

Framing Faith and Fear: Muslim Religious Scholars Perspectives on Media Representation of Terrorism in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the perceptions of Muslim religious scholars on media representation of terrorism in Kenya. Kenya presents a unique context for the study because of its diverse religious landscape, its specific experiences with terrorism and upsurge of digital platforms for news dissemination. Muslim scholars in Kenya, therefore, play a critical role within Muslim communities as they look after their congregation. The phenomenological theory was used as a framework for the study. The study found that there was a general perception among Muslim religious scholars that media representation of terrorism was biased towards the Muslim population. The scholars are of the view that Muslims were labelled as terrorists, terrorism sponsors or sympathizers. As a result, the religious scholars had become reluctant to consume Kenyan media products, and some of them had disconnected from various media platforms. There is need for guidelines and policies that recognize the place and the sensitivities of the Muslim population in terrorism reporting in Kenya to improve media representation of terrorism, and as well as differentiating between Islam and terrorism, as part of the guidelines, and training journalists on their implementation.

Key words; Kenya, Media Representation, Terrorism, Muslim Religious Scholars, Islamophobia,

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I. INTRODUCTION

Media representation of terrorism carries significant implications, influencing public perception, policy formulation, and social cohesion (White, J. 2022). In Kenya, a country with a complex and diverse religious fabric, this issue is particularly sensitive and critical. Over the past few decades, Kenya has experienced multiple terrorist attacks, with groups like Al-Qaeda and Al-Shabaab launching attacks in various cities including Nairobi, the capital (Rotich, H. K. 2020). These incidents have not only led to tragic loss of life but also sparked intense media coverage, sometimes representing terrorism in ways that hugely impact social and political landscapes. A crucial but underexplored aspect of this issue is the perceptions of Muslim religious scholars—figures who hold considerable influence over their communities—regarding the media’s representation of terrorism. Muslim religious scholars in Kenya play roles within society (Abdi, B et al 2020). They are not only spiritual guides but also key opinion leaders whose perspectives shape the beliefs and attitudes of their followers. Their influence extends beyond the confines of the mosque, affecting how their communities perceive broader societal issues, including the sensitive topic of terrorism. Given the centrality of these figures in the lives of many Kenyan Muslims, understanding their perspectives on media representation of terrorism is critical. This study explores these perceptions, offering an understanding of how Muslim religious scholars in Kenya interpret media narratives surrounding terrorism and the impact of these interpretations on their communities.

The importance of this study is underscored by Kenya's ongoing struggle against terrorism, particularly following high-profile attacks such as the 1998 U.S. embassy bombing, the 2013 Westgate Mall attack, and the 2015 Garissa University massacre and Dusit 2 Hotel attack in 2019 (Kelly R. M. 2020). These events have drawn significant media attention, with the representation of these incidents often fraught with bias and stereotyping (Obwogi C. O. 2021). Media coverage, both in Kenya and globally, has been criticized for disproportionately associating terrorism with Islam, thus contributing to the stigmatization of Muslim communities. Research has shown that such biased media coverage can fuel Islamophobia, deepen social divisions, and influence policy decisions in ways that marginalize Muslim populations (Nickerson, 2019; Li & Zhang, 2022). Majority of prior studies on media representation of terrorism have primarily focused on content analysis, examining how various media outlets frame acts of terrorism and the extent to which these frames are biased. For instance, in Western contexts, scholars have documented a consistent pattern of portraying Muslims as inherently linked to terrorism, thereby perpetuating harmful stereotypes (Demarest, Godefroidt, & Langer, 2020). In the African context, while there has been some research on the media portrayal of groups like Boko Haram in Nigeria, a significant gap remains in studies that focus on the perceptions of religious leaders, particularly in Kenya, regarding media representation of terrorism. This gap is especially important given the important role of the religious leaders in shaping their communities' views and influencing broader societal attitudes.

This study moves beyond anecdote to provide a systematic exploration of these perceptions, offering new insights into how media representation of terrorism is understood by one of the most influential groups within Kenya's Muslim community. As a result, this study addresses a critical gap in the existing literature. While much has been written about the content of media representations of terrorism, there is a lack of research examining how these representations are received and interpreted by the Muslim communities - directly affected by them. This study not only fills this gap but also contributes to a broader understanding of the complex relationship between media, religion, and terrorism in Kenya.

