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**A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW OF KNOWLEDGE AND  
AWARENESS ON TERRORISM**

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**Abstract**

The reporting on terrorism issues especially related to Islam and Muslims has been widely researched by scholars, academics, practitioners, and other relevant parties. However, the importance to address the level of understanding and awareness on terrorism issues seems more imperative. This paper reviews how knowledge and awareness of this issue as studied by previous scholars, politicians, the media, academics, and security professionals. It focuses on the specific research techniques or methodologies that have emerged, the possible insights they offer, and the challenges and impacts they raise. With that, there is a need to do methodological-based articles on Systematic Literature Review (SLR). Guided by the PRISMA review method; a systematic review that identifies 20 related studies throughout Scopus, Web of Science, and other databases. Based on this study, five main points of SLR were discussed such as; aims of the study; study design, level of understanding; level of awareness; the findings.

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*Keywords:* PRISMA review method, systematic literature review, terrorism understanding, terrorism awareness, Islam and Muslims



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## 1. Introduction

Research on terrorism has a rich perspective and the definition of terrorism also can be varying and universal. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2018) defines terrorism as the systematic use of terror especially as a means of coercion. In other regards, the burgeoning research on media and terrorism continues as the number of terrorism attacks increases worldwide especially in the advent of the new millennium (Fahmy, 2017). Also, very large academic literature examines the discourses and public representations of terrorism.

For example, Borum (2004) defined terrorism as “acts of violence intentionally perpetrated on civilian non-combatants with the goal of furthering some ideological, religious or political objective.” The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights office (2008) defined terrorism as acts of violence that target civilians in the pursuit of political or ideological aims and includes “criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes”. In 2012 Jackson and Hall defined terrorism as an occasional subject of national and international interest before 9/11, it is now ubiquitous, and its influence can be detected in virtually every dimension of contemporary social life. Notwithstanding of wide definition of terrorism which has been stated above, Schuurman (2019) conclude that research on terrorism has retained a strong focus on al-Qaeda, jihadist terrorism more generally, and the geographic areas most strongly associated with this type of terrorist violence based on the articles published between 2007 and 2016.

In light of the above, the importance of knowledge and awareness towards terrorism issues are imperative amongst society.

Due to this, the work of Rose and Larrimore (2002) conducted a survey of 291 nurses and medical staff, and students to examine the knowledge and awareness about chemical and biological terrorism among health care providers. Based on their study, it mentioned that the knowledge scores of the respondents were low, and only less than one-fourth of the knowledge questions were answered correctly. Patel et al. (2020) echo this idea by collecting data and integrating information from various sources with the use of ontology for semantical knowledge representation.

This work is expected to positively impact the government agencies, NGOs, media, and public at large by having a better platform of information in the case of emergency and they will be able to liaise with each other. Thus, the awareness of terrorism is improved among them. Following this, the researchers try to narrow down the topic on terrorism by examining the understanding and awareness of terrorism issues through a systematic review method. This is significant mainly to discover to what extent society understands and is aware of terrorism issues as in media reports.

This article is part of a larger project on the formation of an instrument on the level of knowledge and awareness towards violence and extremist from the perspective of western media. Different methods have been used to study terrorism and media such as through content analysis, survey, and also in-depth interviews. However, a systematic review method can help the readers as well as academics to study the pattern and identify the research gap for future research on media and terrorism.

According to Higgins et al. (2011), SLR or also known as systematic review (SR) is a systematic literature review which involves three main procedures which are organized, transparent and replicable in

all process, especially when to locate and synthesize all the articles. To give an example Mohamed Shaffril et al. (2021) also stated that SLR has emphasized numerous unique procedures compared to the traditional review method.

