

Typhoon Haiyan Coverage on Inquirer and The Wall Street Journal News Sites:

A Framing Analysis****

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Abstract: Natural disasters, which strike without warning and leave limited scope of preparedness, is a potentially traumatic event that is collectively experienced with severe consequences. With its high news values, natural disasters gain attention of the media, and therefore are given foremost and extensive coverage, particularly on news sites which allow readers to access the updates anytime anywhere. Natural disaster coverage is always of great concern to people as it involves massive deaths, human suffering and brings a huge impact to the aftermath life of the victims. Debates were going on that the media depicted natural disasters from different perspectives, especially between the Asian media and the Western media, due to the geographical, cultural, political interest and ideological divergences. Therefore, by taking Typhoon Haiyan news coverage as a case study, this research aims to investigate the differences of news frames featured in the Asian local media, Philippine Inquirer and Western media, The Wall Street Journal news sites. The findings indicated that the news framing of the Typhoon Haiyan disaster showed resemblance in primary news source and theme coded for both the Philippine Inquirer and The Wall Street Journal. Both the local and international news media “mediatised” disaster beyond the national spectrum of interest. The proliferation of new media, irrespective of

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Western or Asian media, has transformed the world of disaster into a global context.

Keywords: Natural disaster, news framing, Typhoon *Haiyan*, news coverage, news media

INTRODUCTION

Natural disaster news coverage is increasingly getting popular concern as it does not only involve enormous deaths and human suffering, but also brings a huge impact to the life aftermath. Natural disaster strikes anytime without warning and leaves limited scope of preparedness (Hanusch, 2012). It may come in series or time-delimited and is a potentially traumatic event that is collectively experienced with an acute onset. The consequences of natural disaster are severe from physical, social, psychosocial, social economic, social demographic and even political perspectives (McFarlane & Norris, 2006; Houston et al., 2012).

In the time of crisis, effective communication is important for response, recovery and next-stage preparedness for the local and international community. At this critical moment, people are relying on the mass media for updated information. People trust the information provided by the media even though there is no further justification for the natural hazards. People are outrageous seeing the calamity of others but yet very interested in knowing more about the mass destruction due to the natural disaster (Zarqa, 2013). Apparently, what average citizens come to know about the disaster are primarily learned from the mass media (Quarantelli, 1991). For the past few decades, natural disaster news has taken up foremost and extensive coverage of the mass media (Houston et al., 2012).

Natural disaster reporting on the media always gains substantial audiences. Thus, when a big natural disaster happens, the media will suspend regular programming and start 'disaster marathons' broadcasts by providing updated information and ongoing occurrences (Liebes, 1998). Reporters have to cover disaster news in a hurry and provide developments of the disaster. In an unknown and hazardous situation, they have to immediately reach the scene to get exclusive and first-hand

news in the rush. According to Zarqa (2013), hype is accelerated by journalistic competition with a drive of being the first during disaster. ¹As during Hurricane *Katrina*, media were unable to gather contextually rich information about the causes and consequences of the natural disaster (Miller & Goidel, 2009).

Given the point of people keep turning to mass media for providing descriptions of what has actually occurred, the community recovery progress and the dreadful impact of the disaster, it is important to have constant studies on how media depict natural disaster, especially between the Asian media and the Western media which may report from different perspectives due to the geographical, cultural, political interest and ideological differences (Broinowski, 1999; Leach, 2005; Knight, 2005). As such, by taking Typhoon *Haiyan* disaster as a case study, this research aims to examine the differences of the news frames featured in the Asian media and the Western media, namely, *Philippines Inquirer* and *The Wall Street Journal* news sites (NPR, 26 Jan 2014).

