

## Islamic Environmental Reporting and News Sources in Malaysian Newspapers

MOHAMAD SAIFUDIN MOHAMAD SALEH, SHARAF DAUDA, TAN KWANG SHEAN & NIK NORMA NIK HASAN<sup>1</sup>

### ABSTRACT

*Islamic environmental reporting is getting its toll worldwide including in Malaysia. News on Islamic environmental research on environmental journalism and news sources in Malaysia exist but the role of news sources on Islamic environmental news are largely unknown. Therefore, this study examines the roles of news sources and journalists in Islamic environmental news coverage in Malaysia, a country with an Islamic-oriented news media. By analysing the content of news articles and interviewing journalists at two mainstream Malaysian newspapers (Utusan Malaysia and Berita Harian), this study found that news sourcing judgements at Utusan Malaysia compromised western and Islamic news values of public interest by preferring sources with knowledge on environmental issues rather than sources with Islamic knowledge; while Berita Harian cited more sources related to Islam. Arguably, preference for sources with Islamic knowledge in reporting Islamic environmental news serves readers' interest best and will guarantee audience rights and interests.*

**Keywords:** *Islam, religion, Malaysian press, environmental news reporting, news sources*

With environmental issues getting more serious worldwide, Southeast Asian countries are among those severely impacted and highly exposed to climate vulnerability (Beirne, Renzhi & Volz 2021: 537), including Malaysia. In the past decade, Malaysia being deemed as one of the developed economies in the region has gained cumulative attention on climate-centric events (Chapman et al. 2021). This has sparked the needs of Malaysia with the official religion is Islam and most Muslims citizens (Mohamad Saleh et al. 2021: 55) to educate its people on Islamic environmental issues. Hence, local researchers such as Mohamad Saleh and Nik Hasan (2019) stated that Islamic environmental news are now much more visible and blooming vigorously in Malaysian news media. Being said so, a review of related literature has also revealed a scarcity of studies on Islamic environmental journalism and the roles played by news sources and journalists in determining the contents of Islamic environmental news coverage.

Media coverage is seen as the major influence in providing understanding and awareness of environmental news towards the society (Agustina et al. 2020: 57). This has further endorsed the statement by Cox (2013) stating that media is the intermediary of information dissemination alongside becoming the platform of environmental news obtainment within the region.

Meanwhile, existing literature on Muslims and ecology indicate that majority of Muslims consider that traditional Islamic law can solve current environmental crisis (Johnston 2012). Yet, Islam has not featured prominently in discussions on religion and the environment (Foltz 2000). Therefore, it becomes imperative to explore the roles of news sources, in relation to journalists' sourcing of environmental news in Malaysia, where the news media should impose a strong Islamic orientation thrive. Additionally, media

---

<sup>1</sup>**Mohamad Saifudin Mohamad Saleh**, Ph. D, Senior lecturer at the School of Communication, Universiti Sains Malaysia School of Communication, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Gelugor, Penang, MALAYSIA. Email: saifudinsaleh@usm.my; **Sharafa Dauda**, Ph. D. Lecturer at Department of Mass Communication, University of Maiduguri, 1069 Bama-Maiduguri Rd., 600104, Maiduguri, NIGERIA. Email: daudasharafa2009@gmail.com; **Tan Kwang Shean**, M.A School of Communication, Universiti Sains Malaysia 11800 Gelugor, Penang, MALAYSIA. tankwangshean@student.usm.my; **Nik Norma Nik Hasan**, Ph. D. Lecturer at School of Communication, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Gelugor, Penang, MALAYSIA. Email: nikhnorma@usm.my

<https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.22.2022.239>

is the pertinent means of communicating good intention and accurate information (*da'wah*) to people around us which Muslim reporters needs to fully utilise the opportunity given to them (Ishak & Solihin 2012: 263).

