



## ARAB WEBSITES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: FRAMING CONTENT AND NEWS COVERAGE 2024

Abdel Azim Gamal Ebrahim (Ph.D.)<sup>1</sup> and Sarg Enas Mosad (Ph.D.)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Bahrain, Kingdom of Bahrain.

Email: [gazim@uob.edu.bh](mailto:gazim@uob.edu.bh)

<sup>2</sup>Kingdom of Bahrain

Email: [drenassarg@hotmail.com](mailto:drenassarg@hotmail.com)

### Cite this article:

Abdel Azim, G. E., Sarg, E. M. (2024), Arab Websites and Sustainable Development: Framing Content and News Coverage 2024. British Journal of Mass Communication and Media Research 4(4), 163-177. DOI: 10.52589/BJMCMR-SD1KNCBS

### Manuscript History

Received: 18 Oct 2024

Accepted: 15 Dec 2024

Published: 23 Dec 2024

### Copyright © 2024 The Author(s).

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0), which permits anyone to share, use, reproduce and redistribute in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

**ABSTRACT:** *The research aims to identify the framing of Arab news websites for sustainable development during the first half of 2024 by measuring the differences between the Egyptian Al-Ahram website and the Emirati Al-Bayan website. The research used the comparative content analysis methodology based on the framing theory. The research discovered the existence of diversity in sustainable development issues, but the Al-Ahram website gave priority to the issue of climate change, while the Al-Bayan website focused on the issue of energy. The government support frame for sustainable development dominated news coverage, and official sources constituted most of the frames in both websites. Arab websites also relied on episodic frames more than thematic frames.*

**KEYWORDS:** Sustainable development; Framing; News coverage; Al-Ahram website; Al-Bayan website.



## INTRODUCTION

The United Nations realized that not all development goals have been achieved and that it will take longer for parts of the world to achieve these goals, so other related but more expansive goals were developed and called the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. Countries around the world, including Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, have joined these goals. World leaders considered the media a valuable tool in contributing to eliminating development challenges, and these leaders believed that the media is one of the institutions that can contribute to achieving the goals of sustainable development. The importance of the role of the media in development increased with the emergence of digital media, which provided additional features that can be used to spread the idea of sustainability at the global level.

In this study, the researcher seeks to analyse the content of two of the largest Arab websites, namely the Egyptian Al-Ahram website and the Emirati Al-Bayan website, during the year 2024, to show how the two websites frame sustainable development issues. This research allows us to learn about how Arab websites frame sustainable development issues and identify the differences between them in the news framing process in order to come up with recommendations that allow the development of news coverage of these issues in a way that achieves the spread of the idea of sustainable development among the Arab public, especially since previous Arab studies have discovered that the public's knowledge of sustainable development issues is still at average levels, despite the passage of more than 40 years since the emergence of sustainable development.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

That et al. (2024) analysed the coverage of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the UAE national newspapers following the announcement of the UAE hosting the COP28 climate change summit in 2023. The study found that sustainable development issues, related to the economy and the environment, received extensive and mostly positive coverage and were framed in the context of achievements rather than challenges. Felix et al. (2024) also found that Nigerian newspapers presented the SDG campaign in a positive tone and that campaign publications were in the form of news presentations, while newspapers placed the presentations on the inside pages.

Li and Chi (2024) concluded that it is important to use digital media to create shared values that contribute to motivating people to adopt a sustainable green lifestyle. The study found a positive correlation between digital media communication and adopting a sustainable green lifestyle. Kayal and Saha found that new media have ushered in a new era in which SDGs, especially those related to higher education, have been created. Hamza (2023) found that Nigerian newspaper coverage of SDGs 1–4 was significantly lower than other study content categories.

López-Carrión (2023) noted that the number of news stories mentioning the SDGs in the ten most widely read digital newspapers in Spain increased by more than 1,000%, making 2020 a turning point in which coverage of this issue became mainstream in the media agenda. Czvetkó (2021) found that the most negative tone appears in most sustainability-related news in Africa as well as East and Southeast Asia, and furthermore, in the case of climate change (SDG 13),



the United States plays a major role in both news share and negative tone. The study found that using network science tools can help verify the description of the SDGs in global news.

Cardey et al (2023) found that Malawi, Ukraine, and the Philippines present contrasting challenges and opportunities for rural development and environmental change, and the research revealed that communication for development plays an important role in addressing the challenges of climate change and the environment. Despite the small number of previous studies that dealt with the framing of sustainable development in news websites compared to studies that examine the issue of development in traditional media, these studies have helped the researcher to identify the extent of interest of digital media studies in sustainable development, as this issue has received the attention of researchers from all over the world, whether they are Africans, Asians, Europeans, or Americans, and this is an additional enrichment for our study, in addition to the fact that previous studies have helped in the methodological definition and proposing hypotheses in addition to designing a content analysis scale.

