

Newsworthy of Criteria of Da'wa Influencers' Instagram Reels

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Abstract

Da'wa Influencer has made Instagram (IG) as the main platform for them to make personal branding and disseminate islamic-preaching messages to public. The effective news writing that able to attract reader's attention is the one that fulfil all the newsworthiness criteria. Although the frequency of video updates from most of the Da'wa Influencer are quite consistent on Instagram, but still unable to reach a higher number of views and not fulfilling the public interest because of lacking of application of the newsworthiness criteria. Due to that issue, this research purpose is to measure the application of the newsworthiness criteria in viral videos produced by Da'wa Influencer on IG platform precisely. This research is a qualitative-based research that implementing content analysis on viral videos produced by Da'wa Influencer on IG based on the Bednarek & Caple's Discursive News Values Analysis Theory. Research findings reported that are four main criteria which frequently being applied by the Da'wa Influencer. Criteria with the highest frequency was the prominence (people/celebrity) with 30% percentage, followed by impact and proximity, both with 25% and the least one was the timeliness with only 20%. This research can be set as reference by the Da'wa Influencer in producing a high impact quality videos which fulfilling all the four (4) criteria of newsworthiness to ensure that their videos would be more effective instead of just spreading awareness to public on how the social media works in term of the dissemination of Islamic preaching also added new understandings to the Da'wa Influencer that mosque is not the only way for us in developing and widening the Islamic knowledge in this 21st century.

Keywords: Newsworthiness, Viral, Video, Instagram, Da'wa Influencer

Introduction

Instagram (IG) is a popular social media application that is seen as an intermediary media for users to interact by sharing pictures and videos. This application emphasises audio and visual elements through short videos (reels), which enable users to create video content with music, thus making the creations more interactive and fun (Ratri 2020; Ririn & Koe, 2022; Diah et al., 2022). The supporting features of this media such as like, comment, and share are the added

values that can attract consistent use of the application (Setiawati et al., 2023). With this advantage, Instagram has succeeded in attracting young people's interest in building their identity and self-confidence. The application allows them to present their personality and identity by sharing online photos or video updates with other Instagram users (Ririn & Koe, 2022).

Social media like Instagram is the right media for spreading da'wah (Abdul Wahab et al., 2019). Delivery of da'wah through reels is seen as aligned with the will of today's society, as some of them prefer watching videos to reading (Othman et al., 2022). Therefore, a skilful preacher or influencer who uses this media can bridge the relationship between preachers and mad'u through the exchange of information between their followers, particularly through the comment section on each post. This interaction then can anchor the da'wah's targets, particularly the youth, to be closer to Islam (Nisa, 2018; Syukor, 2011). Such endeavour necessitates good da'wah content to attract the interest of the target group to interact with the preacher.

In the journalism field, news that attracts many readers, known as "newsworthiness", generally demonstrates more than 20 criteria. Some scholars have found that most of the criteria typically used to measure popular and most-read news are people, conflict, impact, oddity, and negativity (Ashaari & Saparudin, 2012 ; Kim et al., 2017). This study examines four characteristics of newsworthiness identified to be the yardstick in determining video content that attracts people's interest on Instagram. The question that arose was how these features were used as a yardstick to analyse the short videos of popular preachers on Instagram. This study, therefore, examines the application of the newsworthiness criteria in creating preaching content that went viral through Instagram as a means to identify the most influential newsworthiness criteria that can increase reach and interaction.

Da'wah Influencer

Based on Sari's study, an influencer is an individual who has a significant number of followers on social media, and who is paid by a company to promote a product. The aim of the latter is to have an influencer influence their followers to purchase a product due to the belief with their skills, knowledge, and status, an influencer has the power to influence people's purchasing decisions. Researchers have also found another term used to refer to an *influencer* on Instagram, i.e. *Instafamous* (Saleh et al., 2019). Instagram is also seen as more relatable to the younger generation because it contains a variety of information that interests them, such as the latest trends and fashion, sports of interest, and hobbies—all of which often presented on the news feed by the Instafamous (Naura & Sutisna, 2022; Saleh et al., 2019). This study adopts the term *da'wah influencer* to refer to an influential individual who has (i) a large number of followers on Instagram, (ii) knowledge of religious knowledge, and (iii) the skills to use information technology applications to preach on Instagram.

