

Islamic Communication: A Critical Realist Perspective

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Abstract:

In this paper, I explore Islamic communication through a critical realist lens, aiming to enhance the understanding of its principles and applications in contemporary society. The research addresses how critical realism can be utilized to tackle modern challenges in Islamic communication, focusing on three key areas: the conceptualization of Islamic communication within critical realism, the practical implications for contemporary media, and the strategies for addressing intercultural communication challenges. Employing a qualitative methodology that includes theoretical analysis and case studies, I identify significant gaps in the existing literature and propose solutions to bridge these gaps. The findings reveal that integrating critical realism into Islamic communication theory enriches its framework, facilitates the development of practical media applications, and offers valuable strategies for enhancing intercultural communication. This study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of Islamic communication and suggests avenues for future research.

Keywords: Islamic Communication; Critical Realism; Qualitative Research; Intercultural Communication; Media Frameworks.

Introduction

Islamic communication, as both a theoretical and practical framework, occupies a vital space in media and communication studies. Rooted in Islamic principles and values, it transcends conventional paradigms by integrating ethical, spiritual, and cultural dimensions into communication processes. This multidimensional approach aligns communication practices with the core objectives of Islam: promoting truth, justice, and compassion. However, despite its significance, Islamic communication remains underexplored in academic literature, often overshadowed by Western-centric theories such as Agenda-Setting, Uses and Gratifications, and Dialogic Communication.

To critically evaluate Islamic communication, this study positions it against four prominent figures in Western communication

studies: Harold Lasswell, Marshall McLuhan, Jürgen Habermas, and Stuart Hall. Lasswell's linear communication model, emphasizing efficiency through the "Who says What to Whom in What Channel with What Effect" framework (Goduka et al., 2024), neglects the ethical and spiritual dimensions central to Islamic communication. Marshall McLuhan's "medium is the message" theory (Cooper, 2022) underscores the transformative power of media but overlooks moral accountability for content—a core tenet in Islamic perspectives.

Similarly, Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action, while highlighting rational discourse and consensus-building, operates within secular frameworks that exclude transcendental and spiritual elements. Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model acknowledges audience interpretation and cultural context but underrepresents the ethical responsibilities of media creators and consumers. These gaps underscore the need for a paradigm like Islamic communication that bridges ethical, spiritual, and cultural imperatives.

This research adopts a critical realist (CR) perspective to analyze Islamic communication. As a philosophy of science, CR integrates positivist and constructivist approaches to examine ontology and epistemology (Gorski, 2013; Fleetwood et al., 2002). It seeks to uncover the causal mechanisms underlying social phenomena, enabling nuanced understanding and actionable strategies for addressing societal challenges (Fletcher, 2017). Unlike pragmatism, which detaches ontological and epistemological dimensions from methodological strategies, CR emphasizes their interconnectedness, positing that reality—both natural and social—exists independently but requires deeper mechanisms to explain its manifestations (Danermark et al., 2002).

CR's methodological pluralism, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, is especially valuable for Islamic communication. This integrative approach facilitates the exploration of complex social realities, including ethical imperatives and spiritual objectives, without reducing them to experimental observations. Through retroduction—the process of uncovering causal relationships—CR identifies underlying mechanisms often invisible in traditional analyses but critical for understanding communication phenomena (Bhaskar, 1998).

The relevance of this study is amplified by the increasing influence of digital media, which presents both challenges and

opportunities for Islamic communication. In an era marked by information overload, ethical dilemmas, and cultural homogenization, Islamic communication offers a counter-narrative emphasizing meaningful interactions, moral accountability, and the preservation of diverse cultural identities. By situating Islamic communication within a critical realist framework and critically evaluating key Western communication theories, this research bridges the gap between normative ideals and practical realities, offering insights into operationalizing Islamic principles in modern communication practices.