On the other hand, the concept of representation is a critical one in the context of multi-cultural societies. According to Stuart Hall (2013), representation is a key process in cultural interaction, involving the use of language and symbols to convey meaning. Media representation involves the constructed nature of media content, which is achieved through processes of selection, omission, and construction, making the relationship between media representation and communication a central academic concern (Fursich, 2010).

Media, Terrorism and Muslim Communities

Research indicates that the media disproportionately highlights acts of violence by Muslims, often labeling them as "terrorists" and associating them with broader violent networks. This representation reinforces negative stereotypes and contributes to the racialization of Muslims in the context of national security. Such media framing is more likely to label a crime as "terrorism" when the perpetrator is Muslim, influencing public perceptions negatively and fostering bias (Demarest, L., Godefroidt, A., & Langer, A., 2020). The representation of Muslims as terrorists in media correlates with increased public support for policies harmful to Muslims both domestically and internationally, mediated by perceptions of Muslims as aggressive (Saleem et al., 2017). This biased coverage not only affects how Muslims perceive themselves and their representation in the media, but also perpetuates a cycle of prejudice and misunderstanding globally (Nickerson, 2019). Additionally, Muslim students in Britain report negative representations of Muslim countries, which impacts their self-esteem and cultural identity, compelling them to counteract these stereotypes by promoting a more accurate depiction of Islam (Brown, Brown, and Richards, 2015). Post-September 11 discourse has led to a distinction between "good Muslims" and "bad Muslims," politicizing and simplifying Muslim identities and underscoring the need for a narrative that recognizes the diversity within the Muslim community (Mamdani, 2002; Kazi, N., 2021).

Kenyan media representation of terrorism

According to Jamal et al (2008), Kenya's media is viewed as being one of the most dynamic and advanced in Africa, significantly influencing the nation's democratic processes and enhancing the public's access to information. Since the transition to multi-party democracy in 1991, there has been a marked increase in the demand for news, which has spurred substantial private investment in Kenya's media and communications sectors. This growth has transformed media accessibility for Kenyans, providing them with a wide array of information sources and fostering a vibrant public discourse (Jamal et al., 2008; Oriare et al., 2010; Abdi, J., and Deane, J., 2008; J. Ally, 2009). Despite these positive attributes, the Kenyan media representation of terrorism has been problematic. Research indicates that nationalistic sentiments often influence the Kenyan media's coverage of terrorism. Mutie, B.M. (2021) found that reporters born in Kenya displayed a nationalistic bias, compromising journalistic ethics like objectivity and impartiality. Kisang (2014) observed that major Kenyan TV stations, KTN

and NTV, sometimes broadcast messages from al-Shabaab, including verbatim quotes or terrorist video messages, which had occasionally preceded targeted attacks in Kenya. This presents a dilemma on how to balance media representation of terrorism; between giving it a media blackout and facilitating terrorism. Furthermore, certain media practices have contributed to harmful stereotypes, particularly against Muslims and Somalis, linking them indiscriminately to terrorism. For example, a headline in the Daily Nation from April 10, 2015, suggested a direct conflict between Christians and Muslims, which could exacerbate communal tensions. Moreover, a 2014 Media Council of Kenya report criticized some media narratives for perpetuating the stereotype of Muslims as potential terrorists, which has significant implications for social cohesion and national security. Additionally, reports from entities like the Institute for Security Studies in 2020 have highlighted the adverse effects of such media representation of Muslims, often unfairly blaming them for security issues in the country.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There is limited scholarly research on the perceptions of Muslim religious scholars and communities regarding media representation of terrorism in Africa, and in Kenya, particularly. Majority of the existing studies primarily focus on content analysis. In contrast, considerable research has been conducted in the United States, Europe, and Asia on the topic. For instance, in Indonesia, a study by Rosyidi et al. (2018) explored Muslim religious leaders' views on media representation of terrorism, finding that they perceive mainstream media as more aligned with government interests than with the truth or impartiality, and as being predominantly profit-driven. Further, a study by Brown, Brown, and Richards (2016) examined the experiences of international Muslim student leaders, revealing perceptions of media depictions of Muslim countries as sympathetic to terrorism, economically underdeveloped, and culturally conservative. This representation, according to the students, led to suspicion and stereotyping by members of the host communities. Additionally, research by Li and Zhang (2022) on American media representations of terrorism, specifically within the New York Times, found that the depiction of Islam and Muslims over a 17-year period was stereotypically negative, contributing to prejudices like Islamophobia. Sikorsi et al. (2021) also examined media representation of terrorism, noting a prevalence of undifferentiated coverage linking Muslims to terrorism, particularly in proximity to terrorist events. Nickerson (2019) highlighted that media often falsely equate Muslims with terrorism, perpetuating negative stereotypes through biased reporting. Similarly, studies by Luqiu and Yangg (2019) and Raza (2019) found that Chinese state media portrays Muslims as the root cause of Islamophobia in China. In the African context, there are a few notable studies. For example, Demarest, Godefroidt, and Langer (2020) conducted interviews with Nigerian media practitioners and analyzed two Nigerian newspapers—one Christian-affiliated and the other Muslim-affiliated—to explore how terrorism is represented by the media. In Kenya, Adhoch (2016) critically evaluated media representations of terrorism, concluding that the Kenyan media has contributed to public outrage and perpetuated a "moral panic" in society. Another study by the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (2020) focused on the impact of media reporting on terrorism, specifically examining government communication during the Westgate and Dusit2 attacks, and found that Kenyan media reporting is often imbued with patriotic sentiments, likely encouraged by the state.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study used qualitative approach, hence phenomenological method. Data generation technique of conducting in-depth interviews was used to generate data for this article.