On top of that, many previous scholars such as Robinson and Lowe (2015), Greyson et al. (2019) Lockwood et al. (2015), and Mallett et al. (2012) also explained the advantages of SLR. Based on this list of literature, SLR encourages researchers to do extensive searching methods by examining the information such as research design, analytical methods, and causal chains. Most importantly, they suggested that SLR can help to increase the transparency in which all the criteria must be included to ensure the robustness of the research.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Despite an abundance of research on media and terrorism, efforts to study the level of knowledge and awareness towards this issue are still lacking. Thus, this research attempts to fill the gap in understanding the level of knowledge and awareness towards terrorism as reported by the Western media.

This research will look into the research patterns and trends in terrorism through a systematic review method. With regards to fulfilling the empirical gaps, such items and checklists from articles studied could be derived to contribute new knowledge for future research and scholarly work. Additionally, this systematic review provides a reference for future studies related to the level of knowledge and awareness on terrorism issues. Other than that, this review is also crucial as there is a lack of studies on terrorism within the level of knowledge and awareness context.

This systematic review study allows information providers to understand the knowledge and awareness on terrorism easier as reported by the Western media which are also relevant for administrators, academics, policymakers, and media practitioners.

## **3. Research Questions**

- 3.1. What is the level of knowledge and awareness towards terrorism issue?
- 3.2. What is the pattern of study on media and terrorism?

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

1. To study the level of knowledge and awareness on terrorism issue
2. To study the pattern and identify the research gap for future research on media and terrorism

## **5. Research Methods**

A systematic review attempts to collate all empirical evidence that fits pre-specified eligibility criteria to answer a specific research question.

According to Liberati et al. (2009), a systematic review contains four aspects which are (a) a clearly stated set of objectives with an explicit, reproducible methodology; (b) a systematic search that attempts to

identify all studies that would meet the eligibility criteria; (c) an assessment of the validity of the findings of the included studies, for example through the assessment of the risk of bias; and (d) systematic presentation, and synthesis, of the characteristics and findings of the included studies. Meta-analysis a statistical method that integrates and summarises results from relevant publications selected in the systematic review (Zurynski et al., 2015).

Furthermore, it also can provide more precise estimates of the effects of health care than those derived from the individual studies included within a review. From this, it can be said that systematic review and meta-analysis can minimize bias and providing reliable findings.

The analysis of PRISMA or Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses has been used to ensure the transparent and complete reporting of systematic reviews and meta-analyses (Liberati et al., 2009). Thus, this research follows the four steps in PRISMA.

The four steps are identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion (Gillath & Karantzas, 2019). As for identification, authors focus on searching articles through a database and also other additional sources. Then, it continuous with screening to exclude and remove any duplicate articles.

