



**A STUDY OF NEWS MEDIA FRAME ON HALAL CRISIS IN MALAYSIA**

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A RESEARCH PROJECT  
SUBMITTED IN  
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE AWARD OF  
BACHELOR OF COMMUNICATION (HONS) PUBLIC RELATIONS  
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

OCTOBER 2022

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## DECLARATION

I declare that the material contained in this paper is the end result of my own work and that due acknowledgement has been given in the bibliography and references to ALL sources be they printed, electronic or personal.

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Approval Form

This research paper attached hereto, entitled “A Study of News Media Frame on Halal Crisis In Malaysia” prepared and submitted by Jayee Ho, Lee Xin Yee, Loke Xin Yi, Tang Yee Ting, Teh Poh Wen in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Communication (Hons) Public Relations is hereby accepted.

*PongKS*

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## **ABSTRACT**

Malaysia is an Islamic nation, and its citizens' religious practices are governed by Islamic principles. "Halal" products and services are compulsory for Muslim consumers in Malaysia. In the past, it showed that the "Halal" controversy was easily turning into a crisis, and the news coverage of this controversy shaped the public's perception of a brand and an organisation. Thus, this study aims to discover how the "Halal" crisis is being framed in newspapers. The Framing Theory was applied in this study. The current study employed quantitative content analysis to examine the news coverage of Malaysia's "Halal" crisis, which was reported in Malay, English, and Chinese newspapers. The study was based on a sample of newspaper articles from "Utusan Malaysia", "Berita Harian", "Sinar Harian", "The Star" and "Sin Chew Daily". Multi-cluster sampling was used in this research. The findings showed that newspaper frame proportions vary widely. All five newspapers used attribution of responsibility frame in all 86 news coverages. Human interest was the newspaper's second frame, used in 84% (n=72) of news coverage. The third frame most utilised by all newspapers was economic implications (n=44, 51%), and the fourth was morality (n=23, 27%). One news article (1.2%) used the conflict frame.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations

**PR**

**KPDNHEP**

**JAKIM**

**MAQIS**

Definition

**Public Relations**

**Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs**

**Department of Islamic Development Malaysia**

**Malaysian Quarantine and Inspection Services**

**STUDENT DECLARATION FORM**  
Department of Public Relations  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country (Akhmetova & Jaafar, 2020). In 2018, the population of Malaysia was 32.4 million, with 69.1% (20.07 million) of the population consisting of the Bumiputera, or Malays, and indigenous people (Akhmetova & Jaafar, 2020). Most of the residents are Muslims, and they practice Islam. By far, Islam is the largest religion in Malaysia which covered 63.7% compared to other religions (Countrymeters, 2022). Furthermore, the “State of Global Islamic Economy Report 2020/2021” stated that Malaysia was named the best country in four out of six sectors, namely Muslim-friendly travel, Islamic finance, “*Halal*” food, and media and entertainment (Aliff, 2022).

Although Malaysia consists of multi-ethics and multi-religions, Malaysia is an Islamic country, and the religion of Muslims in Malaysia is governed by the tenets of Islam (Faruqi, 2007). According to Islamic principles, “*Halal*” is an Arabic word that means permissible or lawful, while the word “*Haram*” is defined as forbidden (Halal Monitoring Committee, 2022; Emran & Jamil, 2012). Besides, the term “*Halal*” is also defined in General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods, including its use in trademarks, brand names, and trade names (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation, 2004). Today, the “*Halal*” industry is not only limited to the food and beverage industry, but also other sectors such as cosmetics and toiletries, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, tourism, among others (Azam & Abdullah, 2020).

Muslims default to Halal-certified products over non-Halal-certified products. Most Muslims in Malaysia have no tolerance, real or perceived, and demand a near-zero risk “*Halal*” environment (Tieman, 2021). In essence, they have an active incentive to avoid products or services that are deemed to violate Islamic teachings (Tieman, 2021). Therefore, business

owners today have embraced the “*Halal*” certification as a marketing tool to capture Muslim consumers.

Furthermore, a “*Halal*” issue can quickly turn into a “*Halal*” crisis if the product is adulterated with non-Halal ingredients or mislabelled. For instance, a news article reported by New Straits Times (2020) stated that a warehouse in Senai is used to smuggle frozen meat from abroad, which was then repackaged with a fake “*Halal*” logo and sold nationwide. The relevant government department reminded all merchants not to freely misuse the “*Halal*” logo or counterfeit logos as a marketing tool to assign commercial value to their products (Bernama, 2022b). Such actions will cause harm to all consumers, not only Muslim consumers nationwide but also throughout Malaysia. Although it is complicated to apply for the “*Halal*” certification logo, it is a way to protect the rights of Muslims instead of preventing others from consuming their products. Thus, after realising the benefits of having the “*Halal*” logo on their products, some manufacturers misuse it without any sense of ethics. For instance, they used the “*Halal*” logo directly without obtaining JAKIM’s approval through the proper procedure.

Many businesses frequently fail to anticipate and solve “*Halal*” problems or difficulties and this led to the company's reputation and revenues being impacted by negative media coverage of the “*Halal*” issue (Tieman, 2021). There are multiple news sources that are present in our daily lives, including the Internet, television, newspapers, books, magazines, and others. The news not only assists in the dissemination of knowledge but also has a significant impact and is very influential on each other. In addition, news media is a significant component of the news industry and essential in shaping public perception (Ruolan, 2019). For instance, according to South China Morning Post (2020), the news published that an organisation discovered a cartel that was accused of buying off customs agents to import other food products into Malaysia under the “*Halal*” label. The cartel not only got frozen beef from uncertified nations but also imported horse and kangaroo meat. Furthermore, the meats were combined

with beef in widespread warehouses operated by the cartel before being sold to unknowing vendors (Basyir, 2020). When the news media reported negatively on this incident, the audience, especially Muslims, would see this case as a very sensitive and serious issue.

News media becomes more prominent in a world of shareable content. The media establishes the agenda and decides what is significant (Charron & Annoni, 2020). The way the media presents news stories often affects the public's understanding of the news and whether that perspective is positive, neutral or negative (Pesonen et al., 2021). Gregory Bateson (1972) described psychological frames as a “spatial and temporary bounding of a set of interactive messages” that serve as a sort of metacommunication (Arowolo, 2017). Besides, the act of presenting news items and narrative information inside a recognisable setting is referred to as framing (Arowolo, 2017). Iyengar (1987) identified framing effects as “changes in judgement engendered by subtle alterations in the definition of or choice of problems” (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Carter (2013) also claimed that the media’s framing of news can be influential in shaping public opinion and how it can shape the interpretation and presentation of information.

The current study aims to discover how the “*Halal*” crisis is being framed in newspapers. Based on prior research into news framing, this study used content analysis to discover the five distinct types of Gregory Bateson Framing Theory in 1972 (Attribution of Responsibility, Conflict, Economic Consequences, Human Interest, and Morality) used by the crisis type (Arowolo, 2017). At the end of this study, the results allowed crisis managers to recognise how the “*Halal*” crisis is being framed in news coverage on people’s perspectives while also having implications for future research into response methods (An & Gower, 2009). By using this Framing Theory, the findings showed how the newspapers frame the “*Halal*” crisis. Besides, this research showed which news sources and types of coverage have been used in the “*Halal*” crisis.

## 1.1 Problem Statement

The “*Halal*” industry is one of the sturdiest in Malaysia and provides around 8.1% of the total GDP of Malaysia (Malaysian Investment Development Authority, 2021). In Malaysia, the majority of Muslims have no tolerance towards “*Halal*” issues, whether actual or perceived, they seek a “*Halal*” environment that is almost risk-free (Tieman, 2021). Consumers have a strong awareness of “*Halal*” food labelling. The “*Halal*” label itself has become a major cue in determining the final decision of the consumer (Ismail et al., 2016). However, the only official “*Halal*” certifier in the nation, the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM), is yet to have fully operational forensic laboratories with qualified personnel to evaluate the “*Halal*” status of items. As a result of the establishment of the “*Halal*” Science Centre at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok in 1994, Thailand is currently a global leader in “*Halal*” evaluation and research (Hunter, 2019).

The “*Halal*” certification logo application was introduced by JAKIM to increase awareness among Muslims of the importance of consuming products and engaging in related services that follow Islamic norms or principles (Ambali & Bakar, 2014). In fact, the issue of irresponsible business owners using fake “*Halal*” logos is still a common issue (Ismail et al., 2016). Malicious exploitation of the “*Halal*” logo or fake logos as a marketing technique to attribute economic value will hurt all consumers, including Malaysian consumers and Muslims across the country (Bernama, 2020a). As a consequence, this will raise the “*Halal*” issue, which has the potential to quickly develop into a “*Halal*” crisis.

On the other hand, media's framing of an issue can have a significant impact on public perception and understanding of the crisis (Fields, 2006). Media frames that depict “*Halal*” issues might influence potential consumers' perceptions of “*Halal*” products or industries. One aspect of framing is that the media choose the topics journalists will present and decide how



the topics or news will be presented. This determines how the audience perceives the issue and whether they will be influenced by the way the media portrays it. As such, different media may have varying interpretations and opinions on an issue (Sodikin & Rini, 2020). According to Muthia (2023), the messages provided by the media may have an immediate or delayed impact on the ideas, feelings, and behaviours of individuals or groups (Ismail et al., 2016; Muthia, 2023). Public perceptions of crisis issues are established by crisis news reports, which also influence the level of risk associated with “*Halal*” labelling and certification (Aalai, 2017). However, there is a lack of research on how the news media construct the “*Halal*” crisis in Malaysia, particularly the types of sources and coverage included in news reports. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the news media's frame on the “*Halal*” crisis in Malaysia.

