



MASS COMMUNICATION ETHICS IN ISLAMIC BROADCASTING: THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MUSLIM JOURNALISTS IN REPORTING SOCIAL CONFLICTS ON TELEVISION

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Abstract

This journal discusses the ethics of mass communication from an Islamic perspective, particularly regarding the responsibilities of Muslim journalists in reporting on social conflicts on television. The proliferation of social conflict coverage that tends to be provocative and unbalanced has caused public uproar and has the potential to divide the unity of the Muslim community. This study employs a qualitative approach using critical discourse analysis to examine a number of news broadcasts on social conflicts on national television. The findings of this study indicate that violations of Islamic mass communication ethics still exist, such as sensationalism, biased reporting, and a lack of fact-checking. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the responsibility of Muslim journalists through the internalization of Islamic values, religion-based journalism ethics training, and oversight from the press council and the Muslim community. The conclusion of this study emphasizes that Muslim journalists have a moral and religious responsibility to present news on social conflicts in a fair and conciliatory manner that does not provoke social disharmony.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Mass media, particularly television, occupy a strategic position in shaping public perceptions of social events, including conflicts involving community groups, religious affiliations, political interests, and various forms of social identity. As an audiovisual medium, television conveys information not only through verbal language but also through images, sounds, facial expressions, symbols, and visual choices that can influence audience emotions. In the context of social conflict, this communicative power can serve a constructive function when it is used to provide accurate information, educate the public, and help reduce social tensions. However, television can also become a problematic site of meaning production when conflict is framed provocatively, presented in an imbalanced manner, or excessively dramatized through depictions of violence. Therefore, television coverage of social conflict should be understood not merely as a journalistic practice, but also as a form of mass communication with far-reaching social consequences for public opinion, attitudes, and behaviour (Bungin, 2008; Nurudin, 2011).



Within the development of the contemporary media industry, the reporting of social conflict frequently exists within a tension between the public interest and the commercial interests of media organisations. Pressures related to audience ratings, the speed of news production, inter-media competition, and the need to attract public attention may encourage television outlets to portray conflict in sensational ways. Under such circumstances, fundamental journalistic principles, including accuracy, balance, verification, and respect for victims, may be compromised. Conflict coverage that foregrounds violence, amplifies differences between groups, or employs narratives that steer public opinion can generate social anxiety, reinforce prejudice, and even contribute to the escalation of conflict. From the perspective of peace journalism, however, the media should play a role in de-escalating conflict by presenting information clearly, proportionately, and with an orientation toward problem-solving rather than intensifying social tensions (Santosa, 2016; Setiadi, 2024).

From an Islamic perspective, mass communication is assessed not only in terms of the effectiveness of message delivery but also according to the moral values that underpin the communication process. Islamic communication ethics place truthfulness, honesty, justice, trustworthiness, and public benefit at the core of information dissemination. The principle of *sidq* requires journalists to report information truthfully and without manipulation, while the principle of *tabayyun* emphasises the obligation to verify information before it is disseminated. This ethical foundation is consistent with Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat [49]:6, which instructs believers to verify the accuracy of information before accepting or spreading it. In the context of social conflict reporting, this principle is particularly significant because unverified information may generate slander, social unrest, and hostility. Islamic communication ethics therefore provide a moral framework for journalistic practice, ensuring that news is not merely produced rapidly or attractively, but is also truthful, fair, and oriented toward the public good (*maslahah*) (Saleh, 2024; Solehah et al., 2022).

The responsibility of Muslim journalists in reporting social conflict is increasingly significant because they operate simultaneously within two domains: the professional sphere of journalism and the moral-religious sphere. As media professionals, Muslim journalists are bound by journalistic principles such as accuracy, balance, independence, and commitment to the public interest. As Muslims, however, they also carry a religious responsibility to preserve peace, avoid provocation, reject the dissemination of slanderous information, and prevent social harm. A dilemma may arise when editorial policies or the commercial logic of the media industry demand news that is fast, dramatic, and highly marketable, while Islamic values require caution, honesty, and a commitment to the common good. Muslim journalists therefore need to internalise Islamic values as an active ethical consciousness within journalistic practice rather than treating them merely as abstract or normative theoretical knowledge (Mamdud, 2019; Tanti, 2025).