This study begins by exploring the theoretical foundations of Islamic communication and critical realism, followed by an analysis of their intersection. It evaluates the contributions and limitations of Western communication theories, demonstrating how Islamic communication addresses the ethical and spiritual void in these paradigms. Through this exploration, the research contributes to developing a nuanced understanding of Islamic communication as a dynamic and impactful paradigm in media and communication studies.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design grounded in a critical realist (CR) perspective to explore Islamic communication as a multidimensional and ethically informed paradigm. The qualitative approach is well-suited to investigate the nuanced, layered realities of Islamic communication, including its ethical, spiritual, and cultural dimensions. A critical realist framework facilitates understanding the underlying causal mechanisms shaping Islamic communication practices and their implications in modern media contexts. Relevant documents, including Islamic texts (Qur'an, Hadith), academic literature, media content, and communication policies from Islamic organizations, will be analyzed. This method will provide context and further insights into how Islamic principles are applied and interpreted in communication practices. A semiotic analysis will be used to categorize data into meaningful units, with codes informed by Islamic communication principles and CR theory. Themes will be developed to reflect the layered nature of reality, such as ethical foundations, cultural imperatives, and media challenges. The causal mechanisms underpinning observed communication phenomena will

be identified, connecting empirical findings to broader theoretical insights. This step is integral to critical realism, as it moves beyond observable data to uncover deeper structures and influences.

Findings and Discussions

De-Westernization of Communication: An Extended Outline

The theory of Islamic communication—and indeed all communication theories—focuses on what is referred to as the concept of a message within the communication process. In this context, the concept of a message is also rooted in the tradition of Western rhetoric. Moreover, the concept of a message also encompasses various terminological variations within Islam (Almarwaey et al., 2021). A message, in its simplest form, represents information transmitted directly (face-to-face) or indirectly (via written, symbolic, or coded means) to an intended recipient. Beyond this basic definition, a message often conveys an “idea” imbued with moral, political, or socio-economic significance. This indicates that messages inherently carry normative or value-laden aspects, reflecting virtues, truths, or vices within their content.

The concept of a message can be understood through two primary ontological perspectives. First, it exists as a linguistic term with a defined meaning, functioning passively (unlike a verb or organism). Second, it emerges as a complex phenomenon that demands thematic interpretation. Scholars like Roland Barthes have addressed these perspectives through semiotics, leading to the development of two models: (1) a communication model that showcases self-actualization via the message and (2) a message model that facilitates the transmission of discourse. Spoken words represent discourse, while the meanings conveyed form the message.

Massimo Leone further elaborates on how messages intersect with semiotics, emphasizing the significance of signs, their design, and their relationship with religion. He argues that signs constitute the structure of language, while language, in turn, comprises patterns and systems of signs. Within religious contexts, sacred languages and symbols often embody perceived truths, reflecting a profound interplay between signs and spiritual meaning.

In a broader sense, the term “message” holds deep relevance in

semiotics, where religion occupies a central role. Building on semiotic definitions, the notion that “a sign is a sign unto itself” aligns with Peirce’s assertion that “the world is full of signs.” This perspective suggests that religion, too, is replete with signs. Raposa supports this view through metasemiotic explorations of Peirce’s philosophy, asserting that religion is pragmatically expressed through distinct symbols, which challenge and compete with other symbolic systems.

For further clarity, scholars, particularly communication theorists like McLuhan and Capurro, highlight distinctions among related terms such as “message” (*Mitteilung*), “information” (*Information*), and “understanding” (*Verstehen*). These distinctions, elaborated upon according to their essence, offer deeper insights into the nature of communication.

Before delving into the theological dimensions of messages, it is essential to trace the foundational concepts underlying message and communication theories through detailed analysis. Given the semiotic framework employed in this study, this foundation remains closely tied to the field of semiotics within communication philosophy. As such, the discussion excludes psychological or sociological approaches to communication, critical media theories, algorithms, cybernetics, and methodologies like Critical Discourse Analysis, Content Analysis, or other approaches rooted in language philosophy.

Early communication scholars generally agreed that, in antiquity, communication was regarded as an “art” of delivering messages. This art relied on rational and logical arguments, complemented by evocative metaphors, to persuade recipients to accept the conveyed message or its originator.