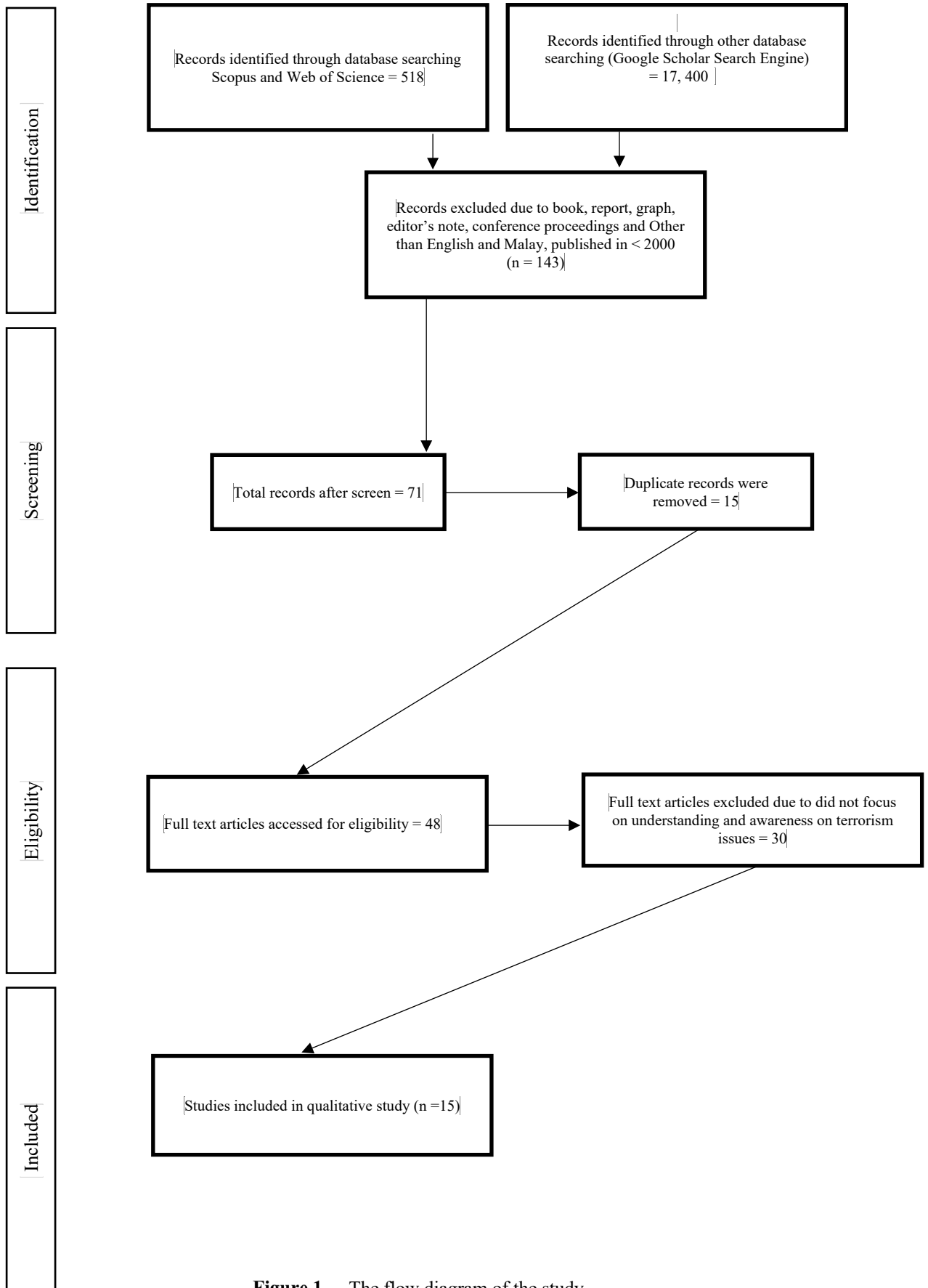
Eligibility is to find out the full-text article which can be assessed and lastly, the inclusion will be focusing on a combination of qualitative and quantitative synthesis. Hence, this four-phase covered and show numbers of identified records, excluded articles, and included studies.

**Table 1.** Keywords and search strings

Databases	Keywords Used
Scopus and Web of Science	(“understanding on terrorism” OR “awareness on terrorism” OR “level of understanding on terrorism” OR “level of awareness on terrorism” OR “Islam and terrorism”)
Other databases	(“understanding on terrorism” OR “awareness on terrorism” OR “level of understanding on terrorism” OR “level of awareness on terrorism” OR “terrorism and media” OR “understanding and awareness on terrorism” OR “Islam and terrorism)

**Table 2.** The inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Timeline	2000 – 2020	< 2000
Document Type	Research articles	Book, report, graph, editor’s note, conference proceedings
Language	English and Malay	Other than English and Malay



**Figure 1.** The flow diagram of the study

## 6. Findings

With limited time and accessibility, the researchers have identified selected articles through electronic databases using PRISMA from 2000 until 2020 (as in Figure 1). The researchers have examined these records through abstract and full-text review only which resulted in a total of 15 articles for qualitative synthesis. The details of 15 articles were evaluated and presented in Table 3 by featuring authors, year, study design, level of understanding of terrorism, level of awareness on terrorism, and the findings.