Prior studies on environmental news have assessed the news sources' perception of journalists and journalism in Scotland (Munnik 2018); the role of journalists in Muslim-majority countries in Africa, Asia (including Malaysia), and Europe (Mughtar et al. 2017); the types of quoted primary sources in the Malaysian newspapers (Ahmad & Lateh 2016; Nik Hasan 2008; Mohamad Saleh 2016; Tan & Mohamad Saifudin 2018; Zulkefly & Bakar 2017); the portrayal of global climate change in the mainstream print newspaper (Azmi et al. 2015); the framing of climate change in New Zealand newspapers (Chetty et al. 2015) and Nigerian daily newspapers (Agwu & Amu 2013); the news sources across national environments (Tiffen et al. 2013); and the media coverage of climate change in Nigeria and South Africa (Tagbo 2010).

Additionally, Western news reporting concepts and norms, which do not suit Islamic laws and culture, are adopted in most Islamic countries (Mowlana 2007) and subsequently define the function and operation of the news media in these Muslim countries. According to Clark (2008), some of these practices of adopting the Western concepts and norms may be responsible for the growth of misperception in the discourse on the portrayal of religion, including Islam, in the media and in the public sphere. Addressing that, this study explains how Islamic-oriented news media use news sources to shape the news and create a voice as well as ascertain the roles of news sources and journalists on Islamic environmental issues. Particularly, this study performed content analysis and in-depth interviews with journalists between two Malaysian newspapers – *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* – to explore the types of news sources and the factors that drive these journalists to depend on specific news sources.

### **Islam and Environmental News Reporting**

As a human and religious obligation, Islamic laws have high regards for environmental conservation practices (Nik Hasan 2008). Earlier on, Khalid (2002) did emphasised on the inclusion of conservation and allocation of limited water resources, the rules of land conservation, delineation of special zones for specific purposes (e.g., the establishment of range and wet lands and green belts), and wildlife protection and conservation as part of Islamic laws. Therefore, Islamic scholars introduced the concept of *hima* to protect certain zones where many Islamic countries now have set aside certain wild areas and prohibit the development or cultivation of these reserved areas (as modern wildlife reserves) (Smith 2002).

Expectedly, Islamic environmental news reporting can contribute to the socio-cultural development of Islamic societies if it is practiced according to Islamic ethics and tenets. For example, the combination of *tabligh* and *maslahah* principles allows practicing journalists to make use of Islamic scholars as sources to educate, teach, and promote religious and cultural diversity, thus seeking the best in public interest, especially of those in multi-ethnic and multi-religious settings. However, as argued by Foltz (2000), an activity or ideology only becomes 'Islamic' based on its association to the scriptural provisions in the Qur'an and the *Hadith* and not the mere involvement of Muslims. In results, this paper argues that if Islamic news sources fail to draw from Qur'anic and *Hadithic* sources to provide information in environmental news reporting, then such information is not from an Islamic perspective, even if such news sources are from Muslim clerics.

It is pertinent to observe that Islamic environmentalism is that which is demonstrably enjoined by the religion of Islam while Muslim environmentalism draws inspiration from a variety of sources that are attributable to Muslims, including but not limited to the religion of Islam (Foltz 2000). Therefore, Islamic environmentalists believe that all aspects of creations are miraculous signs of God and must be respected.

Furthermore, Islamic scholars have also failed to resonate resounding discourse on environmental issues. In relation to this, Foltz (2000) contended that Islam has not positioned itself prominently in discussions on religion and the environment. However, strong environmentalist interpretations have been derived from traditions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and indigenous local

traditions. A large and increasing number of Jewish and Christian theologians and laypersons have also been actively reinterpreting the sources of their faiths in environmentally sensitive ways.

