

News Sources: Distinct Usage of Sources by the Wall Street Journal and the Telegraph in Reporting Special Issues on Islam and Muslims in Malaysia and Indonesia

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Abstract: News sources are the main important element in news reporting as its function is to ensure that the particular news content is reliable and can be trusted. Thus, this empirical study generally intends to identify the pattern of the news sources used to report on special issues on Islam and Muslims predominantly in Malaysia and Indonesia. This study was conducted by selecting the Wall Street Journal and the Telegraph newspapers as samples for the study. The news samples have been selected from 2012 until 2014. The objectives of this study are to see the pattern of news sources used by these two newspapers and also to compare the sources used within the chosen time frame of the study. The data was collected based on the preliminary study and a total of 445 news paragraphs have been analysed through NVivo 8. However, only 186 of news paragraph mentioned its news sources. The findings presented that 149 of news paragraph used official sources which have been classified into media, institutional, leader and minister. While, only 37 news paragraphs used unofficial sources which consists of civilian, activist, witnesses and victims. From this preliminary data, it can be said that both of the newspapers quoted the news from official sources compared to unofficial sources to report issues relates to Islam and Muslims in Malaysia and Indonesia.

Key words: News sources, Islam, Muslim, official sources, unofficial sources, civil

INTRODUCTION

There were a lot of questions being posed in this study. Some of the questions raised were which types of sources are frequently being used by the two international newspapers? What kind of sources used by these two newspapers in reporting issues on Islam and Muslims in Malaysia and Indonesia? What are the dominant sources have been used? What role do the sources play in reporting the issue of Islam and Muslims in the newspapers? In attempting to answer all these questions, the authors present a discussion towards the concept of news sources especially in reporting special issues such as issue on Islam and Muslims in the newspapers. The authors have been put forward by various scholars or academicians who have been talked about the news sources in the media in this study.

In the context of arguments about news sources and the need of credibility aspect among news sources, the authors would like to draw Wahab and Rahim (2013) who

stated that in the era of technology and globalization, the media credibility is more important to determine the selection of certain message, news content and medium that represents any media channel. The researcher believed that media gain credibility through audience who put their trust on the news content through how one news organization report and display the particular news through the use of news sources. Therefore, in this study, the authors want to focus on the types of news sources, the dominant of news sources used and the role played by the news sources in the newspapers. To begin with the authors would like to specify the detail of this empirical study. This study identified specifically the types of news sources that are mentioned in news relating to Islam and stories on Muslims predominantly in Malaysia and Indonesia as reported by The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) and The Telegraph (TT) within the years 2012 until 2014. Other than that, this study would like to identify dominant news sources that are frequently used by these two international newspapers.

What is news sources?: In discussing the credibility of sources used, Wilson (2010) seeks to explain the importance of trustworthy sources or credible sources as this topic has been controversial. When journalists face deadline pressures in publishing one story it leads the journalists to use anonymous sources as they cannot wait for original sources to review the content of the news. Wilson address that this kind of phenomenon has created some conflict when the anonymous sources used in breaking the news because anonymous sources can affect news credibility. For Strentz the credibility of the news is not being measured by how the news is gathered or in terms of the quantity of the news but the most important is the accurate of the sources used. In Malaysian context, studied by Faridah and Rajib stated that Malaysian press has given much effort to ensure the credibility of the news sources, however, critiques have been made by saying that government medias are bias and too sensational in reporting news. Thus, they argued that the concept of objectivity in the news is important to enhance the journalistic writing.

By definition, news sources can be a person, a publication, recording or documents that contain an information in which include sources such as officer record, government officials, organizations, witnesses and people who are involved in that particular event. The official sources are the one who must have an expertise in that particular area and having credibility among the readers (Stovall, 2005). In addition, Hansen (1991) added that official sources are more being favoured among journalists as official sources provide regular and credible information. Thus, the meaning of credibility news is determined by the credibility of sources especially among official sources which can provide much information and willing to talk about particular issue.

After having discussion on who are the official sources, the authors proceed with the discussion by Mus Chairil. He discovered the term of "the selected sources and sources option" (sumber terpilih dan sumber pilihan). According to him, the selected source is very much related to "power" that possessed by the sources in which they might have wide knowledge in social system, economy, politics and culture. While, the sources option or "sumberpilihan" includes either people or documents which are not from selected sources. He also proposed that reporters depend on the sources to obtain information and facts. The sources used by the reporters will definitely influence the content of the news. But in other cases, sources used the reporters for their own benefit to establish their power. As for now, the sources use strategy to uphold their image as they can hire personal public relations to project themselves among

public and reporters act as the mediator in making them as the news sources that are most prominent, credible and influenced.