Accordingly, the use of Instagram as a means of delivering da'wah is seen as more efficient and effective whether through quality visualisations (pictures), symbols and signs in short videos (reels), and snippets (captions) of simple writing that is easy to understand (Subakti, 2021; Danu & Abdul Halim, 2022). Practically, Malaysian preachers who are active on social media and with huge following can be categorised into two types: those with formal religious education or those without a religious education background (Ab Rahim et al., 2023).

An example of the former is Ustaz Wadi Annuar, Ustaz Azhar Idrus, Dr Zulkifli Bakri, Ustaz Abdullah Khairi, Ustazah Asma Harun, Ustazah Asni Mansor, Ustazah Asmak Husin, Ustazah Norhafizah Musa, while an example of the latter is Alif Satar, Asmawi Ani, Yusuf Bahrin, Heliza Helmi, Diana Amir and others who continuously brings religious value through their post updates on Instagram.

Newsworthiness Criteria

Newsworthiness refers to the interesting quality of a particular material that has the potential to attract people's attention to the news. Other terms for newsworthiness include news value, news criteria, or news characteristics. News that has newsworthiness characteristics will attract the attention of many viewers/readers and can even become viral. Viral here refers to anything that is shared and uploaded that can become a sensational issue on social media because it is seen as a polemic topic of debate among the general public due to the news' popularity, sensation, or controversy (Ramli et al., 2021). Such news will make the general public hungry for more information or answers to the questions raised in the news headline, or to satisfy their curiosity for something new by using the captions on clickbait videos. The strategy therefore aims to attract readers' attention by exposing new information that has not been revealed (Bazaco & Sánchez-García, 2019).

A graduate study from 1960 to 2020 found that the most frequently used newsworthiness criterion is oddities, impact, proximity, prominence, novelty, conflict, elite, impact, personalization, drama, unusual nature, celebrities, helpfulness, entertainment, trends, currency/ timeliness, significant, people, interesting, frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, human interest and negativity, positive (good news), negative (bad news), unexpectedness/odd, elite people (celebrity), entertainment, social significance/magnitude, humor, human interest, sexuality, animals, children, practical value/utility, emotional content (sadness/anger/anxiety/awe), humour, eroticism and violence (Galtung & Mari Ruge, 1965; Brooks, 1988; Harriss & Johnson, S., 1989; Fedler et al., 1997; Yaakob, 2008; Kershner, 2009; Shoemaker & Cohen, 2012; Berger & Milkman, 2013; Al-Rawi, 2019; Dafonte-Gómez et al., 2020).

Accordingly, the researcher will assess short-duration videos updated by da'wah influencers on Instagram by analysing the application of the newsworthiness criteria. This method has been applied by journalists and reporters in determining the criteria for an incident or event that can be considered news, which aims to get the attention and focus of the community. Through these criteria, the researchers will assess the four main newsworthiness criteria of prominence, impact, proximity, and timeliness to analyse the influencers' viral videos on Instagram.

Discursive News Value Theory

The application of theory is important in every study because it directly influences the findings. Bednarek's theoretical framework was considered suitable for social media studies on attractive news value (Bednarek & Caple, 2017). According to Darwalis et al (2021)'s study, this framework is a new linguistic theory that can be based upon to study the aspects of news value, visual news, and verbal-visual news linguistically. The framework proposes ten categories of news value:

● *Stereotypical*

Events that have general stereotyped characteristics based on agreement and harmony between views or actions in society. This is related to the typical characteristics that are usually accepted in the community towards an image, idea, type of person or thing and gives rise to belief so that they stick to the established pattern.

● *Prominence*

News values can consist of status, power, celebrities, famous individuals, events, nations, and things. Individual expertise, fame, and power based on the use of various status markers, labels, adjectives, nouns, terminology, achievements and others are also classified as elite.

● *Impact*

An event that has an important effect or consequence in society, such as a deep and significant mental effect or consequence on the reader. The impact can either be positive or negative implications for individuals or society.

● *Negative*

Events are built based on negative values from an emotional point of view, deeds, actions, emotions, and attitudes. Following this, all the highlighted events highlight a negative value.