The emergence of online news has posed a challenge to the traditional mass media particularly in the production routine and presentation format. News websites are great sources of news which involve lesser gatekeepers. The users could have access to the news updates of their interest for 24 hours a day with a wide selection of news content (Mellese & Müller, 2012). *Philippines Inquirer* and *The Wall Street Journal* news sites were chosen as they carry the highest circulation, both in printed and digital format, in the Philippines and United States respectively (Agility PR Solutions, June 2019; Philippines Daily Inquirer, 7 April 2014).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Framing analysis is used in this study to examine the selection of 'some aspects of a perceived reality' that makes those aspects more salient to a media audience. Framing is useful in analysing, interpreting, organising and understanding the information in order to define the

¹Typhoon *Haiyan* was reported as the strongest storm recorded at landfall, and unofficially the strongest typhoon ever recorded in terms of wind speed, which happened in the Philippines on 8 November 2013, and killed at least 6,000 people in that country alone (NPR, 26 Jan 2014).

problem, diagnose causes or make judgments (Houston et al., 2012). Alatas (1997) criticised that framing is the journalistic routine of giving a news article a central theme by focusing on certain aspects of a multifaceted event. Different frames define an event or causes of this same event or issue to be understood in different ways (Gandy, 2001). As pointed by Price & Tewksbury (1997), how the news is presented will affect public opinion about the reported stories and actors involved in it. Thus, it is important to understand the framing scheme. The framing scheme of this study is the news theme and news source. The framing scheme examined the themes and primary source emphasised on *Haiyan* disaster news coverage on *Philippines Inquirer* and *The Wall Street Journal* news sites. According to Tankard (2001), several news features such as headlines, subheads, photographs, photo captions and leads commonly convey frames. Thus, the news frames of the *Haiyan* disaster coverage are addressed in the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the themes of Typhoon *Haiyan* news coverage on *Philippines Inquirer* and *The Wall Street Journal* news sites?

RQ2: Who are the news sources in Typhoon *Haiyan* coverage on *Philippines Inquirer* and *The Wall Street Journal* news sites?

Entman (1991) suggested that the possible frames for a particular event can be reliably detected by comparing the journalistic texts of two or more news-media outlets. Based on the Typhoon *Haiyan* disaster, this study aims to compare cross-media framings, between the Philippines and USA. Particularly, this comparative study investigates the themes and the news sources of Typhoon *Haiyan* coverage on *Philippines Inquirer* and *The Wall Street Journal* news sites and highlights whether these themes change over time. The study provides an insight and better understanding on the news coverage of an Asian natural disaster from the perspectives of both the Asian and Western media. It is critically important to understand how the Asian disaster news is presented on Asian media and Western media. News stories often reflect the predominant cultural norms, political power structures, and media systems in which journalists work (Hallin & Manini, 2004). According to Hanitzsch (2007), journalists working in Asian countries are less likely

to openly challenge the powerful. As such, this study compares the two news media from different countries because they have different political power structures and media systems that reflect broader differences in professional norms, cultural values and social ideologies (Frith & Mueller, 2003). Through a comparison of the news frames of Typhoon *Haiyan* coverage on *Philippines Inquirer* and *The Wall Street Journal* news sites, we address the third research question as follows:

RQ3: What are the differences of news frames featured in Typhoon *Haiyan* news stories on *Philippines Inquirer* and *The Wall Street Journal* news sites?

METHODOLOGY

1. APPROACH

This study employs quantitative and qualitative content analysis to examine how two online news sites frame the *Haiyan* disaster news. The study followed Matthes and Kohring's approach (2008) by coding different frame elements of the text.

2. SCOPE

The unit analysis is the individual news story. 'Haiyan' stories uploaded on *Philippines Inquirer* and *The Wall Street Journal* news sites were downloaded. The database search covered a 2-month time frame from 8 November 2013 which is the occurrence day of Typhoon *Haiyan* to 8 January 2014 by using 'Haiyan' keyword search. To qualify as a unit analysis, a news story has to relate to Typhoon *Haiyan*. After the process of screening and filtering, the total data set featuring 509 stories that were related to Typhoon *Haiyan* were found. *Philippines Inquirer* produced 336 stories whereas 173 stories were from *The Wall Street Journal*.