In addition, Public Relations (PR) professionals are often responsible for building reputation and establishing trust with key stakeholders (Schreiber, 2011). In other words, PR professionals often work closely with the media to shape the narrative and messaging around issues and crises that affect their organisations or clients (Kent & Taylor, 2002 as cited in Mashiah, 2021). In Malaysia, the issue of “*Halal*” products is highly sensitive and can easily damage the reputation of a company and organisation. According to the Holy Quran and Sunnah, “*Halal*” products are important for Muslims because daily consumption of “*Halal*” products is mandatory (Abdullah & Ireland, 2012). It is to guarantee that all Muslims are consuming clean, hygienic, ecologically friendly, and animal welfare-respecting foods and beverages that are manufactured in accordance with Shariah law (Rahman & Dardak, 2021). Tieman (2019) asserted that a string of high-profile “*Halal*” crises involving well-known companies in recent years had eroded the public's faith in brand owners' capacity to ensure the integrity of Halal-certified goods. The “*Halal*” crisis in Malaysia has the potential to erode trust in the “*Halal*” certification system and Malaysia's products and services, especially among Muslim consumers. In order to increase and sustain a sizeable market share in Muslim

markets, solid corporate “*Halal*” risk and image management are required in addition to getting a “*Halal*” certificate (Tieman, 2017). Thus, the research on understanding how the news media framed the “*Halal*” crisis in Malaysia can provide insights into the perspectives and priorities of PR professionals and news media, which also help PR professionals develop more effective communication strategies and press releases.

Meanwhile, Malaysia's diversity of races, religions, and cultures served as a justification for conducting this study and is a crucial factor in the formation of the “*Halal*” Malaysia certification. Integrity, morals, and trust are the cornerstones of the idea of the “*Halal*” offer (Vanany et al., 2019). Essentially, the standards for “*Halal*” products are not static but highly dynamic, and it is argued that “*Halal*” food is evolving into a “*Halal*” supply chain and value chain (Tieman, 2011). Nowadays, the “*Halal*” supply chain has become a complex global “*Halal*” network. The rapid expansion of the “*Halal*” industry into areas such as cosmetics and toiletries, tourism, and pharmaceuticals has led to a significant expansion of the “*Halal-related*” issue. From the perspective of “*Halal*” reputation, the level of risk may increase. When a product, service or brand faces “*Halal*” issues, the problem can easily spread to other companies or other “*Halal*” products in the market, creating a series of “*Halal*” crises (Tiema, 2019).

## **1.2 Research Questions**

RQ1: What are the types of coverage used by the newspaper when covering the “*Halal*” crisis?

RQ2: What are the news sources used by the newspaper when covering the “*Halal*” crisis?

RQ3: How is the “*Halal*” crisis being framed in the newspaper?

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

RO1: To investigate the types of coverage that have been used in the “*Halal*” crisis.

RO2: To find out which news sources have been used in the “*Halal*” crisis.

RO3: To discover how the “*Halal*” crisis is being framed in the newspapers.

#### **1.4 Research Significant**

Newspapers are the main medium for people to learn about current events and receive the most up-to-date information. According to the team of CEIC (2018), the daily average of newspapers in February 2018 was reported to be 1,773,326.000 units. Media coverage can have both positive and negative effects on the audience's understanding and perception of the text (La et al., 2020). Based on the previous study, news coverage related to “*Halal*” crisis issues can produce unexpected news shocks, which are able to generate a negative impact and lead to economic recession in the industries, such as food and beverage, cosmetics, tourism, and others (Kim & Wong, 2006, as cited in Liu & Pennington-Gray, 2015). The actual impact of the crisis may have been minimal, but the news media may narrate it as a major issue through articles, as was the case with the “*Halal*” food crisis in 2014 when two products from chocolate maker Cadbury were found to contain pig DNA (Guardian News & Media, 2014). As a result, all industries involved in “*Halal*” cuisine should pay attention to the press's Public Relations function, particularly in the field of “*Halal*” crisis communication. As there are limited studies on the “*Halal*” crisis frame, this study contributes towards developing literature in the Public Relations field related to Framing Theory and the “*Halal*” crisis, it contributes towards advancing knowledge in this field. By understanding the potential impact of media framing, PR practitioners can tailor their communication efforts to mitigate negative perceptions and promote a positive image of their organisation or industry. This approach can foster trust and credibility with stakeholders, ultimately contributing to the success of crisis communication efforts.

Research shows that studies on the Framing Theory of the “*Halal*” crisis in Public Relations literature are very limited (Kuan et al., 2021). In any Public Relations (PR) and media communications strategy, press releases are an important tool for PR practitioners to communicate their message to the public. Press releases are used to disseminate any news, information, or announcements that put an organisation in a favourable light with its target audiences (Pradhan, 2021). News conveys to the audience and perceives information in relation to how selected facts are presented to the public. The ideas are expressed through words, propositions, and sentences, with the help of photographs and pictures for emphasis, and so on. The use of words, propositions, or photographs is suggestive of the selection of certain aspects of reality. As a result, certain emphasised aspects become prominent and receive more allocation and greater attention than others. All aspects are designed to make certain dimensions of news construction meaningful to the public and to influence the audience's understanding of information (Sodikin & Rini, 2020). In summary, this study will provide Public Relations practitioners with directions on how to frame the perspective and concept of “*Halal*” in press releases. Plus, this research expands the information in the realm of Public Relations by generating literature in the area that deals with the “*Halal*” crisis.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Halal and Halalan Toyyiban

In multi-racial Malaysia where Muslims are the majority, the “*Halal*” issue is a susceptible matter with the potential to cause racial tension (Hassan, 2021). Not only in Malaysia but Muslims worldwide are also concerned about the “*Halal*” issue as it has been occurring globally. A study by Wan-Hassan (2007) revealed that the need to develop a worldwide “*Halal*” standard is the most pressing issue within the “*Halal*” sector today. While Muslims generally accept the definition of “*Halal*” food, it shows a massive gap in its application in the industry. Confusion, misunderstanding, and even misuse in the “*Halal*” audit and certification process have occurred due to different internal “*Halal*” standards in different countries (Wan-Hassan, 2007).

As reported by Laporan Penyata Rasmi (2020), various “*Halal*” industries and agencies brought illegal products from four countries, namely China, Ukraine, Brazil, and Argentina to Malaysia through forged documents, including customs forms, import permits, “*Halal*” certificates, and payment receipts in order to pass inspection by unauthorised authorities (Riza et al., 2022). In order to keep the illegal products out of sight of the authorities, the supplier companies kept the illegal products together with imported products from legal sources and stored them in a special storage area before repackaging them (Laporan Penyata Rasmi, 2020). This behaviour has raised speculation, making the “*Halal*” status of products uncertain and requiring more analysis (Riza et al., 2022). After this viral news and messages were released to the general public, the product consumer base became angry and concerned.

Consumer reaction becomes a major priority when it relates to the “*Halal*” status of products. Muslims have a high level of concern about the issue of “*Halal*”. Thus, when the “*Halal*” status of a product or service is explained, many concerned parties, especially Muslim

consumers, gain confidence and assurance (Laporan Penyata Rasmi, 2020, as cited in Riza et al., 2022). However, the “*Halal*” literacy rate is still low in industries including suppliers, entrepreneurs, and product manufacturers (Bakar & Idris, 2022). The reason for the rise in “*Halal*” fraud cases is that fake “*Halal*” logos aid in the development of their business (Riza et al., 2022). Since the “*Halal*” logo requires “*Halal*” products, fake “*Halal*” logos are produced for illegally imported products, particularly for the food and beverage and cosmetic industries (Halim, 2018).

On the other hand, the wave of globalisation, including the spread of technology, media, and travel, as well as the social interaction of professional women, has brought the rise of the cosmetics and toiletries industry in the “*Halal*” world (Kaur et al., 2018). Rahman et al. (2015) stated that although the “*Halal*” cosmetics and toiletries industry has a significant market share, “*Halal*” products are less for Muslims to buy and consume. This has resulted in most Muslim consumers being restricted or forced to consume non-Halal cosmetics and toiletries produced by globally known brands or non-Muslim manufacturers (Rahman et al., 2015). The cosmetics and toiletries products' ingredients that contain gelatin, lecithin, glycerol, fatty acids, and collagen may make the products non-Halal (Sugibayashi et al., 2019). Furthermore, the lack of religious knowledge among manufacturers of non-Halal cosmetics and toiletries suggests that despite avoiding contamination of products with non-Halal ingredients, these manufacturers cannot guarantee their products' 100% “*Halal*” nature. In short, it is increasing the scepticism of Muslim consumers toward these global cosmetic brands (Mukhtar & Butt, 2012).

There are many other industries that have “*Halal*” issues, such as the pharmaceutical industry. For instance, gelatin is the main ingredient that gives the thin capsule shell its confer filming properties. Cattle, pigs, and goats are the three sources of gelatin. Gelatin from cattle, pigs, and goats must be slaughtered in an Islamic manner to comply with “*Halal*” regulations (Mohamed & Mohd Shafri, 2021). Moreover, Mohamed and Mohd Shafri (2021) stated that

gelatin is a standard drug stabiliser in parenteral formulations. Sources of gelatin can be extracted from cattle or pigs. Such parenteral preparations include vaccines, antibiotics, anti-inflammatory drugs, and anticoagulants. Therefore, it is not easy to the development of the pharmaceutical industry. Manufacturers in the pharmaceutical industry must follow the three basic “*Halal*” principles of the Holy Quran regarding the use and production of pharmaceuticals. The principles include avoidance of foul matters, guarding against harm, and maintaining health (Mohamed & Mohd Shafri, 2021).

In addition, the concept of “*Halalan Toyyiban*” was developed by the practice of the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and the texts in the al-Quran, the term was designed specifically for Muslims (Othman et al., 2018). According to Abdullah (2018), the Quran emphasises that: “Eat what is legal and good on earth”. Based on this verse, mankind should use, act, consume and eat in line with what is not only lawful but also clean, good and wholesome. People in the “*Halal*” market frequently use the terms “*Halal*” and “*Halalan Toyyiban*” interchangeably because there is a misconception that any “*Halal*” food is also “*Halalan Toyyiban*”. However, these two terms actually have distinct meanings. “*Halal*” refers to adherence to the basic requirements of Syariah, “*Halal Toyyiban*” goes beyond those basic requirements, it contains additional characteristics that make things wholesome, good and pure (Abdullah, 2018). For instance, the “*Halal*” certification tells people and consumers that the products do not contain items prohibited by Syariah and also meet specific legal requirements and provisions under Malaysian law. Therefore, fast food that meets the requirements of “*Halal*” certification can also be certified as “*Halal*”. On the contrary, despite the “*Halal*” certification, eating fast food is unhealthy and leads to many health problems. Thus, Halal-certified junk food is “*Halal*”, but not Toyyib (Abdullah, 2018).