● *Positive*

Events are built based on positive values from an emotional point of view, deeds, actions, emotions and attitudes. This context that is appropriate to the event of a person's success or recognition highlights positive values.

● *Personalisation*

The value of personalized news refers to ordinary individuals in the event based on their experiences, reactions and emotions in the event to the reader. This matter is related to an individual having experience in a matter and having the ability to convey it to the community clearly and effectively.

● *Proximity*

Refers to events that describe the geography or culture closest to the location and distance of the publication or target audience. This criterion refers to the explicit place, country, community, place, adjectives and inclusive and exclusive first-person pronouns.

● *Significance*

Refers to large-scale events such as the number, amount, size of entities and other aspects. This is related to all events that highlight the highest degree, severity or intensification of the event.

● *Timeliness*

Timeliness refers to the characteristics of time, such as temporal elements in events. For example, this element also consists of temporal references, current trends, seasonality and a change to a more recent one.

- *Oddity/bizarre*

Value this news that refers to awkward, strange and rare events. Anything that describes a strange event, an unprecedented occurrence, a rarity, an element of surprise and comparison that indicates the out of the ordinary.

Methods

A qualitative approach was carried out in terms of the study design, method of data gathering, and method of data analysis. In the first phase, data collection, the researcher reviewed related publications through the library method, social media methods, and content analysis. Observation of social websites was also conducted to facilitate the gathering of complete data. To collect the data, the Instagram accounts of four da'wah *influencers* with 1 million followers were chosen.

Table 1

List of Da'wa Influencer with their followers Instagram(IG)

Bil	Da'wa Influencer	Name Account Instagram	Total Followers on Instagram (01/01/2024)
1	Ustaz Azhar Idrus	@uiaoriginal	1.7M
2	Dr Zulkifli Al-Bakri	@drzulkifli.albakri	1.2M
3	Ustazah Asma Harun	@ustazahasmaharun	1.1M
4	Ustazah Norhafizah Musa	@Ustazahnorhafizahmusa	1.0M

The study was conducted by assessing the reels of the da'wah influencers that have received the most views throughout the six-month study period. Then, content analysis was performed to analyse the data descriptively based on the four *newsworthiness* criteria addressed in Bednarek' theoretical framework. The data studied were derived from five viral videos from the four preachers. The videos selected were those in the Malay language version and were available during the study period. Upon completing the analysis, the findings were presented according to each category of news value and order of the month, starting from January until June 2023. The four criteria selected were based on the suitability of those criteria in videos that went viral on Instagram. Each of the methods applied has been detailed so that the relevance of the relationship in the study can be seen clearly and achieve the research objectives. The findings are hoped to result in netizens' being influenced by the message brought by the da'wah Influencers, i.e., by bringing the former closer to the religion.

Results

This section presents the findings based on the research objectives, which are to analyse the criteria of newsworthiness or news value of the five videos selected based on several criteria addressed in the Discursive News Value Analysis Theory. Most of the videos were considered viral on Instagram because they received a lot of views and likes. Table 2 enlists the da'wah influencers selected and the total views and likes of each of their Instagram reels posted throughout the study period.

Table 2

Lists the Da'wah Influencers and the total views and likes of each of their Instagram reels in Instagram

Bil	Da'wa Influencer	Posting	Total of Views	Total of Likes
1	Ustaz Azhar Idrus	1	537K	37.7K
		2	584K	45.5K
		3	499K	32.7K
		4	218K	16.5K
		5	356K	28.6K
2	Ustaz Dr Zulkifli Mohamad Al-Bakri	1	567K	1.7K
		2	274K	32.4K
		3	131K	15.0K
		4	121K	9.7K
		5	127K	6.1K
3	Ustazah Asma' Harun	1	373K	28.2K
		2	352K	19.8K
		3	576K	18.8K
		4	539K	52.2K
		5	520K	30.3K
4	Ustazah Datuk Dr Norhafizah Musa	1	391K	30.4K
		2	356K	22.4K
		3	265K	16.4K
		4	487K	20.3K
		5	154K	9.5K

Ustaz Azhar Idrus's(UAI)Instagram has a total of 2276 thousand viewers throughout the study period. For the year 2023, he posted 34 times in a span of 4 months. However, in

May and June, none of his posts were in the form of reels as more content in the form of pictures and posters were posted in the two months. Analysis of his posts also indicates that the criterion of impact was used in all of the posts studied. The timeliness criterion was demonstrated only in the second and third posts. The first and second posts employed all the criteria for going viral which garnered both posts a higher number of views (537,000 views and 584,000 views, respectively) compared to the other three posts. The third post received the third highest number of views (499,000 views) followed by the fifth post (356,000 views). The fourth post received the fewest number of views (218,000 views).

