

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN CANADA: THE ROLE OF CANADIAN NEWSPAPERS IN SHAPING ATTITUDES TOWARDS ISLAM AND MUSLIMS

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ABSTRACT

The issue of Islamophobia got attention from researchers, academicians and journalist for the last three decades. However, the issue got enormous attention after the Twin Towers were attacked on 9/11, 2001, in USA. This study examines how media portray the issue of Islamophobia. For that purpose, two leading newspapers of Canada namely Globe and Mail and Toronto Star selected for content analysis. This study uses content analysis by selecting the articles published on Islamophobia in two leading newspapers of Canada namely The Toronto Star and The Globe & Mail for a period of three months (January to March 2017). There are several parts of a newspaper that are analyzed (i.e. stories, content framing, priming and overall structure). In the first step, we go through the newspaper and identify all the stories. In the second stage, we identify the framing and priming of the stories and articles on Islamophobia. The main focus of this study is to examine the framing of the stories related to Muslims and Islamophobia in Toronto Star and The Globe & Mail newspapers. Moreover, this study concentrated on issue of Islamophobia before and after the Quebec Mosque attack. The main results of the study show that during this period, the negative stories published on Islamophobia are more evident from Toronto Star and Globe and Mail newspaper despite the fact that both newspapers are liberal according to their theme of the stories. As compare to Globe and Mail, Toronto Star published more articles on Islamophobia.

Keywords: Islamophobia, Attitudes, Content Analysis

INTRODUCTION

The issue of Islamophobia received attention from researchers, academicians and journalist in recent years throughout the World (see Jacobsen *et al.*, 2012; MacDonald, 2015; Baker, Gabrilatos & McEnery 2013; Ogan *et al.*, 2013; Sian, *et al.*, 2012; Nicholson 2011; Sayyid 2014; Lindemann & Stolz 2014). However, the issue got enormous attention after the Twin Towers were attacked on 9/11, 2001, in USA. The word Islamophobia has been interpreted by researchers in different ways. For instance, according to Bunzl (2007), Islamophobia has many aspects. According to The Runnymede Trust (1997), Islamophobia only means hate against Muslims and Islam.

The British think tank, The Runnymede Trust examines that Islamophobia has become an integral part of discussion and discourse after the report published: a challenge for us all on Islamophobia (1997). It tells that Islamophobia refers to prejudice against Islam, hatred and unliking towards Muslims. Such sentiments also lead to practical consequences, like discrimination against Muslims and even not giving a chance to Muslims to become part of mainstream political system. In France the word Islamophobie published in a book in 1990 (Ezzerhouni, 2010). The title of the book was *La politique musulmane dans l'Afrique Occidentale Française* by Alain Quellien. Later on, the same word published in interviews of Quellien's book in academic journals by Alphonse Etienne Dinet

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(1861–1929), who belong to France and by profession was a painter who later on embraced Islam, and previously hailed from Algeria. Edward Said, a prominent scholar used the word in 1985 in English language Islamophobia. According to Abbas (2004), the scholars in Britain describe Islamophobia as "fear and dread of Islam". A social and cultural threat from Muslims (Geisser 2003), and threat of Islam and Muslim faith (Lee et al 2009). As there exist negative stereotypes about Muslims, therefore, Islamophobia means as rejection of Muslims and Islam. Islamophobia is also defined as "indiscriminative negative behavior against Muslims and Islam. Previously, the word Islamophobia was much in use in Europe only and not in USA. The fact is that the word Islamophobia was used more than two dozen of time in American prominent newspaper. The New York Times as compare to the British prominent newspaper, The Guardian where the same word got publish for more than two hundred times (Cesari 2006) but in the contemporary world and time this term is very common both in the US and Europe.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

MacDonald (2015) explores the collective identities of Muslims in Canada. The author examined the existence of Islamophobia among Canadians in general and the vulnerability of Muslim youth to radical Islam in particular. In-depth and detailed interviews were conducted with 5 individuals where 2 were selected from Shi'i sect, and 3 were selected from Sunni sect. The opinions of the respondents were taken mainly on the role of the Muslim community in preventing radicalism in the Canadian context. The main findings of the study were that (as Canada is very much inclined to US political and foreign policies, Muslims in Canada may harbor negative opinions about Canada. It was also found that due to the negative stereotypes and the role played by the media there is some misunderstanding in the non-Muslim Canadian citizens which may ultimately lead to intolerance and awareness about Islam. It was inferred from the in-depth interviews that Muslim youth are loyal and happy in Canada, therefore, are ambitious to contribute for the development of Canada, however it is necessary on the part of the Canadian government to create awareness and understandings among the general masses of Canada.