In Malaysia, in order to realise the concept of “*Halalan Toyyiban*” as an important policy, various methods have been implemented in the food industry involved in food

processing, distribution, production, manufacturing and marketing, which must be carried out in accordance with the requirements of Shariah law (Mustaffa, 2019). However, the “*Halalan Toyyiban*” concept has received limited attention in Malaysia, both in terms of the practical application in the “*Halal*” market and the general understanding of society. From the perspective of the regulatory system, compared with the regulations related to the concept of “*Halal*”, the relevant regulations of the “*Halal Toyyiban*” concept are limited (Abdullah, 2018). According to the author, the other 13 “*Halal*” criteria published by the Department of Standards, Malaysia (DOSM) and the Manual Procedure 2014 for Malaysian Halal Certification published by JAKIM are only concerned with the “*Halal*” topic. Therefore, it is important to enhance the practice of the “*Halal Toyyiban*” concept by working towards greater awareness and understanding of the concept in society.

### **2.1.1 Halal Certification**

In the Muslim world, as religious awareness among Muslims increases globally, the necessity for “*Halal*” certification of items has grown more important than even ISO or other comparable certifications (Moiz & Khan, 2014). With increased awareness, there is a growing concern about the labelling and certification of “*Halal*” products (Ireland & Rajabzadeh, 2011). Any product must pass a rigorous application and testing programme before being given the “*Halal*” certification (Moiz & Khan, 2014). Moiz and Khan (2014) mentioned that although many nations have their own “*Halal*” certification programs, over time, several nations' “*Halal*” certification authorities have emerged as the Key Sources of Halal Certification worldwide. Every country has an authority in charge of “*Halal*”. For instance, the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) for Malaysia, Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Muis) for Singapore and the South African National Halal Authority (SANHA) for South Africa (Moiz & Khan, 2014; Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura, 2020).



## **2.2 Framing Theory**

The concept of framing was first introduced by Gregory Bateson in 1972 (Arowolo, 2017). Framing Theory is frequently used to define a phenomenon whereby media disseminate information to influence how people assess and think about issues (Arowolo, 2017). In short, Framing Theory refers to how the media present and package the information of a news story to the public. The Framing Theory contains five news frames to measure the news including conflict, human interest, attribution of responsibility, morality, and economic consequences (Chew et al., 2012).

### ***2.2.1 Conflict Frame***

The conflict frame emphasises the conflicting elements such as a disagreement between two parties, for instance, organisations, individuals, or groups. This is also a trick to capture the interest and attraction of the public (Valenzuela et al., 2017). The conflict was frequently used in American news media because it helps balance the journalistic reporting standards (Neuman et al., 1992, as cited in An & Gower, 2009). Therefore, this frame tends to make an event seem more severe and newsworthy. Furthermore, conflict stories tend to be negative, also previous research has found that such information is more likely to be selected and engaged than neutral or positive-priced stories (Valenzuela et al., 2017).

### ***2.2.2 Human Interest / Personalisation Frame***

The human interest frame brings a face or emotional perspective to the presentation of an event, issue, or problem (An & Gower, 2009). Typically is to describe a story or report designed to attract attention and empathy by making it easy to identify the people, problems, and situations described. The human interest frame in crises stimulates people's psychological pulses, which ultimately led to them being more critical of the crisis (Padin, 2005, as cited in

An & Gower, 2009). Moreover, the human interest frame influences the public's emotional responses and is a crucial predictor of blame and responsibility during a cross-border crisis (An & Gower, 2009). Plus, this framing refers to efforts to personalise, dramatise, or “emote” the news in order to capture and sustain viewers’ interest.

### ***2.2.3 Economic Consequences Frame***

This consequence frame describes an occurrence, issue, or dilemma in terms of the economic repercussions it will have on a particular person, a group of people, a company, or a nation. Economic consequences are frequently significant, and the broad effect of an incident is crucial for news value (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). In terms of maintaining unity within a party or coalition or a country's standing internationally, there may be better choices than adopting a policy.

### ***2.2.4 Morality Frame***

This morality frame places the incident, situation, or crisis in relation to ethical standards, societal norms, and religious principles. Due to the violations of power parties, media coverage frequently has a moralising tone. Furthermore, policies may be viewed as extremely unethical. For instance, a newspaper may use the opinions of an interest group to highlight concerns about diseases. A moral lesson or specific societal recommendations about how to act may be included in such a tale (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Due to the journalistic ethic of neutrality, several researchers discovered that journalists employed the morality frame indirectly through comments or assumptions instead of directly (An & Gower, 2009). Nonetheless, they recognised this frame as one of the many utilised in reporting, finding that it is more prevalent in listeners’ imaginations than in the content of news (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

### ***2.2.5 Attribution of Responsibility Frame***

In the responsibility framework, a problem or issue is portrayed in such a method that the authority, a particular individual or institution, or maybe both, are blamed for its occurrence or settlement. Despite the fact that the presence of a responsibility framing in the news has yet to be formally evaluated (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Besides, “Attribution of Responsibility” highlights the problem or concern by highlighting who is responsible for the situation's cause or its resolution (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015). With its definition, this framing is a method of assigning blame for a cause or solution to the authority, a person, or a society (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). According to past study, the assignment of a blame frame was most frequently used in serious newspapers (An & Gower, 2009).

### **2.3 Application of Framing Theory**

Thus far, a number of studies have begun to examine the use of the Framing Theory. The importance of framing analysis has already been acknowledged in different contexts, such as health aspects, crisis communication, production and the hospitality industry. According to Muhamad and Yang (2017), they used Framing Theory to examine the applicability of the Media Framing Scale to a deductive examination of news stories about a health topic which is child autism in US newspapers. This study investigated the differences in framing between local and national news platforms. Having a clear idea of the frames likely to appear in news coverage is critical when using this approach, as undefined frames might be overlooked or more susceptible to unintentional bias (Muhamad & Yang, 2017). In addition, frames have been viewed as a potent mechanism capable of altering public perception of a crisis, influencing public opinion, and guiding public discourse (Coombs, 2007, as cited in Liu & Pennington-Gray, 2015).

In previous studies by Semetko & Valkenburg (2000) on framing and framing effects, content analysis was utilised to explore the generality of five news frames. The studies examined the content of 2601 newspaper articles and 1522 television news coverages from the 1997 European Heads of State Meeting in Amsterdam (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Besides that, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) examined how famous these approaches were on the top three national television networks and four national newspapers in the Netherlands. These studies found that the most fundamental distinction was between sensational and serious news organisations, not between media. Also, the order of most popular frameworks was the attribution of responsibility, conflict, economic consequences, human interest, and morality (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

According to An and Gower's (2009) content analysis of crisis news framed in 2006 crisis news coverage, a total of 247 news reports were studied to determine among the five news frames the media utilised based on the kind of crisis. The news frames utilised in crisis news stories were discovered to be grouped in the following order: attribution of responsibility, economic consequences, conflict, human interest, and morality (An & Gower, 2009). The study's research gap was due to the restricted types of crisis instances in 2006, and the samples available for use in the study cannot represent all sorts of crises. As a result, researching various media and crises may provide a variety of results.

In addition, Mohd Ghazali et al. (2020) investigated the necessity for effective vaccination coverage in the media, as well as underlined the urgency and importance of vaccination to the public, in order to combat a huge number of vaccine misconceptions, particularly on social media. This study sought to determine if the news media has had a role in properly reporting vaccination. The study used Framing Theory and discovered some discrepancies in the frequency and method of vaccine coverage in the "*Harian Metro*" and "*Berita Harian*" newspapers (Mohd Ghazali et al., 2020). The study discovered that more

exposure was needed in Malaysia for immunisation to become a national priority. Mohd Ghazali and other researchers (2020) suggested that more reporting was needed to improve people's awareness of the potential impact of anti-vaccination on public health based on the popularity of Malay newspapers chosen for this study. Despite the distinctions, the study discovered that Malay media continue to undervalue the necessity of immunisation. This study's research gap was a dearth of information among Malaysian media practitioners about how to deal with vaccine concerns expressed and disputed by social media users that may endanger public safety.

According to Pui and Balaraman (2022), the study showed that there was a statistically significant difference in how the various online news portals use news frames. The study utilised the theoretical framework of framing and building on prior research examining the role of mass media in health communication, findings of the study could be used as a standard for journalists and media professionals to cover vaccination news in the future. The news frames used in the vaccination news are grouped in the following order which included attribution of responsibility frame, human interest frame, conflict frame, economic frame, and morality frame. The attribution of responsibility will be the first order, as the researcher found that all online news platforms expressed a strong need for the government to find a solution to the problem. As the vaccination programme has involved all the social classes, the government's obligation was to ensure the programme has been implemented smoothly. The human interest frame was the second most employed frame found in the news that related to vaccination in the Malaysia context (Pui & Balaraman, 2022). According to Nor and Zulcafli (2020), most news reports reflected the fear, anxiety and uncertainty of most Malaysians to draw attention to their vaccination experience. In this case, people are more likely to be vaccinated because authorities in the country that vaccinated them first certify that the vaccine is safe and effective. For instance, Tun Dr. Mahathir was quoted after receiving the vaccination: "I did not feel anything

at all, and the injection was over in under a minute. This vaccination will protect us” (The Star Online, 2021, as cited in Pui & Balaraman, 2022). The morality frame was the least employed in the vaccination news because it violated the journalist's notion of impartiality. In fact, journalists are obligated to support one side of the debate and present the viewpoint of the debate's proponents from a morality perspective. An and Gower (2019) observed that morality frame was frequently used in avoidable problems, which assume a high level of intentionality and controllability. For example, a representative of authority urged the public to take the necessary safety precautions and provided full cooperation for the betterment (Pui & Balaraman, 2022). Furthermore, given that the current study was concerned with health communication, it made sense that the economic framework hardly appeared in the media, as it was ineffective at motivating vaccination intentions (Motta et al., 2021, as cited in Pui & Balaraman 2022).