The subsequent analysis was of the Instagram account of Dr. Zulkifli al-Bakri, who is a respected religious figure in Malaysia. Throughout the 6-month data collection period, Dr. Zulkifli al-Bakri posted as many as 46 posts. The total number of criteria demonstrated garnered an average of 374,000 views. The post that received the most views (567,000 views) demonstrates all the criteria of newsworthiness i.e. prominence, impact, proximity and timeliness. From the researcher's observation, Dr. Zulkifli al-Bakri's posts concern mainly his daily activities, but each of the posts touch on the value of da'wah and has its own motive to convey.

Furthermore, Ustazah Asma' Harun(UAH) is a popular preacher today. His posts an average of 36 posts per month, 472,000 views were gained from the 215 posts throughout the period. His videos contain all the newsworthiness criteria (prominence, impact, proximity & timeliness) that can make the videos viral. The post that received the highest number of views was the third post (576,000 views) while the second post received the least number of views (352,000 views). Each post demonstrates prominent and impact, whereas the elements of timeliness and proximity were the least demonstrated in his posts.

The last preacher studied was Ustazah Norhafizah Musa(UHM). The average number of posts he sends monthly is 10 posts with the total number of views received with an average of 1653k throughout the study period. His first post received 391,000 views; his second, 356,000 views; and his third, 265,000 views. The highest number of views was 487,000 views, while the fifth post received the lowest number of views (154,000 views). The third and fourth posts were found to contain newsworthiness criteria that helped the content to become viral.

Each influencer applied almost similar *newsworthiness* criteria towards viralling their posts. As mentioned, *newsworthiness* consists of various aspects that depict the values of elements of each news that attract many people. News or stories that are to be employed as preaching content in videos on Instagram must coincide with issues and questions in society. This research findings reported that are four main criteria which frequently being applied by the Da'wa Influencer. Criteria with the highest frequency was the prominence (people/celebrity) with 30% percentage, followed by impact and proximity, both with 25% and the least one was the timeliness with only 20% as mention in figure 1:

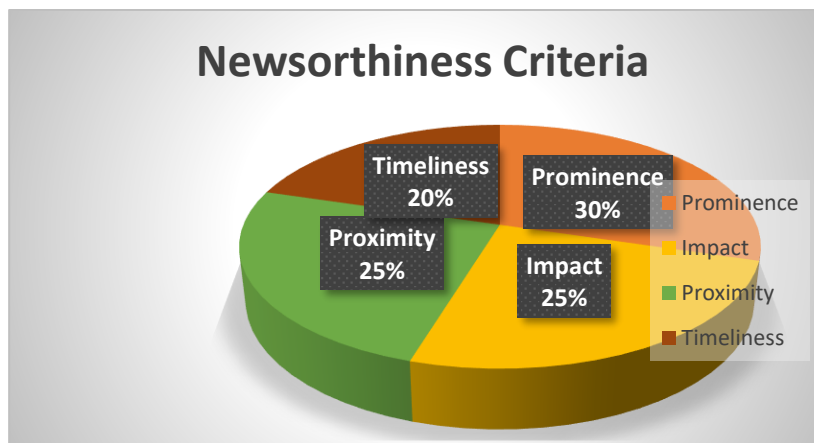


Figure 1: The Application of Criteria of Newsworthiness in Viral Video Da'wah Influencers Through Instagram

Discussion

Prominence Criterion in News Value

Pertaining to the viral reels of the selected da'wah influencers and their prominence criterion, they demonstrate continuity between the content and prominent individuals, such as a da'wah influencer group that has millions of followers as well as intellectual and professional groups who hold important positions in a government department or agency. This characteristic was found to demonstrate certain functions to be conveyed to netizens. Compared to other criteria, the prominence criterion was adopted the most by the Da'wah Influencers to post issues related to an individual and/or materials that showcase a level of sophistication, such as luxury goods, beautiful tourist destinations, or premium food, which can give either good or bad implications to their followers regardless of their awareness. Therefore, in exploiting issues favoured by many, a preacher should be wise to comply with Islamic values so that their videos can attract netizens to like or comment on the post (Omar, 2014).