In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews lasting 30-45 minutes were held with 10 Muslim religious scholars who were considered to have sufficient experience with the Kenyan media representation of terrorism. All the interviews were face to face and were done in conformity with Polkinghorne (1989) who suggest that phenomenological research may involve **5 to 25** participants. Ten Muslim religious scholars from major mosques and religious centers in Nairobi participated in this study. The participants belong to six main mosques and two religious centers in Nairobi. The interviews took the form of ordinary conversations. An interview guide contained the main questions while the probes were determined as the conversations proceeded. Respondents were not only asked about facts related to their perceptions but also their opinions on the subject of inquiry.

IV. RESULTS

The data was analyzed thematically and presented in narrative form using quotations, summaries and para- phrases from the data sourced from the in-depth interviews with 10 Muslim religious scholars. Texts quoted in the study are those deemed to be the most useful ones.

Perceptions towards media

Views of the participants in this research towards the media representation of terrorism, varied widely, though majority expressed negative perception.

Editorial issues

Participants in this research scrutinized Kenyan media's role in reporting. Nearly all the participants expressed their view that the Kenyan media representation of terrorism is not objective. Some of the participants were of the opinion that media representation of terrorism in Kenya was done in a biased manner. This association, the participants argue, contributes to a distorted public understanding of the religion and its followers. The impression formed, according to the participants, is that the media seeks to link acts of terrorism exclusively to Islam. One of the respondents said;

I find that the media is one-sided. Whenever a terror attack happens, normally they refer to the perpetrators as Muslim terrorists. But if the attackers are not Muslims, they just stick to the fact that an attack happened.

This was supported by another respondent;

The first impression that comes to me when the media speaks about terrorism is that they are bias and they always want to associate the acts of terrorism with Islam.

Some respondent focused on what they termed as extra-judicial killings against Muslims as part of the crackdown on terrorism suspects, saying that the media refused to cover the incidents. A respondent said;

When there was all that extra judicial killings and Muslims lost a lot of them, the media refused to cover. even when we did a procession in the streets of Nairobi and I talked about it publicly, they gave me a complete blackout, because they were not comfortable with what I said.

Media Independence

Participants casted doubts on the independence of the Kenyan media when reporting about issues related to terrorism. One respondent said;

I think first is that they don't have independent minds, they don't have an independent mind, they are quick to jump to conclusion, you know, its breaking news, it is hot news, they are thinking initially is very much influenced by the way the western media shows terrorism.

Another respondent agreed;

Ä lot of influence on our media comes from the Western countries. I want them to do their fact check. I want them to be on their own, you know, it is a reality, today that Africa is being controlled economically and politically by their former colonizers. So, I hope in this, the media is going to be independent and think like African and Kenyan.

One participants pointed out that the Kenyan media was borrowing most of the terminologies it uses when representing terrorism from the Western world.

Now, the Kenyan media, is not very independent. They always borrow their terminology and their everything from the Western media.

Some other participants introduced a government perspective. One of the respondents said;

As far as the media misinformation is concerned, I would not hesitate that the pen pushes the people who hold the hand of the who is who in this country. They have a hand in it. Because, if the media did not have the support of the state, some of the things would not have happened. The media is therefore a tool used by the government.

He was supported by another respondent;

Of course, as usual, the media and the misrepresentation of the data came to play because of the worldwide reporting, and because of the security interferences, I presume, and all that have an influence on them.