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

The research design employed in this study was quantitative content analysis. The coverage of the news was related to the “*Halal*” crisis in Malaysia. Based on Malay, English and Chinese, Five Malaysia-based newspapers were included in the analysis, which were “*Utusan Malaysia*”, “*Berita Harian*”, “*Sinar Harian*”, “*The Star*”, and “*Sin Chew Daily*”. The quantitative content analysis employed in this study aims to discover how the “Halal” crisis is being framed in newspapers. Hence, the use of content analysis in this study can help researchers gain a comprehensive understanding of media discourse concerning the “*Halal*” crisis.

#### 3.2 Sample and Sampling

The news articles of “*Utusan Malaysia*”, “*Berita Harian*”, “*Sinar Harian*”, “*The Star*”, and “*Sin Chew Daily*” were the samples of this study. The researchers briefly describe them based on circulation. According to the research from AdQrate (2023), the circulation of “*Utusan Malaysia*”, “*Berita Harian*”, “*Sinar Harian*”, “*The Star*”, and “*Sin Chew Daily*” are 144,438, 90,969, 160,000, 248,559 and 338,568 respectively. According to Mohamad Saleh et al. (2022), in Malaysia, “*Utusan Malaysia*” and “*Berita Harian*” are the top two Malay language daily newspapers with the highest ownership and unique readership statistics. “*Sinar Harian*” is a 100% peninsular regional newspaper, and they have a mobile reporting team (Skuad Cakna) in every district of the state to get the latest news. “*The Star*” is Malaysia’s leading English daily newspaper. The newspaper covers content by lifestyle and fashion, country, world, sports news, and so forth. Besides, “*Sin Chew Daily*” is a Chinese newspaper with a large circulation in Malaysia. It has a huge readership and has become a very influential part of the Malaysian media landscape. As these newspapers are well organised, it is relatively

easy to collate relevant newspaper articles from the portals and accumulate relevant article data through web scraping techniques.

The sampling technique used in this study was multi-cluster sampling. According to Sedgwick (2015), multi-cluster sampling is a sampling method involving two or more stages based on the natural cluster hierarchy structure in the population. Clusters refer to the natural groupings of people, such as households, villages, or schools. At each stage, a random sample of different clusters is taken, and clusters are nested within each other in successive stages (AdQrate, 2023). Bringing the multi-cluster sampling technique into this study, based on the circulation and the readership of newspapers, five national newspapers in three languages were selected from among the 30 most popular newspapers in Malaysia. The cluster will be divided into Malay, English and Chinese, which are “*Utusan Malaysia*”, “*Berita Harian*”, “*Sinar Harian*”, “*The Star*”, and “*Sin Chew Daily*” since these newspapers have the characteristics of wide readership and nationwide circulation. Second, the current study will analyse the three selected newspapers from January 1, 2017, to December 31, 2022.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

This research looked for news articles about the “*Halal*” crisis published in selected newspapers - “*Utusan Malaysia*”, “*Berita Harian*”, “*Sinar Harian*”, “*The Star*”, and “*Sin Chew Daily*” - by searching for keywords appearing in the headlines such as “*Halal*”, “*Halal*’ logo”, “*crisis*”, “*Halal*’ *crisis*”, “*Fake Halal*’ Logo”, “*JAKIM*”, and “*Halal*’ products”, “*清真*”, “*冷冻肉*”, “*走私*”, “*假清真*”. The time frame that was used for this study is between January 1, 2017, and December 31, 2022. This period was chosen due to some of the media, including Asia Sentinel, revealing the serious corruption of JAKIM, in which bribes were often taken to certify institutions and products as “*Halal*” (Hunter, 2019). Thus, the selection of time



frame is considered to search for more relevant news articles to obtain more information, and it will be beneficial to complete this study.

According to Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), the unit of analysis refers to the complete article and news item. This study focused on news framing, also the analysis included all news items regardless of the chapter or length of the article, book reviews, obituaries, duplicate articles, social announcements, and letters to the editor are excluded. A total of 86 valid news articles have been printed and coded.

### ***3.3.1 Newspapers Selected for the Study***

#### ***The Star***

As far as English-language news sources go in Malaysia, “*The Star*” remains the most reputable. According to the 11th edition of the Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2022, “*The Star*” received a 56% rating for brand trust in Malaysia. Additionally, “*The Star*” had the highest weekly offline reach across TV, radio, and print, as well as the highest weekly online reach among English language portals (Liew, 2022b). However, “*The Star*” has remained a reliable news source for the people of Malaysia despite the prevalence of disinformation and scepticism surrounding the global Covid-19 outbreak (*Preference for The Star*, 2021). This can be demonstrated by the fact that news today comes from a wide range of sources thanks to digital and social media, and Star Media Group makes an effort to validate all news before posting or releasing it (*Reuters report: Astro Awani and The Star among most trusted of Malaysian news organisations*, 2018).

#### ***Sin Chew***

Leading Chinese-language newspaper, “*Sin Chew Daily*” is published by Sin Chew Media Bhd Corporation and has a daily circulation of over 400,000 copies (Digital News Asia,

2015). More than 25,500 people have subscribed to the Sin Chew e-paper since its debut in February 2014. Additionally, “*Sin Chew Daily*” and Star Media Group joined up to develop the Sin Chew-Star E-paper Package in March 2015 as part of an endeavour to break into the multilingual market (Digital News Asia, 2015). “*Sin Chew Daily*” has excellent relationships with the owners of the local media. The newspaper, a part of the Asia News Network, is distributed not only in Malaysia but also in its neighbouring countries of Brunei, Indonesia, and some regions of Thailand (Advertising.my, 2022b). “*Sin Chew Daily*” was a new MCA-affiliated publication, indicating that it had ties to Malaysia's current administration politically. “*Sin Chew Daily*” is regarded as one of the most popular Chinese daily due to its reputation for maintaining impartial reporting, despite the fact that many mainstream media outlets have been associated with being political mouthpieces for the ruling government (Advertising.my, 2022b).

### ***Sinar Harian***

“*Sinar Harian*” received the highest brand trust score in Malaysia's Malay newspaper, with a 53% score, according to The Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2022, the 11th edition in an annual series (Liew, 2022a). Since it is consistent with its motto, “Akhbar Arus Perdana Yang Diyakini,” “*Sinar Harian*” continues to concentrate on providing its readers with the most significant news and insider information. In addition to providing a fresh viewpoint on internet news, the newspaper would also make an effort to critically and thoroughly delve into the topics (Rahman, 2022). Aside from that, the fact that “*Sinar Harian*” is independent of any political party also lends credibility to its reputation for objectivity in reporting (Advertising.my, 2022c).

### ***Utusan Malaysia***

On May 29, 1939, “*Utusan Malaysia*” (the Malaysia Courier) made its debut in Singapore. As “*Utusan Malaysia*” is the country's first Malay language daily, it has a reputation for being somewhat of a traditional publication (Advertising.my, 2022d). The “*Utusan*”, a newspaper with Jawi writing, was “extremely chauvinistic on the Malay behalf” when it came to advocating for Malay rights. The newspaper's initial issue claimed that its mission was to be a publication that served the nation or race, religion country or birthplace. The economic well-being and education of Malaysians were topics that were frequently covered in its articles, however it was more conservative when it came to political issues and only marginally progressive when it came to Islamic issues (Government of Singapore, 2019). When “*Utusan Malaysia*” started “*Utusan Malaysia On-Line*” in 1997, however, it became the country’s first newspaper to publish exclusively online. The complete digital edition of the paper would subsequently be accessible to paid subscribers. There are two major editions of “*Utusan Malaysia*”: the primary one, which is distributed during the week, and *Mingguan Malaysia*, which is distributed on Sundays (Advertising.my, 2022d).

### ***Berita Harian***

“*Berita Harian*”, a newspaper that was founded on 1 July 1957, is frequently recognised as a genuine Malaysian publication. The largest print media firm in Malaysia, NSTP (New Straits Times Press Bhd), is the owner of “*Berita Harian*” (Advertising.my, 2022a). A wide range of topics, including sports, politics, and religion, are covered, as well as local, regional, and global news. The reputable “*Berita Harian*” also gives the Malay community a forum to express their opinions on topics that matter to them (SPH Media Solutions, 2023a). According to The Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2022, the 11th edition in an annual series, “*Berita Harian*” received the same brand trust score as “*Sinar Harian*” in Malaysia's Malay newspaper, with a 53% score (Liew, 2022a). Nielsen Consumer & Media View Survey (CMV) data from 2019 shows that “*Berita Harian*” has 152,000 print weekly readers (SPH Media Solutions,

2023b). Furthermore, according to data from comScore in February 2020, “*Berita Harian*” Digital gained 101,239 for monthly unique visits and 393,000 monthly page views (SPH Media Solutions, 2023c). Besides that, “*Berita Harian*” ranks second in popularity as the most popular Malay newspaper website in Malaysia, after “*Harian Metro*” (MEDIAPOD, 2022).

### 3.4 Coding Procedure

The framing of the “*Halal*” crisis in the selected Malaysian newspapers in this study was evaluated utilising three different aspects, including types of news coverage, news sources, and news frames. The deductive approach by Matthes (2008) was used in this study. In a deductive approach, specific frames are predefined as content analytic variables to confirm how frequently they appear in the news. This method necessitates that the researchers have a good understanding of the potential frames because frames that are not predefined risk being missed. In addition, a priori coding methods proposed by Wimmer and Dominick (2014) were used to code both news sources and news frames. Prior coding is when the researcher generates a categorisation based on a theoretical or conceptual explanation prior to gathering the data. The list of news sources and frames was compiled through a literature review and an examination of local coverage of the “*Halal*” crisis. The definitions in the following tables refer to (Bier et al., 2018) and Ghazali et al. (2016), and the tables describe how the coding items in the current study were operationalised:

**Table 1**

*Operational definitions for coding - Types of News Coverage*

<b>News Type</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Editorial</b>	An editorial is a unique report regarding the “ <i>Halal</i> ” issue.