**Table 3.** Summary of Understanding and Awareness on Terrorism Study characteristics and Outcomes (2000 – 2020)

Authors/Year	Topic	Study Design	Aim of the study	Level of understanding	Level of awareness	The Findings
Rose, M. A., & Larrimore, K. L. (2002).	Knowledge and Awareness Concerning Chemical and Biological Terrorism: Continuing Education Implications	Quantitative (Survey)	To examine the knowledge and awareness of chemical and biological terrorism among health care providers.	The knowledge scores of the respondents were low, and only less than one-fourth of the knowledge questions were answered correctly.	Not studied	These findings indicate a need for nurses in continuing education and staff development to develop, implement, and evaluate innovative domestic terrorism preparedness programs.
Pries-Shimshi, Y. (2007)	Creating a citizenry prepared for terrorism: Education, media and public awareness.	Not stated	To suggest some methods to increase awareness about terrorism which include public campaigns and exercises & simulations. These methods are effective to increase public knowledge and awareness about terrorism.	These campaigns run on television, radio, written press, subway billboards, and street billboards. Such efforts integrate the public constructively in the fight against terrorism by empowering them to recognize potential threats. In Australia, the government distributed a special booklet, written in 31 languages to all households across the continent explaining terrorism to bring it up on the public agenda. Other	Not studied	Empowerment of the citizenry, through educational initiatives and campaigns, creates a powerful counterterrorism tool for furthering public understanding of terrorism and mitigating the effectiveness of terrorism

				than that, conducting lectures, seminars courses, and continuing education programs for various target audiences in Israel, aiming to teach the facts about terrorism.		
McGovern, G. P. (2011)	Situational Awareness in Terrorism and Crime Prevention	Not stated	Extending the necessity for knowledge and awareness about terrorism to be expanded to all groups of citizens. The main question asked here is what an average citizen will do when there is an alarm about terrorism by the government?	Not studied	It suggests building situational awareness which is by accepting that the world is a dangerous place to live in.	Recognized that an average citizen is not prepared to deal adequately with a terrorist attack. Without arms and weapons, an average citizen must set a situational awareness mindset that a person must consciously employ every time they leave a location with a "relaxed awareness".
Orehek, E., & Vazeou-Nieuwenhuis, A. (2014)	Understanding the Terrorist Threat: Policy Implications of a Motivational Account of Terrorism	Not stated	(a) the scope of the terrorist threat, (b) what drives perceiving terrorism as an instrumental means of reaching political goals, (c) how the quest for personal significance motivates adopting terrorism-justifying ideologies, and (d) how this understanding of terrorism may inform counter-terrorism policy considerations.	Not studied	Campaigns often attempt to make the public aware of a terrorist threat, intending to have the public assist in the prevention	Unfortunately, no simple solution can end violence in general or terrorism in particular. A motivational account of terrorism suggests specific policy considerations but does not identify which course of action most reduces violence.
Alqahtani, A. (2014)	Awareness of the Potential Threat of Cyberterrorism to the National Security	Qualitative (In-depth Interview)	To develop a conceptual framework for awareness of cyberterrorism threats from the viewpoint of experts and security	Not studied	Many respondents see the importance of the awareness of threats to understand more about the risks posed to	The findings showed that cyberterrorism awareness can be into three categories which are the importance of awareness,

