

# A Systematic Literature Review of Islamophobia on Media: Trends, Factors, and Stereotypes

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## ABSTRACT

Islamophobia is a concept that includes various types of discrimination against Muslims and their followers. This study explores trends in previous research on Islamophobia between 2013 and 2022, focusing on factors that contribute to Islamophobia in the media and prevalent stereotypes. A systematic literature review was conducted, involving the identification, evaluation, interpretation and analysis of relevant studies. The study found that Islamophobia in the media has gained significant attention and requires further investigation to understand current trends and develop solutions. Factors associated with Islamophobia include negative portrayal, structural bias, and a lack of understanding of Islam, which contributes to anti-Muslim sentiment. The study also identified stereotypes, such as Muslims being suspected of attacks, seen as a societal threat, labeled as "other," and women wearing headscarves being stigmatized as religious fanatics. Addressing Islamophobia in the media is crucial, and recognizing these contributing factors and stereotypes can help challenge biases and promote inclusivity in society.

Keywords: Literature Review; Islamophobia; Media; Stereotypes.

## 1. Introduction

Islamophobia, which is often motivated by false information and unfavorable preconceptions, is a phrase used to characterize the irrational fear, hate, or prejudice towards Muslims (Patnaik, 2016). In recent years, after terrorist incidents that were allegedly inspired by Islamic radicalism (Samaie & Malmir, 2017), the media has come under fire for supporting anti-Islamic sentiments (Kurebwa & Muchakabarwa, 2019). Media sources have been charged of feeding stereotypes that portray Muslims as aggressive, regressive, and a danger to Western civilization (Nickerson, 2019). As a result, there have been more hate crimes committed against Muslims (Sutton, 2017), and there is an atmosphere of distrust and dread (Dauda, 2021).

Furthermore, Islamophobia views have been amplified while Muslim voices have been marginalized as a result of the media's concentration on sensationalism and fake news (Evolvi, 2018). The idea that Muslims are inherently dangerous and unworthy of equal treatment has been furthered as a result of this (Luqiu & Yang, 2018). Ultimately, there are substantial social and political repercussions to Islamophobia's influence on the media, which

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is a complex and diverse subject. It is crucial that academics, decision-makers, and media professionals keep discussing this problem and seek to improve how Muslims are portrayed in the media in a polite and factual manner.

The research on Islamophobia in the media emphasizes the nuanced ways that inaccurate representations of Islam and Muslims may foster an environment of hatred, prejudice, and fear. A study that involved a number of survey trials discovered that although favorable news depictions of Muslims and Muslim Americans had comparatively smaller impacts, negative news portrayals increased hatred against Muslims and Muslim Americans as well as support for strict regulations that target them (Lajevardi, 2020). An analysis demonstrates that despite being subjected to covert and overt discrimination, which participants experienced in a variety of contexts, the media was seen as the driving force behind negative stereotypes about Muslims, leading to pressure on Muslims to present themselves in non-threatening and welcoming ways to others (Pihlaja & Thompson, 2017).

Many studies have shown how Islam and Muslims as the subject of inaccurate, sensational, and prejudiced media portrayal. The results reveal that even when Muslims are the victims, negative, biased imagery is used in news media framing to represent the events in Turkey and France in a way that feeds into existing anti-Muslim prejudice (Nickerson, 2019). The findings of the survey of Muslims and non-Muslims demonstrate how different Muslim and non-Muslim media viewers' perceptions of stereotypical and unfair portrayal of Muslims and Islam are (Heeren & Zick, 2014). Then, the survey shows that there has been an upsurge in negative media coverage of Muslims and Muslim Americans (Lajevardi, 2020).