<b>News Story</b>	A journalistic report documenting events or incidents relating to “ <i>Halal</i> ” issues.
<b>Issue Coverage</b>	A unique news article based on unusual or rare situations.
<b>Event Coverage</b>	Coverage about external activities or events related to “ <i>Halal</i> ” issues.
<b>Sponsored News</b>	Articles of the “ <i>Halal</i> ” crisis that are sponsored, paid, or advertorials.
<b>Letter from Readers</b>	Written by members of the public as a letter or opinion article.

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**Table 2***Operational definitions for coding - News sources*

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<b>News sources</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>News agency</b>	Agencies operate on a global scale that gathers and distributes news, photographs, and other information to media outlets such as Xinhua News Agency, and Associated Press (AP).
<b>Government agencies</b>	Institutions that are created by a government, such as Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA), Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Finance, etc.
<b>Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)</b>	Non-for-profit private institutions, companies, or agencies that are independent of government.
<b>Public Limited Company (Bhd)</b>	Business organisation that is publicly traded on a stock exchange.
<b>Private Limited Company (Sdn Bhd)</b>	For-profit business organisation that is privately owned and closely held, and typically has a limited number of shareholders.

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**Table 3***Operational definitions for coding - News Frames*

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<b>News Frames</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Conflict frame</b>	Highlights disagreements among individuals, groups, organisations, or countries
<b>Human interest frame</b>	Presents a human face or an emotional angle to the crisis
<b>Economic consequences frame</b>	Reports the financial significance of the crisis for individuals, groups, organisations, or countries
<b>Morality frame</b>	Situates the event within the context of moral or religious values or social prescriptions
<b>Attribution of responsibility frame</b>	Offers causes of or potential solutions for the crisis and a way of attributing responsibility

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**Table 4***Coding Scheme*

	<b>Title:</b>				<b>Date:</b>	
1.	<b>Newspaper</b>					
	The Star	Sin Chew Daily	Sinar Harian	Utusan	Berita Harian	
2.	<b>Section</b>					
	National News	Regional News / Metro	International News	Entertainment	Economic / Business	Others
3.	<b>Industry</b>					
	Food and Beverages	Cosmetic and Toiletries	Pharmaceuticals / Medical devices	Tourism	Others	
4.	<b>News sources</b>					
	News agency	Government agencies	Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)	Public Limited Company (Bhd)	Private Limited Company (Sdn Bhd)	
	<b>State the sources:</b>					
5.	<b>Types of coverage</b>					
	Editorial	News Story	Event Coverage	Letter from Readers	Sponsored News	Issue coverage / Columnist
6.	<b>Number of words (content)</b>					
	Below 100 words	100 - 200 words	200 - 300 words	300 - 400 words	400 - 500 words	500 and above words
7.	<b>Image</b>					
	With images	Without images				



**Table 5***Coding Scheme*

<b>Attribution of responsibility frame</b>		
<b>Factors</b>		
Does the story suggest that some level of gov't has the ability to alleviate the problem?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Does the story suggest that some level of the government is responsible for the issue/problem?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Does the story suggest a solution(s) to the problem/issue?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Does the story suggest that an ind. (or group of people in society) is resp. for the issue-problem?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Does the story suggest the problem requires urgent action?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Human interest frame</b>		
<b>Factors</b>		
Does the story provide a human example or "human face" on the issue?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Does the story employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy-caring, sympathy, or compassion?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

Does the story emphasise how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problem?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Does the story go into the private or personal lives of the actors?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Does the story contain visual information that might generate feelings of outrage, empathy-caring, sympathy, or compassion?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Conflict frame</b>		
<b>Factors</b>		
Does the story reflect disagreement between parties-individuals-groups-countries?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Does one party-individual-group-country reproach another?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Does the story refer to two sides or to more than two sides of the problem or issue?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Does the story refer to winners and losers?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Morality frame</b>		
<b>Factors</b>		
Does the story contain any moral message?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

Does the story make reference to morality, God, and other religious tenets?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Does the story offer specific social prescriptions about how to behave?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Economic consequences frame</b>		
<b>Factors</b>		
Is there a mention of financial losses or gains now or in the future?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Is there a mention of the costs/degree of expense involved?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Is there a reference to the economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

Two coders were assigned to investigate “*Halal*” news from “*Utusan Malaysia*”, “*Berita Harian*”, “*Sinar Harian*”, “*The Star*”, and “*Sin Chew Daily*”. Before data collection, all coders will receive training to become acquainted with a coding book and coding sheet (Mohd Ghazali et al., 2020). All coders were told face-to-face about the nature of the research, the research aims, and the research questions during the training session. They were instructed about the codebook and the significance of the coding exercise. The codebook’s primary goal is to establish explicit instructions and define each code with a definite description for researchers and coders to follow in order to complete the study. The coding book contains significant topics from the news articles as well as directions for coding them (Creswell, 2013 as cited in Mohd Ghazali et al., 2020). The coders created the coding sheet by adopting the 20-question coding scheme used by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) regarding attribution of responsibility, conflict, economic consequences, human interest, and morality (Bier et al., 2018).

Inter-coder reliability was used in this study to assist researchers in gauging the level of consensus among coders on the data set (Mohd Ghazali et al., 2020). The study applied a formula by Cohen’s Kappa (1960) to calculate the inter-coder reliability. In addition to accounting for the agreement of ratings that may be anticipated by chance, Cohen’s Kappa coefficient  $\kappa$  connects the number of concordant ratings to the number of discordant ratings (Burla et al., 2008). Following the training approach, multi-cluster sampling selection is used to choose the news from the accurate sample to assess inter-coder reliability; the news is separated by newspaper and chosen randomly to be relevant to each newspaper (Muhamad & Yang, 2017). Two coders coded for five newspapers’ news pieces. These five newspapers’ dependability is determined based on their report categories, news sources, and news frames. After coding the newspaper, the two coders have used 30 newspapers to run the result for

calculating the inter-coder reliability through the SPSS software. The result shows that the level of agreement is almost perfect as the value is 1.000.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

For news story frames, we applied a previously created and developed coding scheme. As shown in Figure 1, each article served as an analytical unit and coded as human interest, attribution of responsibility, conflict, morality, and economic consequences. For Figure 2, each news article is analysed with sections, industry, types of coverage, news source, number of words and images. The news articles were coded by two of the researchers. The researcher cross-checked the data to ensure accuracy and consistency of the data. The news articles are read repeatedly to accurately get a general idea of the content and recurring topics and themes. After using the coding scheme, the data showed which frame will be the most employed in the news articles. We conducted a more detailed analysis of the news articles after the data showed which frame is the most and least employed in the news articles.

We used the descriptive test to analyse all the research questions. For all research questions, the sources that we get the news articles from were "*Utusan Malaysia*", "*Berita Harian*", "*Sinar Harian*", "*The Star*", and "*Sin Chew Daily*". For research questions one and two, we used coding schemes to analyse the data. The coding schemes have sections, industries, types of coverages, news sources, number of words and images as well. We referred to the coding schemes while we analysed all "*Halal*" crisis news that occurred in the sectors such as food and beverages, cosmetics and toiletries, tourism and others. We used a deductive approach to investigate the Framing Theory that we used is suitable for our research. The process of the deductive approach was using the Framing theory to analyse the data that we collected in order to test whether the frames that we coded are related to the relevant theory. Then, we used the deductive approach to prove the Framing theory is supported in our research.

For research questions three, we used five news frames to analyse the research question, for example, conflict, human interest, consequence, morality, and attribution of responsibility frame. Besides, we developed different questions in each frame to get the percentage. Lastly, we used IBM SPSS Statistics Version 28 to analyse the descriptive test.

#### 4. FINDINGS

The content analysis of the selected Chinese, English, and Malay newspapers yielded the following results and answered the research questions.

Even though Malaysia is an Islamic country, the news coverage of the “*Halal*” crisis in Malaysia is still limited. Figure 1 showed that within the sampled period of 6 years, there were only 86 news stories related to the “*Halal*” crisis in “*The Star*”, “*Sin Chew Daily*”, “*Sinar Harian*”, “*Utusan*”, and “*Berita Harian*”. The highest number of newspapers was “*Utusan*”, which covered 25 news stories (29.1%) in the newspapers. On the other hand, the lowest coverage of newspapers was “*Berita Harian*”, which covered 10 (11.6%) news stories related to the “*Halal*” crisis. There were 14 news stories covered by “*The Star*”, 18 (20.9%) news stories from “*Sin Chew Daily*” and also 19 (22.1%) news stories from “*Sinar Harian*”.

**Figure 1.**

*The distribution of news stories in the newspapers*

#### **Number of newspapers**

From 1 January 2017 - 31 December 2022

- The Star
- Sin Chew Daily
- Sinar Harian
- Utusan
- Berita Harian

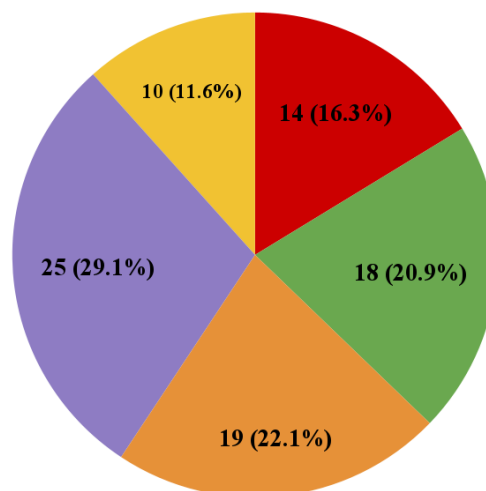


Table 6 showed the coverage of section, industry, number of words in the content and image for “*Halal*” crisis news in each newspaper.