Despite the scarcity of studies on the use of news sources for Islamic environmental news reporting, journalists who work for different news media platforms (e.g., radio, TV, newspaper, and magazine) make use of local political actors, ordinary citizens, journalists, and media analysts as news sources to ensure the credibility of the obtained information (Dimitrova & Strömbäck 2012). Experts such as scientists and professors are among the most common primary sources of environmental news in Malaysian newspapers (Ahmad & Lateh 2016; Nik Hasan 2008; Tan & Mohamad Saifudin 2018; Zulkefly & Bakar 2017). Besides that, occasionally, Western human rights experts are also dominant sources on public events (Kothari 2010), while politicians are commonly used as sources for news reporting (Lawrence 2000).

## Methodology

Content analysis of Islamic environmental news and in-depth interviews with journalists were conducted in this study to explore the types of news sources and the perspectives of journalists on the choices of news sources. Apart from the English Language, the local newspapers in Malaysia are also published in other languages where the major ethnic identities in this country include Malay, Chinese, and Indian. Nevertheless, the Malay language is the main language used in Malaysia where most of the population are Malay-Muslims. Therefore, this study focused on Islamic-oriented newspaper media in the Malay language, namely *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* - the top two daily Malay language newspapers with the highest unique readership statistics and ownership in Malaysia.

The samples of print newspaper articles and online news articles were drawn from a census of Islamic environmental news published between 2012 and 2017. The keywords used for the online news archives were 'Islam', 'environment', 'Islamic environmental news', and 'Allah'

. Consequently, 112 news articles were found, retrieved, and analysed from the library and online archives.

The quantitative content analysis precluded the qualitative approach which allowed in-depth interviews with the journalists. The interviews focused on the journalists' choices of sources used for news reporting. A total of 11 participants, comprising three male and three female journalists from *Utusan Malaysia* and three male and two female journalists from *Berita Harian*, were interviewed in Malay Language because they work for Malay Language newspapers and Malay is the language of communication at work. The interviewees also admitted that they were more comfortable speaking in Malay Language. However, code-switching, which is the mixing of Malay and English languages, occurred during the interview sessions. Code-switching is a common culture among Malaysians. Three interviewees from *Utusan Malaysia* were senior editorial members with over 15 years of working experience, while four interviewees from *Berita Harian* were young journalists with less than six years of working experience. The interviewees from both organisations were university graduates. These are elite journalists according to the Malaysian standards. The interviewees from *Utusan Malaysia* were from diverse educational backgrounds (i.e., environmental studies, social sciences and humanities, and Islamic and historical studies) whereas the interviewees from *Berita Harian* shared a common educational background (i.e., communication). Pseudocode was assigned to each interviewee in this study to ensure their anonymity. For example, respondents for *Utusan Malaysia* were coded as EJ1, EJ2, EJ3, EJ4, EJ5 and EJ6. Similarly, identification for the *Berita Harian's* respondents were EJ7, EJ8, EJ9, EJ10 and EJ11. The interviews were transcribed and translated by two researchers. The interview transcripts were then reviewed by expert translators. Their responses were analysed using qualitative content analysis.

## Findings

This section presents findings from this study. First, from the interview, we discovered that Islamic environmental news reporting is different from the conventional or usual environmental news especially in terms of how it is characteristically reported. In comparison to universal environmental news

reporting, Islamic environmental news reporting provides extra information in terms of Qur’anic verses or *Hadithic* texts. In describing Islamic environmental news, a respondent from *Utusan Malaysia* explained that “in our reporting of the environment, we include information on the Qur’an and Islam to emphasise the importance of environmental protection”. Additionally, Islamic environmental news includes Islamic values such as *amanah* (responsibility), *tawhid* (unity of God) and *ummah* (community). For example, a journalist at *Berita Harian* explained that Islamic environmental news reporting includes the Tawhid value to “highlight the article about the belief of God and the role of humans as *khalifah* to protect the environment and avoid action[s] that can cause damage” to the environment.

Therefore, from the interviews, it can be deduced that Islamic environmental news reporting is crucial for Malay newspapers because they use Islamic environmental news reporting to remind and educate the reader that the environment is entrusted by the Almighty to man, and it is the responsibility of Muslims to ensure that it is nurtured and protected. One of the journalists from *Utusan Malaysia* explained further that, “our newspaper focuses on Malay Language because majority of our readers are Malay Muslims. Hence, we needed to situate environmental news within the discourse on disaster as a reminder from Allah to humans”.

