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https://doi.org/10.57033/Peshqadam_Karvoni-2026/1/19

ISLAMIC WEBSITES IN REPRESENTING TOLERANCE

Annotatsiya: Bugungi globallashuv jarayonida, bag'rikenglik, o'zaro hurmat, bir- birining qadriyatlarini tushunish kabi tushunchalar tinchlikni eng asosiy omiliga aylanib ulgurgan. Islom dini, o'zining 2 milliondan ortiq e'tiqod vakillari orqali dunyoga bag'rikenglik tushunchasini naqadar muqaddas tushuncha ekanini tushuntirish bilan bir qatorda, boshqalarga ham o'rnak bo'la oldi. Ushbu maqolada bag'rikenglik va o'zaro hurmat tushunchalari O'zbekiston hamda Germaniyaning mashhur saytlarida qanday yoritilishi ko'rib chiqilgan. Islom.uz hamda islamische.zeitung saytlarining o'ziga xos jihatlari tahlil qilinishi bilan bir qatorda, o'xshashliklar va farqli tarflariga ham e'tibor qaratilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: Bag'rikenglik, saytlar, qiyosiy analiz, diskurs, islom.uz, islamische.zeitung, media savodxonligi

Abstract : In today's increasingly polarized world, fostering tolerance - acceptance, respect, and understanding for diverse beliefs and practices - is essential for peaceful coexistence. Islam, with nearly two billion followers globally, offers a rich and complex discourse on tolerance, rooted in its historical and theological foundations. This study explores how two prominent Islamic websites, Islamische-zeitung.de (Germany) and Islom.uz (Uzbekistan), operating in distinct cultural and national contexts, represent tolerance in their online discourse. Through a qualitative comparative discourse analysis of over 200 articles and opinion pieces published between 2014 and 2024, the study examines the websites' use of terminology, framing, and underlying narratives concerning tolerance towards other religions, internal diversity within Islam, and broader societal challenges. The central aim is to illuminate both similarities and divergences in their representation of tolerance and explore the potential implications for interfaith dialogue, interfaith understanding, and peaceful coexistence in multicultural societies.

Keywords: Comparative discourse analysis, Islom.uz, Islamische-zeitung.de, interfaith dialogue, tolerance, media literacy

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, the need for tolerance has become increasingly evident as social and religious polarization intensifies globally. Islam, with its diverse interpretations and expressions across cultures, offers a valuable perspective on this critical concept.

The Quran emphasizes individual conscience and freedom of belief, exemplified by verses like “There is no compulsion in religion”. Many scholars including Abdullah Anver “argues that Quran 2:256 emphasizes the universal principle of freedom of conscience and applies to both Muslims and non-Muslims. It transcends the historical context of persecution and embodies a core Islamic value”(1, 2018). Additionally, the Prophet Muhammad’s interactions with people of other faiths, like the Pact of Medina, are often cited as practical examples of Islamic tolerance. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the complexities involved in interpreting and applying tolerance within Islam, particularly regarding the relationship with non-Muslims and the boundaries of acceptable beliefs and practices.

This study delves into the online representation of tolerance within two prominent Islamic websites: Islamische-zeitung.de, based in Germany, and Islom.uz, originating from Uzbekistan. Both websites cater to distinct audiences and operate within specific cultural and national contexts. Analyzing their representations of tolerance can offer valuable insights into how online media shapes contemporary Islamic discourse and its potential impact on interfaith dialogue, interfaith understanding, and social cohesion. As Mohammed Arkoun in his book “Rethinking Islam” highlights that: “Tolerance is not simply a matter of individual psychology or personal behavior; it is a complex ethical and legal notion that requires a framework of social and political institutions to be effectively implemented”(2, 1994).

LITERATURE REVIEW

As 21st century is the century of internet and technology, a lot of academic works have been done to explore this science. In the field of Online Religious Discourse and Identity Formation: “Islam in the Digital Age” by Gary Bunt (3, 2003). This book explores how online platforms shape religious identities, community building, and the dissemination of religious knowledge. “Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds” by Heidi Campbell. (4, 2022) analyzed the emergence of new forms of religious engagement and expression within digital spaces.

In the field of Comparative Media Studies and Religion: “Religion in the Media Age: As Seen from the Middle East” by Stewart M. Hoover (5, 2006) analyzed the

complex relationship between religion and media in diverse cultural contexts, including the Middle East. At the same time “On Islam: Muslims and the Media” by edition of Hilary E.Kahn and Rosemary Pennington (6, 2018) Examined the complex relationship between Muslim communities and media, including the construction of online religious authority within the digital age.

Challenges and problems of online representation of religions have been observed in different books and articles. One of them is “Contemporary Issues in Islam” edited by AsmaAfsaruddin(7,2015) which offers diverse perspectives on contemporary challenges facing Muslims, including the role of media in shaping religious interpretations and practices. While writing this content-analyze as an article, other books such as “Global Islam: Muslim Networks and Connections” edited by Charles Kurzman have been observed as it offers insights into how Muslim communities utilize media technologies to connect across geographical and national boundaries, fostering a sense of global Islamic identity. “Mediating Islam: Cosmopolitanism and the Production of Muslim Cultures” edited by Daniel E. Valentine. The books was clear with analysis of how media representations shape perceptions of Islam and Muslim communities across different cultural contexts. Each word of an author was precious while examining certain websites.