Schnieder (2015) examined the language and framing of newspapers articles in Holland and Germany. These articles were taken from Daily, The FAZ, Daily The Bild, Daily The NRC and Daily The Telegraph. The critical discourse method was conducted for these newspapers. The author focused to examine the reproduction of discrimination, the inequalities about Muslims. Among the Holland newspapers, it was found that there is no enough evidence that can prove that Islamophobia has been reproduced. This study has thoroughly examined, the discourse and the use of the language.

Sayyid (2014) investigated the category of Islamophobia and the theorization of this concept that can contribute to explain the analysis. It is not important to discuss that what was existing before and was the behavior while describing phenomena of Islamophobia. No doubt it is an act that leads to injustice, cruelty and bias behavior. It is a definite issue related to attitude and beliefs. Therefore, there should be a mechanism that produces evidence which would be the foundation of a rational policy.

Lindemann & Stolz (2014) examined that how media represent Muslim immigrants are in the media as compare to other immigrants in 1970 and 2004 by utilizing controlled comparison. The data was collected from the two newspapers namely Le Temps and Le Matin in 2004, and their predecessors La Tribune de Geneve and Le Journal de Geneve and La Gazette de Lausanne respectively for 1970. The findings were very interesting as it shows that for the foreigner the only discourse used was the "Muslim foreigners".

Baker, Gabilatos & McEnery (2013) investigated the Islamophobic behavior of the British press by checking the representation of Islam from 1998 to 2009. It was also examined that how the word Islam and Muslim have been treated? It was also examined that whether the representation of Muslims have been changed after the 9/11 incident or not? In this regard more than 20,000 articles were collected during this entire period of time. It was found out that such articles came into peak at the time just after the 9/11 and 7/7 incidents. It was also found out that most of these article's words referred to the concept of conflict.

Ogan et al., (2013) investigated the reasons that lead to the sentiments against Muslim and Islam in USA and Europe comparatively. Secondary data was collected from Pew News Interest in 2008 and 2010, which shows the attitudes towards Islam and Muslims in many countries. The findings show that politically conservatism leads to negative attitudes towards Muslims in USA and Europe.

Both in the United States and Europe Politically Conservatives consider the Muslims in negative light as compare to other minorities.

Jacobsen et al., (2012) examined the role of the two Danish newspapers played in publishing news related to various races and ethnicities representing Muslims in Dutch newspapers. One study was confined to Dutch newspapers, while the second about the newspapers in Denmark. For the study in Dutch newspapers the time frame was two months, however for the Denmark newspapers, the time limit was only two weeks. According to the findings of the study most of the stories related to Muslims and Islam were negatively framed. These stories were about extremism, Sharia etc. However strangely the discrimination and racism against Muslim in the society was given limited space. The study also shows that negative pictures about Islam and Muslims in the media enhanced discrimination and intolerance in the society.

Sian, et al., (2012) explored three months long, sixty-eight news items of the British press that include Daily The Sun, Daily The Mail, Daily The Guardian and Daily The Independent. Critical discourse analysis method has been used to know that how Muslims minorities have been represented in comparison to other citizens. Islamophobia has largely been witnessed in the majority of the newspapers examined. The finding of the study indicates that prominent newspapers, The Sun, The Daily Mail and The Independent all constructed negatively. These newspapers have usually ignored the voice of the Muslim community.

Nicholson (2011) examined the identity portrayals of Canadian Muslims available in the daily press. The author collected the data from Canadian mainstream daily newspaper coverage for time period of six months (November 1, 2008 to April 30, 2009) which returned 251 newspapers articles. The articles on key words Muslims and Canada or Canadian were focused. The treatment of the government towards Canadian Muslim and non-Muslims was also analyzed; where the author found that Canadian Muslims were indirectly and subtly portrayed as possibly deserving of discriminatory treatment. International Centre for Muslim and non-Muslim Understanding (2015) presented an initial report based on a survey regarding perceptions about religious and cultural groups, focusing on Muslim community by taking 1000 sample from adult Australians. The findings tell that Islamophobic sentiments are very low in Australia, and people who are willing to have friendly and family relationship with Muslims in Australia. There are some exceptions too and, in some areas, people of high age and financial insecurity, have prejudice and anxiety towards Muslims. However, the majority of Australians have positive sentiments about Muslims.