Next comes the findings on the attribution of sources to news and interviews with journalists from *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian*. The former presents evidence of the use of news sources in the newspapers, while the latter explains why journalists prefer to attribute information to certain sources on Islamic environmental news. In total, a total of 112 news articles were analysed and 11 journalists were interviewed. Referring to Table 1, only 54.46% of the total number of news articles used sources, while 45.54% were not attributed to sources. The results of the content analysis demonstrate that a very high number of Islamic environmental news articles in these two newspapers were not attributed to sources. According to the interviewees, most of these articles were submitted by individuals, usually experts in certain fields, who are not the staff of the newspapers, and these contributors rarely cite sources. One of the journalists from *Utusan Malaysia* explained that, “like the articles sent by people outside the media; they usually write the articles based on their opinion and understanding”.

**Table 1: Summary of sources on Islamic environmental news**

	<i>Utusan Malaysia</i>	<i>Berita Harian</i>	Total
<b>Does the news cite sources?</b>			
Yes	34 (30.36%)	27 (24.11%)	<b>61 (54.46%)</b>
No	30 (26.79%)	21 (18.75%)	<b>51 (45.54%)</b>
	<b>64 (57.14%)</b>	<b>48 (42.86%)</b>	<b>112 (100%)</b>
<b>Number of sources</b>			
One	25 (22.32%)	22 (19.64%)	<b>47 (41.96%)</b>
Two	8 (7.14%)	4 (3.57%)	<b>12 (10.71%)</b>
More than two	1 (0.89%)	1 (0.89%)	<b>2 (1.79%)</b>
No sources	30 (26.79%)	21 (18.75%)	<b>51 (45.54%)</b>
	<b>64 (57.14%)</b>	<b>48 (42.86%)</b>	<b>112 (100%)</b>
<b>Type of sources</b>			
Politicians (primary source)	8 (7.14%)	6 (5.36%)	<b>14 (12.5%)</b>
Government bureaucrat (primary source)	7 (6.25%)	3 (2.67%)	<b>10 (8.92%)</b>
Victim (secondary source)	7 (6.25%)	5 (4.46%)	<b>12 (10.71%)</b>
Sources related to Islam	4 (3.57%)	7 (6.25%)	<b>11 (9.82%)</b>
Others	8 (7.14%)	6 (5.36%)	<b>14 (12.5%)</b>
No sources	<b>30 (26.79%)</b>	<b>21 (18.75%)</b>	<b>51 (45.54%)</b>
	<b>64 (57.14%)</b>	<b>48 (42.86%)</b>	<b>112 (100%)</b>

In addition, Table 1 also presents the difference in the number of news sources cited. Overall, 41.96% of these news articles depended on a single source; 10.71% depended on double sources; and the remaining

1.79% cited more than two sources. Meanwhile, in terms of the categories of sources used, politicians (as primary sources) and other sources were dominant with attributions in 12.5% of the total number of news articles. This can be seen in news article 5 where *Utusan Malaysia* quoted the State Legislative Assemblyman of Kemelah, Datuk Ayub Rahmat who asked the flood victims to be grateful as several parties including the government were available to provide humanitarian aid and assistance. The second most cited news sources were victims (10.71%) and the least cited sources were government bureaucrats (8.92%). For instance, in *Berita Harian* (news article 50) where the Village Chief of Kampung Kubur, Datuk Rosli Mohd Nor (the victim) realised that about 100 cemeteries were damaged from flash floods after completing his prayers at dawn. This is also similar to news article 51 in *Berita Harian*, where the elder son of the victim stated that the water level was about one meter in the front porch when the flood started four days ago. The interviewees described victims as those who are affected by environmental misfortune, such as flood, as observed by one of the interviewees who commented that, “victims share their experience with us; therefore, we quote their statements”, while another interviewee added that, “quotations from victims make the stories more interesting”.