In the field of communication as a discipline, a similar pattern emerges. Social regulations introduced after the advent of media were established only after empirical research or theoretical discussions about their impacts. This is because society acts as an epistemological foundation driving such progress, a concept tied to the idea of “social epistemology” coined by Steve Fuller. Essentially, society itself is the force behind the development of these epistemological constructs. This foundation is considered “strong” as it emphasizes complex and collaborative methods. Within society, some individuals excel in rational analysis, while others are adept at empirical investigations, including grounded research due to their direct interaction with research subjects. Through these processes,

data is gathered and developed into theoretical discourse, forming the basis for regulations, particularly those anticipating potential material or non-material losses, such as psychological impacts, at both individual and societal levels.

I conclude that, in the West, messages considered accurate and authoritative require investigation through two epistemological sources—rationalism and empiricism—as well as through social epistemology, as previously mentioned.

On the other hand, communication development within the scientific domain and its derivative products follows a different trajectory. Advancements in mathematics have driven an approach to communication science that not only results in policies, as previously noted, but also produces information technology as communication infrastructure, both in physical (direct, wired, or wireless) and digital forms. Reflecting on Gunnar Myrdal's observations regarding the maturation of economics, which transitioned from its initial political dimension (political economy) to a mathematically oriented field, a similar trend can be seen in communication studies.

Myrdal notes, *"This implicit belief in the existence of a body of scientific knowledge acquired independently of all valuations is soon found to be naïve empiricism... There is an inescapable a priori element in all scientific work."*² I interpret this to suggest that the development of positivism begins with such empirical foundations. Furthermore, while economics as a social science has transformed into a precise science, Myrdal acknowledges that its certainty is grounded in an "implicit belief" inherent in its epistemological roots.

I align with Myrdal's perspective, as the technification of communication has propelled us, driven by the spirit of industrialization, into the era of social media. Michel Serres reminds us that despite the evolution of media, these mediums remain "cultural artifacts," reflecting their origins and identities. This technification has advanced alongside the development of mathematical and physical models for communication media. It recalls Descartes' assertion that anything representable mathematically can guide the development of communication science products.

This technification contributes to the technical delivery of messages, including the emergence of cryptography and the codification of message content through symbols, codes, and specific indices. The socio-political climate has also influenced technological advancements, such as during the world wars, when technologies

like Morse code and semaphore emerged. In the digital era, messages are encrypted with binary codes. The core infrastructure of this technification, especially in the digital realm, is mathematical coding based on binary numbers—1 and 0.

As the coding world evolved, digital graphics advanced alongside innovations like the camera. In the pre-media era, or during a time when media was limited to paper—or even earlier, to gestures—a message relied on the rhetorical skills of the messenger. As recipients engaged directly with messengers, logical arguments combined with persuasive gestures and intonation created a connection, often based on shared ideas or other affinities. This dynamic allowed for the establishment of authority by the messenger, bearer, or even owner of the message, recognized and accepted by the recipient.

With the evolution of media into the digital age, this authority shifted to the digital realm, where metrics such as “followers” became indicators of influence. Authority today often stems from the creation of digital graphic content, such as recorded works on television or purely graphical designs like cartoons. This authority is now embodied by figures known as public figures, influencers, and similar roles. Messages are often more easily conveyed and impactful when delivered by such authoritative figures.

In Critical Realist (CR) ontology, reality is conceptualized as having three distinct levels. The first level is the **empirical**, where events are experienced and observed. At this level, events or objects can be measured and often interpreted through “common sense,” but they are always influenced by human perception and interpretation. This is known as the **transitive level** of reality, encompassing social ideas, meanings, decisions, and actions, which can themselves have causal effects.

The second level is the **actual**, where events occur independently of human experience. These events happen regardless of whether they are observed or interpreted, and their true nature often differs from how they appear at the empirical level (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 20).

The third and deepest level is the **real**, where causal structures or “causal mechanisms” exist. These mechanisms are inherent properties within objects or structures that generate events observed at the empirical level. CR’s main objective is to explain social phenomena by uncovering these causal mechanisms and their effects

across the three layers of reality, often illustrated metaphorically as an iceberg.

The iceberg metaphor highlights the interconnectedness of these levels, showing that no level is more or less “real” and that they interact as parts of the same reality. This graphic analogy also demonstrates the limitations of the **“epistemic fallacy”**, which conflates knowledge of reality with reality itself. Bhaskar (1979) emphasized that, unlike the natural world, social structures depend on human activity. Causal mechanisms within these structures exist only through the activities they regulate and cannot be empirically identified in isolation (p. 48). This implies that these mechanisms, as social constructs, are embedded within phenomena at the empirical level (e.g., human actions and ideas) and can be studied scientifically.

