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**VISUAL FRAMING OF “LAHAD DATU” CONFLICT COVERAGE  
IN MALAYSIAN MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS**

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*Abstract*

Visual play an important role in media reporting of news. Textual news must accompany with pictures to convey many direct and indirect meanings. Visual alone can portray thousands of meaning which unable to perform by written messages. A review of many media and communication articles showed that many researchers focused more on textual news rather than visual news. It's seems visual portray of issues or conflict are rare. Therefore, this paper is to examine visual framing of Lahad Datu conflict coverage, which is known as Sabah standoff conflict in Malaysia, is an unforgettable tragedy until killed about 10 of Malaysian security personnel. This research is to examine visual portrayed in Lahad Datu conflict coverage in Malaysian mainstream newspapers such as Utusan Malaysia, The Star, Sin Chew and Nanban daily for the study period of one month during the crisis. With the guidance of framing analysis, researcher employed quantitative content analysis to gather the results. With 466 news coverage (288 visuals), results revealed that, the most prominence frames covered by all the four dailies were attribution of responsibility. In explaining the visual images, results noticed that images of militants and soldiers were portrayed more followed by images of decision makers. However, majority of the visual images message shown that visual portrayed a solution for an emergency situations and promoting particular parties or people.

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**Keywords:** Crisis, Lahad Datu Conflict, Visual Framing.



## 1. Introduction

Crisis becomes a situation when a problem in a particular organization is continued with or without solution taken by responsible people. According to Coombs (1999), crisis is a sudden and unexpected event effecting an organization's reputation in financial and reputation operation. It can make people think badly of the organization. Crises can be divided into few types, such as health crisis, economic crisis, natural disaster crisis, organization crisis, international crisis and so on.

In this research, the researcher will focus on the security crisis, also known as terrorism crisis. Crisis reporting, especially terrorism and security crisis, is a new phenomenon in developing countries like Malaysia especially on visual framing. This study will focus and examine on visual coverage of the Lahad Datu Invasion in mainstream media in Malaysia.

Lahad Datu is a small town in Tawau Division, East Malaysia. Lahad Datu Invasion is aggression by an armed group from Sulu Sultanate in Lahad Datu. In 1654, Sultan of Brunei gave Sabah to Sultan of Sulu and in 1878, Sultan of Sulu leased Sabah to the British North Borneo Company. In 1946, British North Borneo Company gave Sabah to Britain. As a consequence, in 1963 Sabah became part of Malaysia (Erman *et al.*, 2014).

## 2. Problem Statement

On 9<sup>th</sup> February 2013, a conflict between Sulu and Malaysian security forces continued to grow, threatening the peace of the people of Sabah. A total of 100 people from the Sultanate of Sulu from southern Philippines have been smuggled into Lahad Datu, Sabah on the ground of taking back their land. They challenged Malaysia's alleged ownership of Sabah. This negotiation has evolved into a clash of weapons of up to ten armed Malaysian personnel.

This incidence of aggression by terrorist groups in Semporna and Lahad Datu caused enormous impact to the political, social and economic situation, particularly in Sabah.



**Figure 01.** Affected area at Sabah from Sulu attack

The root cause for this crisis is because the Philippines has demanded territory from Malaysia over the state of Sabah. The reason for this claim is that the territory of the Sultanate of Sulu also includes

the northern part of East Borneo included in the Sulu Archipelago. The current status of the sultan is still not resolved. On 7<sup>th</sup> October 2012, President Benigno Aquino of the Philippines has announced a framework of peace agreement between the Philippines and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). However, the heirs of the Sultanate of Sulu felt left out in the negotiations. In response, Sultan Jamalul Kiram III claimed himself to be the legitimate heir to the throne of Sulu, he has decided on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2012 that the public and the military contingent should claim rights to the territory of North Borneo. Terrorism crisis refers to the terrorist operation to attack innocent people to get something via immoral events such as bombings, creating physical damages, psychological harm to the public and so on (Zhang *et al.*, 2013). As per figure 1, yellow color in the map represent the attacks area in Sabah by the Sulu Intruder. The invasion of the terrorist group in Lahad Datu Sabah, gave off many negative effects such as the death of security officers and innocent people, losses of property from the battle. Furthermore, it has impacted the number of tourists and the economy. Most of the villagers felt fear and anxiety all the time thinking about the safety of their lives.

