

COVERAGE OF QURAN (HOLY QUR'AN) BURNING INCIDENTS IN INTERNATIONAL MEDIA: EXPLORING THE PREDOMINANT THEMES

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Abstract- The Quran burning incidents in the Sweden during 2023 have given rise to a multidimensional discourse at global level. There are voices that condemn the desecration acts in terms of blasphemy, religious hatred, and Islamophobia. On the other hand, there is a view point that the acts are protected under the laws of 'freedom of expression'. In any case, the Quran burning incidents have attracted a lot of public and media attention around the globe. This research endeavor is an attempt to explore and analyze various themes produced by the selected international media in their coverage of the Quran desecration incident that took place in Sweden on June 28, 2023. Employing the quantitative and qualitative content analysis we have attempted to dig out the predominant themes produced by the media outlets including; *Al Jazeera* (Qatar), *Dawn* (Pakistan), *India Today* (India), *New York Times* (USA), and *The Guardian* (UK). Our findings show that *Al Jazeera* and *Dawn* condemned the burning of Quran incident and portrayed it as a manifestation of Islamophobia which would widen the 'us' verses 'them' dichotomy between Islam and the West. On the other hand, *India Today* and *New York Times* defended the act under the pretext of freedom of expression. However, *The Guardian* projected both sides of the story by criticizing both the burning of Holy Quran and the Muslim world reaction on it.

Index Terms- Burning of Quran, Desecration of Quran, Islamophobia, Freedom of expression, Blasphemy

I. INTRODUCTION

There was an attempt to desecrate the Holy Quran in Sweden on June 28, 2023 (Al Jazeera, 2023 July 20). After this, the second incident happened in Denmark where a person tried to burn the Quran on July 24, 2023 under the supervision of the government (BBC, 2023 July 30). The controversial topic of burning the Holy Quran in Western societies, including some isolated cases in nations like Sweden, goes to the core of cultural sensitivities, societal values, and the intricate relationship between religious freedom and respect. These desecrations have provoked contentious discussions, bringing up issues with the protection of religious freedoms, the boundaries of free speech, and the effects on intercultural community cohesion. In an increasingly interconnected global landscape, navigating the challenges of coexistence, protecting diversity, and formulating inclusive policies require an understanding of the multifaceted dimensions of these incidents.

The Holy Quran burning incidents that have occurred in Western countries, particularly in Sweden, are of great importance for research in a number of critical domains. The intricate relationship between hate speech and freedom of speech is brought to light by these incidents, which calls for a discussion of the moral and legal bounds of speech. Community relations, interfaith discourse, and the integration of multicultural societies are all affected on a social and political level. These incidents, which represent underlying tensions and ideological conflicts, frequently draw attention to the rise of extremism and hate crimes as well as their effects on marginalized groups. Gaining knowledge about these occurrences can help one better understand the difficulties associated with globalization, cultural disputes, and the ways in which the media shape public opinion. The burning of the Holy book Quran in west and especially in Sweden in a past few years has raised the argument and prompted question about the nature of Western Islamic ties. The rise of such incidents has been rapidly increased. In the past few years, where people from the western countries have been seen doing extremism in the shadow of Islamic phobic These incidents lead protests and chaotic situation in the countries. Muslim states have expressed their anger over Burning of Holy Quran incidents and raised a question like why such incidents are allowed to happen? Muslims states including Iraq and Pakistan mentioned that dishonoring the Holy Quran amount to an urging of violence and have asked for accountability after sequences of holy book incidents in Sweden and Denmark's caused a chaos around the world (*Al Jazeera*, 2023 July 12).

The government of Sweden decided to permit Salwan Mokika an Iraqi who is a resident Sweden, to burn the Holy book Quran in front of Stockholm's main mosque as considering this act is a human right. But it is critical and important to understand the impact of such incidents. Many Muslim countries have condemned the burning of Holy Quran. The Islamic rules and ideology of Muslims all around the globe are against to the burning of Holy Book. This incident has hurt their sentiments because Quran considered as sacrosanct book and it is justifiable for them to get upset. Expressing yourself freely is a basic human right but at the same time there should be some obligations. It is important to practice this advantage in a way that does not encourage violence and aggression against the society. Burning the Quran may be seen as an intentional incitement intended to outrage and damage the sensibilities of the large numbers of individuals who worth and regard this valuable book. Communities should encourage respect, tolerance and

comprehension of many societies and religions. Such efforts have the possibility. Subsequently, it's basic to address fragile subjects considering propriety and sympathy while bearing the potential impacts they can have on society cohesion (Anbi, 2023, July 02).

Muslim leaders during their speeches to the UN in September 2023 addressed the West over Burning of Quran (The Holy Book of Muslims), criticizing the acts as protected as free to express as dissimilatory. There have been series of burning of Quran incidents in multiple countries of west and government are condemning these actions but not taking any strict action and saying cannot stop because these acts are secured under laws on free expression. Turkish president T. Erdogan said to the UN that "The number of these instances has gotten out of hand. Additionally, he stated that the mindset that "empowers the ugly attacks against the Holy book in West, by allowing them under the pretext of free expression, is essentially damaging (West's) own future through its own hands." Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi also expressed his anger on such incidents. He took the Quran to the rostrum and addressed the UN "The burning of the Koran, the prohibition of the hijab in schools, and other heinous discriminations are all examples of Islamophobia and cultural racism that are quite evident in Western nations and are not deserving of human dignity. He was indicating France, which forbade Muslim girls from donning the hijab". The Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hammad Al Thani, who has close ties with both West and the rest of the Islamic World, while addressing to UN said Freedom of expression should not be construed as purposefully violating the sacredness of others. To my Muslim brothers and sisters, I would emphasize that it is improbable for us to become sidetracked by a fool or a prejudiced person whenever it occurs to him to provoke us by burning the holy Quran or by engaging in other types of pettiness (*World News*, 2023 September 20).