Also observed researches framing of Tolerance Within Islamic Discourse: “Islam and the Secular State” by Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im (8, 2008) which analyzes the relationship between Islam and secularism, including discussions on religious freedom, tolerance, and pluralism. While existing research addresses online religious discourse, media and Islam, and Islamic perspectives on tolerance, limited scholarship has directly compared the online representation of tolerance across distinct Islamic websites from different cultural and national contexts.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative comparative discourse analysis (CDA) to examine how two prominent Islamic websites from distinct cultural and national contexts, Islamische-zeitung.de (Germany) and Islom.uz (Uzbekistan), represent the concept of tolerance in their online discourse. Thematic coding will be used to identify key themes and narratives related to tolerance within the selected texts. This will involve:

Close reading to identify recurring ideas, arguments, and framings. Coding based on pre-established categories related to the research objectives (e.g., terminology used for tolerance, target groups towards whom tolerance is emphasized, limitations or conditions on tolerance).

Comparative analysis will also be used as the coded data from both websites will be compared and contrasted to understand similarities and divergences in their representation of tolerance. This will involve: Identifying common and distinct themes, narratives, and framings used on both websites. Examining the potential factors contributing to these similarities and differences. Such as: cultural and national contexts of each website, target audiences and intended messages, underlying theological and ideological perspectives.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Both websites emphasize tolerance as a core Islamic value rooted in teachings of respect and compassion for others. They showcase examples of interfaith engagement and collaborative initiatives fostering peaceful coexistence between Muslims and members of other faiths. Both platforms condemn extremism and violence motivated by religious intolerance.

Islamische-Zeitung.de, situated in a diverse, secular society, frequently addresses issues of integration, religious discrimination faced by Muslims in Europe, and the need for mutual understanding between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. Islom.uz, operating in a predominantly Muslim nation, grapples more with internal debates on tolerance towards diverse Islamic interpretations and expressions within Uzbek society. Islamische-Zeitung.de caters to a broader audience, including German society at large, aiming to bridge the gap between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. Islom.uz primarily targets Uzbek Muslims, focusing on internal religious dialogues and promoting harmonious relations within the Muslim community itself.

Islamische-Zeitung.de frequently utilizes the term “tolerance” explicitly, advocating for its application in diverse spheres like religious practices, cultural expressions, and political discourse. Islom.uz tends to employ broader concepts like “respect,” “understanding,” and “compassion” while implicitly incorporating them into discussions of interfaith relations and internal religious dialogues. Islamische-Zeitung.

de: In an article titled "Tolerance is No Weakness," author Ahmet Toprak condemns Islamophobia and argues for interfaith understanding based on shared values of justice and compassion. He cites Qur'an verses like "There is no compulsion in religion" (2:256) as foundational principles for building tolerance (10).

Islom.uz: In a piece titled "The Importance of Mutual Respect among Muslims," Sheikh Muhammad Yusuf emphasizes the need for understanding and respecting diverse interpretations within Islam, drawing upon Prophetic traditions advocating for peaceful discourse and avoiding unnecessary disputes(11). Islamische-zeitung.de: An article condemning the Charlie Hebdo attacks in France, emphasizing the importance of peaceful dialogue and respect for all faiths.

The differences likely stem from the historical and social contexts of each nation, target audience considerations, and potentially underlying theological or ideological perspectives. Recognizing these nuances is crucial for understanding the diverse ways tolerance is represented within Islamic media and fostering genuine interfaith dialogue and understanding across Muslim communities and wider societies.

This comparative analysis reveals both shared and distinct understandings of tolerance on Islamische-Zeitung.de and Islom.uz. While both emphasize tolerance as a core Islamic value, the specific contexts and target audiences shape how this concept is articulated and applied. Recognizing these nuances is crucial for fostering genuine interfaith dialogue and understanding across diverse Muslim communities and wider societies. Future research could explore a wider range of Islamic websites, delve deeper into the underlying factors shaping their representations of tolerance, and examine the potential impact of these online discourses on interfaith relations and social cohesion.

CONCLUSION

This comparative analysis of Islamische-zeitung.de and Islom.uz reveals that while both websites emphasize tolerance as a core Islamic value, their specific contexts and target audiences influence how they represent this concept. Both websites condemn extremism and violence motivated by religious intolerance. They showcase examples of interfaith engagement aimed at fostering peaceful coexistence.

There are also differing representations: Islamische-zeitung.de, situated in a secular society, focuses on interfaith dialogue and promoting understanding between Muslim

and non-Muslim communities. It frequently uses the explicit term “tolerance” and emphasizes its application in various spheres. Islom.uz, operating in a predominantly Muslim nation, prioritizes internal religious dialogue and fostering tolerance within the Muslim community. It generally employs broader concepts like “respect” and “understanding” while implicitly addressing tolerance.

Therefore, understanding these contextual and presentational nuances is crucial for fostering genuine: Interfaith dialogue and understanding across diverse Muslim communities and broader societies. Media literacy regarding how online platforms can shape contemporary Islamic discourse and its potential impact on social harmony. As the scholar Tariq Ramadan says “Tolerance, a much misused word, should not signify indifference or lack of conviction, but rather the capacity to recognize and respect the other in his or her difference”(9, 2017).

This study highlights the value of comparative discourse analysis in examining diverse online representations within the rich tapestry of Islamic thought and engagement with the concept of tolerance in the digital age. Further research could explore a wider range of Islamic websites and platforms, considering factors like language, media format, and ideological affiliations, to offer a more comprehensive understanding of how the online representation of tolerance evolves within various Islamic contexts.

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