All social structures have inherent **“causal powers and liabilities”**—potential abilities or constraints that shape their behavior. Conditions in the open social world influence whether these powers are actualized, meaning they may or may not manifest observable impacts at the empirical level. To address this, the method of **“retroduction”** examines the specific social conditions that allow causal mechanisms to operate. In this framework, the iceberg metaphor serves as a visual tool for understanding CR ontology and epistemology, emphasizing the layered nature of reality and the dynamic interaction between levels.

Inculcating Islamic Values to Communication Theory

Integrating critical realism into Islamic communication theory opens up a fascinating pathway to a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of its fundamental principles and applications. Islamic communication, at its core, is rooted in theological and ethical foundations that have guided the practice of communication among Muslims for centuries. However, as the world evolves and faces new challenges, there is a pressing need to re-examine these traditional concepts through a modern lens. This is where critical realism comes into play.

Critical realism, as a philosophical approach, emphasizes understanding the underlying structures and mechanisms that shape our reality. It moves beyond the surface-level observations and insists on digging deeper to uncover the hidden layers of social phenomena. When applied to Islamic communication theory, critical realism

encourages scholars and practitioners to look beyond mere textual interpretations of Islamic teachings and engage with the broader social, cultural, and political contexts that influence communication practices.

This integration enhances the interpretation of traditional Islamic communication concepts, allowing them to remain relevant in contemporary settings. For instance, traditional Islamic values such as honesty, respect, and compassion can be re-evaluated in light of modern challenges such as digital communication, misinformation, and intercultural dialogue. By applying a critical realist perspective, we can explore how these values can guide communication strategies in today's complex media landscape.

Moreover, critical realism offers a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play in Islamic communication. It recognizes that communication is not merely a transfer of information but involves power relations, social interactions, and cultural narratives. For example, the concept of "Amr bil Ma'ruf wa Nahi an al-Munkar," which encourages promoting good and prohibiting wrongdoing, can be critically analyzed within the context of contemporary media practices. How do these principles manifest in social media interactions? What power dynamics emerge in online discussions about ethical issues? These questions highlight the relevance of integrating critical realism into the study of Islamic communication.

Furthermore, this integration provides a framework for addressing the ethical implications of communication practices. In an age where misinformation can spread rapidly, critical realism can help us assess the impact of communication on society. It prompts us to consider questions such as: How do Islamic principles inform our understanding of truth and falsehood in the media? How can we promote ethical communication that aligns with Islamic teachings while addressing modern challenges? This critical engagement allows for the development of more robust ethical guidelines that resonate with the realities of contemporary communication.

In conclusion, integrating critical realism into Islamic communication theory not only enriches our understanding of its principles but also offers practical applications that address contemporary challenges. By encouraging a deeper examination of traditional concepts and their relevance today, this integration paves the way for a more comprehensive approach to Islamic communication in a rapidly changing world. To illustrate the integration of critical

realism into Islamic communication theory, we can analyze specific case studies that provide new insights and perspectives, enriching traditional communication concepts and adapting them for modern contexts. These case studies serve as practical examples of how critical realism can illuminate the complexities of Islamic communication in various settings.

One notable case study involves the use of social media platforms among Muslim communities during significant global events, such as the Arab Spring. During this period, many Muslims utilized platforms like Twitter and Facebook to share information, organize protests, and foster a sense of community. A critical realist approach allows us to examine the underlying social structures that influenced these communication practices. It prompts us to ask: What were the social, political, and economic factors that drove these individuals to engage in activism through social media? How did their understanding of Islamic principles shape their communication strategies?

Through the lens of critical realism, we can see that the use of social media was not merely a technical choice; it was deeply intertwined with the socio-political context of the time. The Arab Spring highlighted the power of collective action and the role of communication in facilitating social change. By analyzing this case through critical realism, we gain insight into how traditional Islamic values of justice and community empowerment were articulated and mobilized in a modern communication context.