The UK, US and some European Union member countries rejected condemning the burning of the Holy Book during debate at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva over the rising number of incidents against the Muslim holy book (Quran). The discussion was held after Pakistan submitted an official statement on behalf of member states of the (OIC), including those who are members of the United Nations Human Rights Council. The OIC called on the countries to denounce the attacks targeting the Quran, explaining them as "acts of religious hatred." US and the UK announced that they would vote against a draft resolution on religious hatred following the Quran burning Incidents (Beksac, 2023 July 12).

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has severely c the burning of copies of the Quran in Sweden by extremists, stating that such actions by extremists are intolerable and that governments from all over the world must step forward to take meaningful action to stop similar incidents from happening again. The OIC is of the opinion that religious hatred should be combated through international law. The OIC highlights the importance of respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms worldwide. The United States has described the act as deeply dishonourable but has not officially condemned it. An organized group is carrying out terrorist activities like insulting Islam, Prophet Muhammad SAW and burning Quran in different

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countries of the world including Europe. It is a sign of a poor mentality. It causes social and political instability and prevents harmonious cohabitation. Anti-Islamism and brutality against Muslims have been on the get in Western countries in recent years. The rise and growing role of extreme right-wing activities, parties and individuals has played a major role in this regard (Islam, 2023 July11).

In a statement, the Taliban government said that Sweden had stopped all of its operations in Afghanistan "after the holy Quran was burned and permission was given for the insulting of Muslim beliefs." The specific organisations that would be impacted by its ban were not disclosed. Since the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan in 2021, Sweden no longer maintains an embassy there. (SCA) reported that it was requesting clarification from the relevant authorities. SCA is not a part of the Swedish government. SCA condemns any disrespect of the holy Quran and is neutral and independent in its dealings with all political actors and states, according to a statement from the NGO (*Al Jazeera*, 2023 July).

The sharing of films and live-stream footage has resulted in the Quran-burning incidents gaining much attention. According to Mohammad Fazl Hashmi, a professor of Islamic philosophy and theology at Uppsala University in Sweden, these films vindicate the opinion of a small minority. Mohammad Fazl Hashmi said it was being seen as evidence that Sweden's anti-Islamic sentiment was to blame. Swedish Foreign Minister Mr. Tobias Bluström has condemned the burning of the Holy Quran and termed it as an expression of Islamophobia, but it does not matter to him. Although the government does not support these views, Fazl Hashmi says that many political figures have expressed their hatred of religion. Still, polls show many Swedes are against burning the Quran. According to a survey completed by Kantar Public in July, a large proportion of Swedes support a ban on the use of any religious text (Syed, 2023).

The whole scenario calls for an in-depth exploration and analysis of the themes produced by the international media on the issue. Therefore, in this study, we are focused on the research question; how did the selected international media outlets including; *Al Jazeera* (Qatar), *Dawn* (Pakistan), *India Today* (India), *New York Times* (USA), and *The Guardian* (UK) portray the burning of Quran incident in Sweden? Secondly, we are focused on; what are the predominant themes produced by the selected media in their coverage of the incident that took place on June 28, 2023?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Burning of the holy books is not a new phenomenon, Qureshi (2001) in his research paper "Can the Burning of Holy Books Ever Be Justified" identified the fundamental idea behind the burning of sacred books is the "freedom of expression" which ultimately feeds into religious intolerance, chaos in public, and acts of violence in society. The United States and the European Union media has played a crucial role in providing coverage on hate speech which has resulted in the aggravation of Islamophobia. Two prominent incidents analyzed in contrast to the legislative structure in this study are about Pastor Terry Jones attempt in conducting a mass Quran burning on the 9th

anniversary of the 9/11 attacks and the film director Geert Wilders film 'fitna' featuring hateful content.

Books can be prohibited or censored to a great extent but burning religious books can instigate the masses and increase the likelihood of society committing acts of destruction (Henley, 2010). Hatred among religious communities stems out from the burning of Holy Scriptures (Karam, 2012). This study is done by content analysis and involves an explanatory approach towards burning books in relation to historical incidents and arguments to determine that there can never be any justification for the incineration of sacred books and this act influences the right to freedom of speech and the obligation to defend the right to free speech for other people.

Berdan, in his findings stated that the incidents for burning books would take place when a person would feel oppugnant and threatened to the ideas presented in a book (Berdan, 2014). The first incident of burning books took place in the reign of the first monarch of unified China and then the same incidents kept on happening in the Middle Ages, Dark Ages and the Colonial Era (Fishburn, 2008). Similar acts are done by hatemongers of today such as burning sacred books or any work of art (Russel, 2010). Fishburn, highlights the stigma behind burning books and how colonizers to weaken the colonized used this tactic to burn their books and libraries, to agitate and instigate the colonized (Fishburn, 2008). Post-Colonial era has the incident of Nazis burning all books by Jewish authors labelling them as "un-German" (Ihrig, 2016). In an attempt to analyze further what could lead to the idea of burning books Fenwick and Glancey, discovered that books have been burned in the ancient to the present day without any basis and reasons, their findings further give reasons that burning of books is simply and act caused by the hate against the idea of the book, the writer, or the hate towards a particular religious or ethnic group. Qureshi (2017) through his findings stated that the fundamental cause of destruction of books and libraries occurs because of the hatred based on ethnic, religious or political motives.