Theoretical Framing

The idea of examining the trend of leading newspapers on the theme of Islamophobia is taken from the famous Framing theory. The concept of framing in media and communication has recently a dominance in importance as it crucial in guiding in the investigating the content of the media. It also guides the association between public opinion and media. The roots of framing can be found in various discipline and various definition have been given by different scholars (scheufele 1999 cited in *Tewksbury and scheufele, 2009*). Framing is a *process* in the world of communication (de Vereese, 2005) in which certain aspects are selected from real life. These aspects are emphasized to define the problem and to diagnose its causes. Furthermore, moral judgments are suggested and solutions and suggestion and action are proposed which are appropriate Entman, 1993). The framing process consists of various *stages*. These stages are: *frame-building, frame-setting* and individual and societal level consequences of framing (d'Angelo, 2002; Scheufele, 2000; de Vreese, 2002 cited in de Vereese, 2005).

It is important to study framing on two dimension, disciplinary origins that is *psychological* vs. *sociological* and also the explanatory origin that is applicability model vs. other effects models. The broad or macro level studies approached to framing described by the two scholars Pan and Kosicki in 1993, were drawn from attribution theory and also frame analysis (Heider, 1959; Goffman, 1974). In the year 1959, Heider, explained through experiments that human beings come face to face with complex information in the daily life which are reduced to judgement about causal attribution, these attributions according to Heider are the perceived links between an observed behaviour and a potential cause.

The framing theory has received significance since its emergence in 1960s' in the field of sociology. However, it was in 1993 that Robert Entman (1993) the American political scientist, warned in 1993 the absence of a unified theory of framing, which may be capable of explaining the construction of frames, and how these frames are manifested in the text and how they explain the minds of the public.

According to Entman (1993) this lack of the framing theory has complicated the solid and unified progress of the discipline. This fact was further highlighted by other that the term frame lack the clear conceptualization (Abreu, 2015).

Goffman's (1974) have also worked on sociological approaches to framing and frames of reference. Primary framework is socially constructed category system that serve as important tools for information processing among the public. In order to influence audience way of interpretations media discourse is used in specific primary frameworks.

In the year 1967, a scholar, Sherif found that all individual judgement and perceptions occur within certain frames of reference. He explained that it is necessary to build up a situation, in which evolution of a situation will be shown in the judgement of the individual person. (Sherif, 1967, p.382). In their most important and Nobel Prize winning work both Kahneman and Tversky's (1979, 1984) presented the idea that "perception is reference-dependent". Every individual does translate the idea according to his schema (Scheufele, 2008). The implication for communication research is clear, however, Kahneman, experimental work was primarily focusing impact of framing on economic and risk related choices.

The frame helps in the understanding of the messages contained in it by reminding the viewers the message inside is relevant and connected and those outside the frame must be ignored. The sociologist Erving Goffman (1974) recovered the concept of framing and theory of framing. He referred to the frame as social framework and as a mental schema allowing users to organize experiences. Frames are instrument of the society allowing people continue a shared interpretation of reality (Abreu, 2015). In 1980, it was for the 1st time the term framing was published in *journalism quarterly* while this number reached to 165 during 2001-2005 (Weaver, 2007 cited in Abreu, 2015).

The literature shows two methods of the identification of frames. These include: the deductive method and inductive method. The content analysis based on the deductive method is easy to perform, it can also be applied to sample which are large and it is it can also be replicated. While in the Inductive method, the frames are detected through the immersion in the selected sample. (Abreu, 2015). The evolution of framing theories can be categorised into three phases. *First phase* (1974 to 1990)-the beginning of the instrumental application based on the sociological definition of the term. During this phase the theory of framing entered to the field of communication. *Second phase* (1990s)-in this phase frame was related to the speciality of media studies and there was a debate between those according to whom framing is only the extension of the agenda setting and those who argued framing as different theory but a complementary (Rabadán and Mariño 2009 cited in (Abreu, 2015). *Third stage-reorganization and empirical development*. It started in 21st century and is continues to date. During this period, attempts have been made to conceptually and methodologically reunify that allows a more solid and rapid development through research synergies (Abreu, 2015).