3. VARIABLES

Based on past researches (Knight, 2005; Barnhurst & Mutz, 1997; Worawong et al., 2007), the coding scheme was initially constructed. The coding variables included the name of the news site, the dateline of the story, the headline, the first two paragraphs of the news story, the primary source of the news story - local government, foreign government, police, medical authorities, victims' relatives and friends, business organisations, non-government organisations, benefactors, eyewitness/victims, locals, prominent figures, religious groups, media and expert and the news theme – politics of local government, economy, health and environment, human interest, victim count, relief, fund-raising & donation, science & facts, communication, search & rescue, damage, recovery, rehabilitation & aftermath, religious matters, crime, politics of foreign government, aid effort, refuge and historical & tourism.

The categories of news theme used were initially drawn from the study of Knight (2005) which examined media reportage of the 2004 Tsunami. The appropriate news of each story was coded based on the story focus in the headline and lead. If the coder could not identify the theme from the story's headline and lead, then the rest of the story is examined until the theme is identified. Primary source in the study refers to the source the person who was first mentioned or quoted in the article. Source categories were also initially drawn based on two studies that focused on natural disasters (Knight, 2005; Houston et al., 2012).

4. PROCEDURE

After defining the coding categories, the coders pre-tested twenty *Haiyan* related news articles posted on *Philippines Inquirer* and *The Wall Street Journal*. After the pre-test, the coders resolved their disagreement through discussions to achieve intercoder agreement. This process was repeated twice. Then, changes were made to the categories of news themes and sources. Three coders then separately coded all the 509 news stories.

After the coding process, through quantitative content analytic technique, the total of each category of source and theme was counted. Then, the result was analysed by using interpretive qualitative approach.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. THE CONCEPT OF 'DISASTER' AND THE ROLE OF MEDIA

Disasters, either natural or manmade, have always been one of the top news stories that best captured the general public's attention (Houston et al., 2012). The term 'disaster' has been defined and described meaningfully by the disaster researchers, as 'an event concentrated in time and space' or 'mass emergencies' that brings observable negative consequences, like 'physical harm and social disruption' (Fritz, 1961; Perry, 2006; Lindell, 2013). The characteristics of disasters, being 'unusual, dramatic, and often have great impact upon people's lives' have made disasters newsworthy, and driven by commercial imperatives that news outlets are 'expected' to report them (Belle, 2000). In short, media are pressured to report accurate information speedily and spread to the largest audience possible (Kodrich & Laituri, 2005).

A disaster's concentration in time can be defined according to temporal periods, e.g. pre-impact, trans-impact, and post-impact (Lindell, 2013). According to the emergency management of National Governors Association (NGA), the time frame can also be understood through the activities in different phases, e.g. hazard mitigation, disaster preparedness, emergency response, and disaster recovery (Lindell, 2013). The 'issue-attention cycle' proposed by Downs (1972) attempted to illustrate the different stages of a disaster: (1) a pre-problem stage, (2) alarmed discovery and euphoric enthusiasm, (3) realising the cost of significant progress, (4) gradual decline of intense public interest, and (5) a post-problem stage (Houston et al., 2012). But what is crucial, is the amount of time since a disaster occurred, that not only affects individuals and community at large in terms of needs, activities and concerns, but also influences the news coverage on the disaster over time (Houston et al., 2012).

Media involvement in disasters has contributed significantly to those who are in areas at risk, victims or those who show concerns. Though not exclusively, but yet recognising the contribution of media, the Disaster Research Center has given the credit to mass media as the primary source of information that fulfills the average citizens' and officials' expectations about disasters, that they know and learn from the disasters that happened (Houston et al., 2012). The roles of mass media, can range

from communicating the risk warning, describing the real event, informing the public about post event, to contributing to individual and community recovery and resilience when reporting a disaster (Norris et al., 2008; Houston et al., 2012).