The prominence criterion was also found to be the criterion most favoured for marketing a product. This is because through the influencers' personal branding, trust and good perceptions are created among their fans towards a product, even if it has just been launched. In this regard, the product's advertising or promotion was made using various methods to attract the public to buy the product. Hence, the trustworthiness element demonstrated through a product marketing that complies with sharia has become a dominant factor to quickly the confidence of Muslim consumers (Harun et al., 2023). It is clear that this element has been indirectly used in videos that depict either the influencer's personality and life, or product marketing to generate sales and maximise profits.

Impact Criterion and News Value

This criterion can facilitate viralling an Instagram post because certainly netizens would prefer to share what they are feeling and going through on social media. In the researcher's opinion, most of these criteria, together with the criteria of human interest, are interesting and can bring changes to the audience physically, emotionally, and spiritually. This belief is due to most social media users' preferences to share and update what they are currently feeling through photos and videos. As Abu Bakar and Ashaari (2018), study found, videos that touch netizens' emotions have the potential to increase self-awareness, which will instil their spirit

to adhere to the religion. Clearly, the advent of technology has had an impact on the process of receiving knowledge and obtaining information, particularly religious knowledge (Salih et al., 2019).

In this regard, this impact criterion can indirectly be absorbed in an influencer's videos in order to leave traces of goodness to social media users, because of that it is definitely very popular in writing news in the field of sports. In the sports field, the final results of a game receives more attention compared to the nature of reporting during the game. The journalists in this field who are experienced and skillful at writing headlines of a news often focus on the success of the team that succeeded in winning the championship at the final stage of the competition and the team that has lost will not be informed because the matter has been known by the fans or supporters their own. But, during the COVID 19, the topic of health and safety of players, coaches, and fans became the most significant focus of sports media, while the economic impact of league shutdowns and cancelled games for virtually every sporting event worldwide also received a massive amount of coverage (Sadri et al., 2022).

Through news reports in the field of sports, the final results of a sport or competition get more attention than the nature of reporting during the game. The implication is that these criteria that have been put in place have definitely succeeded in influencing fan support for a team as well as being able to sell the newspaper only because there are people who are very interested in knowing the final result through a more in-depth review. This matter proves the similarity between the findings of a study in the field of preaching in this study and a study done in the field of sports that emphasizes the impact aspect of a video so that it becomes a hot discussion among the community. Moreover, the study of Zhang and Caple (2021), had proven that the linguistic analyses of news values including impact, eliteness, positivity, superlativeness, and unexpectedness show similarities and differences between the domestic and international media in their reporting on Li Na. Form this news, has highlights the unprecedented sports achievements Li Na has gained as a world first-ranked female tennis player in her late 20s and early 30s and revealing the great influence of her success on the advancement of this sport and her rising economic status. Therefore, the impact criterion was proven able to attract the public's attention through the technique of writing clickbait headlines to get a larger audience to fuel the spirit of sports or anything reported that has implications for netizens in their lives (Bazaco & Sánchez-García, 2019). This proves that there is a similarity in the findings made in the field of preaching in this study and studies made in the field of sports that emphasize the impact aspect of a video.

Proximity Criteria in News Value

Proximity is the aspects of physical, geography, demography, or psychology between an issue or event with others. Although it seems difficult to get posts on issues that are close to everyone, proximity will narrow the scope of readers interested in the entry to only some groups. Researchers have found that this criterion is at an intermediate level and is used moderately in Instagram postings. Through this study, the proximity criterion was found to depict the physical and psychological closeness between the preacher and his/her target viewers. This criterion concerns posts that are directly related to events that describe geography, culture, demographics or psychology between an issue or event and other people. If this is related to da'wah, The posts submitted should concern issues that are close to the preaching target, particularly related to their personality that touches on egoism and neglects

the teachings of Islam (Saidpudin et al, 2021). The study of Mohd Hashim et al (2022), and Zafri et al (2023), has proven that da'wah content through Instagram could increase the understanding of religion among netizens based on the preacher's extent of creativity to make the latter feel the closeness of the matter to their souls. For example, this criterion was inserted in the second post by Ustazah Asma' Harun.