The integration of critical realism into Islamic communication theory is a crucial step toward addressing previous theoretical limitations within the field. Historically, Islamic communication studies have often been confined to theological interpretations, lacking the depth and breadth needed to engage with contemporary challenges. This gap has hindered the development of robust frameworks that can guide practical applications in a rapidly evolving media landscape.

One of the primary limitations of traditional Islamic communication theory is its tendency to focus predominantly on textual analysis, often overlooking the socio-cultural and political contexts that shape communication practices. By integrating critical realism, we can address this limitation by emphasizing the importance of understanding the underlying structures and dynamics that influence communication. This shift in focus allows for a more

comprehensive approach that recognizes the interplay between individual agency and social structures.

Moreover, critical realism encourages a multi-dimensional exploration of communication practices, moving beyond binary oppositions such as truth versus falsehood or good versus evil. It prompts us to consider the complexities of communication in a nuanced manner, recognizing that ethical dilemmas often exist within a spectrum rather than clear-cut categories. For instance, when discussing the ethics of communication in contemporary media, critical realism allows for a richer analysis that considers the motivations and contexts behind various communication choices.

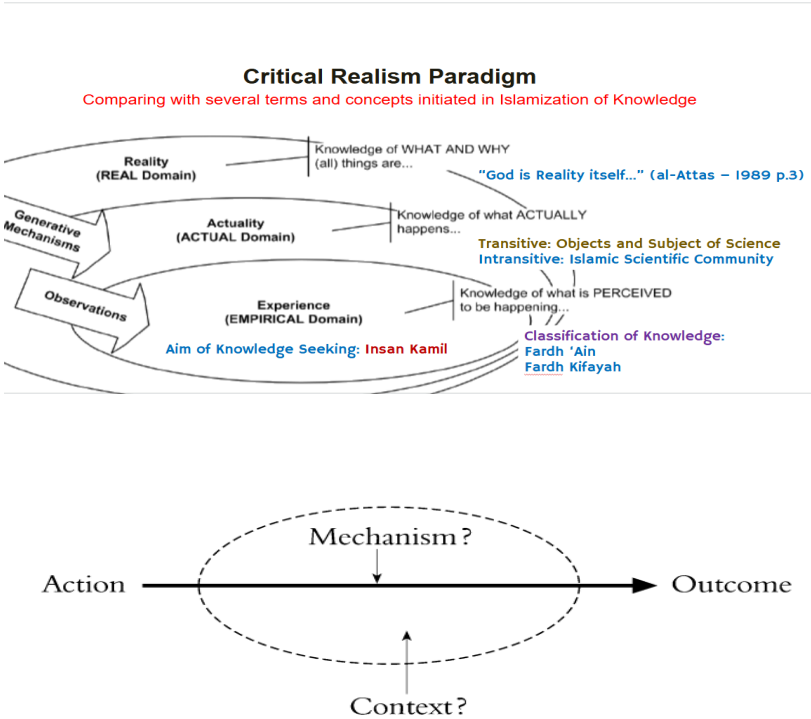
In light of these theoretical advancements, integrating critical realism provides a robust framework for further academic exploration and practical application in the field of Islamic communication. This framework can guide researchers in developing comprehensive models that account for the diverse influences on communication practices. By emphasizing the importance of context, power dynamics, and ethical considerations, scholars can cultivate a more nuanced understanding of Islamic communication in contemporary settings.

Additionally, this integration paves the way for future research that can explore the intersections of Islamic communication with other fields such as media studies, sociology, and intercultural communication. By fostering interdisciplinary collaborations, researchers can uncover new insights and develop innovative approaches to communication challenges faced by Muslim communities worldwide.

Furthermore, this framework can inform the development of practical guidelines for media professionals and Islamic organizations. As communication practices continue to evolve, there is a need for ethical frameworks that resonate with Islamic values while addressing contemporary challenges. By leveraging critical realism, practitioners can develop communication strategies that align with their ethical principles and promote understanding and cooperation in diverse contexts.

In conclusion, the integration of critical realism into Islamic communication theory addresses previous theoretical limitations and offers a robust framework for future exploration. By shifting the focus from textual analysis to a more comprehensive understanding of communication dynamics, this integration enriches our theoretical

insights and provides practical applications that resonate with the realities of contemporary communication. As the field continues to evolve, embracing critical realism will empower scholars and practitioners to navigate the complexities of Islamic communication in a rapidly changing world, fostering a deeper understanding of its potential impact on society.