Being an integral part of the social and political response to disasters, news media helps to foster immediate reaction of the international relief efforts, particularly in forming public opinions and shaping their demands for government policies such as the preparedness and prevention efforts for future disasters, as well as determining their support for relief aids (Belle, 2000). Besides, news media have also been 'shaping citizens' knowledge of natural disasters' (Cowan et al., 2002).

In the 1970s, a survey done in the United States reported that 80 percent of respondents, who have no direct experience with the natural disaster, relied heavily on firstly, the electronic media and secondly, the newspapers for disaster information (Wenger et al., 1975; Belle, 2000). Belle (2000) analysed the United States news coverage of foreign disasters using a set of contextual influences variables on the amount of coverage, indicating 'distance' of the event from the United States demonstrates expected relationship with the amount of coverage when the magnitude of the disaster event is controlled.

Though it might suggest disaster news own great prominence in the media, nevertheless disaster reporting has also been claimed to influence people's judgments about the actual damage and their preparation towards disasters (McClure & Williams, 1996). Studies found that media coverage on disasters are lacking of coverage comprehensiveness, contain inaccuracies, overdramatize social and individual reactions, and interpret statistics without context (Wilkins & Patterson, 1987; Hiroi et al., 1985; Cowan et al., 2002). Assuming representation of the disaster which occurred is accurate, media have nevertheless, presented 'an inaccurate image of mass devastation' to the public (Cowan et al., 2002).

The effects of disaster reporting towards its audiences as well as the normative roles of media have been further discussed and challenged in the recent studies. Cottle (2014) who staged disaster in a global context, has adopted a more critical view. He questioned the way disasters was conceptualized, and argued that 'what's ruled in and what's ruled out' carries political or ideological implications. Echoed by Houston et al. (2012), who questioned the implications of disaster coverage on wider

political conversations about disaster-related issues, also urged an investigation on the normative function of media in relation to disasters.

The contemporary disaster coverage is no longer confined geographically. Cottle (2014) argued using the studies of Hurricane Katrina, what was once ‘national’ has turned ‘global’ with the emergence of new media. Examining the roles of new media, specifically news sites, in the formation of a disaster community in Cyberspace after the Gujarat earthquake that happened in India in 2001, Kodrich and Laituri (2005) wrote that the advancement of new technology, which is interactive in nature, has dramatically changed the way media report disaster, forcing the media to take on ‘an active humanitarian role’ rather than the role traditionally taken.

Furthermore, media’s involvement with the disaster has exceeded what was once solely reporting disaster news, but has intervened in disaster management (Kodrich & Laituri, 2005). Murthy (2013) argued that blogs functioned as a democratising agent in Sri Lanka during the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, where the new media has given the ‘local’ journalists ‘global voices’ to challenge disaster coverage which they found problematic. Also, drawing the case of Typhoon *Haiyan* which swept across the Philippines in November 2013, Cottle (2014) quoted the efforts of Google, in developing online tools - ‘crisis map’ and a ‘people finder’ to assist people in the immediate disaster aftermath. In his conclusion, he claimed that the ‘mediated disasters in a global age’ today have become increasingly dependent on media and communications, and thus causing disasters to be ‘defined, dramatised and publicly constituted’ (Cottle, 2014).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. FRAMING AND FRAMING ANALYSIS

Entman’s definition of ‘framing’ is “possibly the most widely accepted” (David et al., 2011) amongst the scholars. Matthes (2009) in his analysis of media framing studies found that Entman’s definition is the most influential definition in the studies of media frames. Framing means ‘selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular

problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/ or treatment recommendation for the item described' (Entman, 1993). He suggested that framing functions to define problem, diagnose causes, make moral judgments and suggest remedies. Recognising the power of news media coverage, text and visual presentation in framing and formulating a picture of an issue in the mind of the public within a political realm, Entman (2004) argued that media frames are able to 'stimulate support or opposition to the sides in a political conflict' through emphasising elements of depicted reality while de-emphasising elements that construct a counter frame.