Many issues, disputes, and knowledge gaps may be recognized based on the existing studies that were discussed. Firstly, the lack of diversity in the media sector is a concern. Due to a lack of knowledge and correct depiction of the Muslim community in the media, this can contribute to erroneous and negative portrayals of Muslims and Islam. Secondly, the appropriate ratio of free speech to responsible journalism is a matter of debate. While media outlets are free to cover stories and voice their viewpoints, proper reporting is necessary to avoid supporting anti-Muslim prejudice and stereotypes. Thirdly, the effects of Muslim representations in the media on people with varied cultural and religious origins are not well understood. There is a need for greater research on the effects of media depictions on people from various religious and cultural backgrounds, even though some studies have examined how Muslims and non-Muslims view one other. Finally, further study is required to determine the most effective ways to combat media-based Islamophobia. While some study has examined the effects of inaccurate media portrayals, there hasn't been much done to promote more truthful and uplifting representations of Muslims and Islam.

This study of a systematic review of the literature on Islamophobia in the lenses of media is to fill the previously mentioned gaps by identifying and evaluating previous research that has been conducted on Islamophobia in the media. The specific aims of this research are to identify trends in previous studies on Islamophobia from 2013-2022, to investigate the factors that encourage or reinforce Islamophobia in the media, and to investigate the stereotypes that often appear in the media towards Islam. In line with that, three questions appear based on the aforementioned background – first, what are the research trends on Islamophobia in the media during 2013-2022?, secondly, what are the factors that drive the study of Islamophobia in the media?, thirdly, What are the stereotypes that often appear in the media towards Islam?

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

The term "islamophobia" is frequently used to characterize the fear and hate of Islam, which results in a dislike or bias against Muslims (Patnaik, 2016). In Muslim-majority nations, it is a phenomena that affects the world, the country, the city, the neighbourhood, the body, and the emotions (Najib & Hopkins, 2020). Islamophobia, according to research, is a two-dimensional phenomenon that includes anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic emotions (Uenal, 2016). Anti-Muslim sentiment is hostility towards Muslims as a group, whereas anti-Islamic sentiment is hostility towards Islam as a religion.

Accordingly, media theory and the construction of social reality is a field of study that explores the relationship between media and the way we understand and shape the world around people (Flew, 2017). According to this theory, the media is the sole source of information that shapes our understanding of current social realities and how we experience the world (Sohn & Choi, 2019).

In the context of Islamophobia, media theory and the construction of social reality show that the media can play an important role in shaping negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims (Saleem et al. 2016). In many cases, the media provides false or biased coverage of Islam and those who practice it. One example of media that plays a role in forming negative perceptions of Islam is the news media (Hassan & Azmi, 2021). Sometimes, the news media only highlight violence and terrorism perpetrated by radical Islamist groups without providing historical or wider social context (Hoewe & Bowe, 2018). As a result, the public has become accustomed to the image that Islam is synonymous with violence and terrorism (Kurebwa & Muchakabarwa, 2019).

In addition, social media also plays a role in shaping negative perceptions of Islam (Margiati & Qodarsasi, 2022). In many cases, people can spread misinformation or spread hate against Islam and Muslims on social media platforms. This can reinforce existing negative stereotypes and form inaccurate perceptions of Islam (Abdelhadi & O'Brien, 2020).

However, even though the media can play an important role in shaping negative perceptions about Islam, media theory and the construction of social reality also show that we are not completely passive in receiving information from the media (Flew, 2017). It requires the ability to analyze and criticize information received from the media (Martin, 2017), as well as to develop a more accurate perception of Islam.

Thus, media theory and the construction of social reality show that Islamophobia is not solely the result of individual policies or actions, but is also influenced by the role of the media in shaping our perceptions of Islam and Muslims. Therefore, efforts to overcome Islamophobia must also involve developing a more critical media awareness and a more accurate understanding of Islam and Muslims.

### 3. Method

Systematic literature reviews are a methodologically rigorous research method used to organize, evaluate (Hanson-Abromeit & Sena Moore, 2014), and provide unbiased accounts of existing literature related to a specific topic (Barn, Raimondi, Athappian, & Clark, 2014), reducing researcher bias and defining a precise scope of review (Senivongse, Bennet, & Mariano, 2017). This study conducted the SLR based on the guidelines by Kitchenham and Charters (Shahrol, Sulaiman, Samingan, & Mohamed, 2020) to identify, evaluate, interpret and analyze available study to address specific research questions on the Islamophobia on media.