### **3. Research Questions**

What are the elements that frame crisis?

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

Purpose of this study is to examine the visual framing of “lahad datu” conflict coverage in Malaysian mainstream newspapers.

## **5. Literature Review**

### **5.1. Crisis and Crisis of Terrorism**

According to Ahmadi (2016), the word “*crisis*” is from the Greek word “*krinon*” which means dangerous situations in social, political and economic issues. Crisis happened when it doesn’t happen naturally. Crisis is known as a sudden event that looms to disrupt an organization’s or state’s maneuvers, mainly in its finance and reputation. Crisis threatens to damage the reputation because crisis can create a bad perception about the organization, state or country. Furthermore, a crisis is a situation that gives off negative and unexpected impact for a country and government (Coombs, 1999). A good communicative response to a crisis can limit and minimize any types of future damage (Coombs & Holladay, 2009; Holladay, 2009; Qureshi *et al.*, 2016).

News is known as anything that captures the audience’s attention. One of the prominent news value is conflict. The majority of news that are covered by newspaper are either conflict or crisis news (Conley & Lamble, 2006). Newspaper coverage can have affirmative or destructive impact on the specific issue (Cheong & Zanuddin, 2017). Media plays an important part in communicating the crisis to the public.

Terrorism news can't be separated from news and news such as Iraq war, Afghanistan war, India-Pakistan war, North Korean war and other kinds of crisis news appeared in most of the local and international newspapers. Crises threaten to damage reputations because a crisis gives people reasons to think badly of the organization. News in media and the internet play a critical role during a crisis. Most of the stakeholders will learn about a crisis from news reports. "Crisis consists of five dimensions such as: 'it is highly identifiable and can be seen by the public, needs immediate attention, uses an element of shock, needs immediate solution and that a country that faces the crisis is out of control'" (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993). Adams and Roebuck (2007) said that most of the crisis happened without any expectation and preparation, it requires a surprised feeling followed by a trigger; whereby crisis can influence public's perception of the government.

Crisis of terrorism is known as using aggressive acts of violence to harm people physically and mentally to make them scared and fearful from sabotage, riots, kidnappings, mass poisoning, rape, bombing and unlawful imprisonment (Norris *et al.*, 2003 2003). In the United States (U.S) Marine Barracks in Beirut on October 1983, the suicide attempts succeeded after they convinced the U.S. to withdraw their soldiers from Lebanon. The same phenomena happened that resulted the U. S to pull out their soldiers from Saudi Arabia two years after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Again the same thing happened to the Filipino government when they called back their soldiers from Iraq after Iraqi extremists kidnapped a Filipino truck driver (Kydd & Walter, 2006).

Lahad Datu crisis falls into the terrorism type of crisis because according to Norris *et al.* (2003), terrorism crisis is known and defined as the systematic procedure in using force and violence against innocent public to achieve their political goals. Techniques used in terrorism are using aggressive violence in order to harm people physically and mentally such as through sabotage, riots, kidnappings, mass poisoning, rape, bombing and unlawful imprisonment to make people scared and fearful through a systematic pattern and procedure as per planned earlier by the terrorist group, their main targets are usually ordinary citizens or the innocent public. Due to the Sulu group demanding power of authority from the Malaysian government in such ways, overall, in this report the researcher will use terrorism crisis perspective.

Kydd and Walter (2006) said that terrorism works well because it causes individuals, government or state to respond to the terrorist's goals. The first principal strategy used by terrorists is attrition. Attrition means terrorist try to persuade the enemy through showing them that the terrorists are strong enough to cause destruction. The second type of principal of terrorist strategy is to use intimidation. Intimidation is when terrorists try to convince the public through revealing that they able and willing to do any extreme things in order to affect normal citizens and trying to frame the government or authority as being incapable to stop them. The third type of terrorist strategy is to use provocation; it's an act to persuade the government to respond to terrorists in order to stop them from violent behavior. This is followed by the use of spoiling strategy, which is using persuasion to negotiate with the government with the

perception that terrorists are weak and untrustworthy, and lastly is to use outbidding when they are able to influence the public and win public support.