Framing can occur generally within a culture, or in the minds of professional communicators and members of the lay public, or in specific media texts such as articles and broadcasts (Entman et al., 2009). Frames are 'selective' in nature, and therefore suggesting ideas that construct reality in a certain way (Matthes, 2012). Through selecting and highlighting some information at the expense of others, news frame is capable of shaping the minds of audiences and influencing their interpretations towards issues, candidates and events. In short, framing is considered 'an active process of creating, selecting, and shaping the frames' (Matthes, 2012).

Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) suggested news frames can be analysed at macro and micro levels. Macro level emphasises on the mode of presentation used to disseminate information which communicates an underlying schema among the audiences, while micro describes how the audiences use the information and presentation features to make sense of an issue. Besides, news frame can also be studied from the media and audience perspective (Matthes, 2009). Matthes (2012) commented in his studies on framing politics that although news frames are impactful, however, audience frame towards the political issues is not always consistent with what was suggested by the political elite or the news media. In addition, frames tend to change over time, depending on whether the issues and events are well known (Houston et al., 2012).

Framing analysis today is found commonly used in news framing studies at national level (Houston et al., 2012; Yang & Ishak, 2012; David et al., 2010; Dahmen, 2010) and recently, at cross-national level (Mellese & Muller, 2012; Oh et al., 2012; Kwon & Moon, 2009).

Amongst these studies, traditional news media like newspapers, broadcast and news magazines are commonly studied.

David et al. (2010) analysed news framing on population debate in the Philippines comparing source and news frames in broadsheet newspapers. Even though some started to investigate online news reports, news sites and blogs, comparative research in recent years has indicated a growing interest in exploring framing at a larger context, sampling the new media. Kwon and Moon (2009) took a cross-national approach, and ran a cross-media investigation between newspapers and blogs on collectivism in news framing. They highlighted two important aspects in the development of framing research. Firstly, “framing” carried cultural and national differences with the emergence of globalisation. Secondly, the embedded values, based on current national interests, political ideology and cultural norms and values, that build the common frames bridging journalists’ news and public’s interpretation, need to be studied in the new media environment. Capturing a similar vision, Oh et al. (2012) conducted a cross-national study of US and Korean newspaper coverage, comparing the cross-cultural variations in news frames and sources.

Though studies of how disaster news is framed are not new, yet very few studies can be found on natural disasters. One of them is Li’s (2007) study of news framing on the television coverage of a human-made disaster – the September 11 terrorist attacks. The study suggested a coverage frame scheme based on Entman’s conceptualisation of framing, and it was later adopted by Houston et al. (2012) in their studies of news framing of natural disasters. Considering its applicability in analysing disaster news, six main categories of coverage frames have been used to analyse the leads and headlines in disaster news, namely, (1) political; (2) economic; (3) environment; (4) human interest; (5) criminal; and (6) others. Investigating the newspaper and news broadcasts coverage of natural disasters in the United States over a period of ten years, they also found that, disaster news today tend to emphasise on disaster economics while giving attention to the current impacts of disaster on humans, the built and natural environment, as well as the affected state and region. However, very little convincing evidence has shown that media play a role in contributing to the aspects of disaster preparedness, recovery and resilience (Houston et al., 2012).

2. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To determine the news sources and the news themes that appeared in Typhoon Haiyan news coverage, a total of 509 stories were content analysed within two months (62 days) of The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) and The Philippines Inquirer (PI) reporting. Of this total, 173 items or 33.99 per cent of the stories appeared in WSJ whereas 336 items or 66.01 per cent appeared in PI. The news coverage of Typhoon Haiyan in PI, happened in the country in which the media operates, is double in number of the stories of WSJ. Table 1 shows the total number of news and the percentage of Typhoon Haiyan coverage in WSJ and PI.