Existing studies on media, social conflict, and journalistic ethics have extensively discussed the importance of journalistic professionalism, peace journalism, and the consequences of media commodification for the quality of news reporting. Nevertheless, studies that specifically integrate Islamic mass communication ethics with the responsibilities of Muslim journalists in television coverage of social conflict remain limited and require further development. Much of the existing scholarship tends to position journalistic ethics within a universal professional framework, while the religious dimension of Muslim journalists as communication actors has received relatively limited in-depth attention. In Indonesia, where society is both religious and pluralistic, reporting on social conflict requires not only professional standards but also moral and spiritual sensitivity so that news coverage does not become a catalyst for social disharmony. Accordingly, this study is academically relevant because it seeks to address the intersection between mass communication, Islamic broadcasting ethics, the responsibilities of Muslim journalists, and television reporting of social conflict (Dewi, 2019; Saleh, 2024; Setiadi, 2024).

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to analyse mass communication ethics within the framework of Islamic broadcasting and to examine the responsibilities of Muslim journalists in reporting social conflict on television. The study focuses on how Islamic ethical principles of communication, including *sidq*, *tabayyun*, *'adl*, *amanah*, and *maslahah*, can serve as a moral foundation for Muslim journalists in producing and presenting news about social conflict. It also examines how television reporting of conflict may contribute to sensationalism, bias, inadequate verification, and social disharmony when it is not adequately guided by journalistic ethics. Accordingly, this study is expected to contribute to the development of scholarship in Islamic communication, journalistic ethics, and television broadcasting, while also providing practical insights for journalists, media editorial teams, broadcasting institutions, and Muslim communities in strengthening conflict reporting that is accurate, fair, peace-oriented, and committed to the public good.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach because it aims to develop an in-depth understanding of how Islamic communication ethics and the responsibilities of Muslim journalists are practised in television reporting on social conflict. The qualitative approach was selected not to measure the frequency of news coverage statistically, but rather to interpret the meanings, values, and tendencies embedded in the texts, visuals, narratives, and framing of social conflict news. In this study, television is understood as a form of mass communication with considerable power to shape public opinion through the construction of social realities presented to a broad audience (Bungin, 2008; Nurudin, 2011). Accordingly, television coverage of social conflict is positioned as an object of critical inquiry, particularly when such reporting has the potential to contain sensationalism, bias, inadequate verification, or narratives that may intensify social tensions.

The primary method employed in this study is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This method is particularly relevant because the study does not treat news simply as a collection of journalistic texts, but examines how social conflict is constructed, framed, and directed through linguistic choices, visual representations, source perspectives, issue emphasis, and media interests. The analysis seeks to identify whether television coverage of social conflict tends to prioritise industry interests, such as audience ratings and dramatic presentation, or whether it adequately incorporates the principles of Islamic communication ethics. The analytical focus includes the application of *sidq* (truthfulness), *tabayyun* (verification of information), *‘adl* (justice), *amanah* (trustworthiness), and public *maslahah* (public welfare) in the reporting of social conflict. Critical Discourse Analysis is therefore employed to uncover the relationships among news texts, media production practices, the responsibilities of Muslim journalists, and the broader social consequences of news coverage for society (Fairclough, 1995; Saleh, 2024; Solehah et al., 2022).