## **5.2. Media Framing**

During crisis, public eager for updated information. Media is an important tool for them to gather information. This research employ Entman (1993) framing analysis because it can help to analyze visual messages portrayed in media especially in the news, and it connects news on finding the causal of problem, interpretation of problem, provide judgments and give recommendation for selected conflict news coverage. When the media place stories in specific frames, they lend a different meaning to the news. Furthermore, media's function to increase or decrease the salience of issues, can allows the public to remember and make judgments on such issues. Media are powerful because media have the potential to shape and influence the public's opinion and behavior (Entman, 2007). Furthermore, media is responsible to update their publics with latest and accurate information (Zanuddin & Abdoulaye, 2017).

Stories in media is used by publics to gather appropriate and updated information. The way information is transfer in news report can affect reader perceptions about the covered issue. So that, it is important for any organization, people or parties to used framing process in informing and suggesting response for a crisis (Entman, 2007). Many researchers did many studies in examining textual analysis of crisis coverage. To fill the gap, the researcher in this study used visual elements in framing analysis to examine how the visual messages was portrayed by mainstream news coverage.

Applying this framing analysis to Lahad Datu conflict can help media to portray information through selected visuals in examining how the conflict news was portrayed in newspaper to identify the main reasons for the crisis along with suggested response to overcome the conflict. The framing research in mass communication serves to illuminate the rationale behind the crisis types as crisis frames. Frames are concerned about salience or emphasis and operate on two related levels: frames in communication and frames in thought. Frames in communication involving using images, words, phrases and many other elements that can present via messages such as providing whole background story of a crisis. However, frames in thought involve the cognitive structures (such as scripts or schema) people utilize when interpreting information (Druckman, 2001). Added by Druckman, framing effects occurs when a communicator selects certain factors to emphasize. The people who receive the message will focus their attentions on those factors when forming their opinions and making judgments after read through the news.

During crisis, frame can stimulate psychological reaction among readers. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) identified five news frames in order of predominance, they are: attribution of responsibility, conflict, economic, human interest, and morality frame. They added that the attribution of responsibility frame was the most predominantly used in crisis news coverage. The first type of frame in news is conflict frame. Conflict frame is used to portray quarrel or disagreement among individual, groups, society or country. Most of the news issue portrays conflict to grab a reader's attention. Morality frame will direct issues or problems in the context of creating sympathy and to behave rationally. Followed by

the economic consequence frame of reporting on issue that impacts the overall economic sector to individuals, groups, society or country. Human interest frame is about discussing issue to satisfy reader's needs. Finally, the attribution of responsibility frame discusses about finding solution and recommendation for a problem.

Entman (1993) suggested that the frame can be identified and examined by "the presence or the absence of certain keywords, phrases, particular images, source of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing cluster, facts or judgment" and Tankard (2001) arranged the most comprehensive empirical approach for identifying and measuring news frames such as headlines, subheads, photos, photo captions, leads, sources selection, quotes selection, pull quotes, logos, statistics and charts, and concluding sentences and paragraphs. The selection of any particular framing device as suggested by Tankard can determine how the mainstream media in Malaysia framed the Lahad Datu crisis.

Frames, suggests that the mass media do even more than create saliency. By selecting what to include and what to exclude from a story, the news media frame a story. Media limit or define the story's meaning and thereby shape people's interpretation of that story (Hallahan, 1999). Gamson and Modigliani (1989) identify framing devices such as metaphor, exemplars, catch-phrases, depictions and visual images that provide information and offer media package of an issue.

Hallahan (1999) said that frame can be define as a message's meaning by shaping the inferences that individuals make about the message. Journalist use frames to put information into a usable context for readers, to make stories accessible and meaningful to their audiences, and to enable readers to act upon information when appropriate. Framing is doing it's job effectively in mass media while emphasizing issue's importance through selection of photos, interesting texts, portraying of actors, attracting headlines and so on to define the problems and find solutions for the problems (Entman, 1993).

### **5.3. Visual Framing of War**

Coleman (2006) said that images and visuals can add on information which is not available in printed words. Visual can be a substitute message to any printed words in disseminating message. Coleman also noted that images induce people to think deeply. He also added that photos in news can elicit more emotional responses among readers. In investigating the framing of the Iraq War in both national and foreign media, Dimitrova and Strömbäck (2005), conducted a content analysis of articles in *The New York Times* and *Dagens Nyheter*, a Swedish newspaper, during the official war period. They found *The New York Times* emphasized more on military operations, troops, arsenal, and combat visual images compare to *Dagens Nyheter*.