Development of Practical Media Frameworks

The integration of critical realism into media frameworks represents a significant advancement in aligning communication practices with ethical considerations rooted in Islamic principles. Critical realism, as a philosophical approach, posits that reality exists independently of our knowledge of it, yet human understanding is shaped by social, historical, and cultural contexts. This duality allows for a deeper exploration of the complexities of media practices, particularly in environments influenced by Islamic values.

Critical realism suggests that phenomena in the media do not simply reflect the surface reality but are embedded in a web of causal relationships that are often hidden. By recognizing these underlying structures, media practitioners can develop frameworks that not only adhere to Islamic ethical guidelines but also respond to the multifaceted nature of contemporary media consumption and production. This is particularly relevant in today's globalized world, where media messages are disseminated across diverse cultural contexts, often leading to misunderstandings and misrepresentations of Islamic values.

One of the theoretical underpinnings of critical realism that is especially pertinent to media frameworks is the distinction it makes between the real, the actual, and the empirical. The real refers to the underlying structures and mechanisms that shape social phenomena, while the actual encompasses events and situations that occur. The empirical relates to the perceptions and experiences of individuals. In media contexts, this means that practitioners must consider not only the content they produce (the actual) but also the deeper societal influences that inform that content (the real) and how audiences interpret it (the empirical).

For instance, an Islamic media framework informed by critical realism would encourage practitioners to examine how cultural narratives, historical contexts, and social norms influence the production and reception of media content. This could lead to the development of content that is not only ethically sound but also culturally relevant and resonant with audiences. By grounding media practices in a critical realist perspective, practitioners can ensure that their work contributes to a more nuanced representation of Islamic values in the media landscape.

Moreover, critical realism emphasizes the importance of reflexivity in media practices. Reflexivity involves a critical examination of one's own biases, beliefs, and assumptions in the production of media content. In the context of Islamic communication, this means that media professionals must be aware of their own cultural backgrounds and how these may affect their representation of Islamic principles. This self-awareness is crucial in preventing the perpetuation of stereotypes and misrepresentations, which can arise from a lack of understanding of the complexities of Islamic culture and beliefs.

In developing practical media frameworks, practitioners can

utilize critical realism to create guidelines that not only uphold ethical standards but also encourage a reflective practice. Such frameworks could include principles for ethical storytelling, ensuring that narratives not only align with Islamic values but also represent the diversity within the Muslim community. By addressing the complexities of identity, culture, and faith, these frameworks can help foster more accurate and respectful representations of Islam in media.

Additionally, the integration of critical realism into media frameworks can support the development of participatory practices that engage audiences in the production process. This aligns with Islamic principles of community and collective engagement, allowing for a richer dialogue between media producers and consumers. By recognizing audiences as active participants rather than passive recipients, media frameworks can be designed to encourage feedback and co-creation, thereby enhancing the relevance and impact of media content.

In summary, the integration of critical realism into media frameworks offers a robust foundation for aligning media practices with Islamic principles. By acknowledging the complexities of reality, fostering reflexivity, and promoting participatory practices, these frameworks can address ethical considerations while enhancing the representation of Islamic values in contemporary media. This approach not only benefits media practitioners but also contributes to a more informed and respectful understanding of Islam in the broader media landscape.

To illustrate the effectiveness of practical media frameworks developed through the lens of critical realism, it is essential to examine various case studies that demonstrate their application in diverse media environments. These case studies highlight how these frameworks address ethical and practical challenges in real-world scenarios, showcasing their adaptability and relevance to contemporary media practices.

One compelling example is the case of an Islamic television network that sought to present a balanced and authentic portrayal of Muslim life in a Western context. The network faced significant challenges in countering negative stereotypes and misconceptions about Islam, particularly in the wake of global events that heightened scrutiny of Muslim communities. By employing a critical realist approach, the network was able to develop a framework that emphasized ethical storytelling and community engagement.