The formulation of a specific review question, a comprehensive and thorough search of primary studies, and the setting of inclusion and exclusion criteria, and the evaluation of the included studies' quality are the four processes in this study. The following subsections contain the explanation for each step.

#### 3.1. Research Question

The populations, the factors, and the stereotypes, as stated in Table 1, deserve to be considered before continuing the SLR process in order to select the appropriate research questions.

**Table 1.** Criteria & Scope

Criteria	Scope
Population	Papers related to Islamophobia in the media during 2013-2022.
Factors	Papers that contain Islamophobia factors in the media.
Stereotypes	The existing works discuss several stereotypes against Muslims in media.
Population	Papers related to Islamophobia in the media during 2013-2022.

According to the framework of the questions, the specific research questions are as follows: RQ1: What are the research trends on Islamophobia in the media during 2013-2022? RQ2: What are the factors that drive the study of Islamophobia in the media? RQ3: What are the stereotypes that often appear in the media towards Islam?

#### 3.2. Search Process

The following steps generate the iterative search technique used in this study. 1) *Initial search in online database library*: used Google Scholar with an interval between 2013-2022 with

keywords in table 2 such as “Islamophobia on Media”, “Islamophobia factors in the media”, and “The Stereotypes of Islamophobia on Media”. 2) *Refine search in major indexing databases*: referred to publications that have doi. 3) *Record search result* and 4) *Classify the academic papers*: according to types of journal publications.

**Table 2.** Search Keywords Code

Keywords	Code
K1	Islamophobia on Media
K2	Islamophobia factors in the media
K3	the Stereotypes of Islamophobia on Media

### 3.3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Several inclusion criteria are considered while conducting a systematic literature review. Priority is given to articles that have been published both in journals or conference when reviewing and sorting a group of papers from the source library with an interval 2013-2022. Papers must be written in English as a result. The article must at least discuss aspects of Islamophobia on Media. These publications were required to include terms that attempted to define, propose, recommend, or describe current works in Islamophobia on media based on the search process.

The SLR must include certain excluding rules in order to guarantee a complete and comprehensive review procedure. While it is crucial to take into account articles from a range of languages and themes, the scope of the review must be restricted to papers that adhere to particular standards. For instance, articles written in a language other than English or another language can be automatically excluded from the review procedure. Moreover, articles from related fields that do not use the specified keywords may also be excluded.

The papers that fulfill the inclusionary standards are then identified through a short listing and review procedure once these exclusionary conditions have been established. Each manuscript must go through a thorough review procedure to make sure it satisfies the standards set forth for the review, such as relevancy to the topic or research issue. In the end, only those publications are chosen for additional research and analysis that satisfy both the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

**Table 3.** Research Question Structure

Question	Answer
Are papers related to Islamophobia in the media?	(Yes/No/Partially)
Do papers that contain Islamophobic factors in the media such as social, economic, or political?	(Yes/No/Partially)
Do existing works discuss several stereotypes against Muslims in the media such as terrorist, conservatives, violence, or fanatic?	(Yes/No/Partially)

### 3.4. Quality Evaluation

To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data utilized, it is crucial to select articles that are reliable, pertinent, and connected to the study. In order to select relevant papers, it is necessary to consider the research technique used, the accuracy of the data and analysis, and the standing of the journal or proceeding publisher. This validation procedure is crucial to ensuring that only quality publications are selected in order to accommodate high impact and provide reliable and accurate data in order to accomplish research objectives. Articles will be selected based on the evaluations: 1) Discussing Islamophobia on media, 2) Discussing factors of Islamophobia on media, and 3) Discussing stereotypes of Islamophobia on media.

To accomplish the quality evaluation, relevant and acceptable information must be retrieved for articles that are partially included in the evaluation process; otherwise, the article will be excluded. The method used in this particular article is crucial to obtaining accurate data extraction findings. The questions that were utilized in the selection of articles are shown in Table 3.