Druckman (2001) stated that framing research has examined the moderating effect of source credibility, however framing contains many ingredients that characterize the fundamental persuasion process (Hovland, Janis, & Kelly, 1953). Framing effect research owe a basic debt to the persuasion studies in the era of World War two. Unlike the persuasion theory, framing theory is concerned with the origin, evolution, effects of frames and presentation. Similarly, the persuasive studies are concerned with the deliberate persuasive content to audience and readers, who are presumed to be already aware the intention. Frames in the news are basically the angle described by the journalist about the people and political objects, words used to name and issue and much more. According to (Tewksbury, Jones, Peske, Raymond and Vig, 2000) the framing literature tells that audience of news frames are usually not aware about the hidden frame and their influence. The persuasion and frame audience experience different messages, and hence are typically concerned with different outcomes. However, cognitive responses that reveal audience issue interpretation is a primary effect of framing (e.g., Price, Tewksbury, & Powers, 1997).

On the other hand, the persuasion research is concerned with the responses of acceptance of persuasive messages. Much like information effects, persuasion effects are visible in what people know or believe about an issue (Nelson, Oxley, & Clawson, 1997). Kinder & Sander (1990) stated that framing effects are visible and what the audience think is necessary about an issue of understanding it. Framing effects are not defined as attitude effects but as interpretation effects.

Objective of the Study

The main objectives of this study are:

- To examine the Islamophobic trend and frame in two leading newspapers of Canada namely Globe and Mail and Toronto Star.
- To examine how these newspapers prime the stories related to Muslims?
- To examine what changes have been occurred in framing and priming of stories related to Muslims after Quebec Mosque attack

Research Questions

The main questions of this study are:

1. Is the Canadian press Islamophobic?
2. How two leading newspapers of Canada namely Globe and Mail and Toronto Star frame the stories related to Muslims and Islamophobia?
3. How are Islam and Muslims typically written about?
4. How these newspapers prime the stories related to Muslims?
5. What changes have been occurred in framing and priming of stories related to Muslims after Quebec Mosque attack?

Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this study are:

- H1: Canadian print media is Islamophobic.
- H2: There is significant difference in two Newspapers regarding publishing articles related to Muslims.
- H3: The Framing and Priming of Stories of Canadian Print Media have changed after Quebec Mosque Attack.
- H4: Islamophobia receives prominent attention on the newspapers.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses content analysis by selecting the articles published on Islamophobia in two leading newspapers of Canada namely The Toronto Star and The Globe & Mail. There are several parts of a newspaper that are analyzed (i.e., stories, content framing, priming and overall structure). In the first step, we go through the newspaper and identify all the stories. In the second stage, we identify the framing and priming of the stories and articles on Islamophobia. The study uses the contents published from January 2017 to March 2017 in two leading newspapers (Toronto Star and The Globe and Mail). The Toronto Star is the biggest newspaper in Canada both in terms of readership and circulation. This newspaper is the ownership of Toronto Star Newspaper Ltd. This newspaper is published in Toronto area, and some other parts of the country seven days a week. Toronto Star is a division of Star Media Group, a subsidiary of Toronto Star Corporation (The Toronto Star website is <https://www.thestar.com>)

Owned by the Woodbridge company, the Globe and Mail is published from six cities of Canada including Toronto. The 2015, statistics shows that this newspaper's readership is 2,018,923 and is the Canada's most read newspaper. This is mostly read on Saturdays, however its circulation is low on week days as compare to Toronto Star. The Globe and Mail website is <http://www.theglobeandmail.com>

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of table 1 shows the frequency of articles published with the theme of Islamophobia. The drastic change from January to February in the frequency of publication is due to the Quebec Mosque attack on January 29, 2017. Apparently, as compare to Globe and Mail, Toronto Star published more articles with the theme of Islamophobia.