A group of people started a movement that known as the moral brigade of civil authoritarianism claiming that violent and bloodshed comic books were the source of violence and these books might have detrimental effects on young people (Hajdu, 2009). Surprisingly the famous Harry Potter series books were burned because of their analogy with satanic magical teachings (Pyne, 2010). Such happenings tell us that the books targeted and burned by extremists are not only religious they include art and literature work as well (A Brief History of Art Censorship from 1508 to 2014). Burning of books is an absurd subtext of history which reoccurs constantly (Schwartz, 2010).

The books set on fire by the public are viewed as notorious. It is true that a well-known book gains popularity when readers get curious about its content (Kollman, 2014). In addition (Newman & Zuber, 2011) while discussing the spread of information through social media stated that given the current state of technological advancement and ease with which the information disseminated to a wide audience through the internet, it is completely irrational to publicly burn books or works of art. The media plays a very crucial role in developing or breaking anything. Media corporations are pervasive worldwide and have a great ability to disseminate propaganda both at news and

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information. Media companies such as CNN and the BBC in the United States and Europe have strong media instruments to spread misinformation or propaganda at both at the national and worldwide levels, under these circumstances if such platforms broadcast Islamophobic content on their news, blogs, websites or published articles can transform the views of the masses watching on a large scale (Slomp, 2011).

Article 20 of the ICCPR states that "any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law." (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1996). This clause discourages acts of violence and speech that might trigger the public creating disorder. The U.S admitted that the actions of hatred based on religion can cause rifts between the public. In America, there was no legislation against hate speech. This is due to the fact that the fundamental tenet of the freedom of speech was that any speech, debate, or discussions about public matters, worries, and disagreements ought to be unrestrained, ferocious, and publicly accessible; this decision was issued in NY Times (Sullivan, 1964). Danchin, argues that it can be difficult to distinguish between the freedom of speech and hate speech, definitional issues surrounding threats of hate can be particularly problematic (Danchin, 2010). Because hate speech has been a part of American society and politics since the twentieth century, there is a political basis for the lack of laws prohibiting it (Schultz, 2010). Pastor Terry Jones was requested by the President Barack Obama not to instigate people and to cancel the event, while this being done he was banned from entering Britain by the authorities. In comparison, this study shows that the hate speech is illegal in Europe. The Racial and Religious Hatred Act of 2006 made acts of religious hatred, like burning holy books, illegal in the United Kingdom (Racial and Religious Hatred Act, 2006). This act was made to protect religious groups against violence and it is applicable to verbal and behavioral actions and the burning of Holy books. Even though burning a holy book is not specifically illegal in the UK, it can still be seen as extremely undesirable and ought to be avoided and discouraged by the authorities and the general public (Sherwood, 2012). The Dutch director was banned from entering UK until 2009 when he was allowed, which empowered him to continue his hatred against Islam. Ansari and Hafeez (2012) explain that it is important to remember, though, that protests have been sparked by the words and deeds of Geert Wilders and Pastor Terry Jones, who have both targeted Islam, the religion of Muslims.

Qureshi (2017) in his research concluded that there can never be justification for the burning of holy books on the basis of freedom of speech or expression because it can lead to the threat towards the practicing of a religion freely. This is due to the fact that burning sacred texts would inevitably lead to an ideological split between those who value holy books and those who do not. Rather than burning holy books, which is a completely negative approach, practice and outcome. There is a plethora of other humane ways to express freedom that can have positive effects. A society's commitment to harmony, peace, and public order must be able to establish itself in any situation and anywhere place.

The available literature encourages us to look into the coverage given by the international media to the Quran burning incident that took place in Sweden on June 28, 2023. Therefore, our main objectives are; to explore how did the selected international media outlets including; Al Jazeera (Qatar), Dawn (Pakistan),

India Today (India), New York Times (USA), and The Guardian (UK) portray the burning of Quran incident in Sweden. Secondly, to determine the predominant themes produced by the selected media in their coverage of the incident that took place on June 28, 2023.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Framing Theory

Journalists must choose the elements of a situation to effectively convey the gist of an event or problem, gather information for a story, and present it in an appealing and understandable manner. One of the most important choices is selecting the frame for an issue or event, which defines the basic characteristics of an issue. Robert Entman defines Framing as *"To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described."* (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Framing is a crucial aspect of news reporting, involving phrases, images, analogies, or metaphors used by journalists to convey the essence of an issue or event, simplifying the story-writing process and aiding audiences in understanding the news they encounter. Political communication researchers have identified two primary stages in the framing process: frame-building and frame-setting. Frame-building involves the development of frames and their inclusion in news stories, while frame-setting describes audience consumption of news with frames and their adoption as ways to understand issues. These stages are linked because the ultimate goal of journalists is the audience's acceptance of frames as describers of public life events and issues. Frame-building is the process by which journalists create news stories from everyday life, incorporating ideas and facts from a specific culture and sources. This process is influenced by the constraints and practices of their profession and organizations, with three powerful forces shaping the production of frames: culture and social norms, organizational pressures and constraints, and frame advocates. Journalists operate within the hierarchy of influences (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014).