Carpenter (2007) conducted a content analysis comparing the visual framing of the Iraqi War in articles from elite U.S. newspapers with articles from non-elite U.S. newspapers. Carpenter found that elite publications were more likely to use visual of military frames, and non-elite newspapers were more likely to use visual of human interest or anti-war frames. Through visual framing, particular pictures and photos can create a linkage between the issues and publics in the country especially during crisis

coverage. Fahmy (2007) explored visual differences in the coverage of the second Gulf War from *The New York Times* and *The Guardian*. They found numerous differences in the visual coverage of the war. For example, *The New York Times* focused on images of the U.S. military and government officials while *The Guardian* focused more photos of material destruction in Iraq.

Dobernig and Lobinger (2010) explored differences in the coverage of the 2009 Gaza crisis in four printed news sources in Palestinian press and Israeli press. Study found out, Palestinian press using individual civilians as visual representation which portrayed a sense of empathy, while the Israeli press was represented by visuals of political or governmental officials portraying responsibility and responses. Schwalbe (Schwalbe) did a visual content analysis study to examine visual portrayal of the Iraq war in *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News* and *World Report* of the Iraq War. Visuals were coded according to conflict images such as weapons, troops, and combat images. This is followed by visual of violence of war such as the results of conflict; for instances injury, death and destruction images. Human interest visuals are also included by Schwalbe such as civilians and humanitarian relief workers, politicians, antiwar protests images, media self-referential, looting images, oil resources and others. Results revealed that the pictures of weapons, troops, civilians and military leaders appeared most in all the dailies compared to other images such as oil resources, looting, and so on.

A study by Ben-Yehuda *et al.* (2013) of crisis press coverage (CPC) to examine the reporting of Arab-Israel and East-West conflicts for 14 short crises in the Arab-Israel and East-West conflicts. Quantitative content analysis researches in this study measure the coverage of text items, headlines, photos and graphics for up to 21 days. Overall, 136 conflicts were depicted from Arab-Israel conflicts and 395 conflicts from East-West conflicts. The study showed that politicians and decision makers' photos appeared more on the front page in both newspapers followed by soldiers and militants as the second most frequent image shown. The messages of the photo in this study expressed concern response as a core emotion.

## **6. Research Methods**

This study employed quantitative content analysis in order to achieve the research objective. Content media research methodology has been used extensively by many media researchers (Amahallawi & Zanuddin, 2017; Cheong & Zanuddin, 2017; Watimin & Zanuddin, 2017). Four selected Malaysian mainstream newspapers were chosen for this study based on their circulation in the Audit Bureau Circulation Malaysia (Refer to Table 1). Quantitative content analysis is used to identify portrayal of visual images through news coverage because traditional mass media such as newspapers are the best mediators of propaganda during conflict (Zanuddin & Amahallawi, 2017) . The focus of this research is on printed media which is newspapers. The rationale choosing printed media is because, sources

are most often quoted in the print media, and the print media reaches out to the mass audience (Chang, 2009).

The selection of newspapers in this study were selected from three different ethnic orientation such as *Utusan Malaysia* newspaper to represent Malay community, *The Star* to represent many ethnic in Malaysia, *Sin Chew* to represent Chinese community and finally *Nanban* daily to serve Tamil community in Malaysia.

**Table 01.** Circulation of selected mainstream newspapers in Malaysia

Newspapers	Circulation
Utusan Malaysia	191, 302
The Star	289, 362
Sin Chew	385, 299
Nanban	55, 000

Source: (<http://abcm.org.my/Jan-2013-to-June-2013-ABC-Circulation-Figures-PM-Price-Band.pdf>)

## 7. Findings

### 7.1. The Coverage

This study has found 466 news of Lahad Datu crisis throughout four newspapers from 9<sup>th</sup> February until 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2013. Since Lahad Datu crisis is an unusual situation among publics in Malaysia, researcher interested to know about the frequency of news in all mainstream newspaper in Malaysia.

**Table 02.** Frequency of Coverage of the Lahad Datu crisis by different newspapers

Newspaper Percentage	Frequency	Valid
<b>Utusan Malaysia</b>	159	34.1
<b>The Star</b>	105	22.5
<b>Sin Chew Daily</b>	113	24.2
<b>Nanban Daily</b>	89	19.1
<b>Total</b>	466	100.0

Table 2 indicates the number of articles and percentage of news based on the type of the newspapers and news report on the Lahad Datu crisis during the year 2013. It was found that *Utusan Malaysia* carried the largest coverage 159 (34.1%), followed by *Sin Chew* 113 (24.2%), *The Star* 105 (22.5%), and *Nanban* 89 (19.1%).