Table 1: The total number of news and the percentage of Typhoon *Haiyan* coverage in *WSJ* and *PI*

News sites	Number of News	Percentage of News
<i>The Wall Street Journal (WSJ)</i>	173	33.99
<i>The Philippines Inquirer (PI)</i>	336	66.01
Total	509	100.00

The findings indicate that 67.63 per cent and 62.50 per cent of the total news stories were covered, for WSJ and PI respectively, in the first two weeks (8/11/2013 – 22/11/2013) when the typhoon story was first reported. In the following weeks (23/11/2013 – 7/12/2013), the number of stories dropped significantly - 43.35 per cent and 38.69 per cent each for WSJ and PI. Entering the second month, the total number of stories covered by PI was 46 (13.69 per cent) whereas WSJ reported only 14 news (8.09 per cent) out of the total coverage for the entire study period. Table 2 shows the comparison of WSJ and PI news coverage in the various stages.

Table 2: The comparison of *WSJ* and *PI* news coverage from stage to stage

News Site	Stage 1*		Stage 2*		Stage 3*		Stage 4*		Total
	No. of News	%	No. of News	%	No. of News	%	No. of News	%	
<i>WSJ</i>	117	67.63	42	24.28	10	5.78	4	2.31	173
<i>PI</i>	210	62.50	80	23.81	31	9.23	15	4.46	336

*Stage 1 (8/11/2013 – 22/11/2013); Stage 2 (23/11/2013 – 7/12/2013); Stage 3(8/12/2013 – 22/12/2013); Stage 4 (23/12/2013 – 8/1/2014).

News stories were coded for the primary source and the main theme based on the first two paragraphs of the stories. This study found 14 categories of news sources cited by *WSJ* and *PI* in the news coverage of Typhoon Haiyan, which included ‘local government’ (232 items or 45.58 per cent), ‘foreign government’ (22 items or 4.32 per cent), ‘police’ (8 items or 1.57 per cent), ‘medical authorities’ (2 items or 0.39 per cent), ‘victim’s relatives and friends’ (10 items or 1.96 per cent), ‘business organisations’ (28 items or 5.50 per cent), ‘non-government organizations’ (NGO) (49 items or 9.63 per cent), ‘benefactors’ (22 items or 4.32 per cent), ‘eyewitness or victims’ (32 items or 6.29 per cent), ‘locals’ (5 items or 0.98 per cent), ‘prominent figures’ (8 items or 1.57 per cent), ‘religious groups’ (10 items or 1.96 per cent), ‘media’ (65 items or 12.77 per cent), and ‘expert’ (16 items or 3.14 per cent). Table 3 shows the comparison between *WSJ* and *PI* in news sources.

Table 3: The comparison between *WSJ* & *PI* in news sources

Source	WSJ		PI		Total	
	No. of News	%	No. of News	%	No. of News	%
Local government	55	31.79	177	52.68	232	45.58
Foreign government	14	8.09	8	2.38	22	4.32
Police	3	1.73	5	1.49	8	1.57
Medical Authorities	1	0.58	1	0.30	2	0.39
Victim's relatives and friends	2	1.16	8	2.38	10	1.96
Business Organizations	9	5.20	19	5.65	28	5.50
NGO	21	12.14	28	8.33	49	9.63
Benefactors	6	3.47	16	4.76	22	4.32
Eyewitness /victims	12	6.94	20	5.95	32	6.29
Locals	3	1.73	2	0.60	5	0.98
Prominent figures	7	4.05	1	0.30	8	1.57
Religious groups	0	0.00	10	2.98	10	1.96
Media	29	16.76	36	10.71	65	12.77
Expert	11	6.36	5	1.49	16	3.14
TOTAL	173.00	100.00	336.00	100.00	509.00	100.00

The findings indicate that the top three sources cited by both *WSJ* and *PI* were the same, namely, ‘local government’, ‘NGO’ and ‘media’. The total number of cited sources for ‘local government’, ‘NGO’ and ‘media’ of *Haiyan* stories for both news sites separately were 232 items (45.58 per cent), 49 items (9.63 per cent) and 65 items (12.77 per cent). The news sources cited the least in all the stories were ‘medical authorities’ and ‘locals’ in which the percentage for each category is less than one.