Table No. Number of Articles Published in Two Leading Newspapers (Jan to March 2017)

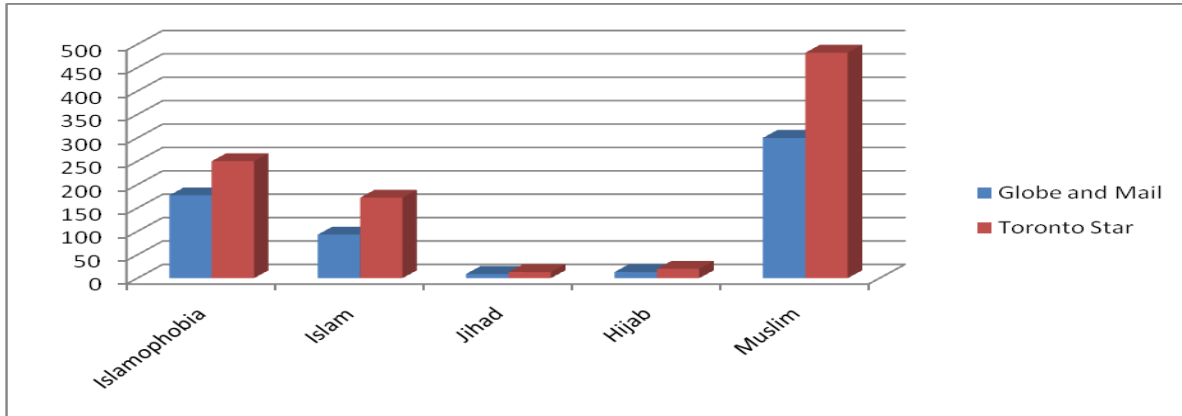
	No. of Articles			
	January	February	March	Total
Toronto Star	18	62	27	107
Globe and Mail	09	45	15	69
Total	27	107	42	176

The results of table 2 shows the most frequent word used in the articles published are Muslims (300 times by Globe and Mail and 482 times by Toronto Star) and Islamophobia (177 times by Globe and Mail and 250 times by Toronto Star).

Table No. 2 Frequency of the Different Words in Two Leading Newspapers (Jan to March 2017)

	Islamophobia	Islam	Jihad	Hijab	Muslim
Globe and Mail	177	93	09	13	300
Toronto Star	250	172	13	20	482
Total	427	265	22	33	782

Figure 1: Frequency of the Different Words in Two Leading Newspapers (Jan to March 2017)



The results of table 3 shows the Mosque is one of the frequent words used in the news stories/articles published (119 times by Globe and Mail and 133 times by Toronto Star) due to the January 29, 2017 Quebec Mosque attack. Moreover, the frequency of articles is also changed in increasing direction after Quebec Mosque attack. The words Sharia and Terrorisms are also frequently used by Toronto Star during the same period.

Table No. 3 Frequency of the Different Words in Two Leading Newspapers (Jan to March 2017)

	Terrorist	Extremist	Mosque	Extremism	Sharia	Terrorism
Globe and Mail	20	10	119	11	15	14
Toronto Star	39	16	133	06	68	43

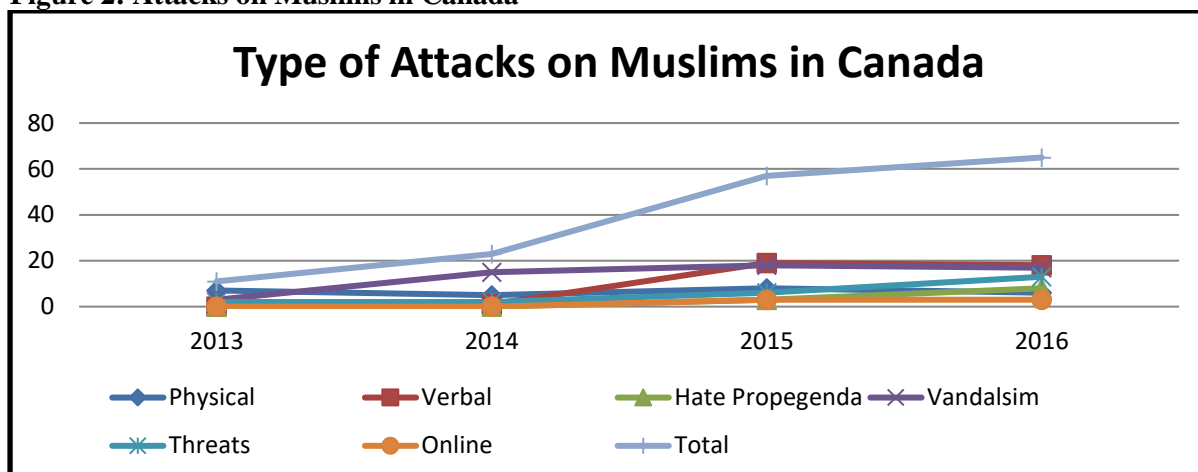
Table 4 show the trend of two leading newspapers according to their published stories and articles. The data shows that both newspapers are liberal according to their theme of the stories.