Business Influence

Participants in this study are of the view that the relationship between media reporting and profit-making is a complex issue in Kenya. One respondent said;

One thing which is important is that all the time what the media is doing is commercializing the lives of human beings.

This was supported by another respondent;

When terrorism incidents happen, people look for more and more information, and the media has to satisfy the need and use the opportunity to generate income. They then sensualize their report and accuse Muslims and Islam and misrepresent facts about my religion. (Respondent 9).

Some participants further spoke about how the commercialization of terrorism has had an impact on the Muslim communities.

Terrorism has been commercialized. And so, it has affected Muslim agencies, it has affected the Muslim people and the scholars and preachers whose aim is to guide the Muslim faith.

One of the participants spoke about how some media outlets feel the pressure to meet the expectations of majority of their audiences.

In some cases, profit-making becomes part of the need to maintain a loyal audience, potentially affecting the objectivity of reporting. This is even more serious when the matter relates to terrorism which leads to killing of many innocent people.

Attitude towards media

Participants were of the opinion that the Kenyan media representation of terrorism has had a huge impact on how they perceive the media and journalists. Majority of them expressed negative attitude towards the media and journalists, though some of the participants said they have noticed a gradual improvement in media's representation of terrorism over time. Some of the participants have gone to an extent where were reluctant to engage with Kenyan media, citing a lack of preparedness to present the truth about terrorism. Others expressed their unwillingness to accept interview requests from Kenyan journalists due to perceived preference for negative portrayals of Islam. A respondent said;

I even turn away from being interviewed by the Kenyan media personnel because I know they are not prepared to listen and air the truth about terrorism.

This has resulted in some participants indicating that they have taken a drastic step by disconnecting from various media channels. One respondent said;

Today, I don't have a radio in my house. I don't have a TV in my house. I don't buy the newspaper. I don't read the newspapers and the social media, because I know, all that is there is commercial. It is as a result of business, you know, to some people it is business. And I don't like supporting people who are using blood and human lives for commercial gains.

This was supported by another respondent;

That's what has now put me in a situation where I don't want to listen to anything about media.

However, there were few participants, who were positive about Kenyan media representation of terrorism, citing specific examples. This has often led to change of attitude towards the media. A respondent said;

They have started reporting in my case positively, and in my view, my attitude actually towards journalism has changed radically.

However, this sentiment was challenged by some of the participants who insisted that all the incidents where the media represented the terror issues positively was either as a result of the involvement of human rights groups, like Amnesty International Kenya, or professional entities, like the Law Society of Kenya.

Media efforts for improvement

Participants also focused on some notable improvement in the Kenya media landscape when it comes to representation of terrorism. One participant said;

There has been a positive change. not the degree required. but the hostility has come down. I think there is a new thinking among the media of what terrorists are doing. So, the whole condemnation of Islam or Muslims is being turned down. I think having realized that the Muslims themselves are victims of terrorism. then I think they are taking a few steps backward. So, the amount of hostility that was there has reduced.

Another respondent agreed;

For over 20 years or so it has been absolutely negative. it is changing a little bit now. And we hope that that trend will continue.

Need for Media Reforms

Participants in this research focused on areas they believe the Kenyan media should improve on in regards to representation of terrorism. Their suggestions focused on the journalism curriculum to enhance ethical journalism. They also discussed the need to educate journalists about mainstream Islam to differentiate it with terrorism, which they view as minority. They further called for collaboration between the Kenyan media and Muslim religious scholars to further improve the Kenyan media representation of terrorism. They also focused on the need for responsible journalism when reporting on terrorism, and the use of terror incidents by promoting unity. They also emphasized on upholding the truth, educating journalists, or advocating for a more independent African and Kenyan media.

Some participants emphasized the importance of leveraging moments of crisis, such as terrorist attacks, to foster unity among Kenyans. The call is for a collective identification as Kenyans, transcending racial, religious, and ethnic boundaries. One of the respondents said;

Whenever there are terrorist attacks, they should possibly present a fair and also try and break any stereotypes and use that opportunity to call for a unity of purpose between Kenyans, you know, to come together, people from different races, and faith and all that, so that they become identifying themselves, first as Kenyans, against these acts of terrorism, and that is the only effect these acts have, to clarify that they have nothing to do with a given race, a given people, or a given faith.

Other participants spoke about the issue of media literacy regarding Islam and terrorism. A respondent said;

I feel the Kenyan media needs to be educated on Islam, on terrorism. Terrorism is a negative thing, it's not Islam, it has nothing to do with Islam. They must have in their work areas, library, where they have Islamic books, literature on Islam, and learn main stream Islamic views on terrorism.