From the authors' point of view, the best way to describe official sources in the news is referring to the power and knowledge that they possessed on that particular event. In addition, the authors remain that news sources either official or unofficial, selected or option are inseparable from the question of credibility. Extending the idea of Mackay and Lowrey (2011), audiences are having more.

Tendencies to believe credible sources that actually who constructed a message of particular news and which sources are reliable in reporting the issue of Islam and stories on Muslims is becoming the primary questions of this study.

News sources used in Islam and stories on Muslims: In the case of this study on the use of news sources when reporting on Islam and stories on Muslims, there is a study done by Kabir and Bourk (2012). This more recent study revealed that New Zealand's newspapers do covers on Islam and Muslims and most of the news are coming from overseas news agencies such as foreign newspapers and AP. However, they found out that editorial column also provide news on Islam and wrote them in a positive way with a few exceptions. They also outline the frequent of news coverage on Islam and confirm that less coverage of Islam or Muslims have been reported by New Zealand's newspapers but the international coverage on Islam seems relatively significant to these newspapers. Yet, they found the consistent coverage on Islam and Muslims in the New Zealand's newspapers indicate that Islam has become an important issue to New Zealand newspapers.

The author then discover empirical evidence provides by Archetti (2010). Her research was designed to study the use of news sources by American elite newspapers relating to the issue of Islam and Muslim stories. She discovered that sources from Afghanistan have been used at 11%, Pakistan at 7% and the EU at only 4% and majority sources were from national sources at 78%. Take into example of the event of 9/11, she compared the use of sources between French newspapers and US newspapers and found out that French newspapers use 164 different of news sources and mostly from Afghanistan, Pakistan, the EU, the Middle East, Arab countries and international organizations. In the meantime, the US newspapers only use 126 sources to report on the issue of 9/11 attack.

The proliferation of literature on types of sources when reporting on Islam and Muslims have been

discussed by Hoewe *et al.* (2010) that many of the journalists do not have much information when reporting on religion issues. They further argued that reporting on religion needs to be part of journalism education or to be include in journalism curriculum as there was a study done by Gormly (1999) revealed that most of reporters do a poor job when reporting on religion topic. Thus, the improvements in reporting on religion especially Islam are needed as due to the growth of Islam globally and also to fill the gap in understanding Islam among public. In this case, they believed that journalists need to practice and apply the standards of good journalism rather than to change their standards just to accommodate Islam. They further developed the best practises for reporting on Islam and among of the practices are encouraging reporters to use multiple and diverse sources. The use of multiple sources regardless of races, religions and cultures are required to ensure that the reporting will not provide readers a distorted version of that particular event. Most importantly, they suggested interviewing Muslims especially when the stories related to Islam issues.

This is not extreme to say that very little research has been conducted among news on Islam and stories on Muslims by international newspapers from the aspect of sources used especially issues on Islam in Malaysia and Indonesia. This is consistent with what have been said by Perreault (2014) by saying "Much research has examined the orientalism that occurs in the coverage of Islam in the West but little has occurred on how Islam is covered in a Muslim-majority context". Thus, to fill the gap and to contribute to the body of knowledge this is the reason why this study has been conducted and select Islam stories in Malaysia and Indonesia as the subject in this study.

Research questions: This particular study would like to answer the following questions:

- What are the types of sources of information that frequently being used by WSJ and TT in reporting news on Islam and stories on Muslims in Malaysia and Indonesia within 2012 until 2014?
- What are the dominant sources used by WSJ and TT in reporting the issue of Islam and stories on Muslims in Malaysia and Indonesia within 2012 until 2014?

Sources category: Sources that are selected in this study have been defined as the most frequently used in the media. To develop the category of sources, the authors have adopted categories used by several researchers such as Gans (1980).