			officials in critical infrastructure.		staff and facilities. Awareness of the threat is the catalyst for seeking to understand it.	types of awareness, and good and bad of awareness.
Che Mohd Aziz, Y., Bakri, M., Fakhrorazi, A., Mohd Azizuddin, M.S., Rusdi, O., & Kamarul Zaman, H. Y. (2016)	Kefahaman Dan Penerimaan Mahasiswa Universiti Awam Terhadap Gerakan Isis	Quantitative (Survey) and Qualitative (Focus Group Discussion )	The objective of this study is to ascertain the level of understanding about ISIS among students of higher learning institutions in Peninsular Malaysia and to ascertain the potential for their acceptance and rejection of ISIS' struggle.	The level of understanding of IPT students towards ISIS is relatively low, especially when the questions posed to them about ISIS are specific questions such as ISIS's relationship with al-Qaeda and the true understanding of ISIS. Most prominent is when there are still many among IPT students who fail to understand that ISIS is a terrorist organization.	The level of acceptance of IPT students towards the ISIS struggle was also low with a cumulative mean of less than 2.00 and a consistent mean value below 3.00 for each item studied. This phenomenon indicates a good level of awareness among the respondents of IPT students studied. It is a good indicator from the aspect of national security	The threat of ISIS has become an urgent threat for Malaysia to deal with wisely. So far, the Malaysian security forces seem to be able to curb the ISIS threat because the Malaysians involved are now mostly veteran Salafi fighters who were previously also involved with al-Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah.
Jackson, R., & Hall, G. (2012)	Knowing Terrorism: A Study on Lay Knowledge of Terrorism and Counter-terrorism	Qualitative (Focus Group Discussion )	Research on how messages and representations about terrorism are received by the public, and what laypeople know and believe about the phenomena.	The lack of knowledge is directly related to a deep distrust of the media as an authoritative source of information	The deep awareness of the role of media in producing influential representations based on labeling most frequently produced a deep sense of powerlessness	Based on this observation, it has normative implications about the role of knowledge and education in changing people's beliefs and knowledge, and hence, their possibilities for resistance and political action.
Jerome, L. E. E., & Elwick, A. (2019)	Identifying an Educational Response to the Prevent Policy: Student Perspectives on Learning about Terrorism, Extremism, and Radicalisation	Qualitative (Focus Group Discussion )	To discuss the level of awareness among school students in the UK about terrorism who experiences a curriculum project on terrorism, extremism, and radicalization.	Based on the focus group conducted, there is a need to enhance political literacy and media literacy to ensure a better understanding of terrorism among the younger generation.	The awareness could only be increased when the knowledge is increased. Students will be able to develop a more sophisticated understanding of terrorism because they are now able to appreciate	Through political literacy, it becomes the basis for them to become more critical to stories they read in the media and social media. From media literacy, they can understand political implications



Keenan, K. (2018)	Rethinking place in the study of societal responses to terrorism: Insights from Boston, Massachusetts (USA)	Qualitative (In-depth Interview)	This paper presents several contributions to public policy, including rethinking a place-based paradigm for how emergency managers communicate with the public, how to generate a politics of fear reduction based in place, and how to rethink future studies on terrorism to appreciate the practical places of everyday life.	The respondent summarises the point that this paper is making. The respondent notes that the media is indeed a source for information about terrorism, and this serves as a prompt to think about the hazard.	and deal with differences. What politicians say about terrorism may amplify vulnerability awareness, and this may serve intentional and nefarious political goals. But whether or not my respondents thought terrorism was likely in familiar places – and the conversations prompted by these thoughts – attenuated vulnerability awareness.	and diversity in a deeper sense. Understanding the historical context in which terrorism was generated advances our understanding of why and how terrorism might occur today. However, understanding how non-terrorists perceive their risk at those moments in time which in this study was through the place – will help us understand societal responses.
Mohd Hefzan, A., Azmi, A., & Ishak. A. R. (2018)	The Ideology of Terrorism Among University Students: Issues and Challenges	Quantitative (Survey)	This study aimed to examine the extent of the spread of ideological terrorism against undergraduate University	The level of understanding of students is generally at a low level based on the average overall mean value of 1.63.	Based on the feedback that has been answered by the respondents showed an unfavorable percentage of questions in the form of comprehension. This can help researchers obtain an initial picture of the level of understanding of students that students do not really understand the modus operandi of militant groups, therefore if the level of understanding of respondents is low then the awareness of students is also at a less satisfactory level.	Many students tend to reject this ideology of terrorism based on the percentage that most choose not to support acts of terrorism.
Che Mohd Aziz, Y., Kamarulniza	Malaysian Attitude And Perception On	Quantitative (Survey) and	To identify the attitudes and	This data shows that the level of	Not studied	The findings showed that the level of

