
Propaganda Against Islam On Social Media: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract: The main objective of the study to review the published literature on propaganda against Islam on social media. However, a detail review of literature has been conducted, in this regard, this study has reviewed the journals publications, websites, social media platforms such as Facebook, twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp. Anyhow, there are very few studies to do the systematic literature review on title of propaganda against Islam on social media, this is main source of motivation for current study. After careful review of literature, this study concluded that western media has portrayed the negative image of Muslims. Anyhow, we also have found that most of studies have conducted in western countries rather Muslims countries media. Some of studies also suggested that Muslims should use social media to answer and defend their point of view and give the clear and positive picture of Islam to non-Muslims. This study also proposes that Muslims should respond to any anti-Muslims post positively with constructive justification. Moreover, this is responsibility of Muslims countries to give the clear image of Islam to other world rather overlook the social media posts. Anyhow, this is literature-based study, the future study should conduct empirically. Besides, the future studies should compare the non-Muslim countries social media with Muslims countries social media to overcome the distance between these two communities.

Keywords: social media, Islam, Muslims, propaganda

INTRODUCTION

In this digital era, information technology with internet facility is become an important part of human lives. Along with internet facility a recent development in information and communication technology is a social media (Imran & Jian, 2018). As we know, in past we had one-way communication channel and it was very conventional. The social media has changed the mode of communication, it is not only providing one-way communication, it also involving the people to share their views (Perrin, 2015). The user of social media is not only receiving content and also can create the content in social media. Along with this advantage, social media has positive impact on education and expedite the learning process (Sarwar, Zulfiqar, Aziz, & Ejaz Chandia, 2019). According to past researchers that teachers are using social media to deliver their lecture material and discussion session. One of the recent examples of this COVID-19 pandemic situation, almost of all of the universities using social media platforms to arrange the online classes, such as WhatsApp groups, google class classroom, skype and zoom (Pfaar et al., 2020). However, we cannot neglect the role of social media for the respect of information transfer and knowledge delivery. Furthermore, social media is also promoting youth identity and make the transition process faster. For example, transitioning the younger generation when they entered in university. In other words, when they entered in new community in university level, they get to know the new people, new friends through online and offline activities. In short social media is eliminated the boundaries of time and space.

Furthermore, social media is providing freedom of speech to community (DuMont, 2016). It is also giving the opportunity to public to express their feeling and share their views on social media such as Facebook, twitter and many other apps. However, along with these advantages, social media is also using for propaganda purpose, violating the rule and regulations (Awan, 2016a). We don't have any mechanism to recognize the violator and catch up the person who spreading fake news on social media. As we know religion is private and worth talking

in public space, where some of people sharing the religious practices information, there also some people spreading the fake or hate speech particularly against the religion. This kind of activities are making chaos in communities. Most recent incident in India, there are some people who using Facebook and WhatsApp groups to call the mob against the Muslim community, and they did mas killing on the basis of religion. In other words, people expose their life expression on social media, including religious expressions. Social media become a tool for religious discourses such as new Zeeland attack in last year.

Anyhow, on the basis of above discussion, this study supposed that there are limited studies about propaganda against Islam on social media in academic research. This is the main motivation for this current to initiated research. However, based on above, the main purpose of the study is to review the literature on the representation of Muslims in social media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A lot of academic literature has been discussed the negative image of Islam on social media. As according to Oboler (2016) that he investigated the various posts on Facebook and found there are many themes portray, the Muslims are terrorist or rapists and dishonest. An other study investigated the tweets on twitter and expressed that Muslims are described as terrorist, scum, pedos, yusrats and pigs (Awan, 2016b). Moreover, Törnberg and Törnberg (2016) have review the 746062 posts of social media and derived the results that Muslims are portrayed as extremist, conflict creator and violence due to them in the world. In addition, Awan (2016a) has investigated the Facebook data regarding islamophobia and found that Muslims are libeled online through negative attitude, discrimination, stereotypes, physical threats and online harassment. Miller (2017) has investigated the data of anti-Islam group discussion on social media and found that they have concern about terrorism and political threat from Islam.