The framework included guidelines for content creation that prioritized diverse representations of Muslims, showcasing various cultures, lifestyles, and perspectives within the Islamic community. It also encouraged collaboration with community members in the production process, allowing for a more authentic voice to emerge in the narratives presented. As a result, the network was able to foster a deeper understanding of Islamic values among non-Muslim audiences while reinforcing a sense of pride and identity within the Muslim community.

Another case study involves an online media platform dedicated to providing news and analysis from an Islamic perspective. This platform faced the challenge of addressing complex geopolitical issues while adhering to ethical standards rooted in Islamic principles. By utilizing a critical realist framework, the platform developed a set of editorial guidelines that emphasized accuracy, fairness, and contextualization in reporting.

These guidelines encouraged journalists to engage with multiple sources and perspectives, ensuring that their coverage reflected the complexities of the issues at hand. Moreover, the platform implemented a feedback mechanism that allowed audiences to share their insights and critiques, fostering a collaborative approach to news production. This resulted in more informed and nuanced reporting, which not only enriched the platform's content but also engaged audiences in meaningful discussions about current events.

In the realm of social media, another case study demonstrates the application of critical realism in developing frameworks for ethical engagement. A group of Muslim influencers sought to use their platforms to promote positive narratives about Islam while countering hate speech and misinformation. By adopting a critical realist perspective, they established guidelines that prioritized authenticity, empathy, and community support in their interactions.

The influencers created campaigns that encouraged constructive dialogue and challenged harmful stereotypes, fostering a sense of solidarity among their followers. They also collaborated with experts to ensure that their content was grounded in accurate information, reinforcing their credibility as sources of Islamic knowledge. This approach not only strengthened their community engagement but also contributed to a more positive representation of Islam in the digital space.

These case studies illustrate the practical application of critical

realism in diverse media contexts, highlighting how the developed frameworks can effectively address ethical and practical challenges. By fostering authentic representations, encouraging participatory practices, and promoting ethical engagement, these frameworks demonstrate their adaptability and relevance in contemporary media environments.

Furthermore, the success of these case studies underscores the importance of continuous evaluation and refinement of media frameworks. As media landscapes evolve, practitioners must remain attentive to emerging challenges and opportunities, adapting their frameworks accordingly. This iterative process, rooted in critical realism, ensures that media practices remain responsive to the complexities of reality and the diverse needs of audiences.

In conclusion, the case studies presented exemplify the effectiveness of practical media frameworks developed through a critical realist lens. By addressing ethical considerations and real-world challenges, these frameworks provide valuable guidance for media practitioners striving to align their work with Islamic principles. The adaptability and relevance of these frameworks underscore the potential for fostering a more nuanced and authentic representation of Islam in contemporary media.

The development of practical media frameworks grounded in critical realism not only enhances ethical media production but also serves as a crucial bridge between theoretical concepts and actual media practice. This bridging process is vital for media professionals who seek actionable strategies to navigate the complexities of contemporary media landscapes while adhering to Islamic principles.

One of the primary challenges faced by media practitioners is the gap between theoretical frameworks and the realities of media production and dissemination. While theoretical discussions provide valuable insights into ethical considerations and cultural contexts, they often lack concrete guidance for practitioners in their daily work. This is where the integration of critical realism becomes particularly beneficial, as it offers a structured approach that translates theoretical concepts into practical applications.

For instance, critical realism encourages media professionals to engage in reflexive practices, allowing them to critically assess their own biases and assumptions. This reflexivity is essential in creating content that accurately represents Islamic values and avoids perpetuating stereotypes. Media frameworks that incorporate

reflexivity provide practitioners with tools to evaluate their work critically, ensuring that their narratives align with ethical standards while remaining relevant to diverse audiences.

Moreover, the frameworks developed through critical realism can address specific ethical dilemmas encountered in media production. For example, in the context of reporting on sensitive issues such as terrorism or political conflict, media professionals often grapple with the challenge of balancing public interest with ethical considerations. By employing a critical realist framework, practitioners can navigate these dilemmas by prioritizing accuracy, context, and empathy in their storytelling.

Additionally, these frameworks can offer practical guidelines for media professionals on how to engage with audiences effectively. In an era of rapid information dissemination through social media, understanding audience dynamics is crucial for fostering meaningful interactions. Critical realism emphasizes the importance of recognizing audiences as active participants in the media process, which can inform strategies for audience engagement and feedback.