Frames in news significantly impact public opinion by shaping receivers' beliefs and feelings about issues, problems, and policies. Frame-setting is the process of influencing perceptions about public issues and problems, including their causes, consequences, and responsibility for correction. Entman (1993) and others suggest that frames provide the necessary information, making them a powerful tool in shaping public opinion. Agenda-setting refers to the media's coverage of a problem, while frame-setting focuses on how public perceptions of the problem's explanation are shaped by the media's frame, as explained by Price & Tewksbury in 1997. Applicability refers to the mental associations people make between concepts, such as poverty and high unemployment. News articles can establish this link by explicitly stating or implying it in their portrayals of the poverty-stricken. Frame-setting occurs unawares or through systematic consideration of a message. Accepting how an issue is described in the news is not entirely irrational, as the more attention people

pay to the news and the longer, they spend thinking about a frame, the more influence the frame would exert.

So, keeping in view the relevance of the theory we have employed it to find out how did the selected international media outlets including; Al Jazeera (Qatar), Dawn (Pakistan), India Today (India), New York Times (USA), and The Guardian (UK) portray the burning of Quran incident in Sweden. Secondly, to determine the predominant themes produced by the selected media in their coverage of the incident that took place on June 28, 2023.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

The incident of Quran burning understudy took place in Sweden on June 28, 2023. Keeping in view the research objective we have selected very first news story published on the issue by the Al Jazeera, Dawn, India Today, New York Times, and The Guardian. We have selected one news story from each of the selected media outlet because the very first report on an issue covers all available aspects on an issue. Additionally, a news outlet covers the issue with all possible angles. We assumed that the media outlets' immediate coverage would give us an opportunity to analyze and determine the predominant themes produced by the news outlets around the issue of Quran burning. The selection of five media outlets from; Qatar, Pakistan, USA, UK, and India have been done to explore and determine the media discourses produced internationally about the Quran burning incident.

Data Analysis

We have employed the qualitative and quantitative content analysis to achieve the research objectives.

Content Analysis

Walizer and Wienir (1978) define content analysis as any systematic procedure devised to examine the content of recorded information. Krippendorff (2004) defines content analysis as a research method that establishes valid and reproducible data-context links. Kerlinger (2000) defines content analysis as the systematic, objective, and quantitative study and analysis of communication which measures variables.

According to Wimmer & Dominick, (2011,p-164) content analysis focuses on avoiding "counting for the sake of counting," where data is collected without meaning. Analysis aim must be clear for mass media research to be meaningful. Without a goal, counting punctuation marks in different publications doesn't help media theory or policymaking. Instead, research questions or hypotheses from theory, prior research, practical difficulties, or societal change should guide content analysis. The research procedure requires a thorough literature evaluation. With clear research objectives, content categories can be accurately constructed, yielding more useful data. Examples include

examining how society views bikers or comparing newspaper content online and in print (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011.p-164). According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011) following are the key steps involved in the content analysis; formulating hypothesis and research question, defining universe of the study, selection of an appropriate sample, determining a unit of analysis, constructing content categories, establishing the quantification system, training the coders, coding the contents, analyzing the data, and drawing conclusions.

V. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Content analysis of *Al Jazeera*;

This news story was published in *Al Jazeera* English on July 21, 2023. The 473-word news story was released 23 days after the occurrence on June 28, 2023. The first paragraph of the news story which has 82 words, paints a negative picture of the burning of the Quran problem in Sweden. The mention of the ambassadors to be called in several countries after a Quran was kicked and partly damaged in Stockholm, though it wasn't burned as had been announced. This shows that Muslim-majority countries are reacting negatively and condemning the event. Adding to the bad mood is the fact that the Swedish embassy in downtown Baghdad was burned down on the same day as the protest. Based on what was said in the paragraph, it seems that what Sweden did have major bad effects on diplomatic ties and how people in many other countries felt about it. When looking at the whole paragraph, the text shows that the Quran-related event in Sweden had bad results and effects.

The information given about Salwan Momika in 21 words in second paragraph of the news story, who planned the event in Stockholm and his arrest on June 28 seems to be more of an account of what happened than a clear picture of good or bad things. The text gives information about the person concerned and the events that happened in order, but it doesn't give a clear view or judgement. In this way, this information seems more neutral, since it focuses on giving facts without taking a side in the Swedish Quran burning problem.

When looking at the third paragraph, which length is 79 words, it shows a grim picture of what happened because of the burning of the Quran in Sweden. Iraq has taken a number of steps, including expelling the Swedish ambassador, recalling the charge d'affaires, stopping the working permit of a Swedish company, and threatening to cut official links if these kinds of things happen again. These responses show strong disagreement and possible political problems because of the event in Sweden that was linked to the Quran and was seen as disrespectful or harmful. Overall, the text makes it seem like Iraq has had bad reactions to what happened, which shows that international ties are tense and that people feel condemned.

The analysis of the fourth paragraph having 40 words, shows a bad picture after burning of the Quran in Sweden. Qatar's reaction to call Sweden's minister and hand him a protest note shows some kind of disagreement or worry about what happened in Stockholm. The words "shameful acts" used in the foreign ministry statement from Qatar show a negative attitude. This suggests that Qatar finds the events in Sweden unpleasant or insulting. Overall, the text suggests that Qatar has a negative

view and talks about how the country reacted badly to the burning of the Quran problem in Sweden.