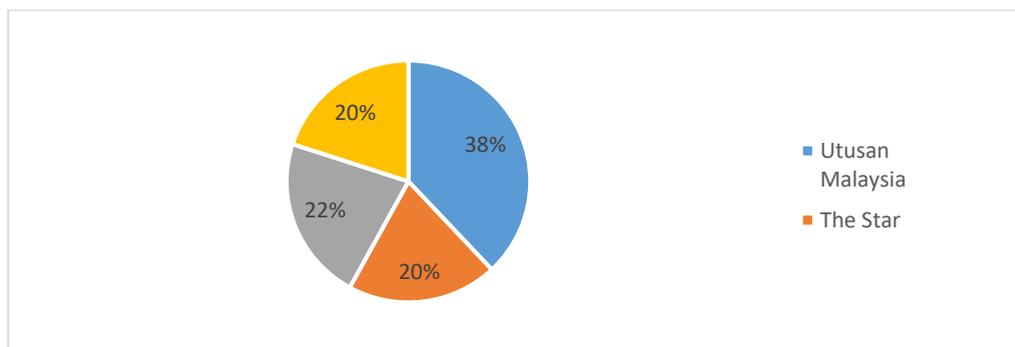
## 7.2. News Framing

**Table 03.** News Frames of Lahad Datu crisis in selected dailies

Newspapers				Total
Utusan Malaysia	The Star	Sin Chew	Nanban	
30	10	17	10	67
10	9	6	11	36
14	10	6	5	35
82	58	61	48	249
23	18	23	15	79
159	105	113	89	466

According to Entman (1993) & Hallahan (1999), frames can shape people's perception through the use of themes, word, headline, paragraph and some other elements in writing news and portraying pictures in media. In this study, the researcher was able to figure out the highest and most dominant frames employed in all of the mainstream dailies in Malaysia. The *attribution of responsibility frame* is the strongest frame in Lahad Datu conflict in all newspapers at 53.4% followed by economic *consequences frame* 17%, *conflict* for 14.4% and *human interest* and *morality frame* are 7.7% and 7.5% respectively. The reason why *attribution of responsibility frame* covered the most is because, all the dailies wanted to portray solution for the crisis and to make a stable situation in the country rather than admitting that there is a crisis (Coombs, 2007).

## 7.3. Visual frequency of Lahad Datu crisis



**Figure 02.** News Frames of Lahad Datu crisis in selected dailies

Coleman said images can induce people to think deeply about the issue and he added that photos in news can elicit more emotional responses among readers. In agreeing with his information, one of the variables for this research is visual framing of the Lahad Datu conflict. Overall, from 466 news on Lahad

Datu issue, the data depicted 288 visual images for it. Among the 288 visuals, as listed in figure 4.9, 38% of visual images were portrayed by *Utusan Malaysia*, followed by *Sin Chew daily* for 22%. *Nanban daily* and *The Star* respectively covered for 20% of visuals. When the researcher measured the messages portrayed by shown visuals, as per Figure 3, the findings showed that the majority of the visuals of Lahad Datu conflict portrayed messages that needed urgent attention or with immediate solution needed from the authority because, 130 visuals from 288 portrayed an impending crisis that needed immediate solution followed by visuals of information sharing, with 83 visuals covered in information sharing messages such as providing information and news about Lahad Datu crisis or explanations on the root cause and background of the Lahad Datu crisis. Sympathy visual messages consisted of 29 visuals. In explaining the sympathy visual messages, *Utusan Malaysia* carried the highest visuals for 14 articles followed by *The Star*, *Nanban* and *Sin Chew daily*. *Sin Chew*'s visual are more on information sharing and crisis need immediate solution rather than expressing their sympathy through news coverage. Chi square test was performed by the researcher to know the significant differences among newspapers and portrayal of visual messages. A Chi Square test revealed a significant difference in portrayal of visual messages on Lahad Datu conflict among four selected dailies for the value of 110.824<sup>a</sup>,  $P < .05$ .