Table No. 4 Frequency of the Different Words in Two Leading Newspapers (Jan to March 2017)

	Liberal	Secular	Progressive
Globe and Mail	148	14	07
Toronto Star	78	09	16

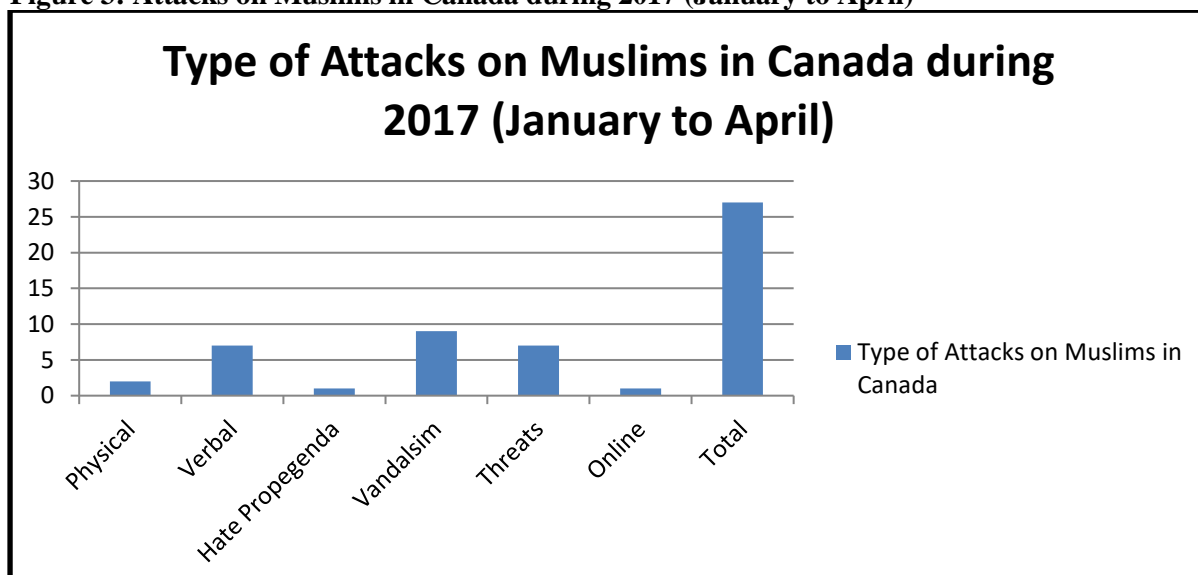
The increasing trend of attack on Muslims is quite clear from the figure. The total number of attacks is increased from 11 in 2013 to 23 in 2014 and further increased to 65 in 2016. The ratio of vandalism attacks is highest among other attacks on Muslims in Canada. Among others the vandalism attack on Khadijah Islamic Centre in Montreal's Pointe-Sainte-Charles neighborhood was the severe one. An interesting conclusion can be drawn from the data on attack on Muslims in Canada during 2013 to 2016.

Figure 2: Attacks on Muslims in Canada



Source: National Council of Canadian Muslims (www.nccm.ca)

Figure 3: Attacks on Muslims in Canada during 2017 (January to April)



