world conference on research in
SOCIAL SCIENCES

WORLD CONFERENCE ON RESEARCH IN SOCIAL SCIENCES
SOCIALSCIENCESCONF

21 - 23 November 2025 Copenhagen , Denmark

Online Islamophobia and Offline Violence: a Critical Discourse Analysis of Fake Social Media Narratives on the 2024 Southport Killing and Their Impact on British Muslim Youths

Khandaker Uddin

Liverpool Hope University, United Kingdom

Abstract

This study examines the adverse effects of misleading social media messages on Islam and Muslims in the United Kingdom.. Although the Southport incident on the 29th of July 2024 was committed by a non-Muslim teenager, killing three white British girls, false accusations circulating on social media blaming a Muslim for the crime incited Islamophobic attacks and riots, resulting in heightened fear among Muslims across the country.

Research indicates that a significant portion of social media messages were fake and Islamophobic, negatively portraying Islam and Muslims. Far-right groups and individuals use social media platforms to depict Muslims as a potentially hazardous or suspicious community, contending that they pose a threat to both the fabric of British society and its core values and incite violence against them.

British Muslims have the youngest age profile among all religious groups, with nearly half being young people. Their youth and concentration in major urban areas position them to influence the workforce significantly. However, growing Islamophobia and the resulting concerns among Muslim youths about their safety may jeopardise their future aspirations.

This paper aims to critically examine the misleading text messages circulating on social media about the Southport incident, which reached millions of viewers in a short space of time.

The paper employs Fairclough's (1995) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach to examine the social media text messages.

The paper aims to conclude by suggesting a series of policies aimed at guiding social media in verifying harmful messages, particularly those targeting faith communities.

Keywords: **Youth, Social Media, Islamophobia, Critical Discourse Analysis, Riots**