For example, media professionals can develop campaigns that invite audience participation, encouraging them to share their perspectives and experiences. This collaborative approach not only enhances the relevance of media content but also fosters a sense of community among audiences. By bridging the gap between theory and practice, media frameworks can empower practitioners to create content that resonates with their audiences while adhering to ethical principles.

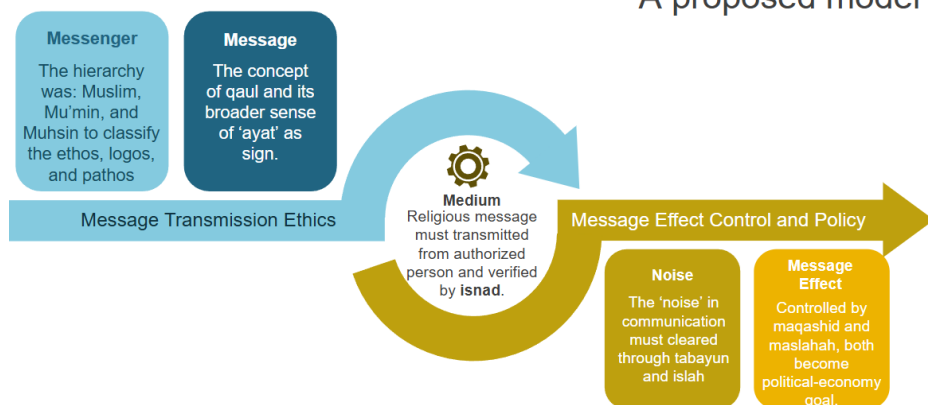
Furthermore, these frameworks can be instrumental in addressing the challenges of misinformation and bias in media narratives. In an increasingly polarized media landscape, the need for accurate and balanced reporting is more critical than ever. By integrating critical realism into their practices, media professionals can develop strategies that prioritize factual accuracy, contextualization, and multiple perspectives in their reporting.

For instance, a media framework informed by critical realism might include guidelines for verifying information from diverse sources, encouraging journalists to seek out voices that are often marginalized in mainstream narratives. This approach not only enriches the media landscape but also contributes to a more informed public discourse, aligning with Islamic values of truthfulness and justice.

In summary, the practical media frameworks developed through a critical realist lens serve as a vital bridge between theoretical concepts and media practice. By offering actionable strategies for ethical production, audience engagement, and addressing misinformation, these frameworks empower media professionals to navigate the complexities of contemporary media landscapes while adhering to Islamic principles. This integration of theory and practice contributes to a more nuanced and responsible representation of Islam in the media, ultimately enhancing the understanding and appreciation of Islamic values in diverse contexts.

Communication Process in Islam

A proposed model



Conclusion

This study has provided a critical realist perspective on Islamic communication, offering a fresh and necessary theoretical lens to analyze communication dynamics within Islamic contexts. By highlighting the importance of underlying social structures, cultural norms, and historical influences, the research extends beyond the traditional theological and ethical focus commonly found in existing literature. This approach not only enriches the theoretical framework of Islamic communication but also bridges the gap between abstract theory and practical application, offering valuable insights for both scholars and media practitioners.

The findings demonstrate how critical realism can inform

the development of media frameworks that are ethically aligned with Islamic principles, especially in navigating modern media environments influenced by global and Western narratives. Additionally, the application of critical realism enhances intercultural communication strategies by revealing deeper insights into cross-cultural dynamics, helping to counter stereotypes and foster mutual understanding in an increasingly globalized world. These contributions emphasize the relevance of critical realism in addressing contemporary challenges faced by Islamic communication in diverse media landscapes.

However, while this research offers substantial theoretical advancements, it also acknowledges its limitations, primarily in terms of scope and empirical validation. Future studies should explore wider media contexts, including digital platforms, and integrate interdisciplinary perspectives such as postcolonial or feminist theory to deepen the analysis. Incorporating empirical data through mixed-method approaches would further strengthen the findings. Overall, this study establishes a foundational contribution to the field, encouraging continued exploration of how critical realism can shape more effective, ethical, and contextually relevant Islamic communication practices in a rapidly evolving media environment.

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