For the part of the section for newspapers regarding Table 6, for the National News section, “*The Star*” covered 93 percent (n=13), “*Sin Chew Daily*” covered 56 percent (n=10), “*Sinar Harian*” covered 5 percent (n=1), “*Utusan*” covered 48 percent (n=12), and none for “*Berita Harian*”. Next, for the regional news and metro section, it was covered by both newspapers which were “*Sin Chew Daily*” 33 percent (n=6) and “*Sinar Harian*” 58 percent (n=11) separately. For the others section, “*The Star*” covered 7 percent (n=1), “*Sin Chew Daily*” covered 11 percent (n=2), “*Sinar Harian*” covered 37 percent (n=7), “*Utusan*” covered 52 percent (n=13), and “*Berita Harian*” covered 100 percent (n=10). Lastly, the result showed that there were no newspapers published in the International News section, Entertainment section, and also Business or Economic section.

Next, for the part of the industry, the category of Food and Beverages accounted for the largest proportion among other industries, which “*The Star*” covered 100 percent (n=14), “*Sin Chew Daily*” covered 89 percent (n=16), “*Sinar Harian*” covered 100 percent (n=19), “*Utusan*” covered 96 percent (n=24), and “*Berita Harian*” covered 90 percent (n=9). For “*Sin Chew Daily*”, this newspaper also published “*Halal*” crisis news that covered 1 (5.5%) news in each category of “Cosmetic and Toiletries” and “Others”. Meanwhile, both newspapers “*Utusan*” and “*Berita Harian*” published 1 piece of news each about the “*Halal*” crisis in the other category (“*Utusan*” 4%, “*Berita Harian*” 10%). However, no newspaper covered the “*Halal*” crisis news in the category of “Pharmaceuticals / Medical devices” and “Tourism”.

In addition, for the number of words in the published content, the result showed that most newspapers wrote the content of the “*Halal*” crisis between 200 to 300 words. There were 29 percent (n=4) for “*The Star*”, 28 percent (n=5) for “*Sin Chew Daily*”, 16 percent (n=3) for “*Sinar Harian*”, 44 percent (n=11) for “*Utusan*” and 50 percent (n=5) for “*Berita Harian*”. The second highest content words number was 300-400 words which covered 36 percent (n=5) for “*The Star*”, 11 percent (n=2) for “*Sin Chew Daily*”, 37 percent (n=7) for “*Sinar Harian*”, and



40 percent (n=10) for “*Utusan*”. Next, the table showed that the third highest number of words was 100-200 words for each content, which include 21 percent (n=3) for “*The Star*”, 5 percent (n=1) for “*Sin Chew Daily*”, 21 percent (n=4) for “*Sinar Harian*”, 8 percent (n=2) for “*Utusan*” and 40 percent (n=4) for “*Berita Harian*”. Apart from that, 14 percent (n=2) for “*The Star*”, 28 percent (n=5) for “*Sin Chew Daily*”, 10 percent (n=2) for “*Sinar Harian*”, 8 percent (n=2) for “*Utusan*” and 10 percent (n=1) for “*Berita Harian*” wrote the content with the number of 400-500 words for each “*Halal*” crisis news. For the newspapers that wrote 500 and above words for “*Halal*” crisis news, there were covered by both newspapers which were “*Sin Chew Daily*” 28 percent (n=5) and 16 percent (n=3) respectively. Finally, none of the newspapers published “*Halal*” news that was below 100 words in content.

Lastly, most of the newspapers covered their news with images, which include 71 percent (n=10) for “*The Star*”, 94 percent (n=17) for “*Sin Chew Daily*”, 100 percent (n=19) for “*Sinar Harian*”, 100 percent (n=25) for “*Utusan*” and 100 percent (n=10) for “*Berita Harian*”. On the other hand, there were only a few newspapers that did not include images in their content, which covered 29 percent (n=4) of “*The Star*”, and 6 percent (n=1) of “*Sin Chew Daily*”. In short, 94 percent (n=81) of 86 news stories contained images and 6 percent (n=5) of newspapers covered without images.

**Table 6***Details of news coverage*

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>The Star</b>		<b>Sin Chew Daily</b>		<b>Sinar Harian</b>		<b>Utusan</b>		<b>Berita Harian</b>	
	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Section</b>										
National News	13	93	10	56	1	5	12	48	0	0
Regional News / Metro	0	0	6	33	11	58	0	0	0	0
International News	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Entertainment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Economic / Business	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Others	1	7	2	11	7	37	13	52	10	100
<b>Total number of newspaper</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Industry</b>										
Food and Beverages	14	100	16	89	19	100	24	96	9	90
Cosmetic and Toiletries	0	0	1	5.5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pharmaceuticals / Medical devices	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tourism	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Others	0	0	1	5.5	0	0	1	4	1	10
<b>Total number of newspaper</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Number of words (content)</b>										
Below 100 words	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
100 - 200 words	3	21	1	5	4	21	2	8	4	40
200 - 300 words	4	29	5	28	3	16	11	44	5	50
300 - 400 words	5	36	2	11	7	37	10	40	0	0
400 - 500 words	2	14	5	28	2	10	2	8	1	10
500 and above words	0	0	5	28	3	16	0	0	0	0
<b>Total number of newspaper</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Image</b>										
With images	10	71	17	94	19	100	25	100	10	100
Without images	4	29	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total number of newspaper</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

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#### **4.1 RO1: To investigate the types of coverage that have been used in the “Halal” crisis.**

The first research question was to investigate the types of coverage that have been used in the “Halal” crisis from “*The Star*”, “*Sin Chew Daily*”, “*Sinar Harian*”, “*Utusan*”, and “*Berita Harian*”.

Table 7 showed the types of coverage on “Halal” crisis news for “*The Star*”, “*Sin Chew Daily*”, “*Sinar Harian*”, “*Utusan*”, and “*Berita Harian*”. The result showed that all the newspapers prominently covering the “Halal” crisis news in “News Story” category, which “*The Star*” covered 93 percent (n=13), “*Sin Chew Daily*” covered 94.5 percent (n=17), “*Sinar Harian*” covered 95 percent (n=18), “*Utusan*” covered 96 percent (n=24), and “*Berita Harian*” covered 90 percent (n=9). Next, both newspapers covered “Halal” crisis news as an Editorial category with 7 percent (n=1) in “*The Star*” and 5.5 percent (n=1) in “*Sin Chew Daily*” respectively. With the result, the table showed that only “*Sinar Harian*” (5%, n=1) covered special coverage on the “Halal” crisis in the Letter from Reader category and none was recorded from other newspapers. The Issue coverage category was covered by both newspapers which were “*Utusan*” (4%, n=1) and “*Berita Harian*” (10%, n=1). The findings also showed that neither publication reported any “Halal” crisis news in the events coverage category or special news based on the sponsor news category.

**Table 7***Types of coverage*

Newspaper	The Star		Sin Chew Daily		Sinar Harian		Utusan		Berita Harian	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Types of coverage</b>										
Editorial	1	7	1	5.5	0	0	0	0	0	0
News Story	13	93	17	94.5	18	95	24	96	9	90
Event Coverage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Letter from Readers	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0
Sponsored News	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Issue coverage / Columnist	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	1	10
<b>Total number of newspaper (n)</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

#### **4.2 RO2: To find out which news sources have been used in the “Halal” crisis.**

The second research question examined the news sources in “*The Star*”, “*Sin Chew Daily*”, “*Sinar Harian*”, “*Utusan*”, and “*Berita Harian*”.

The results, as shown in Table 8, indicated that the primary news sources for these five newspapers are government agencies and private limited companies when covering the “Halal” crisis. The government agencies that serve as the main source of news are the Ministry Of Domestic Trade And Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP) followed by Malaysian Quarantine and Inspection Services (MAQIS) and Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM). For “*The Star*”, official government departments provide 79 percent (“*The Star*”: n=11) of the news, while private limited companies provide 21 percent (“*The Star*”: n=3). In addition, 89 percent (“*Sin Chew Daily*”: n=16) of the news for “*Sin Chew Daily*” comes from government agencies, while 11 percent (“*Sin Chew Daily*”: n=2) comes from the private limited company. Furthermore, 89 percent (“*Sinar Harian*”: n=17) of the news reported in “*Sinar Harian*” come from government institutions whereas 11 percent (“*Sinar Harian*”: n=2) come from private limited companies. Aside from that, 100 percent of news (“*Berita Harian*”: n=10; “*Utusan*”: n=25) that reported in both “*Berita Harian*” and “*Utusan*” comes directly from government agencies.

**Table 8***News source*

<b>Newspapers</b>	<b>The Star</b>		<b>Sin Chew Daily</b>		<b>Sinar Harian</b>		<b>Utusan</b>		<b>Berita Harian</b>	
	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>News Source</b>										
News agency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Government agencies	11	79	16	89	17	89	25	100	10	100
Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public Limited Company (Bhd)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Private Limited Company (Sdn Bhd)	3	21	2	11	2	11	0	0	0	0
<b>Total number of newspaper (n)</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

### **4.3 RO3: To discover how the “Halal” crisis is being framed in the newspapers.**

The third research question explores news frames in “*The Star*”, “*Sin Chew Daily*”, “*Sinar Harian*”, “*Utusan*”, and “*Berita Harian*”. As shown in Figure 2, the proportion of frames varies greatly from newspaper to newspaper. Attribution of responsibility was the dominant frame as all 86 (100%) news coverages were found to employ this frame in all five newspapers. Besides, human interest was the second frame used by the newspaper and 84 percent (n=72) of news coverage were found to use this frame. The third frame most used by all newspapers was economic consequences frame (n=44, 51%), and the fourth was morality frame (n=23, 27%). The conflict frame was found the least used, and only one (1.2%) of the 86 news articles used this frame.