Some of the participants proposed a comprehensive change in the curriculum for journalism education, arguing that journalists need to be well-versed in the issues related to Islam and terrorism to avoid inadvertently using language that could be inflammatory. One respondent calls for an agreed-upon terminologies that can guide journalists in reporting on terrorism incidents without perpetuating stereotypes.

It should be changed in the curriculum of teaching, probably journalists they need to know about Islam, they need to know Islam, and they need to be enlightened on Muslims and other communities. Secondly, there should be terminologies, people should come up with and determine or agree on terminologies to be used when reporting on terrorism incidents because failure to that without knowing it will use a word that is inflammatory.

Engaging Muslim Scholars

Participants focused on the importance of the Kenyan media engaging Muslim scholars to help them in shaping the media's representation of Islam and terrorism. They also suggested that engaging the Muslim community will give media representation of terrorism the balanced coverage needed. One of the participants said;

There was no serious engagement on the Muslim scholars, and international scholars on this. It was not done at all. So, in the process, my position as a Muslim scholar, as a Muslim leader, might not change from the Kenyan media representation of terrorism.

This was supported by another respondent;

Whenever the media engages the Muslim scholars or the representatives of the Muslim people, they always get a balanced representation, but most of the times, they are carried away by emotions, and they miss the point.

Few Participants, however, noted that there were some positive media engagements that gave them an opportunity to give their side of the story and represent the true picture of Islam. One respondent expressed their satisfaction with media response whenever an issue was brought to their attention in regards to their representation of terrorism.

Lately I noticed that they invite Muslim scholars and give them opportunity to explain terrorism. I was very happy when one of the TV stations, invited Sheikh Ibrahim Let home, who explained the word Jihad in Islamic context. (Respondent 7)

Most of the participants were of the view of the need for a mechanism to establish relations and regular engagement between the Muslim scholars and the media houses to ensure the media captures the true feeling of Muslims on their representation of terrorism. This works according to some of them by appointing Muslim journalists or editors of Muslim affairs, who could act as a bridge between the Muslim community and the media houses. They also believe that such an appointment will enrich the Kenyan media representation of terrorism in terms of facts and context.

V. DISCUSSION

The objective of the study was to examine the perceptions of Muslim religious scholars in regards to Kenyan media representation of terrorism as a phenomenon. In order to address the objective, in-depth interviews were conducted with 10 respondents drawn from the Muslim religious scholars over their perceptions towards the media representation of terrorism. The findings offer a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between the Kenyan media and the Muslim community. A significant concern for Muslim religious scholars was the perceived bias in the Kenyan media's representation of terrorism. This resonates with the observations made by Archetti C. (2013), in his work, which discusses how media narratives can shape public perceptions of terrorism. The labeling of perpetrators as "Muslim terrorists" aligns with the concept of 'framing' in media studies, as discussed by Entman R. M. (1993), where the media's choice of words and emphasis can significantly influence public interpretation. This is what the Muslim scholars refer as the main basis for their largely negative perception towards the media. The issue of unfair coverage and selective reporting by the Kenyan media highlights an important aspect of media ethics. This issue can be contextualized within the broader discourse on media representation and stereotyping, as explored in Stuart Hall's (2013). The lack of contextual understanding and language barriers cited by participants point to a deeper issue of cultural incompetence in journalism. It reflects a gap in the media's ability to accurately report on events involving Muslim communities, an issue that is consistent with W. James Potter (2013), which emphasized on the importance of understanding and correctly interpreting different cultural contexts in media reporting.

The other issue that reigned supreme in the findings of this research is perceived lack of independence of the Kenyan media when it comes to representation of terrorism. Muslims scholars were of the view that the Kenyan media was not acting independently, due to its susceptibility to influence by the Western Media. This phenomenon can be understood through the lens of "Media Dependency Theory," which suggests that media content often reflects the influences of more dominant media sources, as discussed by Ball-Rokeach S. J. and DeFleur M. L. (1976).

The findings also indicate the issue of the commercialization of terrorism, which aligns with the concept of 'sensationalism' in media reporting. This is a situation where the media is influenced by the emotions and feeling of patriotism when representing terrorism in an attempt to move with the feeling of the majority on the phenomenon to attract more audiences and hence more advertisement. This aspect is in line with Allan S. (2004), who discusses how the pursuit of profit can lead to sensationalist and unbalanced reporting, especially in the context of terrorism.