### **Research Problem**

The three largest Arab countries in terms of GDP in 2022 were Saudi Arabia 1,108.57, the United Arab Emirates 507.06, and Egypt 475.23 (US\$ billion) ([www.statista.com](http://www.statista.com)). The Arab region is characterized by its diverse natural resources, industrial production, and environmental footprints, and has many oil and gas producers, such as the Gulf States, which have highly developed economies. On the other hand, there are countries in the region that suffer from poverty and conflict, such as Yemen and Sudan (Abdulmalik, 2022).

The multiple conflicts in the Middle East have led to the decline of climate change and sustainable development issues from public discourse and news coverage across various local media outlets for long periods previously (Eskjær, 2017). This has led Dunwoody (2014) to argue that science journalists in the Global South often rely on translation. In the contemporary period, the Egyptian and Emirati governments have given great attention to issues of sustainable development and climate change to the extent that each country has established a ministry specialized in sustainable development affairs. Moreover, Egypt hosted the largest United Nations conference in this field, COP 27, in 2023, and the United Arab Emirates will also host COP 28 in 2024.

It was natural for this official Arab and international activity to receive parallel attention in news coverage of sustainable development issues. When world leaders announced the 17 Sustainable Development Goals at the United Nations in 2015, they said that the media can play a new and indispensable role in achieving these goals, which contributes to the media being a tool for opening a broad societal debate on these issues.

The research problem is concerned with analysing the news content of sustainable development issues on the Egyptian Al-Ahram website and the Emirati Al-Bayan website to identify how sustainable development was framed and its coverage patterns with the aim of discovering the differences between the two Arab websites belonging to two different countries with the aim of reaching results and proposing recommendations that make digital media contribute to sustainable development in a positive way and be an effective tool in achieving the desired goals. Therefore, the research question is: How did Arab websites frame sustainable development issues during the first six months of 2024?



## **Importance**

The research provides an accurate description of the framing of the sustainable development news content in two of the largest Arab news websites. The research fills part of the gap in Arab studies that study the framing of sustainable development in websites. In addition, the research alerts researchers to increase interest in studying sustainable development to discover the best methods that can be followed in coverage via digital media, especially since previous studies indicate that the Arab public's knowledge of sustainable development is still at average levels.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the study are to:

- Examine the extent of interest of Arab news websites in sustainable development issues;
- Discover the news frame used in sustainable development;
- Know the sources of information in sustainable development issues;
- Identify the patterns of news coverage of sustainable development issues; and
- Test the differences in news coverage between the Egyptian Al-Ahram website and the Emirati Al-Bayan website.

## **Research Questions**

The study is guided by the following questions:

- What are the issues of sustainable development in Arab news websites?
- What are the types of frames that dominate news coverage?
- Do Arab websites use episodic or thematic frames?
- What are the objectives of the news frames in the two websites?
- What is the tone of news coverage in the two websites?
- What sources are relied upon in constructing news frames?
- What are the patterns of news coverage used in the two sites?
- Are there differences in framing sustainable development issues between the two sites?



---

## Hypotheses

H 1: There is a correlation between the ranking of sustainable development issues on Al-Ahram website and the ranking of the same issues on Al-Bayan website.

H 2: There are significant differences in the tone of framing sustainable development on Arab websites due to the difference in location.

H 3: There is a correlation between the types of news frames on Al-Ahram website and the types of frames on Al-Bayan website.

H 4: There is a correlation between the sources of information on Al-Ahram website and the sources of information on Al-Bayan website.

H 5: There is a correlation between the framing objectives on Al-Ahram website and the framing objectives on Al-Bayan website.

H 6: There are significant differences between Al-Ahram website and Al-Bayan website regarding the evidence used in the news framing of sustainable development issues.

## Theory: News Framing

The framing process in news is based on telling a particular story through a distinctive lens that is created by selecting, evaluating, and presenting some basic concepts in the news story, and actors are presented as cause and effect, according to who are the bad guys who should be blamed and who are the good guys who should be praised for their positive actions. These classifications are effective because they carry weight and emotional significance, and framing events is of great importance to achieve these goals (Schefuele, 1999).

Framing assumes that how a problem is viewed in a news report can influence how the audience interprets this problem. (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2009), where the media present events in different ways as they choose certain images and aspects to present certain points of view to the audience (Fahmy, 2010). Therefore, Credit (1993) confirms that political actors, the frame of the media form in which the event is presented, as well as broader cultural aspects, all contribute to shaping frames (El-Bendary, 2010).