The adaptation or alteration of the sources category is relevant to fulfil the criteria of news reporting on Islam and stories on Muslims in the newspapers that frequently being used before. The sources that are selected in this study are as follows:

- Media: sources that includes in this category are reports or documents or press statement from any media organization such as news release, documents/reports from news agencies
- Leader: sources that includes in this category are considered as someone who plays a role as a leader and hold the important position in the country such as politician leader, religious leader, ministers
- Government institution: sources that includes in this category are considered those who are working with the government. Including spokesman, religious officers, Malaysian police, Indonesian police, General officers, Military Chief and Counter Terrorism chief.
- Education institution: sources that includes in this category are considered those who are in the academic field; teaching and think thank category Those who are having wide professional knowledge and also qualifications in certain field. It includes researchers, experts, analyst and academicians
- Financial institution: sources that includes in this category are involving the financial side. It involves bank, any other saving institution and insurance institution
- Judicial institution: sources that includes in this category are those who are working in the field of judiciary professionally such as lawyer, magistrate and judge
- Witnesses: sources that includes in this category are those who are clearly stated in the news study as witness of any event
- Victims: sources that includes in this category are those who are clearly stated in the news study as victims of any event
- Civilians: sources that includes in this category such as friends and lay people
- Activists: sources that includes in this category are those who are clearly stated in the news articles as activists of any association
- Others: sources that are non from all the above

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To answer the above questions, an analysis towards two international mainstream newspapers in the US and the UK has been conducted. The two newspapers are The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) and The Telegraph (TT).

The reasons behind of these selections are because these two newspapers represent the highest circulations among mainstream newspapers in both countries. Other than that, these newspapers also provide quite a wide coverage for Asian which helps the authors to gather as much as articles related to the study. Most importantly, these two newspapers represent different news organisations in which WSJ represent US newspaper while TT represents UK newspaper. Therefore, the researcher believe could compare the findings between two newspapers. By using a phenomenological approach, the issue of Islam and Muslims within Malaysia and Indonesia context was selected. This is to provide an in-depth study on that particular issue. However, for the purpose of this study, the researcher specify to the issue of news sources found on Islam news and stories on Muslims issues. To select the news, all the news samples have been gathered by purchasing the full version of articles at their particular websites. Thus, by using the search engine, news articles that contained keywords such as 'Islam', 'Muslims Islam in Malaysia', 'Muslim in Malaysia', 'Islam in Indonesia' and 'Muslim in Indonesia' within 2012 until 2014 have been collected. However, for the purpose of preliminary study, the researchers selected 30 news articles derived from both newspapers which contain 445 news paragraphs as a total. However, only 183 news paragraphs will be analysed as they mentioned their sources of news either in direct quotation or indirect quotation. All the news sources that are mentioned in the news paragraphs are being counted regardless of how many times the same sources are mentioned.

To analysis the data, the authors employing a Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) which involves steps such as preparing and organizing the data, conducting a preliminary read-through of the database, coding, condensing codes to organize into themes, representing the data either in figures, tables and forming an interpretation of them (Creswell, 2014). This kind of method is suitable to be used as to help the authors to figure out the types of sources used. Furthermore, the advantage of using NVivo 8 in this study is really helping the authors to examine in terms of numbers (by matrix schedule) and also to organise the data in the text and visual model (Creswell, 2012; Sotiriadou *et al.*, 2014). Analysis have been focused to the news relate to Islam and stories on Muslims predominantly in Malaysia and Indonesia from 2012 until 2014. The period of study is selected is based on the assumption that 3 years is a long time and sufficient to look at the pattern of consumption of the news sources were used in reporting on Islam and stories on Muslims. The analysis focused on two important things which are the types of sources and the dominant of sources used. The comparisons of the sources used between these two international newspapers will also being studied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this part, the researchers elaborated the findings of this study based on the research questions as above.

Table 1 showed the list of sources used by the two selected newspapers in this study. The researchers have separated into official sources which contain media, leader, government institution, education institution, financial institution and judicial institution. On the other hand, the unofficial sources include witnesses, victims, civilians, activists and others. Total numbers of the sources used in this study are 186. It means that the authors have coded 186 times for sources category in NVivo 8. Based on the table above, it is not surprisingly that six categories of official sources, 'government institutions' were most commonly used as sources in news stories relating to Islam and stories on Muslims at 41% in which somewhat half of all sources used in the category of official sources. This can be said that the official sources are mostly being used as the news sources in reporting the issue of Islam by these two international mainstream newspapers. The authors believed that based on the past researches stated above, these newspapers would prefer to choose the official sources as their main news sources as they certain that any information that coming from the official sources are highly reliable, credible and true because of the "power" that they have in disseminating facts on particular event. Apart from that, the use more of official sources could further strengthens their credibility of news organization.