## 4. Results

Using the keywords K1 "Islamophobia on Media", K2 "Islamophobia Factors in Mediaa", and K3 "the stereotypes of Islamophobia on Media", an initial search in the online database library using Google Scholar with intervals between 2013 and 2022 yielded 56 publications.

An initial search in the online database library using google scholar with intervals between 2013-2022 found that in 2021 there were 15 publications, 2020 with 12 publications, 2019

with 10 publications, 2022 with 7 publications, 2018 with 5 publications, 2016 with 3 publications, 2014 with publications, and 2013 & 2017 with one publication.

Additionally, Refining is the second step in process, and it is used to focus on the study's principal objectives and ensure that only relevant articles are included in the analysis. The researcher will review the articles discovered during the search stage to find out whether they fulfill the set inclusion criteria during the refine step. By doing this, the possibility of bias is reduced and it is ensured that the analysis's conclusions are validly supported by research and pertinent to the proposed study topic.

The refine step can assist researchers in identifying research gaps that the corpus of prior material has not yet addressed. In this study, researchers identify the publications having doi. The results of the database's refining search are shown in table 4.

**Table 4.** Refining Database

Year	Number
2014	2
2016	2
2017	1
2018	3
2019	10
2020	8
2021	15
2022	7

The results for the articles in the enhanced database revealed that 8 articles had no doi. Thus, the total number of publications that have been refined is 48 and there has been a decrease of around 14.29% from 56 publications.

The inclusion criterion for a systematic literature review was the study's most crucial subsequent step. Published publications in journals or conferences are given preference. To provide a thorough and comprehensive review process, SLR must have specific exclusion restrictions. Publications from relevant fields that do not include certain keywords as well as articles written in languages other than English or other languages may be automatically excluded from the review process. Next, using short listing and review methods, papers that fulfill the inclusion criteria are found. And only the papers that obtained the inclusion and exclusion criteria were selected for further investigation and analysis.

**Table 5.** Exclusion & Inclusion Criteria

Publications	Number
Included	38
Excluded	10

Table 5 reveals that 38 publications were selected for additional study after the procedure of excluding and including publications relevant to preset requirements was completed. 7 publications, however, were excluded because seven were published in book form and the other three were not written in English.

As a result of SLR, the media's portrayal of Islamophobia is being studied. The criteria for the 38 selected articles were satisfied by carrying out the steps in the search strategy as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6.** The Result of Search Process

Search Process	Number
Initial	56
Refine	48
Excluded	10
Included	38

#### 4.1. Trends of Islamophobia Studies on Media

The first research question is "What are the research trends on Islamophobia in the media during 2013-2022?". After conducting a search process using Google Scholar with the keywords "Islamophobia on Media", "Factors of Islamophobia on Media", & "Prototypes of Islamophobia on Media", it resulted in 38 publications with the following details; 1) 2021 with

14 publications, 2) 2019 & 2022 with 6 publications, 3) 2020 with 5 publications, 4) 2014, 2016, & 2018 with 2 publications, & 5) 2017 with one publication. Table 7 shows them in detail as the answer of research question 1.

**Table 7.** Trends of Publication of Islamophobia on Media

Year	Number	Authors
2014	2	(Awan & Awan, 2014; Sayyid & Sayyid, 2014)
2016	2	(Awan & Zempi, 2016; Samari, 2016)
2017	1	(Terman, 2017)
2018	2	(Evolvi, 2018; Ragozina & Ragozina, 2018)
2019	6	(Azeez, 2019; Boulahnane & Boulahnane, 2019; Eckert, Metzger-Riftkin, Kolhoff, & O'Shay-Wallace, 2019; Kurebwa & Muchakabarwa, 2019; Mahalingappa, 2019; Patil, McLaren, McLaren, & McLaren, 2019)
2020	5	(Abbasi, 2020; Furlanetto, Furlanetto, & Mehring, 2020; Güz, Bingöl, & Yanik, 2020; Parhan et al., 2020; Taufiq & Handayati, 2020)
2021	14	(Anderson, Shahbazi, and Abid 2021; Cervi, Tejedor, and Gracia 2021; Chaudhary, Ghani, and Naseer 2021; Deroo 2021; Elsayeh 2021; Hassan and Azmi 2021; Irawan and Nasution 2021; Nurhalizah et al. 2021; Sikander 2021; Stroup and Stroup 2021; Suryandari et al. 2021; Witro and Alamin 2021; Zheng and Almeida 2021; Saduqi 2021)
2022	6	(Baharuddin & Baharuddin, 2022; Mansoor, Zainab, & Gul, 2022; Moore-Berg, Hameiri, Falk, & Bruneau, 2022; Spier, 2022; Sultana, 2022; Varol, 2022)