m, A., & Mohd Sofian, O. F. (2019)	Daesh's Ideological Struggle	Qualitative (Focus Group Discussion )	stances of Malaysians who are Muslims against the political struggle of Daesh.	understanding of Malaysians towards Daesh is still low even though news about Daesh incidents is often featured in various media channels. Despite various efforts by certain parties to inculcate the value of understanding to the people about Daesh but the people's acceptance is still at a weak level.	Not studied	understanding towards Daesh among Muslim Malaysians is around 79% while 90% rejected the ideology and only 9% accepted it. The rejection and acceptance among Malaysians were founded to be influenced by various factors such as background, family and education, personal issues, and access to alternative media.
Urango, K. E., & Lee, J. L. (2019)	Counter-Terrorism Policy of Mongolia: Raising Awareness on Terrorism		This study aims to suggest methods to quickly raise awareness and create a security culture to improve Mongolia's long-term terrorism prevention policy.	NATO counter-terrorism efforts focus on improving awareness of terrorism and enhance engagement with other countries in terms of shared awareness of threats, cooperation, and assessment. Understanding terrorism is essential as it will help ordinary citizens to understand how they can reduce the chances of becoming a victim.		For long time measure to increase awareness, Mongolia's counter-terrorism policy must be improved in terms of enhancing and expanding international cooperation and information sharing with other countries, improving information exchange between law enforcement agencies and improving the monitoring of foreigners, and tightening visa processing control.
Haner, M., Sloan, M. M., Cullen, F. T., Kulig, T. C., & Lero Jonson, C. (2019)	Public Concern about Terrorism: Fear, Worry, and Support for Anti-Muslim Policies	Quantitative (Survey)	(1) To understand Americans' concern about terrorism by placing it in context among other issues and examining the utility of theoretically-driven models for	In particular, individuals who were less educated were more likely to be fearful of a terrorist attack but were not more worried about being a victim of an attack.	Not studied	Terrorist attacks domestically and abroad have received increasing levels of attention because of the often devastating nature of these events. The relationships

			understanding this reaction.			among fear, worry, education, and age should be examined in future research to fully unpack these dynamics.
			(2) To examine whether concern about terrorism translates into support for policy measures that target Muslims in particular.			
Youngman, M. (2020)	Building “Terrorism Studies” as an Interdisciplinary Space: Addressing Recurring Issues in the Study of Terrorism	Not stated	Identify several advantages of establishing terrorism studies as a formal discipline. However, I ultimately seek to argue that some of the recurring issues faced in the study of terrorism are best addressed not merely by resisting this temptation, but by actively encouraging movement in the other direction and developing terrorism studies more explicitly as a space for interdisciplinary engagement.	Institutional support is lacking in other ways, too, and the costs of making field research the gold standard needs to be acknowledged. Some of these are financial: universities are, at the best of times, wealth-privileging institutions, and existing mechanisms of support often do not fully cover the considerable costs of fieldwork—particularly for those who, for whatever reason, cannot fully uproot to their field of study for lengthy periods.	Not studied	Developing terrorism studies as a space for interdisciplinary engagement, by contrast, would allow us to move some of the issues from the margins to the forefront of our thinking. Some of the most important findings of political violence come from those who do not identify as terrorism scholars.

The findings of this systematic review (limited to research published within 2000 until 2020) yield the total of 15 journal articles in English and Malay related to the level of understanding and awareness towards terrorism issues. In terms of quantity, this number is relatively small especially when we consider the timeline of articles included in this study (20 years) with two languages being included (English and Malay).

However, a broader subject on research related to terrorism may yield a greater number of studies. In this study however, we have focused on studies with such focus by arguing that to combat terrorism, we must first gain empirical data related to the level of “understanding” and “awareness” (Jerome & Elwick,

2019) then only further measures or steps may be implemented to reduce the effects of terrorism at various levels.