Table 9 shows the results of findings in more detail. As stated above, for all five newspapers, attribution of responsibility was fully used to describe the “*Halal*” crisis in the news coverage (“*The Star*”: n=14, 16%; “*Sin Chew Daily*”: n=18, 21%; “*Sinar Harian*”: n=19, 22%; “*Utusan*”: n=25, 29%; “*Berita Harian*”: n=10, 12%). In addition, the second most frequently used frames were slightly different among the newspaper. For instance, human interest frame was the second for “*The Star*” (n=10, 14%), “*Sin Chew Daily*” (n=13, 18%), “*Sinar Harian*” (n=16, 22%), and “*Utusan*” (n=24, 33%), while both human interest and economic consequences were the second frames for “*Berita Harian*” (n=9, 13% and n=9, 20%, respectively). The third frame that most frequently used by “*The Star*”, “*Sin Chew Daily*”, “*Sinar Harian*”, and “*Utusan*” were economic consequences frame (“*The Star*”: n=1, 16%; “*Sin Chew Daily*”: n=5, 20%; “*Sinar Harian*”: n=5, 14%; “*Utusan*”: n=10, 30%). Further, morality was the fourth most frequently used frame by all five newspapers (“*The Star*”: n=1, 4%; “*Sin Chew Daily*”: n=5, 22%; “*Sinar Harian*”: n=5, 22%; “*Utusan*”: n=10, 43%; “*Berita Harian*”: n=2, 9%). The least recorded frame was conflict frame. While none were used by



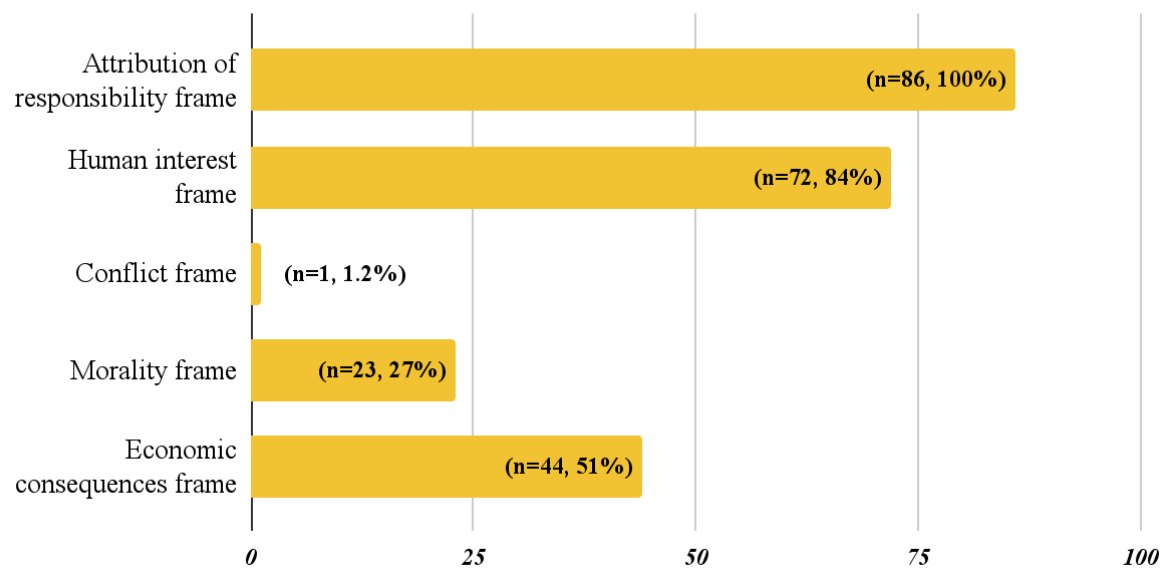
“The Star”, “Sinar Harian”, “Utusan”, and “Berita Harian”, “Sin Chew Daily” used the frame minimally in only an article (n=1), at about 100%.

**Figure 2.**

*The proportion of news frames used by the selected newspapers*

**Total number of news coverage: (n=86, 100%)**

**Newspaper: The Star, Sin Chew Daily, Sinar Harian, Utusan, and Berita Harian**



**Table 9***The news frames used by the selected newspapers*

<b>Newspaper</b>	The Star		Sin Chew Daily		Sinar Harian		Utusan		Berita Harian		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>News frame</b>												
<i>AR</i>	14	16 / 44	18	21 / 39	19	22 / 41	25	29 / 35	10	12 / 33	86	38 / 100
<i>HI</i>	10	14 / 31	13	18 / 28	16	22 / 35	24	33 / 33	9	13 / 30	72	32 / 100
<i>C</i>	0	0 / 0	1	100 / 2	0	0 / 0	0	0 / 0	0	0 / 0	1	0.5 / 100
<i>M</i>	1	4 / 3	5	22 / 11	5	22 / 11	10	43 / 14	2	9 / 7	23	10 / 100
<i>EC</i>	7	16 / 22	9	20 / 20	6	14 / 13	13	30 / 18	9	20 / 30	44	19.5 / 100
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>100 / 100</b>

*Note.* AR: Attribution of responsibility frame; HI: Human interest frame; C: Conflict frame; M: Morality frame; EC: Economic consequences frame.

%; **Horizontal** / **Vertical**

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Discussion

In recent years, the “*Halal*” crisis reported by news coverage has been flawed and the reputation of “*Halal*” products is vulnerable to crises. The purpose of this study was to discover how the “*Halal*” crisis is being framed in newspapers. Based on literature findings, we argue that the different ways media frame the “*Halal*” crisis will affect public perceptions of these issues (Lecheler & De Vreese, 2018). The way in which the “*Halal*” crisis was portrayed in the media may directly and indirectly influence how potential consumers perceive products or industries labelled as “*Halal*”. Notably, the majority of news related to the “*Halal*” crisis was categorised as national news, which reflects the fact that it is urgent social issues that gain a large amount of public attention and covers incidents that are potentially meaningful in the cultural or social context (Coleman et al., 2011; Kasperson & Kasperson, 1996; Sonmez et al., 1999, as cited in Liu & Pennington-Gray, 2015).

Unsurprisingly, the findings showed that the two newspapers that reported the most incidents related to the “*Halal*” crisis were “*Sinar Harian*” and “*Utusan*”, which were concentrated in Malay-language newspapers. This finding reveals that news related to the “*Halal*” crisis has been more widely reported in newspapers that primarily serve Malays. According to research from AdQrate (2023), the circulation figures for “*Utusan Malaysia*”, and “*Sinar Harian*” are 144,438 and 160,000 respectively. In terms of readership, “*Utusan Malaysia*” has 699,000 readers, while “*Sinar Harian*” has 509,000 readers. This result may be explained by the fact that the news coverage of the “*Halal*” crisis is closely linked to the interests and livelihoods of the Malay community. Meanwhile, Malay-language newspapers have a larger readership with an interest in issues related to “*Halal*” products and services. Surprisingly, the newspaper that reported the fewest news related to the “*Halal*” crisis was

*“Berita Harian”*. A possible explanation for this might be that *“Berita Harian”* has a different editorial focus and may prioritise other news topics over the *“Halal”* crisis. Besides, another possible explanation for this finding is that the reporters and editors of *“Berita Harian”* may not have the same level of access to sources or information related to the *“Halal”* crisis as other newspapers, leading to fewer reports on the issue. Further research would be needed to explore these potential reasons in more detail.

#### ***5.1.1 ROI: To investigate the types of coverages that have been used in the “Halal” crisis.***

The findings showed that the types of coverage on the *“Halal”* crisis were mainly news stories, which was indicated at 94% (n=81). The news coverage related to the *“Halal”* crisis is closely linked to the livelihoods and interests of Malays due to *“Halal”* being mandatory (Abdullah & Ireland, 2012). This finding highlighted an important reality that the newspapers tend to report on the *“Halal”* crisis as a news story rather than emphasising, discussing, and prioritising it as a serious issue (Ghazali et al., 2020). As a result, even in the case of contentious events, the newspaper would only report on them without going into further depth about the consequences or root causes of the issue. The news would at most provide an overview of what the government is doing and the measures it is taking, rather than address the issues that give rise to controversies, such as poor enforcement of relevant authorities and lack of awareness among consumers on how to identify genuine *“Halal”* products. The media had covered the *“Halal”* crisis in the form of news stories that only focused on presenting the facts of the crisis without providing in-depth analysis or exploring the issue from different angles. This approach limited the public's understanding of the issue and potentially led to a narrow view of the problem.

In addition, the findings unearthed that the type of reporting on the *“Halal”* crisis was rarely in the form of letters from readers and no sponsored news and event coverage were

identified. This indicates that the readers may not have been particularly interested in the news coverage of the “*Halal*” crisis, resulting in a lack of involvement in terms of the letters from readers. Meanwhile, the news media may not have prioritised the issue, resulting in minimal coverage. The consequence of this inadequate coverage is that the public may not have been fully informed about the “*Halal*” crisis, which could have led to a lack of awareness and potentially increased harm to those affected. Thus, readers may not have enough information or knowledge about the “*Halal*” crisis to form an opinion or express their concerns.

### ***5.1.2 RO2: To find out which news sources have been used in the “Halal” crisis.***

The findings revealed that government agencies are the most commonly used news sources in newspapers when covering the “*Halal*” crisis, with a staggering 92% (n=79) of the articles citing them as a source of information. For instance, the government agencies that are most used in the news are the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), Malaysian Quarantine and Inspection Services (MAQIS) and Ministry of Domestic Trade and Costs of Living (KPDNHEP). This is unsurprising, given that government agencies are perceived as authoritative data sources due to their official status and direct involvement in policy-making and implementation. For instance, the Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM) is the government agency in Malaysia that ensures that all halal certification standards and guidelines are adhered to (Soraji et al., 2017). Their primary role is to conduct inspections and audits of companies, manufacturers, and producers to guarantee that the goods they produce and the processes they use to align with the criteria for halal certification (Soraji et al., 2017). In addition, they are responsible for regulating industries, enforcing laws, and providing essential services to citizens, making them vital sources of information for news media. Furthermore, journalists tend to rely on government agencies for accurate and up-to-

date information because they are often staffed with subject matter experts who have specialised knowledge and expertise in their respective fields.