The 38 publications are the work of 85 authors. Here are the top 5 rankings of authors who write in publications about one of which is Islamophobia in the media which is shown in table 8.

**Table 8.** Top of Five Authors

Name	Affiliation	Citations
Imran Awan	Birmingham City University	610
Irene Zempi	Nottingham Trent University	342
Laura Cervi	Autonomous University of Barcelona	260
Santiago Tejedor	Autonomous University of Barcelona	267
Helen McLaren	Flinders University	240

#### 4.2. Factors of Existing Works

The second research question is "What are the factors that drive the study of Islamophobia in the media?". The findings of the SLR study were used to determine the factors found for each article. The results of the factors that exist in each of the articles provided are shown in Table 9.

**Table 9.** Factors of Existing Works

Factors	Authors
Social	Sultana 2022; Parhan et al. 2020; Furlanetto et al. 2020; Baharuddin 2022; Mansoor et al. 2022; Spier 2022; Samari 2016; & Patil et al. 2019
Politic	Taufiq & Handayati 2020; Suryandari et al. 2021; Stroup 2021; Güz et al. 2020

#### 4.3. Stereotypes of Existing Works

The third research question is "What are the stereotypes that often appear in the media towards Islam?". The findings of the SLR study were used to determine the stereotypes found for each article. The results of the stereotypes that exist in each of the articles provided are shown in Table 10.

**Table 10.** Stereotypes of Existing Works

Stereotypes	Authors
Terrorist/Violence	Abbasi 2020; Furlanetto et al. 2020; Mansoor et al. 2022; Cervi et al. 2021; Nurhalizah et al. 2021; Suryandari et al. 2021; Güz et al. 2020; Awan and Zempi 2016; Samari 2016 & Moore-Berg et al. 2022
Conservatives/ Fanatic	Irawan and Nasution 2021; Stroup 2021; & Awan 2014

## 5. Discussion

The first finding explains the first research question related to research trends on Islamophobia in the media during the 2013-2022 timeframe. In this context, the literature review provided outlines the role of media theory (Sohn & Choi, 2019) and the construction of social reality in shaping negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims (Saleem et al., 2016). A search using Google Scholar with keywords related to Islamophobia in the media yielded 38 publications covering specific years. The publication details show trends in research on Islamophobia in the media during the period under study. The data provides information about the frequency of publications in certain years and can assist in understanding the focus of research that has been conducted in that period.

The literature review in this paper provides information about how the media plays a role in shaping negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims (Hassan & Azmi, 2021). This is related to the search results for publications related to Islamophobia in the media, which indicates the existence of research that addresses this issue. The literature review explains that the media, including news media and social media, can provide false or biased coverage of Islam, thus forming an inaccurate negative image (Hassan & Azmi, 2021).

Therefore, the results of the publication search and literature review provide a broader understanding of research trends related to Islamophobia in the media over the time span studied, as well as the role of the media in shaping negative perceptions of Islam. This is a relevant basis for formulating efforts to overcome Islamophobia by involving the development of a more critical media awareness and a more accurate understanding of Islam and Muslims.