The research data were obtained through systematic searches and documentation of national television news broadcasts concerning social conflicts relevant to the focus of the study, particularly reports that revealed competing narratives, potential bias, sensationalism, or problems related to factual verification. The primary data consisted of news texts, quotations from anchors or reporters, visual selections, headlines, source selection, and visual constructions appearing in television news broadcasts. Supporting data were drawn from literature on mass communication, journalistic ethics, peace journalism, Islamic communication ethics, and professional regulations, including the Indonesian Journalistic Code of Ethics and the Broadcasting Code of Conduct and Programme Standards. The analysis was conducted in three stages: data reduction by selecting relevant broadcasts and news segments; data presentation by organising the findings into thematic categories such as accuracy, balance, *tabayyun*, sensationalism, and *maslahah*; and interpretative conclusion drawing. The trustworthiness of the analysis was maintained through repeated examination of the news texts and their contexts, comparison with the principles of journalistic ethics and Islamic communication ethics, and consistency among the empirical findings, theoretical framework, and research objectives (Santosa, 2016; Setiadi, 2024).

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Concepts and Values of Islamic Communication Ethics

The findings indicate that Islamic communication ethics constitute an important foundation for the practice of mass communication, particularly when the media disseminate information capable of influencing public emotions, opinions, and behaviour. In the context of television reporting on social conflict, ethics cannot be understood merely as a set of professional rules; rather, they should also be regarded as a form of moral consciousness that guides journalists in preventing the misuse of media power. Islamic communication ethics conceptualise the dissemination of information as an *amanah*, or entrusted responsibility, that must be fulfilled with honesty, accountability, justice, and an orientation toward public welfare. The findings demonstrate that, from an Islamic perspective, mass communication is concerned not only with whether messages successfully reach audiences, but also with whether those messages convey truth, prevent harm, and preserve social harmony (Saleh, 2024; Solehah et al., 2022).

Conceptually, ethics refer to standards for determining what is morally right or wrong in human conduct. Ethics provide guidelines for assessing whether a communicative act is consistent with the moral values recognised within society. In communication, ethics relate to the ways in which individuals or institutions convey messages truthfully, honestly, fairly, without deception or manipulation, and

without causing harm to others. Islamic communication ethics extend this understanding by positioning *akhlaq*, or moral character, as the foundation of communicative behaviour. Muslim journalists are therefore expected not only to comply with professional journalistic standards but also to embody Islamic values throughout the processes of news production, selection, framing, and dissemination to the public (Suhandang, 2013; Dewi, 2019).

The first value underpinning Islamic communication ethics is *sidq*, or truthfulness. The findings show that truthfulness is a fundamental principle in the dissemination of information because it forms the basis of public trust in the media. In reporting social conflict, *sidq* requires journalists to present facts accurately, refrain from adding to or omitting relevant information, and avoid constructing narratives designed to manipulate public opinion. When conflict reporting is produced without a commitment to truthfulness, the media may shift from serving as a source of information to functioning as an instrument for generating prejudice and social hostility. Accordingly, *sidq* serves as a central principle that ensures conflict reporting remains grounded in truth and moral responsibility (Saleh, 2024; Batubara et al., 2019).

The second value is *tabayyun*, which refers to the obligation to examine and verify the accuracy of information before disseminating it to the public. This principle has a strong foundation in Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat [49]:6:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا

Meaning: "O you who believe! If a wrongdoer comes to you with information, verify its truth."

This verse emphasises that information should not be accepted or disseminated hastily without a process of verification. In television journalism, *tabayyun* requires journalists to confirm information with multiple sources, distinguish facts from opinions, and avoid broadcasting information whose accuracy remains uncertain. This principle is particularly relevant to the reporting of social conflict because unverified information may intensify slander, public anxiety, and further conflict (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019; Solehah et al., 2022).

The third value is *'adl*, or justice. In the reporting of social conflict, justice requires the media to provide proportionate space to all parties involved. Fair reporting should not highlight only one version of events, favour a particular group, or marginalise the voices of weaker parties. The Islamic principle of justice applies to all human beings without discrimination. Muslim journalists must therefore avoid framing that unfairly discredits particular actors, judgmental language, and visual representations that reinforce negative stereotypes of specific individuals or groups. Interpretatively, the principle of *'adl* positions conflict reporting as a space for clarification, mutual understanding, and dialogue rather than as an instrument for intensifying hostility (Saleh, 2024; Santosa, 2016).

