence, whilst completely sidelining well-grounded jurisprudential knowledge and established doctrinal concepts.

Consequently, this imbalance between scholarly content and emotional appeal results in a superficial da'wah discourse that appeals to emotion at the expense of reason, thereby stripping religious content of its profound educational and intellectual objectives.

Based on the foregoing, the intellectual superficiality in da'wah discourse via short videos is a negative reflection of the intersection between the constraints of the digital medium and the shortcomings of contemporary da'wah approaches. The prioritisation of emotional rhetoric and sentimentality over rational structure and scholarly grounding, the commodification of religious content through reliance on algorithmic logic and the creation of sensationalism to garner engagement and financial returns, coupled with the decline of scholarly specialisation and the preacher's assimilation into the persona of the 'digital influencer'; all of which transform Islamic legal knowledge from a well-established intellectual and educational system into fast-consumable material that strips da'wah discourse of its depth and stifles the recipient's critical awareness. These factors have rendered digital da'wah discourse via short videos superficial, devoid of its Islamic legal content and its divine purpose.

Fourth: Guidelines and criteria for regulating da'wah discourse via short videos:

With the growing technical constraints of communication media and the increasing rush of new preachers towards them, coupled with the absence of a conscious commitment to the Sharia standards and

regulations governing contemporary da'wah discourse via these modern digital applications, it has become imperative to establish Sharia guidelines to regulate the use of these platforms and ensure they are utilised correctly, striking a careful balance between the requirements of clear communication and ease of access on the one hand, and the preservation of the authenticity and depth of Sharia knowledge on the other. The following are some of these guidelines:

1. To proceed from the correct Islamic perspective; whereby da'wah discourse explains and reinforces its major principles, namely: sound creed, worship in accordance with the Sunnah, upright upbringing, virtuous ethics, and a moderate stance, without excess or negligence in all matters of life.[41]

2. Setting priorities and not getting bogged down in minutiae, contentious issues, or disputes amongst Muslims in general; so that their ranks may be united and they may come together.[42]

3. A sincere and pure intention for the sake of Allah, the Exalted; for there is a vast difference between a da'i who feels the weight of the mission and carries the concerns of Muslims in his heart, striving to guide, call and enlighten them, and another da'i whose sole concern is to amass wealth or fame.

4. Taking into account the preacher (da'iyah's) area of scholarly specialisation, and requiring those leading the digital discourse to possess sound knowledge and a firm grounding in Islamic jurisprudence, by limiting themselves to the fields of Islamic studies in which they are proficient, and preventing non-specialists from delving into complex fiqh issues, delicate matters of creed, and issues of exegesis and hadith that require tools of ijtihad and a solid foundation in the principles of Islamic jurisprudence.

5. The need for new preachers to distinguish between beneficial simplification—which makes Islamic concepts accessible in a manner the public can understand—and harmful oversimplification, which takes texts out of context and strips Islamic content of its foundational principles. This is achieved by addressing all aspects of the issue at hand without omission.

6. Relying on Islamic evidence and rational argument as the fundamental basis for the content, and not limiting oneself to emotional appeals or entertaining narrative styles; this ensures the development of a solid faith-based and intellectual awareness in the recipient, rather than merely a fleeting emotional response.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear to us that contemporary da'wah discourse via short videos faces a dual methodological challenge; this is embodied in the attempt to capitalise on the communicative appeal and rapid dissemination of modern digital media, whilst simultaneously countering the danger of slipping into 'intellectual superficiality' and the 'commodification of the da'wah message'. The study reached the following conclusions:

1. Algorithmic dominance and the attention economy have contributed to the emergence of da'wah styles based on sensationalism and emotional manipulation, the erosion of the foundational structure, and the prominence of non-specialists, whilst the figure of the preacher as an educator has become conflated with the behavioural model of the digital influencer.

2. Scientific simplification is a da'wah and communicative necessity dictated by the realities of the age, provided that it is not used as a pretext to fragment Islamic legal rulings or to strip the discourse of its scholarly depth and fundamentalist authority.

3. The danger of intellectual superficiality in da'wah discourse via short videos is not limited to merely reducing an idea or summarising a text; rather, it extends to a dangerous stripping of Islamic legal knowledge of its foundational and educational depth, and transforming it from an integrated system of faith and thought—upon which the rulings for the faithful are based and which enlightens them regarding their religion—into individual impressions and fleeting, consumable 'knowledge snacks' that appeal to momentary emotions and feed a craving for excitement, without progressing beyond this to build a solid understanding of Islamic law.

4. The study concluded that the advancement of digital da'wah discourse requires moving beyond dependence on algorithms towards an horizon of conscious digital grounding; committed to the standards of scholarly competence, the jurisprudence of objectives and consequences, the rationalisation of emotional rhetoric through rational and Sharia-based evidence, and the purification of da'wah from market logic and pure profit-seeking.

5. The overriding objective must always remain the guidance of people, addressing their concerns and reforming their circumstances, so that the digital medium becomes a tool serving the essence of the Islamic message, rather than a measure of its depth or a criterion for its legitimacy. [43]

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