When looking at the fifth paragraph which consist of 18 words, it shows how bad things are because of what happened with the burning of the Quran in Sweden. The fact that Saudi Arabia called the Swedish charge d'affaires in Riyadh and gave them a note of protest shows that they don't agree with what happened in Sweden. The fact that a protest note was called for and delivered says that Saudi Arabia finds the events to be troublesome or offensive. Overall, the text suggests that Saudi Arabia is critical and shows that the country has a bad reaction to the burning of the Quran problem in Sweden.

The sixth paragraph which has 65 words in total, paints a bleak picture of what happened in reaction to the burning of the Quran. Hassan Nasrallah, who is in charge of Hezbollah in Lebanon, wants other Arab and Muslim countries to do what Iraq did and kick out Swedish diplomats. This shows a bad attitude and a desire to work together to attack Sweden. People are being asked to hold protests after Friday prayers with statements like "the whole world must see how we embrace our Quran and the whole world must see how we protect our Quran with our blood." This sounds like a strong and possibly hostile tone. Overall, the text gives the impression that Hezbollah has a negative and harshly critical point of view, calling for strong actions and protests against Sweden in response to the events linked to the Quran.

The seventh paragraph having 40 words, provides summary of the situation in light of the recent events surrounding the Quran burning in Sweden. Swedes should take "decisive measures to prevent this hate crime" against Islam, according to Turkey, and the country's official description of the occurrence as a "despicable attack" reflects a hostile attitude. Turkey views the occurrence negatively, and the usage of terms like "hate crime" and "despicable attack" shows that they share this view. As a whole, the material paints a picture of a critical Turkish viewpoint on the Quran-related controversy in Sweden, with an emphasis on condemnation and a need for preventative actions.

When looking at the eighth paragraph, which consist of 54 words, it shows how situation is worsening after burning of the Quran in Sweden. The fact that Iran's foreign ministry called Sweden's representative to Tehran to "strongly protest against the desecration of the holy Koran" shows that they strongly disagree with and reject what was done. There are plans for protests all over the country after Friday prayers, and the Iranian Foreign Minister has written a letter to the UN secretary-general, which adds to the bad mood. Overall, the text gives a critical view from Iran and shows how strongly the country reacted to the event in Sweden that had to do with the Quran.

The analysis of the ninth paragraph which length is 36 words, it shows the reaction of the Kingdom of Jordan. The Kingdom of Jordan said in a statement that the damage done to the Quran in Stockholm was a "reckless act that fuels hatred" and a "manifestation of Islamophobia that incites violence and insult to religions." These words and phrases show strong dislike and a bad view of what happened. Using words like "reckless act," "fuels hatred," and "manifestation of Islamophobia" shows a critical stance, focusing on the bad effects and meanings of the event in Sweden that was related to the Quran. Overall, the

writing makes it sound like Jordan had a very negative response to the burning of the Quran.

The tone of the news story as a whole is negative about the burning of the Quran in Sweden. The text talks about how many countries, mostly Muslim-majority countries, strongly condemned, protested, and took formal steps against Sweden for what they saw as disrespecting the Quran. Throughout the piece, words like "despicable," "hate crime," and "manifestation of Islamophobia" are used to show strong disagreement and criticism. Overall, the news story talks about the bad responses and outcomes that came about because of the burning of the Quran in Sweden.

Content analysis of Dawn;

The introductory segment has 69 words, according to the quantitative content analysis of the given paragraph. Within this, expressions that support the protest against the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden total six. The criticism of the Swedish government includes these statements. Nevertheless, there are no phrases or words in the paragraph that support a neutral or opposing position. Regarding the qualitative analysis, specific words and attitudes are supporting the protest. Strong statements are communicated through phrases like "desecration of the Holy Quran," "shouting slogans against the Swedish government," and "protesters blocked the main Karakoram Highway." There are no indications of anything that would support a different viewpoint. Thus, the researcher classifies the paragraph under the 'negative' content label, indicating a clear alignment with the sentiments of the protest against the desecration incident, based on both quantitative and qualitative content analysis.

The paragraph under analysis has a word count of 112 and contains eight expressions that are quantitatively negative towards European nations, particularly Sweden, for allegedly hurting Muslim sentiments by burning religious texts. Interestingly, none of the terms express support for free speech or a favorable opinion of Europe. Qualitatively, Mr. Deshani's remarks use phrases like "miserably failed," "hurting the sentiments," and "frequently desecrated," all of which suggest a critical position. He charges that 57 Islamic nations' leaders are only making "mere condemnations" rather than taking concrete steps to uphold the sacredness of the Quran. After weighing the results of the two analyses, the researcher classifies the paragraph as "negative." This suggests a prevailing critical viewpoint, since Mr. Deshani claims that Sweden and other European nations are hurting Muslim feelings and argues that their position on freedom of speech should be reevaluated in light of religious convictions.

Based on a content analysis of Abdul Ghaffar's statement, the researcher has identified both qualitative and quantitative components. There are 46 words in the paragraph in terms of quantity. In these, Abdul Ghaffar calls on Pakistan to confront the growing global problem of Islamophobia. Qualitatively, arguments in support of this position include Ghaffar's recommendation that Pakistan call an Organization of Islamic Conference meeting to proactively confront the desecration of the Holy Quran. The wording used, which highlights the necessity of taking decisive action to regulate and stop such acts, shows opposition to Islamophobia. There are no arguments in favor of any other discourse in this paragraph. As a result, taking

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into account both quantitative and qualitative findings, this content is classified as "positive," suggesting that it supports Abdul Ghaffar's viewpoint regarding Pakistan's contribution to the fight against Islamophobia.