Interestingly, *Utusan Malaysia* published more Islamic environmental news and cited more news sources across different types, except Islamic-related sources, even though its newsroom editorial policy on staff diversity is Malay-Muslim centric. According to one of the interviewees, “majority of journalists at *Utusan Malaysia* are Muslims”. Expectedly, they should focus on sources in Muslim communities and readers who practice Islam. In contrast, *Berita Harian* cited more Islamic-related sources and the interviewees revealed that they used more Islamic-related sources, such as *ustaz*, given their vast Islamic knowledge. This was detailed further in news article 60 where the Mufti of Perlis, Prof. Madya Dr. Mohd Asri Zainul Abidin was cited, and the Perlis State Fatwa Committee was given a voice in the news. They believed that an *ustaz* would convey reliable facts on Islamic-related matters. One of the interviewees said that, “as journalists, we lack information about Islam; that is why we always seek the facts from the Islamic scholars”.

Furthermore, *Utusan Malaysia* appeared to rely more on political sources. The interviewees revealed politicians as the most cited primary sources for their Islamic environmental news because they are influential public figures in the society. They also admitted that they are often in contact with politicians and less frequent with *ustaz* or religious authorities. Therefore, it was easier to obtain comments from political sources. Referring to *Berita Harian* news article 66 for example, the Prime Minister of Malaysia (at the time), Datuk Seri Najib Razak was cited in relation to the Eleventh Malaysia Plan (RMK11) on the need to pay more attention to states that have higher propensity to experience floods. Some of the interviewees also revealed that they rarely used *ustaz* or religious authorities as sources because these sources were perceived to have inadequate background understanding of environmental issues: “Sources related to Islam are usually knowledgeable in Islamic matters, but rarely knowledgeable on science of the environment”.

Meanwhile, the use of sources between *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* are similar in terms of the attribution to government bureaucrats where *Utusan Malaysia* cited these sources in four news articles whereas *Berita Harian* cited these sources in three news articles. There was a slight difference between both newspapers in terms of the least cited sources—2.67% of the total number of news articles from *Berita Harian* cited government bureaucrats whereas *Utusan Malaysia* recorded 3.57% for the number of news articles that cited Islamic-related sources.

## Discussion

This study confirms that characteristically, Islamic environmental news reporting differs from universal environmental news reporting due to the inclusion of Qur’anic verses or *Hadithic* texts and Islamic values in the former. It was also uncovered that reporting Islamic environmental news is pivotal for Malay newspaper organisations like *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* because its major audience base comprises of Malay Muslims. Consequently, assigning such prominence is a deliberate effort to educate its readers on the importance of environmental protection from the Islamic perspective based on the vital

role ascribed in the Islamic concept of *khalifah* (protector or preserver of the environment), which is not new or uncommon across Muslim communities. Therefore, reporting Islamic environmental news to a Muslim reader makes acceptance of such roles easier and endears him or her towards performing it.

This study also demonstrates that almost 50% of the Islamic environmental news articles published by *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* were not attributed to sources and the most frequent category of Islamic environmental news were feature stories. The interviews revealed that most of the sources used were individuals who were not the newspapers' members of staff, such as experts and routine contributors of features, opinions, and analysis. As clarified by Soley (1992), the primary function of 'news shaper' is to deliver a comprehensive analysis to the readers and provide a clear background and commentary on certain issues that are difficult to understand. Notably, feature stories were found to be the most prevalent category of content published for Islamic environmental news reporting. These routine pieces are often written by columnists or contributors who are known to the media as individuals with an in-depth understanding of the issues. In most cases, these are expert views and usually disclaimed by the newspapers. Therefore, such contributions are usually not attributed to routine sources, but are used to shape opinions of readers on the discussed subject. The contributors also use this opportunity to convey their own agenda.