## Episodic and Thematic Frames

According to Thussu and Freedman (2003), the framing process is divided into general and partial structures, so the frames are either episodic or thematic. The episodic frame focuses more on the person, and its primary goal is to focus on individual events (Benjamin, 2007), with no specific vision of the social consequences that lead to the problem (Wallack et al., 2005).

On the other hand, the thematic frame focuses on the issue and the formation of trends over time and therefore focuses on broader social policies (Diane, 2007).



## Sources in News Framing

News sources vary in covering events between official and unofficial sources, and Bennett Lance (1990) concluded that the construction of news is subject to the influence of sources on the frame chosen by journalists. This is what made Druckman (2001) emphasize that sources are a fundamental pillar in the framing process. Bennett (2003) also concluded that the media rely heavily on official government sources, and therefore the media agenda is set by government officials rather than journalists. Tumber and Palmer (2010) believe that sources influence the public's view of issues. Therefore, Raluca (2014) concluded that the repetition of the same sources over time has the potential to influence both the message and the message recipients and the credibility of the media.

## METHODOLOGY

This research belongs to descriptive/analytical research, so it relied on a content survey to monitor, analyse, and interpret the coverage of sustainable development in the sites, in addition to using a comparison between the framing of the issue in the two sites. Which represent different samples of the Arab world regions, as Egypt represents North Africa and the Nile Valley, while the United Arab Emirates represents the Gulf region. News reports were collected from websites using single keywords (development, sustainable development, climate change) using an advanced search engine in the digital archive of the sites and through the Google search engine to retrieve articles. This ensures the selection of a sample that is directly related to the research topic and is time specific. This is to achieve more accuracy in selecting the sample.

### Representation

The researcher's return to more than one digital platform resulted in obtaining (110) news reports, including (34) reports on the Egyptian Al-Ahram website and (76) reports on the Emirati Al-Bayan website. All reports were directly related to sustainable development issues and were published over a period of six months starting from January 1, 2024, to June 30, 2024. According to Riffe et al. (2014), "this is a sufficient period for analysis." According to Riffe et al. (1993), two specific weeks for a one-year time frame for daily newspapers can provide a broad representation of the newspaper's content.

### Units of Analysis

The idea was the content analysis unit, while the frame analysis was the category of the frame type as the unit of analysis. The unit of analysis was designed according to its purpose, which was included in the coding guide. Then, the prominent frames and issues related to sustainable development were identified, covering a wide range of sub-issues, the number of which reached 24 issues, which were included under three main areas (environment and climate, social development, and economic development).

Based on the criteria proposed by Owen (1984) as well as Bantum, O'Carroll, Owen and Jason (2009), the topics were identified based on their frequency and strength. Where repetition emphasizes the emergence of the same idea with differences, and repetition involves the use of



identical or nearly identical words to convey the same meaning, and strength refers to strong emphasis through verbal or non-verbal means.

## **Procedures**

Egypt and the UAE were chosen as case studies due to the growing global recognition of the Arab region's contributions to sustainable development and climate change issues. These two major Arab countries have a special interest in sustainable development to the extent that each of them has established a ministry bearing the name of sustainable development, in addition to the regional roles that these two countries have recently played in the global climate change arena by hosting the climate summits in 2022 (COP27) and in 2023 (COP28), which made the two countries focal points for international climate policy and the formulation of the global climate discourse. In addition, the two countries have an advanced technical infrastructure that allows the researcher to access these sites via the Internet to obtain copies of the texts of the reports published on the two sites.

The research relied on the comprehensive inventory method for all reports and articles that highlight sustainable development. The criterion for selecting the topics of the analysis field was that the article be about any issue of sustainable development directly, so topics that discuss development in passing were excluded because these articles often focus more on other topics. While it refers to development in a fleeting and rapid manner, it uses the development status in some countries to demonstrate or as an argument for the opinions it presents.

## **Coding**

Coding and categorization is a method of content analysis, but it goes beyond just counting words. The researcher was keen for the analysis categories to be comprehensive and exclusive and for the categories to also be based on the theory of news frames. The coding guide included the operational definitions of these categories.

## **Tool**

The content analysis form was the tool for collecting data and analysing texts. The form was designed based on the theory of news frames with the aim of analysing news reports. The analysis tool included the main categories and subcategories included under each main frame.

## **Validity and Reliability**

The analysis form was presented to three academics at the University of Bahrain and the American University of Bahrain to verify the validity of the scale (·) and their observations were made. As for the reliability of the scale, the Holsti equation was used to calculate the number of categories that the analysts agreed upon on the total categories.