In the study of more critical areas such as crime, news reporting is more proximate from a geographical or psychological point of view. Most news broadcasts on television prioritise crime news in their agenda because they understand that such information could attract the public. News about suicide cases is an important source of information for the public. News credibility becomes an important element to influence the picture presented. Media reports strongly suggest depression to be an important factor contributing to suicide (Pridmore, 2006). This matter involves a news writer's observation that the way a crime news is told defines the interpretive framework that is sent to the audience, and news writers explain how, in recent years, the production and delivery of crime news have changed due to the spread of digital technology as a source of information, as described in the study by (Calzado & Lio, 2021). Clearly, news that demonstrates the proximity criterion, which is often focused on traditional newspaper reporting or social media, has shown that the method is effective in ensuring the community's inclination to research and disseminate the information to others.

Timeliness Criterion in News Value

The timeliness criterion refers to the posts that fit the current atmosphere and situation. A viral video that is posted to respond to current happening is hotly discussed. UAI and UAH's posts seldom use this criterion. Other preachers have used this criterion in four out of their five posts, for example, Dr Zulkifli and UHM. This study found the timeliness criterion to be the most adopted criterion on the Instagram videos by the da'wah influencers. Hence, Bednarek and Caple (2017), explain that reference to the future events are sometimes used to increase the news value of timeliness and to place something on the news agenda.

In the field of health and medicine, this criterion was proven to be very significant in focusing on an issue or contagious disease, such as the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic which has directly affected from a political, economic, social and health point of view. Any information about Covid-19 at that time became viral despite some of the information being distorted by irresponsible people (Andini & Widayanti, 2020). In this regard, the criterion has left an impact on the public to be more vigilant and comply with any S.O.P. set by the Ministry of Health. The validity of all facts included in the related posts was checked to deter fake news from instilling fear and suspicion in certain people. This criterion was certainly expected to attract the interest of netizens in responding and commenting on Instagram. If this criterion is not applied properly, the outcome would be a failure to get attention among netizens because what is updated is not according to the trends or phenomena at that time (Kilgo & Sinta, 2016)).

Conclusion

The discussion in this study presents the analysis of newsworthiness criteria demonstrated in the Instagram reels of da'wah influencers. From the analysis, the idea and creativity in the visual and audio resources of quality videos that went viral were detected based on the strategy used by the da'wah

influencers. Each preaching content was found to have a specific purpose and significance to deliver the preaching message to its target audience on social media. The findings indicate that the influencers' viral videos are characterised by significant elements such as pictures and music in shaping and changing netizens' perception of an event or matter. The findings prove that viral videos on Instagram definitely contain some criteria of newsworthiness such as prominence, impact, proximity and timeliness to attract the attention of netizens and expand the target of da'wah on social media.

This study makes several important theoretical and contextual contributions to the existing literature on social media da'wah and newsworthiness criteria. Theoretically, it extends the application of Bednarek's Discursive News Value Analysis framework to the novel context of Islamic preaching content on social media, demonstrating how traditional newsworthiness criteria can be adapted to analyze viral religious content. This bridges theories from journalism and media studies with the field of Islamic communications. Contextually, the research provides valuable insights into the strategies used by prominent Malaysian da'wah influencers to create viral content on Instagram, an increasingly important platform for religious outreach to younger audiences. By identifying the specific newsworthiness criteria most frequently employed in viral Islamic content, this study offers practical guidance for religious communicators seeking to expand their reach on social media. Additionally, the findings contribute to broader discussions about the evolving nature of religious authority and knowledge dissemination in the digital age. Overall, this research advances understanding of how traditional media theories can be applied to analyze emerging forms of online religious communication, while also providing actionable insights for practitioners in the field of digital da'wah.

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