The findings of this study reveal that *Utusan Malaysia* published more Islamic environmental news and cited more news sources, except Islamic-related sources compared to *Berita Harian*. Despite its lack of Islamic-related sources, the editorial policy of *Utusan Malaysia* was revealed to focus on Malay-Muslim readers. Meanwhile, *Berita Harian* cited more Islamic-related sources where the *ustazs* are believed to have vast Islamic knowledge to convey reliable facts on Islamic matters. For instance, a news article by *Berita Harian* quoted the Director of the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), Datuk Othman Mustapha who urged the mosques around Malaysia to send prayers (*solat hajat & munajat*) for the flood victims that happened in East Coast states (i.e., Pahang and Terengganu), Perak, Perlis and Johor.

Kothari (2010) further noted that the use of sources in news guarantees their availability in the future as well as their credibility to the audiences. Nonetheless, news sources can be dishonest and biased; in those instances, journalists and the news audiences are unable to distinguish between truth and falsehood. Such incidence can be rather risky given the sensitive nature of religion and the diverse views on Islamic matters. Hence, this study propounded that the contributors of expert feature articles may be knowledgeable, but they also hold certain perceptions on the discussed topics. Consequently, they may mix both facts and personal opinions within their interpretations and schools of thought. Naturally, the readers of Islamic environmental news published in *Utusan Malaysia*, and *Berita Harian* are a combination of individuals, groups, communities, and institutions with diverse religious backgrounds. In other words, not all readers are familiar with the discussed Islamic issues. Thus, as discussed in the introduction of this paper, religion is a very sensitive issue, which implies the significance of conscientious use of experts (as news sources) by the Malaysian newspapers because such experts have the power and medium to shape the perception of the audience.

Furthermore, journalists from *Utusan Malaysia* rarely used Islamic scholars as sources because they perceived those Islamic scholars do not have adequate background understanding of environmental issues and only knowledgeable in Islamic matters. In other words, when it comes to the determination of news sources, the journalists appear to deliberately compromise knowledge of Islamic environmental issues although there are specific basic principles of journalism from the Islamic worldview in the context of environmental issues (Muchtar et al. 2017). As Muchtar et al. (2017) described, some of these basic principles of journalism from the Islamic worldview are seeking the best in public interest (*maslahah*) and balance (*i'tidal*) as well as guiding news sourcing in Malaysia and other Muslim-majority countries. Moreover, the perspectives of Islamic news values are also in line with the Western perspectives on journalism that seek to guarantee the rights of all citizens (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2007).

Additionally, *Utusan Malaysia* demonstrated higher use of political sources as primary sources for Islamic environmental news given their position as influential public figures in the society. The study also found that the journalists from *Utusan Malaysia* routinely interact with politicians and less

frequently with *ustaz*. Therefore, it was easier for them to obtain comments from political sources. Consequently, this questioned the news sourcing judgements of journalists at *Utusan Malaysia*. Although political sources are easily available, these sources may not be appropriate to seek Islamic facts given their political biases. As corroborated by other journalists at *Berita Harian* (higher use of Islamic-related sources), Islamic-knowledgeable sources convey more reliable facts on Islamic matters. For example, *Berita Harian's* article on the proper way to dispose ashes of burnt worn-out Quran according to Shariah Laws (*hukum syarak*) was quoted by the Pahang Islamic Religious Department (JAIP) in its explanation. Therefore, this study inferred that political source are most likely to deliver unreliable facts on Islamic matters. Additionally, politicians (as primary sources) and other sources were predominantly cited and victims (individuals who are affected during an environmental misfortune) were the next most cited sources, while government bureaucrats were the least cited sources. The victims share their personal experiences of environmental issues with journalists, which add value to the reported news.