Some of the incidents are reported on social media such as Donald Trump president of USA tweets to support the anti-Muslim video. Basically, a viral video shown the Muslim migrant attacking young Dutch man on crutches, the claim in the tweet has little substance. Basically, the person arrested for attack was not a migrant it was born in Netherlands and he is a Netherlands national. In India Facebook group created over 7 years ago, these pages have more than 2.9 million members, these are around 600 Facebook pages. They are posting fake news and spreading hate speech against Muslims. Recently, WhatsApp group has used to communicate and made the plan to do the mass killing of Muslims in Delhi in India. Another incident happened in New Zealand; a 19 years old guy killed the 49 Muslims in a Christchurch mosque. He broadcasted the all incident live on social media and shown the killing. A recent incident reported in India against Muslim Tablighi jamaat, they blamed that Tablighi jamaat is responsible for the spread of COVID-19 in India and furthermore, they labeled with corona jihad. On 21st March 2020, a person name Mahesh Vikram has posted a 45-second video with claimed that a Muslim worker on restaurant is spitting on the food before delivering to customers. Later in investigation, the person name Mahesh Vikram admitted he spread the fake news. However, this kind of incidents are harassing and defamed the Muslim community in front of the world. However, the Muslim community is protesting and appealing that who is responsible for these kinds of acts?

One more study has conducted the meta-analysis of 345 published studies on the role of social media for Muslims identity. The researched shows that Muslims are portrayed negatively framed, and as violent religion. Furthermore, this study suggested that majority of studies covered the western countries, they neglected the Muslims countries and Muslim media (Ahmed & Matthes, 2017). Besides, according to Downing and Dron (2020) social media more specifically twitter could be the important platform for Muslims to spread the positive vibes and also make them enable to challenge the fake news and hate narratives about Muslims. A study of Harris and Isa (2019) is conducted in context of China, where some information is circulating against Uyghur Muslims society about their faith, politics and identity. Anyhow, they have used social media such as WeChat to convey the message about their religion and violence in the region. Slama (2018) Muslims are practicing Islam through social media, such as piety, celebrity and sociality. Shehu, Othman, and Osman (2017) social media has significant impact on Islam if properly utilized, it could help to improve the humankind and reduce the evils in the society.

Therefore, on the basis above discussion, the current work is proposing the following proposition.

Proposition: There is any role of social media is to promote the propaganda against Islam

METHODOLOGY

A systematic literature technique has used to draw the proposition. In this respect the current study has review the academic journals, social media platform such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and online websites which are reported the incidents against Muslims in world. However, this kind of technique has been used the past studies to draw the results such as Imran, Aziz, and Hamid (2016); Imran and Jian (2018).

CONCLUSION

On the basis of past literature, the current study found that most of western media has labeled the Muslims as terrorist. Along with this, the western social media is also harassing Muslims with hate speech, and using different hating words such as rapist, pigs etc. Anyhow, some of studies stressed, the most of studies conducted in western media context, those studies neglected or did not cover the Muslims countries and araba media. However, past findings could be the biased or not generalized. Furthermore, they suggested that future studies should cover the Muslim countries media and as well as compare the social media of Muslim countries and non-Muslim countries to justify the results.

Besides, literature from website also reported that some of non-Muslims are also working to control the hate speech on social media against media. More specifically, the main role should play by Muslim community to aware the western media about Islam that Islam the religion of peace. Moreover, Muslims community should be united and make the external strong relationship. This kind of strategy can help Muslim community to improve their positive image. The example of imran khan prime minister of Pakistan, he explained the role of Islam in human lives in united nation assembly. Along with this step, Pakistan, Turkey and Malaysia is going the launch the TV channel, which can explain the importance and role of Islam in human lives to non-Muslim. This step would help to both communities to reduce conflict if has any.

In respect of implications, this study would help Muslims world to understand the current senior and image of Islam in the world. This study can help Muslims to work on their deficiencies and overcome the haters behaviour in non-Muslims minds. Furthermore, in term of limitation, this study only covered the literature, hence the future studies should conduct or empirically the to validate the current study. Furthermore, the future studies should compare the Muslims and no-Muslims countries media to find the issues, this kind of study would be helpful to reduce the distance between Muslims and non-Muslims.

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