Based on Figure 3, *Utusan Malaysia* newspaper portraying images on Lahad Datu crisis need an immediate solution from relevant crisis manager. And same messages were portrayed in *Nanban daily* because two of these dailies dominant visuals were on crisis need to solve immediately. Data concluded that among the four dailies, *Utusan Malaysia* and *Nanban daily* are showing images of Lahad Datu crisis need an immediate solution.

Visuals in the *Sin Chew daily* are more concentrating on the information sharing images to provide updated and necessary information about Lahad Datu crisis to their respective readers and *Sin Chew daily* also portraying the highest images of information sharing together with sympathy visual images in order to update people with the necessary information and at the same time expressing news editor's sympathy towards the impacted people. In showing scary images, data in Figure 3, revealing that, *Sin Chew daily* portrayed most of the scary and sympathy images compare to other three dailies. Scary and sympathy images portrayed most in *Sin chew daily* is mainly because, this daily want to alert people regarding the dangerous that might face by Malaysian public if an immediate solution is not taken.

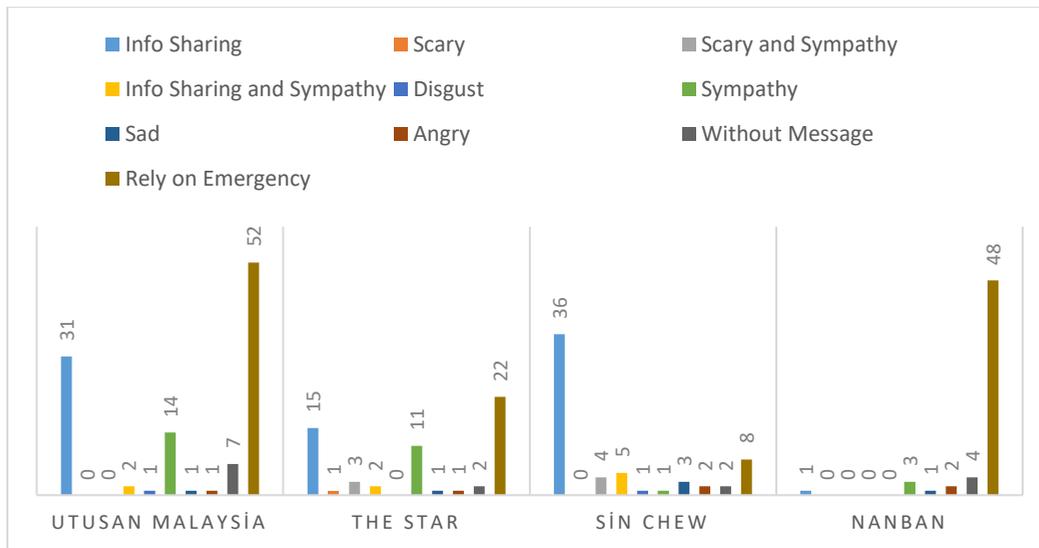


Figure 03. Visual Messages of Lahad Datu Crisis

#### 7.4. Portrayal of Lahad Datu Images and Newspapers

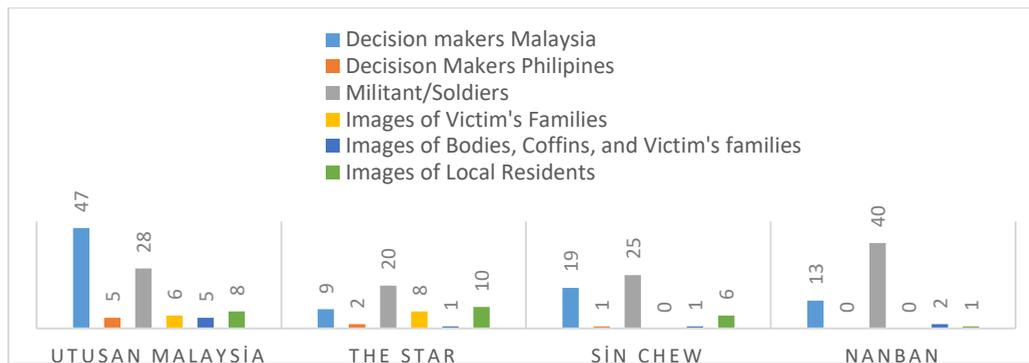


Figure 04. Portrayal of Lahad Datu Images in Newspapers

For the portrayal of visual images for the selected period, data revealed that, visual of militants and soldiers of Malaysian security personnel were portrayed most which is 113 articles. Similar findings were depicted with Dimitrova and Strömbäck (2005) & Carpenter Carpenter (2007), founded the emphasized visuals were on military operations, troops, arsenal, and combat visual images. Images of Malaysian decision makers and politician images is in second highest which is 88 articles is accordance with previous studies by Dobernig and Lobinger (2010), Schwalbe (2013) & and (Ben-Yehuda *et al.* (2013)) revealed that the highest portrayal of visual are decision maker and authority people. Followed by images of local residents of 25 articles from 288 articles in this visual portrayal of LD crisis. Researcher found that, the highest portrayal of militant and soldier pictures were portrayed in *Nanban* daily most and for the images of decision maker and politicians in Malaysia, *Utusan Malaysia* covered most. In showing any association

between the dailies, Chi Square test was ran by researcher and the result revealed a significant differences in portrayal of Lahad Datu crisis pictures among four dailies with the value of 97.886<sup>a</sup>,  $P < .05$  (Refer to figure 4).

Images of local residents and villagers from Sabah appeared most in *The Star* daily compare to *Utusan Malaysia*, *Sin Chew* and *Nanban* daily. *The Star* daily portrayed 10 visuals of images of local residents compared to *Utusan Malaysia* for 8 visuals, *Sin Chew* daily for 6 visuals and *Nanban* daily for 1 visual only. *The star* portrayed most of images of local residents and villagers from Sabah is because the *Star* daily interested to create a bond and linkage between news readers and Sabah people in the news agenda through *The Star* also is the daily that portrayed most of the images of victim's families. This is due to *The Star* would like to express their sad and sympathy through portrayal of victim's family photos to generate feelings among their readers.