The 47-word paragraph, which has 20 words specifically endorsing the speakers' position, quantitatively mostly backs their demand that action be taken against those who burn the Holy Quran. There are no statements endorsing the Swedish government or providing an unbiased viewpoint. Qualitatively, statements such as "protest against the sacrilege of the Holy Quran," "expel the Swedish ambassador," and "punish the people burning the Holy Quran" support a strong case for taking decisive action against the alleged offence. Not a single statement endorsing the Swedish government or offering an unbiased opinion. Ultimately, the results of both quantitative and qualitative content analyses point to the paragraph being classified as "negative," demonstrating a strong agreement with the demands of the speakers and a lack of support for the stance taken by the Swedish government.

In conclusion, the content analyses show that every paragraph that was looked at had a negative viewpoint. The protest against the desecration of the Quran in Sweden has received overwhelming support, according to both quantitative and qualitative evaluations. There are no indications of neutral or opposing viewpoints, and the majority of the expressions condemn the incident and criticize the Swedish government. The speakers' language supports a critical position by highlighting the seriousness of the desecration and calling for swift action against those responsible. As such, all of the paragraphs are categorized as "negative," indicating that everyone is against the purported actions and that everyone is in agreement with the protesters' viewpoints.

Content analysis of India Today;

Analysing content quantitatively researcher determined that headline of the story contains 7 words .out of these 2 words are employed by newspaper that are against Sweden and 5 are employed by newspaper that are in favor of Sweden. As the qualitative analysis is concerned, the headline contains expressions that criticize Sweden are "Islamophobic act". The expression held by newspaper to appreciate or defend the Sweden is "Swedish government condemns Quran burning". There is no neutral expression in the headline.

Drawing on the quantitative content analysis the researcher has found out that the story contains 188 words. Out of 188 words three expression stress upon the burning of Quran incident in Sweden as for as the expression in favour of Sweden there are seven expression.As the qualitative analysis is concerned, the paragraph contains expressions that are showing how Sweden is sorry about the incident And OIC is thinking about precautionary measure to stop such incidents .The expressions used by newspaper are "Muslims were offended by the burning of the Quran", "and collective measures to prevent the desecration of the Quran", "Stomped". In terms for supporting the Sweden, expression found are "Swedish government stand against the recent acts of burning of the Quran in the country", "condemned", "Swedish foreign ministry echoed the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's sentiments", "offensive, disrespectful, and a clear provocation", "Expressions of racism,

xenophobia and related intolerance have no place in Sweden or in Europe," the Swedish government said", "Sweden upholds the constitutionally protected right to freedom of assembly, expression, and demonstration "and for neutral expression of discourse no expression has been employed by newspaper. Keeping in view the quantitative and qualitative content analysis findings of this paragraph the researcher codes it in the content category labelled as 'negative'. This means that both quantitatively and qualitatively *India Today* has criticized by mentioning the countries that are denouncing this act that happened in Sweden.

Conclusively the narrative build by *India Today* in the story is not promoting the narrative of desecration of Quran and they are appreciating and supporting the narrative of freedom of speech.

Content analysis of *New York Times*;

Analysing content quantitatively researcher determined that headline of the story contains 12 words. Out of these 5 words are employed by newspaper that are against Sweden and 3 are employed by newspaper that are in favour of Sweden. As the qualitative analysis is concerned, the headline contains expressions that criticize Sweden are "Sweden Set to Burn Religious". The expression held by newspaper to appreciate or defend the Sweden is "NATO Statutes Instead". There is no neutral expression in the headline. Analyzing the headline of the news story quantitatively it has 12 words. Out of these 3 words are against the Sweden and 3 words in factor of Sweden. Qualitatively analysis by researcher those words that are against Sweden are "Set burn Religious" and negative: NATO statutes instead" this headline is a mixture of positive and negative words which is showing that headline is neutral.

Drawing on the quantitative Content Analysis the researcher has found out that the third paragraph of the news story contains 161 words, out of these 14 words are employed by newspaper that are against Sweden and the act of Quran burning. 21 words are deployed by newspaper in favour of the Sweden. As for as the qualitative analysis is concerned, the paragraph contains expressions against the Sweden discourse of incident and expressions employed by newspaper are "man burned" "to burn a religious text", "to protests and widespread condemnation", "tense debate" and "lead-up". In terms of supporting the Sweden discourse the newspaper has employed expression that are "Turkey agreed to clear the way for Sweden to join the alliance", "the alliance, changing gears", "peaceful", "Unclear", "Swedish news media" As for as the neutral discourse about the issue is concerned, the newspaper has employed no expression. Keeping in view the quantitative and qualitative content analysis findings of this paragraph the researcher codes it in the content category labelled as 'positive' which means newspaper has both qualitatively and quantitatively favoring the Swedish government and their law of freedom of speech.