The call by Muslim scholars for media literacy and educational reforms so that they are exposed to Islam and Muslims, particularly in the context of reporting on Islam and terrorism, highlights the need for ethical and responsible journalism in Kenya. Participants' suggestions for changing the journalism curriculum to include more ethical reporting practices resonate with the principles outlined Frost C. (2011) where the need for ethical and objective journalism is paramount in modern societies.

The consensus on the need for media to engage with Muslim scholars for a more balanced representation of Islam and terrorism is an essential step towards responsible journalism. This is in line with Wahl-Jorgensen K. and Hanitzsch T. (2009), which emphasizes the importance of diverse sources and perspectives in journalism.

VI. Conclusion

From the findings, it is evident that perception of Muslim religious scholars towards the media is largely negative as a result of media association of terrorism with Islam. Therefore, there is need for the existence of terrorism coverage policy that takes into consideration the perspectives of the Muslim community in Kenya, who have a stake on the issue of representing terrorism. Whereas, most of media houses in Kenya do have an editorial policy that calls for balance and accuracy, the media representation of terrorism lacks balance and does not often engage the Muslim communities to the required level when representing terrorism incidents. There is need for the media houses to act professionally and independently from outside influence. It also emerged that the media organizations do not often engage Muslim religious leaders and other representatives at the height of terror attacks, neither do they have experts in the field of Islam and terrorism to put the story into perspective for their audience to avoid the issue of accusing Muslims as a community. Therefore, the conclusion of this study is that although media houses in Kenya have made efforts, albeit few, this is not enough to balance their coverage when representing terrorism phenomenon and create a friendly environment for the Muslim community. More importantly, and specific to this context, the question of media representation of terrorism is a complex matter even at global level, and it requires deliberate efforts and clear policies to bring about change the perceptions of the Muslim religious scholars and the larger Muslim community.

VII. Recommendations

Resulting from the study, the following suggestions may be used to improve media representation of terrorism in Kenya. They are outlined below;

- **Engagement of Muslim religious scholars:** There is need for media engagement of the Muslim religious scholars to bridge the huge gap in perception. The establishment of engagement mechanism can be established through existing media entities; Media Owners Association, Editors' Guild or journalist unions. This could minimize the largely negative perception towards the media by the Muslim religious scholars, who are very important in the context of all issues surrounding the Muslim community in Kenya. The most important roles are engaging Muslim minorities to be good representatives (models) for Islam, participating in the media programs to show the correct image of Islam (Gamal M. M. Mostafa, 2007).
- **Guidelines on terrorism coverage:** There is no single formula or even set of rules agreed upon by all stakeholders that govern media representation of terrorism in Kenya. This has made the Kenyan media representation of terrorism leaning towards negativity as perceived by the Muslim religious scholars. There is need for creation of a national guidelines or policies on terrorism coverage agreed upon by all stakeholders including the Muslim Communities. This is the approach being favored by responsible mass media organizations as voluntary self-restraint to void the danger of manipulation and exploitation by terrorist organizations (Altheide, D. L., 2007).
- **Differentiating between Islam and terrorism:** Policy makers and media outlets need to come up with a mechanism to avoid the issue of linking terrorism with Islam, which is a global problem for the Muslim communities. Media outlets should also come up with their own internal means to differentiating between Islam as a religion, and terrorists, as groups, who do not represent the mainstream Muslims. Based on our findings and previous results stemming from effect studies, we call on journalists to explicitly distinguish Muslims from terrorists, because undifferentiated media coverage can promote Islamophobia and negatively affect intergroup relations between Muslims and non-Muslims (von Sikorski, C., Schmuck, D., Matthes, J., Klobasa, C., Knupfer, H., & Saumer, M., 2022).

- **Training journalists on terrorism reporting:** There is an overwhelming need for Media Institutions and Universities that offer journalism courses to train journalists in the Kenyan media on the sensitivities surrounding the media representation of terrorism for the Muslim communities in the country. It seems that majority of journalists are not aware of the pitfalls associated with linking Islam and Muslims with terrorism and the use of terminologies perceived to be offensive by the Muslim community. Therefore, there is need for deliberate efforts at all levels; from policy makers to media outlets, to design a training on terrorism reporting for all journalists. Targeted training that includes a focus on basic facts about Islam as well as raising awareness of the resources that are now available to journalists may go some way towards improving portage of Islam and Muslims (Ewart, J., O'Donnell, K., & Chrzanowski, A., 2018).

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