Furthermore, the revelations by some interviewees that they rarely used *ustaz* as sources because they have inadequate background understanding of environmental issues touches on a fundamental issue on faith-based environmental discourse. In the context of this work, on the one hand, Islamic scholars are required to provide knowledge on what Islam says about the environment, but they are not fully knowledgeable about environmental issues. In fact, several existing Islamic environmentalists are straddled between 'Islamic' and 'scientific-environmental' spheres, and act as a bridge to connect Islamic scholars with contemporary issues. In this regard, lack of knowledge on what Islam says about the environment among Islamic scholars may also be responsible for the observation by Foltz (2000) that Islam has not featured prominently in discussions on religion and the environment. The *tawakkul* nature of most Muslims may also be another factor as reported in Foltz (2000). However, this paper submits that for Islamic scholars to make any meaningful impact on the way forward and in the discourse on faith-based environmental discourse and action, the *ummah* needs to apply the concept of '*aql* (rational intelligence), which was gifted by the Almighty for a purpose in Islam. In line with our previous argument, total submission to Allah and trust in Him is a prerequisite of faith but neglecting the responsibility to the environment by omission or commission or non-application of rational thinking, is tantamount to the abdication of responsibility and refusal to acknowledge the existence of other variables that are responsible for the causes of environmental disaster and/or preventive or mitigative options.

To conclude, this study reveals that information on Islamic environmental news are predominantly attributed to politicians, government officials (as primary sources), and other secondary sources, such as victims. The news sourcing judgements of journalists at *Utusan Malaysia* were found to compromise both Islamic and Western news sourcing judgment values of public interest given their preference for sources with vast knowledge on environmental issues, rather than sources who are knowledgeable on Islamic matters. Sticking to sources with Islamic knowledge for Islamic environmental news reporting guarantees the adherence to the principles of Islamic worldview of journalism in public interest (*maslahah*) and balance (*i'tidal*). Additionally, journalists at *Utusan Malaysia* were also found to largely depend on political sources for Islamic environmental news because politicians are influential public figures in the society and easily accessible compared to Islamic scholars. This may affect their news sourcing judgements because journalists should not just consider the ease of obtaining information from sources. The credibility of sources and the information that these sources provide should not be compromised. This argument is further corroborated by journalists from *Berita Harian* in this study who opted for Islamic-knowledgeable sources because they convey reliable facts on Islamic matters. In other words, journalists at *Utusan Malaysia* neglect the basic journalism principles, while their colleagues at *Berita Harian* adopt some basic Islamic and Western principles of journalism.