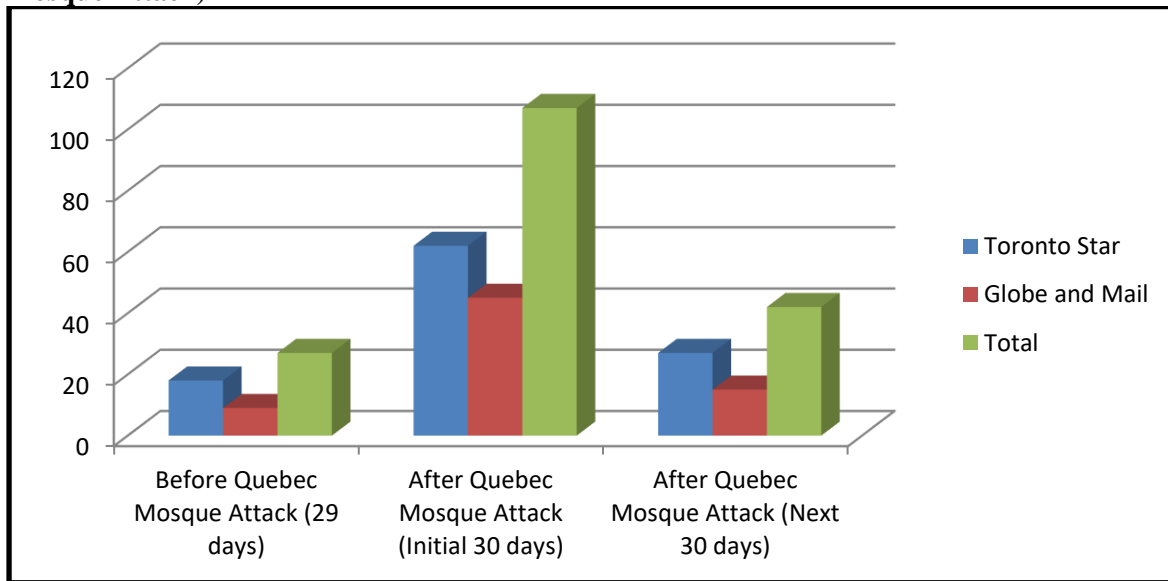
Source: National Council of Canadian Muslims (www.nccm.ca)

It is evident from table 5 that the frequency of articles drastically changed after the Quebec Mosque attack. The articles are more frequently published particularly just after the initial 30 days (March 29, 2017 to February 28, 2017) of Quebec Mosque attack (62 in Toronto Star and 45 in Globe and Mail). However, the number of articles published on Islamophobia is reduced in the next 30 days of the attack (March 2017). Besides the newspapers provided more coverage to Islamophobia, the same issue was widely discussed in other public spheres.

Table No. 5 Number of Articles Published in Two Leading Newspapers (Before and after Quebec Mosque Attack)

	No. of Articles		
	Before Quebec Mosque Attack (29 days)	After Quebec Mosque Attack (1 st 30 days)	After Quebec Mosque Attack (Next 30 days)
Toronto Star	18	62	27
Globe and Mail	09	45	15
Total	27	107	149

Figure 4: Number of Articles Published in Two Leading Newspapers (Before and after Quebec Mosque Attack)



The table shows different pattern of framing and placement of stories/editorials of Globe and Mail and Toronto Star newspapers from January 2017 to March 2017. It is evident that negative stories in total sample stories are more evident from Toronto Star newspaper (55%) as compare to Globe and Mail newspaper (52%). Moreover, in terms of placement of stories both newspapers mainly highlight, published articles/news stories related to Islamophobia.

Table No. 6 Placement and Framing of the Stories/Editorials of Two Leading Newspapers of Canada (Jan to March 2017)

News paper	Placement of the Stories/Editorials		Framing of the Stories/Editorial		
	Body	Headline	Neutral	Positive	Negative
Globe and Mail	59 out of 69	10 out of 69	8 out of 69	25 out of 69	36 out of 69
Toronto Star	90 out of 107	17 out of 107	12 out of 107	36 out of 107	59 out of 107

CONCLUSION

The issue of Islamophobia received attention from researchers, academicians and journalist in recent years throughout the World. This study examines how two leading newspapers of Canada namely Globe and Mail and Toronto Star frame the stories related to Muslims and Islamophobia. This study uses content analysis by selecting the articles published on Islamophobia in two leading newspapers of Canada namely, The Toronto Star and The Globe & Mail. There are several parts of a newspaper that are analyzed (i.e. stories, content framing, priming and overall structure). In the first step, we go through the newspaper and identify all the stories. In the second stage, we identify the framing and priming of the stories and articles on Islamophobia. The study uses the contents published from January 2017 to March 2017 in two leading newspapers (Toronto Star and The Globe and Mail). The Toronto Star is the biggest newspaper in Canada both in terms of readership and circulation. The main results of the study shows that during this period, the negative stories published on Islamophobia are more evident from Toronto Star and Globe and Mail newspaper despite the fact that both newspapers are liberal according to their theme of the stories. As compare to Globe and Mail, Toronto Star published more articles on Islamophobia.

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