From the review of the literature it is also understandable that the media plays an important role in shaping Islamophobia, with various factors stemming from the social and political context. Patnaik (2016) defines Islamophobia as unfounded fear and prejudice directed at Muslims. Samaie and Malmir (2017) highlight the contribution of the media to anti-Islam sentiment. Kurebwa and Muchakabarwa (2019) underscore the spread of negative media stereotypes towards Muslims. Nickerson (2019) demonstrates the use of biased and prejudiced imagery in the media's portrayal of Islam and Muslims. Sutton (2017) establishes a correlation between Islamophobia and the rise in hate crimes targeting Muslims. Dauda (2021) examines the climate of distrust and anxiety fueled by Islamophobia. Evolvi (2018) and Luqiu and Yang (2018) emphasize the role of the media in reinforcing negative perceptions of Muslims. In short, these studies collectively illustrate how the media perpetuates Islamophobia through negative portrayals, biased narratives, and the marginalization of Muslim voices. Such representations reinforce stereotypes, foster fear and mistrust, and contribute to discriminatory attitudes and behavior. Recognizing and addressing these factors is critical in promoting understanding, combating prejudice, and encouraging a more accurate and respectful portrayal of Islam and Muslims in the media.

Meanwhile, Islamophobia as an endless phenomenon that continues to haunt global society, has created stereotypes that are detrimental to Muslims. These stereotypes often emerge in violent and conservative contexts, adding to distrust and concern for Muslims as a whole. From the existing literature, some of the most common stereotypes of Islamophobia are associated with violence and conservative views.

First, Muslims are accused of being the masterminds of attacks where this stereotype appears in Abbasi's research (2020) which highlights radical Muslim groups who are blamed for these attacks. The crimes of individuals or groups who commit terrorist acts are often generalized and attributed to all Muslims, creating a negative and unfair view of the community (Heeren & Zick, 2014). Then, Muslims are portrayed as a threat to society where his stereotype is related to the negative image of Muslims in the mass media, as identified by Parhan et al. (2020). Through reporting that is often biased, Muslims are often portrayed as a threat to social security and stability (Margiati & Qodarsasi, 2022). These stereotypes reinforce fear and prejudice against the Muslim community as a whole (Patnaik, 2016). Additionally, Muslims are described as "Other" where this stereotype has emerged in several studies, such as that of Nurhalizah et al. (2021) and Irawan and Nasution (2021), which highlight how Muslims are often treated as a "foreign" or "other" group. This treatment creates segregation and social dissonance between Muslims and the majority of society, causing alienation and injustice (Eckert et al., 2019). Equally interesting, women who wear headscarves are seen as religious fanatics: This stereotype is related to the discrimination experienced by women who wear headscarves, as identified by Taufiq and Handayati (2020). They are often misunderstood as religious fanatics, seen as symbols that reflect gender injustice and show

excessive loyalty to religious beliefs. These stereotypes stifle individual freedom and create barriers for Muslim women to participate fully in society (Terman, 2017).

## 6. Conclusions

Research trends on Islamophobia in the media during the 2013-2022 period show that Islamophobia in the media has become an increasingly important topic of research and public discussion in recent years, and requires further attention to understand the existing trends and develop solutions to overcome these problems. Then, factors related to Islamophobia include negative portrayal, structural bias, lack of understanding of Islam, and increased anti-Muslim sentiment. In addition, there are several stereotypes associated with Islamophobia, such as Muslims who are suspected of carrying out attacks, Muslims are considered a threat to society, Muslims are considered "other people", and women wearing headscarves are considered religious fanatics. This shows that Islamophobia is a complex problem related to stereotypes and discrimination in society and the media. There needs to be real action to overcome Islamophobia, including increasing understanding of Islam, reducing structural bias in the media and society, and challenging negative stereotypes that harm the Muslim community.

For further research, there are several suggestions and recommendations that can be made, namely to research more about the impact of Islamophobia in the media on the Muslim community, both psychologically and socially and examine more deeply about the role of the media in strengthening or reducing negative stereotypes against Islam and Muslims.

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## 8. Conflicts of Interest

The author explicitly states that there is no conflict of interest in writing this article.

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