At the same time, from this study, we admit that it is hard to find specific articles which study precisely on the level of understanding and awareness towards terrorism issues. This is a worrying sign, because we believe that, to combat terrorism, we have to identify the root of the issue and these aspects include the level of understanding and the level of awareness among the people.

Another finding from this study shows that there are three main research scopes that have been studied in these researches namely focusing on 1) the level of understanding towards terrorism issues, 2) the level of awareness towards terrorism issues and 3) the level of understanding and awareness towards terrorism issues. Out of these three scopes, 10 researches focus on the level of understanding, 9 on the level of awareness and 5 on both aspects of research.

The less dominant themes found in six different research articles are “terrorism message”, “communication about terrorism by emergency managers”, “the spread of terrorism ideology”, “public’s response against terrorist groups”, “security culture”, and “terrorism studies”. Out of these six themes, the gist of the research is on terrorism issue in which each research looked at finding the way respondents perceive terrorism and one research highlighted on the possibility of having the studies of terrorism as a formal discipline at tertiary level.

From this finding, it suggests that research that examine both aspects about terrorism (the level of understanding and awareness towards terrorism issues) may be increased in the future. A stable number of studies have been conducted on comprehending the level of understanding and the level of awareness on this issue, but the combination of both needs more effort by scholars in the future. This is inline with the suggestion made by Jerome and Elwick (2019) who argued that the level of awareness related to terrorism issues among the people can only be increased when there is an increase of level of knowledge pertaining to this issue. The lack of knowledge is then associated with the issue of a deep distrust to the media that serve as the main source of information related to terrorism (Jackson & Hall, 2012; Keenan, 2018).

Kovacic and Logar (2016) through their study entitled *Online News Coverage of Terrorism: Between Informing the Public and Spreading Fear*. An analysis of 57 news reports about the case of the abduction and execution of Tomislav Salopek in 2015 has driven their study to highlight the dilemma between the public’s right to know or the security of the public. They argued that media has been used among terrorists to disseminate the ideology and activities just because to increase sales and ratings. But on the other hand, it is contradicting with The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (2021) which states that journalists do their reporting on terrorism due to the two rights which are the right to information (Article 19) and the right to security (Article 3). Based on their study, it is concludable that journalists should be aware that being immensely knowledgeable is very important and providing ethical reporting is also crucial to avoid any possible adverse consequences of the reporting such as giving the terrorist the opportunity to disseminate ideas and cause public fears. This is confirmed by Williamson et al. (2020) that media should carry the responsibility to provide accurate reporting about terrorism without instigating fear or panic. Similarly, Haner et al. (2019) conducted a national survey of 1000 Americans to understand the concern about terrorism, the emotional impact of the public’s concern, and their levels of fear of a terrorist attack which one of the findings stated that a large proportion of Americans experience fear as an emotional

response to the threat of a terrorist attack. This leads us to an important party when identifying crucial entities to be included in studying terrorism which will be one of the major respondents focused in the field work of this study when it is conducted.

Specifically on studies related to the level of understanding towards terrorism issues, some examples of research include Rose and Larrimore (2002) who examined the knowledge and awareness of chemical and biological terrorism among health care providers. Another study, which is conducted among university students in Malaysia by Yaakob et al. (2016) focused the aim of the research to ascertain the level of understanding about ISIS among students of higher learning institutions in Peninsular Malaysia and to ascertain the potential for their acceptance and rejection of ISIS' struggle. The results of these studies generally demonstrate that the level of understanding towards terrorism issues are low among students (Mohd Hefzan Azmi et al., 2018; Yaacob et al., 2016). The level is also low among specific type of workers (Rose & Larrimore, 2002) with low understanding level on a specific terrorism issue such as Daesh (Che Mohd Aziz et al., 2019). The low level of understanding is associated with the lack of institutional support that hesitate to fund longitudinal study on the level of understanding among people across geographical and organizational borders, and cultural differences (Youngman, 2020).