From Table 1, the authors have categorized the official sources into 6 categories which are media, leader, judicial institution, government institution, education institution and financial institution. For each category of sources, the authors have listed into sub-categories as this way can give clear information to the readers to immediately discover where the information are come from. For the media use as official sources, only WSJ used media as their sources and not TT. WSJ used media as their sources for the issue of changing of weekends in

Table 1: Sources use by category

Types of sources	Frequent (%)
Official sources	
Media	8 (4)
Leader	35 (19)
Government institution	76 (41)
Education institution	25 (13)
Financial institution	1 (1)
Judicial institution	4 (2)
Unofficial sources	
Witnesses	1 (1)
Victims	5 (3)
Civilians	23 (12)
Activists	2 (1)
Others	6 (3)
Total	186

johor state, a statement from bank on printing money for Eid festival and a little media statement on the issue of MH 370.

“When Friday prayer ends, they hurriedly get up and leave the mosque,” Sultan Ibrahim was quoted as saying by state news agency Bernama. Some cannot even wait for the Muslim spiritual leader to recite the prayers he added.

For leader category, WSJ has frequently used at 26 times and TT only 9 times. Indonesian Ministers at that time are President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President Joko Widodo and Djoko Suyanto had been used frequently as sources in 2014 as WSJ at that time reporting on the issue mostly on terrorism and prohibits any Indonesian Muslims societies to join Islamic State. However, TT has no reporting at all which used Indonesian Ministers in any of their news. For example: “President Joko Widodo said his government was reaching out to Muslim organizations in Indonesia for help in reducing the threat of terrorism by Islamic extremists”.

Government institution is the most highly used as the news sources in this study. The researcher will explain on this in a separate Table 2.

Next is the education institution. The sources from education people are also important particularly when discussing the issue of economy, education, terrorism and election from the academic perspective. The table showed that WSJ more frequently used people for academic line in their news which constitute 15 times compared to TT which only used 9 times. The imbalance of the total numbers used are might because of the less news articles from TT are selected. However, the authors found that in 2014, WSJ frequently used education institution for religious disputes such as on interfaith dialogue, the moderates of Islam and election. The similar issue that discussed by both newspapers in 2014 that used education people are issue on Islam and terrorism. For example:

“Religious disputes will fully be resolved only through serious dialogue that brings together leaders from all the religious communities in Malaysia,” said Ng Kam Weng, the research director of Kairos Research Centre.

From Table 2, it can be seen that the two least of official sources used are judicial institution and bank institution. The researcher found that this thing happens due to the least of coverage on Islam economy either in Malaysia or Indonesia has been discussed in both

Table 2: Types of sources category accordance to the newspaper official sources

Types of sources	Wall street journal			The telegraph		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Media						
News release	1	1	1	x	x	x
News agencies	1	3	x	x	x	x
Local media	1	x	x	x	x	x
Total	3	4	1	x	x	x
Leader						
Religious leader	3	x	1	x	x	x
Malaysian politician	4	1	4	3	x	x
Indonesian politician	x	x	x	x	3	2
Malaysian minister	1	1	x	x	x	1
Indonesian minister	1	x	10	x	x	x
Total	9	2	15	3	3	3
Judicial institution						
Lawyer	x	4	x	x	x	x
Total	x	4	x	x	x	x
Government institution						
Spokesman	3	3	8	x	x	x
Religious officers	x	8	4	2	x	x
Malaysian police	1	x	x	x	x	9
Indonesian police	x	1	3	5	x	x
General officers	x	3	3	x	4	x
Military chief	1	4	x	x	x	1
Counter terrorism chief	5	7	x	x	x	1
Total	10	26	18	7	4	11
Education institution						
Researchers	x	x	3	x	x	x
Experts	x	2	2	x	1	1
Analysts	1	3	2	x	x	x
Academicians	x	x	3	x	x	7
Total	1	4	10	x	1	8
Financial institution						
Bank	x	1	x	x	x	x
Total	x	1	x	x	x	x

newspapers. Other than that, lawyer has been used as the official sources only to the issue of word of Allah and only being discussed by WSJ in 2013.