The fourth value is *amanah*, or trustworthiness. In Islamic communication ethics, *amanah* refers to the obligation to maintain public trust by refraining from manipulating information, concealing important facts, or using the media in ways that may harm society. Muslim journalists bear this responsibility because the information they disseminate can shape public opinion, influence behaviour, and determine how audiences respond to social conflict. Therefore, *amanah* in journalism is not limited to responsibility toward media organisations, but also extends to society and religious values. When journalists uphold *amanah*, conflict reporting can serve as a means of education and problem-solving. Conversely, when this principle is neglected, the media may become an instrument of provocation, conflict commodification, and the dissemination of social unrest (Mamdud, 2019; Setiadi, 2024).

In addition to *sidq*, *tabayyun*, *'adl*, and *amanah*, Islamic communication ethics also place *maslahah*, or public welfare, at the centre of mass communication. From an Islamic perspective, mass communication is intended to convey truth, promote goodness, prevent wrongdoing, and preserve social unity. In the context of television, the reporting of social conflict should not end with the dramatic presentation of conflict-related facts; rather, it should be directed toward enhancing public understanding, reducing tensions, and creating space for conflict resolution. The concept of *da'wah* in mass media further illustrates that the media can function as a means of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* when used responsibly. Accordingly, Islamic communication ethics require the media to consider not only whether a news story is worthy of broadcast, but also whether its dissemination contributes to public benefit or instead exacerbates social harm (Mamdud, 2019; Saleh, 2024).

Based on this analysis, the concepts and values of Islamic communication ethics provide both a normative and practical framework for Muslim journalists in reporting social conflict on television.

Truthfulness safeguards news accuracy, tabayyun ensures information verification, justice promotes balance, amanah reinforces professional responsibility, and maslahah directs reporting toward social peace. Analytically, these five values demonstrate that Muslim journalists should not function merely as transmitters of information, but also as guardians of public morality within the sphere of mass communication. Islamic communication ethics therefore serve as an ethical safeguard to prevent social conflict reporting from becoming trapped in sensationalism, bias, and provocation, while encouraging the production of information that is truthful, fair, educational, and supportive of social harmony.

Responsibilities of Muslim Journalists in Reporting Social Conflict

The findings indicate that the responsibilities of Muslim journalists in reporting social conflict extend beyond the professional obligation to provide information to the public. They also encompass moral and religious responsibilities to uphold truthfulness, justice, and social welfare. In the context of television, conflict reporting possesses considerable influence because it is constructed through narratives, images, sounds, source selection, and editorial perspectives. Muslim journalists therefore cannot position themselves merely as media workers concerned with the speed of news production; they must also recognise themselves as moral actors who are accountable for the social consequences of the information they broadcast. Their primary responsibility is not solely to media owners, editors, government authorities, or particular sources, but to the wider public, who have the right to receive information that is accurate, fair, and not misleading (Stein, 1988; Saleh, 2024).

The findings further reveal that television reporting on social conflict frequently involves a dilemma between the public's right to information and the risk of escalating tensions through disproportionate or poorly contextualised coverage. In some conflict-related broadcasts, the media tend to foreground narratives of confrontation, dramatic visual imagery, and competing versions of events, which may lead audiences toward polarisation rather than comprehensive understanding. This situation demonstrates the importance of Muslim journalists applying the principles of accuracy and tabayyun before broadcasting conflict-related information. The principle of tabayyun requires journalists to verify facts through multiple sources, critically examine available information, and avoid hastily determining which party is right or wrong before sufficient evidence has been obtained. From an Islamic perspective, verification is not merely a journalistic procedure, but also an ethical obligation intended to prevent news from becoming a source of slander, misinformation, or social unrest (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019; Solehah et al., 2022).