Relating to this, based on the SLR analysis conducted, the level of awareness towards terrorism issues can also be concluded as low as studies found that when the level of understanding is low, this will definitely affect the level of awareness which is impossible to score a high level (Mohd Hefzan Azmi et al., 2018). In terms of subject, the main aspect of "awareness" which can be included in public awareness campaigns (Orehek & Vazeou-Nieuwenhuis, 2014) and speeches and advocacies by politicians (Keenan, 2018) includes awareness on threat. Alqahtani (2014) found that awareness of threat is one of the crucial elements that must be included to increase awareness of how dangerous terrorism can be.

Studies that focused on both aspects i.e. the level of understanding and the level of awareness demonstrate that students generally have low understanding and awareness on issues related to terrorism (Mohd Hefzan Azmi et al., 2018). The same study also found that, among these students, they could not even understand the questions posted in the questionnaire. To increase the level of understanding, media play an important role (Jerome & Elwick, 2019) with the assumption that, the increase of awareness among the people can only be achieved by increasing the level of knowledge (Mohd Hefzan Azmi et al., 2018).

In terms of research method deployed in these studies, the analysis show that 4 studies deployed qualitative study (3 – focus group discussion; 1 – in-depth interview), 3 quantitative study with survey as the method and 2 studies deployed mixed method. 6 out of 15 studies examined do not state the method applied. From here, it can be concluded that two most popular research methods deployed in studies related to the level of understanding and awareness on issues related to terrorism are survey and focus group discussion. This seems obvious due to the strengths of these method. Survey provide a wide range of data pertaining to views of the respondents while focus group discussion allows in-depth and rich discoveries to be explored in a study (Creswell, 2013; Mason, 2002).

## 7. Conclusion

From the SLR analysis conducted, there are several aspects that have been discussed including the topics being studied in previous research pertaining to the level of understanding and awareness on issues related to terrorism, the number of research and the research method deployed in these researches.

In terms of the themes identified, since this study focused to investigations related to the level of understanding and the level of awareness related to terrorism issues, three major themes were discovered mainly 1) the level of understanding about terrorism issues, 2) the level of awareness about terrorism issues and 3) the level of understanding and the level of awareness about terrorism issues have been identified besides six other lesser dominant themes. Among these three major themes, the least number of research were done on the third theme. This should be something that scholars could pay attention too, as the association between the level of understanding and the level of awareness is highly connected. It is indeed difficult to increase the level of awareness when there is no or low level of understanding. Research studying on the combination of both aspects celebrates such association, that definitely could contribute more in-depth and more meaningful data to develop practical and workable instruments and measures to combat terrorism.

In terms of the research methods deployed, the study found that the most popular ones are focus group discussion and survey. For future studies, these methods may be used as both methods yield rich data in their own ways. However, more in-depth interviews may be conducted to provide “single and in-depth data”, to add to what survey and focus group discussion have to offer. Studies should not stop deploying survey and focus group discussion methods, in-depth interview should be added especially when research on the level of understanding and awareness on terrorism issues becomes more mature, hence it will offer more in-depth and specific data that will assist to administrative and empirical decision makings in the future. Qualitative studies will also offer not only in-depth data but also cultural-sensitive discoveries hence facilitate international collaboration to counter terrorism (Urangoo & Lee, 2019).

These future directions should at least spark motivation among researchers to conduct more studies related to terrorism in general and about the level of understanding and awareness more specifically. This thus then will increase the number of research in this specific issue, hence improving the limited number of studies as found in this study. Only a total of 15 studies found and analyzed in this SLR analysis, although the timeline of the study is 20 years. More studies on the combination of the level of understanding and the level of awareness must also be increased to ensure more impactful results may be obtained and shared. It is then studies on terrorism will give impact to policy making and having positive impacts to the people around the world.

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