Sources of ‘local government’ were widely cited by *PI* (177 items or 52.68 per cent) and *WSJ* (55 items or 31.79 per cent). They were given enormous highlights as the people whose statements were primarily, at the time, extensively emphasised. This was followed by news source from ‘media’ in which the reporting is a compilation of data and facts by the journalists based on the researches done. Those stories with the ‘media’ as the primary source take up 36 items (10.71 per cent) in *PI* and 29 items (16.76 per cent) in *WSJ*. On the other hand, the ‘NGO’ was another preferred source of the journalists. These sources included spokespersons from United Nations, World Bank, The Philippines Red Cross, Global Peace Mission Malaysia, Focus on the Global South, The Rural Poor Institute for Land and Human Rights Services (Rights) Network, Greenpeace, Save the Children and etc.

The remaining 11 categories of sources cited in the news carried almost the same percentage in the coverage of both *WSJ* and *PI*, except for ‘religious groups’, ‘prominent figures’ and ‘foreign government’. *WSJ* did not cite any single source from the religious groups in its reporting of Typhoon *Haiyan*.

As for the main themes of the stories in *WSJ* and *PI*, 19 categories were found in this study. Table 4 shows the comparison between *WSJ* and *PI* in news themes.

Table 4: The comparison between *WSJ* and *PI* in news themes

Theme	WSJ		PI		Total	
	No. of News	%	No. of News	%	No. of News	%
Politics of local government	18	10.40	53	15.77	71.00	13.95
Economic	18	10.40	18	5.36	36.00	7.07
Health & environment	6	3.47	9	2.68	15.00	2.95
Human interest	18	10.40	41	12.20	59.00	11.59
Victim count	13	7.51	34	10.12	47.00	9.23
Relief	16	9.25	32	9.52	48.00	9.43
Fund-raising & donation	4	2.31	16	4.76	20.00	3.93
Science, technology & facts	11	6.36	9	2.68	20.00	3.93
Communication	3	1.73	2	0.60	5.00	0.98
Search & rescue	2	1.16	3	0.89	5.00	0.98
Damage	7	4.05	3	0.89	10.00	1.96
Recovery, rehabilitation & aftermath	26	15.03	42	12.50	68.00	13.36
Religious matters	0	0.00	3	0.89	3.00	0.59
Crime	4	2.31	13	3.87	17.00	3.34
Business	2	1.16	8	2.38	10.00	1.96

Theme	WSJ		PI		Total	
	No. of News	%	No. of News	%	No. of News	%
Politics of foreign government	8	4.62	5	1.49	13.00	2.55
Aid effort	11	6.36	38	11.31	49.00	9.63
Refuge	2	1.16	4	1.19	6.00	1.18
Historical & tourism	4	2.31	3	0.89	7.00	1.38
TOTAL	173	100.00	336	100.00	509.00	100.00

In the combined analysis, the three main themes covered by *WSJ* and *PI* were ‘politics of local government’ (71 items or 13.95 per cent), ‘recovery, rehabilitation and aftermath’ (68 items or 13.36 per cent) and ‘human interest’ (59 items or 11.59 per cent). Among others, the least frequent themes reported included ‘religious matters’, ‘search and rescue’ and ‘communication’ categories which carried less than one per cent of the total news coverage of Typhoon *Haiyan*.