As a result, the statements and reports from government agencies carry a high degree of credibility and reliability (Van Ryzin & Lavena, 2014). In addition, government agencies have access to information not available to the public or news media, such as classified or sensitive information related to national security, intelligence, and law enforcement. This gives them a unique advantage over other sources of information, especially in cases where they may be the only reliable source of information on specific topics. In conclusion, government agencies are often the go-to source for news media when covering complex issues like the “*Halal*” crisis due to their authoritative status, expertise, and access to exclusive information. While they may not be infallible, their role in providing reliable and accurate information to the public is critical, making them an essential partner in the news media’s quest for truth and transparency.

Private limited companies such as Raihanah Cold Storage Sdn Bhd, and a frozen food supply company from Johor Bahru are the second most commonly used news sources in news coverage which is 8% (n=7). This may be due to several reasons, including their relevance to the reported issue and perceived credibility as an information source. Private limited companies are the second most used news sources in “*Halal*” crisis news due to their close involvement in the “*Halal*” industry. As key players in the industry, they are often directly impacted by events related to the crisis and have a stake in shaping the public discourse surrounding it. As a result, their opinions and actions are essential to reporting on and are relevant to understanding the impact of the crisis on the industry and its stakeholders.

In addition, private limited companies may be perceived as credible sources of information because, unlike other sources, such as academics or activists, private companies have firsthand experience and knowledge of the industry. As a result, they can provide valuable

insights and opinions that journalists can use in their reporting. Furthermore, they may have access to data and information that is not publicly available, making their input particularly valuable. For instance, private limited companies have access to data and information that is not publicly available, which can further enhance the quality of news coverage. This may include information about consumer preferences, market trends, production costs, and other relevant data that can inform reporting on the crisis.

### ***5.1.3 RO3: To discover how the “Halal” crisis is being framed in the newspapers.***

The findings showed that the attribution of responsibility frame is the most commonly used news frame in news coverage, which is 100% (n=86). A news frame is the way in which a news story is presented or framed by the media, which can influence how the audience perceives and understands the story. The use of attribution of responsibility frames in the newspaper provides the cause or potential solutions of the “*Halal*” crisis and a method of attributing responsibility, such as the focus of coverage on who or what is responsible for a particular problem or event.

As a result, the use of the attribution of responsibility frame in newspapers, readers may tend to attribute the responsibility for creating or solving the “*Halal*” crisis to an individual or government. However, companies also have a critical role to play in addressing the crisis and demonstrating their commitment to transparency and accountability (Lee & Li, 2021). By standing up together with the government and providing transparent communication to the public, the spokesperson can assist to mitigate the negative effects of the crisis. For example, they can clarify any misconceptions or misinformation about the situation through a press conference or press statement. In the context of the “*Halal*” crisis in Malaysia, it seems that the media placed a strong emphasis on assigning blame for the situation. For example, four assistant enforcement officers of the Malaysian Quarantine and Inspection Services

Department (MAQIS) was charged with receiving illegal bribes in a meat cartel case (Shah, 2021). Even though a logistics boss was mentioned in the news reports, it was not described in detail. Thus, the focus of the news article is more on MAQIS, readers may attribute the responsibility to the government. This could have a significant impact on public perception of the issue, as it could have directly and indirectly influenced who the public sees as responsible and what actions they believe should be taken to address the crisis. Therefore, it is crucial for companies to communicate their role in addressing the crisis and work together with government agencies to provide accurate and reliable information to the public. By doing so, companies can demonstrate their commitment to addressing the issue and help rebuild stakeholder trust.

The human interest frame is the second most used frame among the newspapers which accounts for 84% (n=72) of the entire stories. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) explained that human interest is given a human face or an emotional view to present an issue, event or problem. For instance, 84% (n=72) of the newspapers provide images accompanied by the news. Images can help to make news stories more visually interesting and engaging for readers, also help to break up long blocks of text and provide a visual representation of the news being reported (Ulloa et al., 2015). For instance, the images in the news can help readers understand the fake “*Halal*” logo products that have been spread in the market, and the relevant department has taken action on it (Mohamed, 2017). This showed in a way that words alone might not be able to convey.

The findings showed that the conflict frame is the least used frame in the news coverage, which is 1% (n=1). Semetko and Valkenburg (2020) interpreted that this frame is to emphasise the conflict between individuals, groups, or institutions to grab audience interest. However, in the case of the “*Halal*” crisis, the conflict frame may not have been used because it does not accurately represent the issue’s nature. The “*Halal*” crisis is a controversy that emerged in the



meat industry. Some consumers discovered that the meat they had been consuming was not “*Halal*”, as it was mislabeled or improperly processed. This issue primarily concerned consumers, producers, and regulatory agencies rather than clear opposing groups or individuals. The only news mentioned about the vendors did not clearly explain the ingredient of the brush and labelled the “*Halal*” logo as the brush made with pig bristles (Zainudin, 2017). Therefore, there is a conflict between the vendors and the relevant department.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The study found that more attention, exploration and exposure are needed to the “*Halal*” crisis issues in Malaysia. By observing the types of coverage used by the newspaper when covering the “*Halal*” crisis, the “*Halal*” crisis is mostly seen as a news story to be reported and not an issue to be highlighted and emphasised. The researchers are of the view that it is crucial for the news media to cover the issue of the “*Halal*” crisis from different perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue and to help the public make informed decisions. This could include making informed purchasing decisions, supporting companies that are committed to transparency and accountability in the “*Halal*” practices, and engaging with relevant authorities to advocate for better regulation and enforcement. By providing this information, the news media can play a pivotal role in enabling the society and public to actively engage in addressing the “*Halal*” crisis and contribute to the development of a more sustainable and responsible “*Halal*” industry in Malaysia (Piah, 2022).

As stated above, government agencies and private limited companies are newspapers’ most used news sources when covering the “*Halal*” crisis. Government agencies are relied upon for their authoritative status, expertise, and access to sensitive information, making them critical sources of accurate and reliable information for journalists. On the other hand, private limited companies are also an essential source of information due to their close involvement in the “*Halal*” industry, expertise and experience, and access to industry-specific data and

insights. Furthermore, the spokesperson is the representative of the organisation during a crisis and plays a vital role in managing public perceptions (Institute for Public Relations, 2007). By keeping quiet, the organisation may appear dishonest and untrustworthy, which can cause long-term damage to its reputation. Therefore, the spokesperson should be forthcoming with information and communicate regularly with stakeholders to address their concerns (Rivas & Nicosiano, 2017). In the context of the “*Halal*” crisis, it is imperative for companies to adopt a proactive stance in their communication efforts and issue a joint statement with relevant government agencies, including JAKIM, KPDNHEP, and MAQIS. This approach enables companies to alleviate any concerns and restore confidence among consumers. Additionally, by demonstrating transparency and accountability, companies can rebuild trust with stakeholders and mitigate the negative impact of the crisis. As they often work closely with the government agencies to ensure compliance with the “*Halal*” certification process and regulatory requirements. Their insights and expertise can provide journalists with valuable information on the state of the industry, its challenges, and opportunities for improvement. These two sources provide a comprehensive understanding of the “*Halal*” crisis and its impact on the industry and its stakeholders. This is because their insights and expertise inform the public of important developments and issues related to the “*Halal*” crisis.

Additionally, the findings showed that the five newspapers predominantly used the attribution of responsibility and human interest frames to cover the “*Halal*” crisis. These results are very similar to earlier research indicating that the attribution of the responsibility frame is the most common framework used in crisis communication (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). When covering crises, the news media often attribute specific blame to individuals or organisations and place the responsibility for the crisis on one or the other, especially when reporting on preventable crises such as unethical behaviour, organisational misconduct or mismanagement and harm (An & Gower, 2009). This could have significant implications for

public perception of the issue, as it may influence who the public sees as responsible and what actions they believe should be taken to address the crisis. For instance, if an organisation is discovered to be using a forged “*Halal*” logo, it will be considered a serious violation of “*Halal*” regulations as well as a breach of consumer trust. In this case, the organisation that used the fake logo would bear the most blame for the crisis. Organisations that use their fake “*Halal*” status are essentially misleading customers and infringing on their right to accurate information (“Jakim Urges Consumers to Report Eateries Misusing Halal Logo,” 2019). Consequently, consumers are experiencing heightened anxiety levels and initiating inquiries into “*Halal*” authorities’ legitimacy due to the misused “*Halal*” logo or certification (Asa, 2019). This can have serious ramifications, including harm to consumers who may consume non-Halal products and reputational damage to the organisation that used the fake logo. In this case, the relevant regulatory bodies and authorities, such as JAKIM in Malaysia, would be obligated to take action against the organisation that used the fake logo. This includes imposing fines or being jailed for not more than three years, revoking halal certifications, and, if necessary, taking legal action (Nordin, 2023).

As with any study, some limitations are worth noting. The sample has been limited because of the limited number of cases on the chosen topic. Limited cases can also mean that less information is available about a particular topic, making research studies more difficult. In the future, the researchers may extend the coverage for another ten years to get sufficient information. Moreover, the research can be done as a case study, focusing on a specific crisis to discuss, such as when Cadbury was found to be contaminated with pork DNA in 2014. Case studies can be particularly effective in generating new ideas and insights, especially compared to other research methods such as surveys or content analysis. Despite these limitations, our study contributes to the knowledge of the new frame of the “*Halal*” crisis and provides a foundation for future research in this area.

Theoretically, this study contributes to assisting in providing proof and reference to the future researcher to have information and analysis that is more specific based on how news media frame the “*Halal*” crisis by using the Framing theory. Because there are no studies about the “*Halal*” crisis frame research in Malaysia. Our research was conducted using content analysis, which may have limitations for addressing specific research questions. Therefore, future studies may benefit from exploring and comparing alternative research methods to further advance the knowledge under investigation in this field by providing new insights, data, or perspectives.

Practically, this study provides insights into the company that deals with the “*Halal*” crisis. For example, we could follow up with government agencies such as JAKIM or MAQIS to investigate how the company handled the “*Halal*” crisis. By exploring different research methods, we can obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the research question and increase the credibility of our findings. It is essential to acknowledge that no single research method is ideal, and each method has advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, this research method can provide a more all-around approach and enhance the practical implications of the findings.

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