Quantitatively analysing the content researcher has found out that in second paragraph of the news story comprising of 134 words out of which eight expressions have been highly criticizing the act of Quran Burning in Sweden. Moreover, two expressions have been expressed to appreciate the Sweden. As the qualitative analysis is concerned, the paragraph contains expressions that criticize Sweden and condemnation of Quran burning act by other Muslim countries. The expressions used by newspaper are;

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"to strains with Turkey", "Sweden's harbouring of dissidents", "views as terrorists", "has wrestled with how to handle protests involving the burning of the Quran", "incitements of religious hate, ", " have overturned decisions" ," consequences for Sweden security" .Two expression has be employed by newspaper to appreciate or defend the Sweden are "enough evidence that it would disrupt public order and security to infringe on rights to freedom of speech", "agreed to clear the way for Sweden's entry". Keeping in view the quantitative and qualitative content analysis findings of this paragraph the researcher codes it in the content category labelled as 'negative'. This means that both quantitatively and qualitatively New York Times has criticized Sweden for letting this incident happened and Their law of freedom of Speech.

Analysing content quantitatively researcher determined that last paragraph of the news story contains 197 words. No expressions are employed by newspaper to highlight the negative on Sweden. As for strengths of Sweden eight expressions are employed by newspaper and one expression is considered as neutral in this discourse. As the qualitative analysis is concerned, the paragraph contains expressions that is favoring the freedom of speech. The expressions used by newspaper are "protest permit, citing freedom of speech rights", "Turkey agreed to support Sweden's bid" "changed his mind", "try to delay or stop the process to join NATO", "apologized for any offense he had caused along the way", "to support freedom of speech" Newspaper has not employed any expression to condemn the Quran burning act in Sweden. As for the neutral expression for the discourse is concerned, for that newspaper has employed one expression that is "on countries to examine their laws to prevent religious hatred." Keeping in view the quantitative and qualitative Content analysis findings of this paragraph the researcher codes it in the content category categorized as 'positive', which means that New York Times both qualitatively and quantitatively supported the right of freedom of speech.

Conclusively the narrative build by *New York Times* in this news story is promoting a freedom of speech right as basic human right and they are not condemning desecration of Quran.

Content analysis of *The Guardian*;

The researcher looked at a 75-word paragraph in a quantitative content analysis. The main subject of the story is Iraq's unfavorable reaction to a proposed Qur'an burning in Stockholm, which resulted in the Swedish ambassador's dismissal, embassy storming, and the suspension of permits for Swedish companies. Words like "suspended working permits," "set ablaze," and "hundreds of protesters" qualitatively contribute to a negative tone. There are no signs of neutrality or support for the Swedish viewpoint. As a result, the paragraph is classified as "negative" in both analyses, which is consistent with Iraq's position regarding the Qur'an burning incident.

Quantitatively, there is no clear endorsement of the anti-Islamic protesters' actions in the 74-word paragraph, and no affirmative statements are found. Additionally, there is no positive language directed towards the Iraqi embassy, the object of the protest. Qualitatively, derogatory phrases like "kicked," "burned the Qur'an," and "partly destroyed" add to the negative perception of the demonstrators' actions. As a result, the researcher codes this paragraph as "negative," indicating a critical stance towards the

anti-Islamic protest, based on both quantitative and qualitative assessments.

After a quantitative assessment and content analysis of the given paragraph, a total of 28 words are found. A critical attitude is discerned in this, specifically criticizing the Iraqi authorities for not protecting the Swedish embassy. Qualitatively, the passage consistently portrays Iraqi authorities in a negative light, using phrases like "failed in their responsibility to protect." A purely negative orientation results from the lack of any positive or neutral expressions. Consequently, both the quantitative and qualitative analyses categorize this paragraph as 'negative,' indicating a prevailing critical stance towards Iraqi authorities in their responsibility for embassy protection.

A quantitative content analysis of the 103-word paragraph highlights how strongly the Iraqi government condemns the burning of the Swedish embassy. There is a total lack of statements endorsing any other opinion. Qualitatively, the passage perpetuates a negative attitude by highlighting the strong language employed by the Iraqi government, such as the use of phrases like "security breach" and its pledge to protect diplomatic missions. Both the quantitative and qualitative analyses point to a strongly negative tone in response to the incident. As a result, the researcher classifies this paragraph as "negative" based on both analyses, reflecting a critical viewpoint on the Iraqi government's burning of the Swedish embassy.

In terms of numbers, the paragraph has 28 words and doesn't explicitly support or oppose any political discourse regarding the ongoing protest in Stockholm and the recall of the *chargé d'affaires* to Sweden. Qualitatively, a neutral position is suggested by the lack of words or phrases that explicitly support a certain political narrative. Thus, the content is classified as 'neutral' with respect to the political discourse surrounding the event, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

A quantitative analysis reveals that the 44-word paragraph primarily conveys a negative sentiment, which is best expressed by the phrase "completely unacceptable and the government strongly condemns these attacks." Qualitatively, Billström constantly reinforces a negative tone with his use of language such as "completely unacceptable" and his pledge to convey dismay to high-ranking Iraqi representatives. The paragraph is classified as "negative" because neither of the analyses' positive or neutral expressions can be found in it.