## References

- Agustina, A., Dewi, T. T., Soemantri, N. P., Qureshi, N. Y., & Moenanto, G. 2020. Environmental communication in Indonesian television news coverage. *Aspiration Journal*. 1(1): 56-72.
- Agwu, A. E., & Amu, C. J. 2013. Framing of climate change news in four national daily newspapers in Southern Nigeria. Paper presented at the Impacts World International Conference on Climate Change Effects, May 27-30, Potsdam, Germany.
- Ahmad, J., & Lateh, H. 2016. Media and the environment in Malaysia: An analysis on news coverage of landslide disaster in Kuala Lumpur. *Malaysian Journal of Communication*. 32(2): 525-544.
- Azmi, N. J., Mohd Omar, N. A., Mohd Zaid, S. A., Wahab, Z., & Yusof, A. 2015. Media portrayal on global climate change: an analysis of Malaysian mainstream newspapers. *Studies in Media and Communication*. 3(1): 73-78.
- Beirne, J., Renzhi, N., & Volz, U. 2021. Bracing for the typhoon: climate change and sovereign risk in Southeast Asia. *Sustainable Development*. 29(3): 537-551.
- Chapman, A., Davies, W., Downey, C., & Dookie, D. 2021. *Asian Development Bank Climate Risk Country Profile: Malaysia*. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.
- Chetty, K., Devadas V., & Fleming, J. S. 2015. The framing of climate change in New Zealand newspapers from June 2009 to June 2010. *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand*. 45(1): 1-20.
- Clark, L. S. 2008. Religion, philosophy, and religious convergence online: ABC's lost as a study of the process of mediatisation. *Northern Lights*. 6: 143-163.
- Cox, R. 2013. *Environmental Communication and the Public Sphere*. London: Sage.
- Dimitrova, V. D., & Strömbäck, J. 2012. Election news in Sweden and United States: a comparative study of sources and media frames. *Journalism*. 13(5): 604-619.
- Foltz, R. C. 2000. Is there an Islamic environmentalism? *Environmental Ethics*. 22(4): 63-72.
- Ishak, M. S. B. H., & Solihin, S. M. 2012. Islam and media. *Asian Social Science*. 8(7): 263.
- Johnston, D. L. 2012. Intra-Muslim debates on ecology: Is Shari'a still relevant? *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology*. 16(3): 218-238.
- Khalid, F. M. 2002. Islam and the Environment in P. Timmerman (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Global Environmental Change (Social And Economic Dimensions of Global Environmental Change)*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- Kothari, A. 2010. The framing of the Darfur Conflict in the New York Times: 2003-2006. *Journalism Studies*. 11(2): 209-224.
- Kovach, B., & Rosenstiel, T. 2007. *The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect*. Philadelphia: Three Rivers Press.
- Lawrence, R. G. 2000. *The Politics of Force: Media and the Construction of Police Brutality*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Mohamad Saleh, M. S. 2016. Environmental communication among the media and environmental non-governmental organisations (engos) in Malaysia: a roller coaster ride? Ph.D. Dissertation. Leuphana University of Lüneburg, Germany.
- Mohamad Saleh, M. S., Adi Kasuma, S. A., Zuknik, M. H., & Nik Hasan, N. N. 2021. Islamic values in environmental communication within the Malaysian media: a case study of Utusan Malaysia and Berita Harian. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*. 37(3): 54-72.
- Mohamad Saleh, M. S., & Nik Hasan, N. N. 2019. Analysing Islamic elements in environmental news reporting in Malaysia. *Media Watch*. 10(1): 54-67.
- Mowlana, H. 2007. Theoretical perspectives on Islam and communication. *China Media Research*. 3(4): 23-33.
- Muchtar, N., Hamada, B. I., Hanitzsch, T., Galal, A., Masduki, A., & Ullah, M. S. 2017. Journalism and the Islamic worldview: journalistic roles in Muslim-majority countries. *Journalism Studies*. 18(5):555-575.
- Munnik, M. B. 2018. Reaching out in a climate of negativity: perceptions and persistence among Muslim sources engaging with news media. *Contemporary Islam*, 1-17.



- Nik Hasan, N. N. 2008. The representation of environmental news: a comparative study of the Malaysian and New Zealand press. Ph. D Dissertation. New Zealand: University of Canterbury.
- Smith, G. 2002. Islam and the environment. *Earth Island Journal*. 17(2): 26-26.
- Soley, L. C. 1992. *The News Shapers: The Sources Who Explain the News*. New York: Praeger.
- Tagbo, E. 2010 (Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism). Media coverage of climate change in Africa: A case study of Nigeria and South Africa. (online) <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/our-research/media-coverage-climate-change-africa-case-study-nigeria-and-south-africa>. [19 February 2020].
- Tan, K.S. & Mohamad Saifudin, M. S. 2018. Pemaparan berita perubahan iklim dalam Malaysiakini, The Malay Mail Online dan Free Malaysia Today. *Jurnal Komunikasi Borneo*. 6: 28-40.
- Tiffen, R., Jones, P. K., Rowe, D., Aalberg, T., Coen, S., Curran, J., Hayashi, K, Iyengar, S., Mazzonleni, G., Papathanassopoulos, S., Rojas, H., & Soroka, S. 2014. Sources in the news: a comparative study. *Journalism Studies* .15(4): 374-391.
- Zulkefly, U. N. A., & Bakar, K. A. 2017. Analisis wacana kritis terhadap isu perubahan iklim di Malaysia. *Jurnal Linguistik*. 21(2): 36-47.