Images of militant and soldiers were portrayed most in *Nanban* daily followed by the images of decision makers in Malaysia. *Nanban* daily in serving Tamil community in Malaysia, able to provide necessary information to their readers on the solution and emergency of the Lahad Datu crisis. Same scenario applied to *Sin Chew* daily because the highest coverage of visuals for the *Sin Chew* daily is from images of militant and soldiers followed by decision makers in Malaysia. However, for *The Star* daily, after the most dominant of visual coverage of militant and soldiers, images of local residents were portrayed most. In examining the visuals in *Utusan Malaysia*, data revealed that *Utusan Malaysia* portrayed most of the decision makers in Malaysia and followed by militant and soldier images as per figure 4. Samples of visuals used as below:



Photo 1 & 2: Air Asia assisted Ministry of Defense and Army Troop Arrival in Lahad Datu, Sabah & Visual Images Portraying.



Photo 3 & 4: Visual Images Malaysian Defense in the Tamil Newspaper.



Photo 5 & 6: Visual Images of Malaysian Army Defending Lahad Datu portrayed in the English newspaper the Star.



Photo 7 & 8: Visual Images strong support by the Malaysian Minister of Defense and the Prime Minister giving moral support to the army covered in the Malay Language newspaper, Utusan Malaysia.

Figure 05. Samples of visuals: Source: Sin Chew, 2013

## 8. Conclusion

Quantitative content analysis, together with systematic coding book were able to deliver some interesting and useful data for further understanding of the elements and variables to frame crisis effectively. Throughout this research, the results depicted that 466 news about Lahad Datu crisis were

found in the duration of study. *Utusan Malaysia* portrayed the highest frequency of “LD” crisis coverage followed by *Sin Chew daily*, *The Star* and *Nanban daily* respectively. In doing framing by media for different newspapers, the results showed that, *attribution of responsibility* frame dominated in all newspapers except for *Sin Chew daily* which focused on *Conflict* frame the most. In examining the visual attached with LD Crisis news, *Utusan Malaysia* portrayed most of the visuals and majority of the visual images spread out Lahad Datu incident is rely and depend on emergency solution followed by information sharing and expressing sympathy concern. For the portrayal of visuals, the highest coverage of visuals are pictures of militants and soldiers followed by politicians who are decision makers. In finding the differences between dailies, Chi Square test revealed that there is a significant difference in portrayal of pictures whereby *The Star*, *Sin Chew* *Nanban daily* portray most of the militant and soldier visuals and Malaysian decision maker pictures were portrayed in *Utusan Malaysia* newspapers.

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