‘Politics of local government’ theme was given great emphasis to show strong leadership and confidence in assuring the people that they were well-prepared for the devastation aftermath. The people were not alone and should have no worry with the aftermath. Local government was portrayed as a backbone for recovery and rehabilitation actions. With that ‘reality’ constructed by the media, the status quo of the Philippines government is secured. Along with calamities were some human interest stories which were poignant and included elements of heroism and etc. The stories of how ordinary people reacted in the calamities were widely covered.

CONCLUSION

Framing is a social construction of reality. The news media do not operate in a political, economic and ideological vacuum, and the 'nature of news' is not an objective reflection of truth. When journalists seek to actively classify and interpret their life experiences to make sense of what happens, they engage in a cognitive process named 'news framing'. The messages produced by the journalists are interpretations that have been crafted, among selected and highlighted competing facts, to reflect 'reality' that is packaged efficiently for the audiences.

Framing is vital. The way a given piece of information is presented has the potential to influence the public opinion about the reported occurrences. It influences audiences' interest, attention and comprehension of the news that they cannot witness directly. The audiences respond on the occurrences based on their perception and understanding of the 'facts' that journalists choose to play up or down in their reports. The audiences also tend to believe in the reality constructed by the journalists to be the most salient aspects of a natural disaster. In revealing the social world to the audiences, framing analysis debunks the myth of the so-called 'balance and objectivity' of news reporting which is tainted with ideologies and operational constraints.

In this study, the journalistic act of framing the news of natural disaster, Typhoon *Haiyan*, through core themes in *WSJ* and *PI* did not show much difference. That means journalists' choices of highlighting or reducing elements of the perceived reality to make them more or less salient are not obvious in both coverages. *WSJ* and *PI* have emphasised on the similar themes with consistent societal sentiments – humanitarian.

The same trend goes to the news sources in this study. Just as what was argued by Entman (1993) and Fahmy (2005), to a certain extent, the source is the story. It confines the simple nature of the stories, as well as the flow of information in the news media. In *WSJ* and *PI* news reports, local government was heavily cited as the official source which legitimises the state and all its actions and policies. However, the hegemony of the Philippines government is framed as being challenged. The State strives to prove that local strategies are relevant and sustainable, alongside with international aid efforts and fundraising.

The news framing of the Typhoon *Haiyan* disaster shows resemblance in primary source and theme coded for both Western media, *WSJ* (an American English-language international news media) and an Asian media, *PI* (a Philippines-based English-language news media with the mission of ‘We are a multi-media organisation passionately telling the Filipino story’). In line with Simon Cottle’s (2011 & 2014) findings, infused within natural disaster reporting on news sites, media has reached a new global height of extensity and intensity, in terms of speed and scale. With the universalising technologies, media and communication environment changed. Natural disaster that strikes the country no longer remains as ‘a state’s misfortune’. Instead, it is a ‘mediated disaster’ which becomes ‘globalised media event’ that exhibits extensive scale. These communication technologies also provide greater prospects for the audiences from all over the world to “witness” disaster before they hurdle into humanitarian response. In other words, the proliferation of new media, irrespective of Western or Asian media, has transformed the world of disasters into a global context.

In today’s global news ecology, both local and international news media ‘mediatised’ disasters from different views and values which could in pursuing of open to national integration, striving for political change or mobilising sympathy for humanitarian response. Through borderless news reporting, journalistic framing has gone beyond the national spectrum of interests to offer a philanthropic support to the storm victims. By such communication means, Typhoon *Haiyan* reporting on both *WSJ* and *PI* exhibits not only a ‘national event’, but a ‘media event’ that manifests public opinion in the global public sphere.

Notwithstanding the above, this study focuses on “media framing” without empirical data from audience analysis. Therefore it is beyond the scope of this study to draw conclusion about audiences’ cognitive understanding of Typhoon *Haiyan*. A future research could be done on “audience framing” to further comprehend the meaning constructed by audiences on natural disaster reporting. It would be remarkable to juxtapose the findings of this study with the impact of news frames on public’s perception and opinion towards the disaster.

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