Table 3 of unofficial sources used in these two newspapers shown that TT has frequently used the unofficial sources at 20 times between 2012 until 2014. The use of civilians sources mostly on 2014 shown that the particular issue that discuss on that year are much related to the society. However, WSJ only used 2 times of civilians sources in the same year. The researcher found that the particular issue that used civilians' sources frequently is on the issue discussion on religion generally in the world which mentioned several opinions from lay people. Other than that, there is also civilian source that have been used in the story of militants in Malaysia and most frequently used of civilian sources are from the issue of MH370 which the journalists cited information from lay people. While, WSJ also used civilian sources on the issue of MH370 where the journalists cited information from a friend of pilot MH370 who paid last respect to Captain Zaharie Ahmad Shah. For example: "Witnesses said the two men's houses were visited by police for 2 h yesterday in the hunt for clues. Foreign intelligence agencies are now expected to assist in sifting through the passenger lists to identify suspects".

The particular Table 4 display the dominant sources that have been used by WSJ and TT in reporting the issue of Islam and stories on Muslims in Malaysia and Indonesia within three respective years (2012-2014). From the total numbers of sources used which are 186 sources, government institution has been used at 76 times from both newspapers. The category of government institution

includes spokesman, religious officers, Malaysian police, Indonesian Police, Officers, Military Chief and Counter Terrorism Chief. Generally, this finding confirms that the government institutions remain the leading sources and indirectly becoming the representative of the image of newspapers. Again, WSJ has been identified as the highest where it constitutes 54 times and TT only 22 times used the government institution as their sources. This might be due to the imbalance factor of selecting news study because the researchers have identified before conducting this study that the population of publishing the news articles are not equal either in terms of frequency of the coverage and also the origin of the news (either Malaysia or Indonesia). If according to the category, spokesman and religious officers are frequently being used as the sources. Interestingly, the researchers found that religious officers used as the sources showed that this study is convincingly related to Islam and stories on Muslims where much information are obtain from religious officers. Most of the stories that used religious officers are on illegal demonstrations, beauty pageant contest, the critics to the government to resolve issues on Islam, election and the interfaith dialogue. For example, issue on obedient wives club to organize the campaigns of Prophet Muhammad as a sex role:

"On Wednesday, Islamic affairs officials broke up a gathering linked to the campaign at a house in Northern Perak state, said one of the officials, AzaruddinSaarani". Authorized seized posters at the home and plan to question club members to find out whether they broke any laws, Azaruddin said he declined to elaborate on what charges they could face".

It is important to know that religious officers in this study include Muslim and non-Muslims religious officers. For an example, the issue of interfaith dialogue, WSJ in 2014 has cited Church religious leader in their news on interfaith dialogue between different religions in Malaysia such as Muslims, Buddhist, Christian and Hindus.

"I hope that his new appointment as archbishop will enhance more interfaith dialogue and put more effort to create a more peaceful and meaningful relationship between different faiths in this country" he said.

Table 3: Unofficial sources

Sources	Wall street journal			The daily telegraph		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Witnesses	x	x	x	x	x	1
Victims	5	x	x	x	x	x
Civilians	x	5	2	x	x	16
Activists	x	1	1	x	x	x
Others	x	3	x	x	x	3
Total	5	9	3	x	x	20

Table 4: Types of dominant sources used

Types of sources	Wall street journal			The telegraph			Total
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	
Government institution							
Spokesman	3	3	8	x	x	x	14
Religious officers	x	8	4	2	x	x	14
Malaysian police	1	x	x	x	x	9	10
Indonesian police	x	1	3	5	x	x	9
Officers	x	3	3	x	4	x	10
Military chief	1	4	x	x	x	1	6
Counter terrorism chief	5	7	x	x	x	1	13
Total	10	26	18	7	4	11	76

CONCLUSION

Findings of this study have presented a different usage of news sources between The Wall Street Journal and The Telegraph newspapers within the years 2012 until 2014. The findings imply a conclusion that official sources are mostly being used as the news sources explicitly. In marked contrast to the view that any other official sources such as media, leader, educational institution, financial institution and judicial institution are less frequently used in the news. Other than that, the authors discover that between WSJ and TT, the WSJ is more dominant in quoting news sources in their news. Of course in doing this study, the authors realized that imbalance of news coverage between these two international newspapers are becoming the main factor that contribute to these findings. In the future, the authors consider studying the specific case study on Islam and stories on Muslims in a specific date and year for the purpose to have somewhat balance total of news reporting. Therefore, it is necessary to the researcher to figure out the main issue and specific date just to have adequately total number of news articles, to study the news sources and synthesize with any other aspects of news sources such as how the sources are quoted and slant/direction of the information. This is in line with Durham (1998) who said that journalists always depend on news sources to frame a story to put into context and give meaning towards particular news.

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