In addition to accuracy, the findings emphasise the responsibility of Muslim journalists to avoid sensationalism in reporting social conflict. Sensationalism becomes evident when the media excessively highlight violence, victims' suffering, provocative headlines, emotionally charged images, or narratives that intensify hostility between groups. Within the logic of the television industry, conflict often possesses high news value because it can attract audience attention and increase ratings. However, from the perspective of Islamic communication ethics, the exploitation of conflict for commercial purposes is inconsistent with the principle of maslahah. Muslim journalists must therefore consider whether their choices of narrative, images, and language help audiences understand the issue more clearly or instead intensify anger, prejudice, and the potential for further conflict (Setiadi, 2024; Santosa, 2016).

The subsequent findings indicate that Muslim journalists also have a responsibility to preserve unity and peace in every instance of social conflict reporting. Conflict-related news should not be constructed merely to display confrontation, but should also provide space for clarification, explain the underlying causes of the conflict, and present possible avenues for resolution. From the perspective of peace journalism, the media should not focus solely on visible acts of violence, but should also draw attention to human suffering, the need for reconciliation, and efforts toward non-violent resolution. This responsibility is consistent with Islamic communication principles that position the media as an instrument of amar ma'ruf nahi munkar, namely promoting goodness, preventing harm, and maintaining social harmony. Muslim journalists should therefore employ language that is calming rather than inflammatory and avoid news constructions that may intensify collective hatred (Mamdud, 2019; Santosa, 2016).

The findings also demonstrate that reporting social conflict requires balance in presenting the voices of all parties involved. In conflict coverage involving competing narratives, such as differing accounts provided by state authorities and community groups, the media have a responsibility not to rely predominantly on the perspective of only one side. Muslim journalists should provide proportionate space for each relevant party so that audiences can obtain a more comprehensive and coherent understanding of the events. This principle is consistent with the value of 'adl in Islamic communication ethics, which requires fairness, the avoidance of disproportionate partiality, and the prevention of

stigma against particular groups. Analytically, balance does not mean treating all claims as equally valid without verification. Rather, it requires that each claim be examined, contextualised, and presented responsibly so that the public is not led toward premature conclusions (Saleh, 2024; Tanti, 2025).

Based on the analysis, the responsibilities of Muslim journalists in reporting social conflict encompass five main aspects: delivering accurate information, avoiding sensationalism, maintaining social unity and peace, providing balanced coverage, and considering the social consequences of every news report disseminated to the public. These five aspects are consistent with Islamic communication principles such as *qaulan sadida*, *qaulan baligha*, *qaulan ma'rufa*, *qaulan layyina*, and *qaulan karima*, which require messages to be communicated truthfully, effectively, appropriately, gently, and respectfully. Interpretatively, Muslim journalists do not merely function as transmitters of facts but also as guardians of the moral integrity of the public sphere. Therefore, television reporting on social conflict should be grounded in a synergy between journalistic professionalism and the internalisation of Islamic ethical values so that the media do not become a catalyst for polarisation, but instead function as a means of education, clarification, and social reconciliation (Ilahi, 2010; Rakhmat, 1994; Saleh, 2024).

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that mass communication ethics within Islamic broadcasting play an important role in guiding the responsibilities of Muslim journalists when reporting social conflict on television. The findings demonstrate that conflict reporting is not merely an activity of information dissemination, but also a practice of constructing reality that can influence public opinion, emotions, and social relations. When news is presented sensationally, disproportionately, provocatively, or without adequate verification, television may contribute to the escalation of conflict and reinforce social polarisation. Muslim journalists therefore bear professional, moral, and religious responsibilities to provide accurate information, conduct verification in accordance with the principle of *tabayyun*, uphold fairness in reporting, avoid provocative content, and consider the broader public interest and social welfare.

Islamic communication values such as *sidq*, *tabayyun*, *'adl*, *amanah*, and *maslahah* should be internalised throughout the news production process so that media organisations are not driven solely by speed and commercial interests, but also fulfil their role as instruments of education, clarification, peacebuilding, and the preservation of social harmony. Accordingly, strengthening the responsibilities of Muslim journalists requires greater ethical awareness, journalism training grounded in Islamic values, consistent adherence to professional codes of ethics, and continuous oversight by press institutions, broadcasting authorities, and civil society communities.

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