The Department of State uses terms like "strongly condemned" and "criticized" in a quantitative content analysis of a 46-word paragraph that criticizes Iraq's security forces for their shortcomings in breach prevention following an embassy attack. Qualitatively, 'negative' classification results from the lack of words that are neutral or supportive combined with EU-echoed statements of criticism and condemnation. This shows a critical attitude towards the incident and the security reaction from Iraq. The paragraph is 98 words long and does not directly advocate burning the Qur'an. A single neutral expression, "called by supporters of the Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr," is identified. The content qualitatively supports Muqtada al-Sadr's opposition to the proposed burning, as demonstrated by statements like "protest at the second planned Qur'an burning" and "Sadr is one of Iraq's most powerful figures." There are no statements endorsing the burning of the Qur'an or taking a neutral stance.

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The researcher classifies the paragraph as "negative" in light of both analyses, indicating agreement with Muqtada al-Sadr's story and disapproval of the planned act.

Using quantitative content analysis, it is possible to determine that the given paragraph has 52 words in total. Two of these phrases, "pro-Sadr slogans" and "Yes, yes to the Qur'an," are recognized as endorsing a specific political narrative linked to the demonstrators. Expressions that affirm the protesters' viewpoint—such as "chanting pro-Sadr slogans" and "Yes, yes to the Qur'an"—are the focus of the qualitative content analysis. Notably, the paragraph lacks neutral language pertaining to the issue under discussion and does not mention or employ any expressions that support an alternative political discourse. Thus, this paragraph is classified by the researcher as leaning towards the 'positive' content category, indicating that it is consistent with the political

A quantitative analysis of the 62-word paragraph reveals three expressions that support the narrative against Qur'an burnings and one neutral position; there are no expressions that support or oppose the discourse of far-right or anti-Muslim activists. The paragraph, in its qualitative sense, highlights the opposition to Qur'anic burnings by using phrases such as "security forces," "firefighters extinguished stubborn embers," and "Sweden less safe." The far-right discourse is not explicitly supported, and the phrase "according to witnesses" is used in an unbiased manner. The researcher classifies the paragraph as "negative" overall, highlighting security concerns in Sweden and aligning with the narrative against Qur'an burnings.

The given paragraph has 85 words in total, including phrases like "burning of the Qur'an," "security concerns," "freedom of speech laws," and "legal changes." Expressions such as "protected by Sweden's far-reaching freedom of speech laws" and "considering legal changes" are noteworthy from a qualitative standpoint. Both quantitative and qualitative content analyses classify the paragraph as "neutral" due to the lack of explicit terms indicating political alignment or opposition.

The opening fifty words of the paragraph are based on a quantitative analysis. Qualitatively, the terms employed paint a dismal picture of the fires and how they will affect Sweden's application to NATO. "Complicated Sweden's application to join NATO" and "legal but inappropriate" imply objections and criticism. Considering both analyses, the researcher codes this paragraph in the 'negative' content category, indicating a consistently unfavorable view regarding the burnings and their implications for Sweden.

The researcher carefully examined several paragraphs that addressed Iraq's reaction to a suggestion that a Qur'an be burned in Stockholm. All analyses, both quantitative and qualitative, revealed a generalized negative attitude throughout the paragraphs, denoted by terms like "suspended working permits," "set ablaze," and "completely unacceptable." Phrases such as "strongly condemned" and "failed in their responsibility to protect" were used in the qualitative analysis to further support this negativity. Consistent use of the 'negative' classification suggests a critical viewpoint regarding the incident, the actions of the Iraqi authorities, and the planned Qur'anic burning. 'Neutral' was applied to one paragraph because there was no overt endorsement or criticism of any political discourse. All things

considered; the combined analyses offered a sophisticated perspective of Iraq's position regarding the Qur'an burning incident.

VI. CONCLUSION

At the outset of this research endeavor, we were focused on an in-depth exploration and analysis of the themes produced by the international media on the issue of Quran burning that took place in Sweden on June 28, 2023. Therefore, in this study, we devised a broader research question; how did the selected international media outlets including; Al Jazeera (Qatar), Dawn (Pakistan), India Today (India), New York Times (USA), and The Guardian (UK) portray the burning of Quran incident in Sweden? Secondly, we are focused on; what are the predominant themes produced by the selected media in their coverage of the incident that took place on June 28, 2023? Employing the quantitative and qualitative content analysis we have found out that Al Jazeera and Dawn condemned the burning of Quran incident and portrayed it as a manifestation of Islamophobia which would widen the 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy between Islam and the West. On the other hand, India Today and New York Times defended the act under the pretext of freedom of expression. However, The Guardian projected both sides of the story by criticizing both the burning of Holy Quran and the Muslim world reaction on it.

Conclusively, the tone of the news story published in Al Jazeera as a whole is negative about the burning of the Quran in Sweden. The story highlights how many countries, mostly Muslim-majority countries, strongly condemned, protested, and took formal steps against Sweden for what they saw as disrespecting the Quran. Throughout the piece, words like "despicable," "hate crime," and "manifestation of Islamophobia" are used to show strong disagreement and criticism. Overall, the news story highlights the bad responses and outcomes that came about because of the burning of the Quran in Sweden. As for as the news story published in daily the Dawn is concerned, the content analyses shows that every paragraph produced themes in favor of the protests against the desecration of the Quran in Sweden. On the other hand, as for as daily the India Today is concerned, the story published in it did not criticise the desecration of Quran rather the themes produced in it were appreciating and supporting the narrative of freedom of speech. Similarly, the New York Times news story has been promoting the freedom of expression as a basic human right and did not condemn the desecration of the Holy Quran. However, daily The Guardian, in its story, projected both sides of the story by criticizing both the burning of Holy Quran and the Muslim world reaction on it.

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