## **Research Sections**

The research report is divided into three parts that appear in the following presentation of the results.



## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This section presents the results of the quantitative analysis to answer the research questions:

### **Q 1: What are the issues of sustainable development in Arab news websites?**

Arab news websites focused on many sustainable development issues, reaching 17 sub-issues in all areas of sustainable development: economic, social, climate, and environmental issues.

Both Al-Ahram and Al-Bayan websites focused on sustainable economic development issues more than sustainable social development and more than environmental and climate issues, but the difference between the two websites was in the type of sub-issues that fall under economic development, as coverage was affected by government policies in each country.

The results showed that economic development issues on Al-Ahram website received 35%, social development issues 32.5%, and environmental and climate issues 27.5%. Issues related to development projects, as well as industry and innovation, were the most prominent issues of sustainable economic development on the Al-Ahram website, with 15% for each, followed by sustainable production issues and energy issues, with 5% for each.

On the Al-Bayan website, sustainable economic development accounted for 55.5%, and energy was the most prominent issue of sustainable economic development, with 27.7%, followed by the issue of optimal exploitation of natural resources, with 10.4%, then the issue of sustainable production and the issue of development projects, with 6.9% for each, and finally the issue of sustainable production, with 3.4%.

Sustainable social development ranked second on the two websites, with its share on the Al-Ahram website being 32.5%, distributed among education, 12.5%; hunger, 10%; women and children, 5%; and poverty, with 5% as well.

Sustainable social development accounted for 34.3% on Al-Bayan website, distributed over 7% of education, 6.9% of continuing education, and 6.8% of health education, followed by three issues: women and children, hunger, and gender equality, with 3.4% for each issue. The two websites were interested in environmental and climate issues in third place, with 27.5% on Al-Ahram website, distributed over 20% of climate change, 5% of water issues, and 2.5% of global warming.

Al-Bayan website was interested in two environmental and climate issues: climate change (3.5%) and desert environments (3.3%). The results revealed a similarity between Al-Ahram and Al-Bayan websites in their interest in global environmental issues, especially climate change, while the two websites differed in their interest in other environmental issues. Therefore, Al-Ahram website was interested in the water issue, and Al-Bayan was interested in the desert environment issue, which are issues that have priority on the agenda of the governments of the countries to which each website belongs.

### **Q 2: What are the types of frames that dominate news coverage?**

The official support frame that highlights government activities and efforts supporting sustainable development was the dominant frame in news coverage in the two sites: 40.9% in Al-Ahram, and 26.6% in Al-Bayan, then the second place was the frame of supporting investment to enhance sustainable development. 18.2% in Al-Ahram and 20% in Al-Bayan,





and the scientific and technological frame ranked third with 13.6% in Al-Ahram, and 23.3% in Al-Bayan.

The two sites then differed in the frames that dominate sustainable development coverage. In Al-Ahram, the frame of the economic consequences of sustainable development problems emerged at 9.1%, as did the frame of threats resulting from sustainable development problems at 9%, and finally the frame of humanitarian concerns at 4.54%, while Al-Bayan focused on the ethical frame at 10%.

### **Q 3: Do Arab sites use incidental or objective frames?**

The Arab websites relied on the episodic frames that focus on specific development problems at a rate of 73.6%, while they relied on thematic frames that focus on the broader vision and examine the origins of development problems and their effects at a rate of 26.4%.

### **Q 4: What are the objectives of the news frames in the two websites?**

Al-Ahram website was like Al-Bayan website in the first objective of framing, which is to provide information to readers to increase their knowledge of sustainable development, as this objective was obtained by 19.3% in Al-Ahram and 26.4% in Al-Bayan, while the two websites differed in the arrangement of the remaining objectives of framing sustainable development.

Al-Ahram website's second objective was to provide official and popular responses to confront problems at a rate of 19.3%, while Al-Bayan's second objective was to provide proposals and solutions to problems at a rate of 23.2%.

Al-Ahram website then focused on describing sustainable development problems, as well as presenting previous experiences that can be used to solve contemporary problems at a rate of 16.1%. For each of their goals, the statement was interested in presenting positive results of sustainable development activities at 14%, then adopting practical solutions to sustainable development problems at 12.4%.

Al-Ahram website was interested in fifth place in proposing solutions to sustainable development problems at 13%, and then after this goal was analysing the causes of the problems as well as presenting the results that were reached in development issues at 6.5% for each of their goals, and in the last place was the goal of adopting practical solutions to confront the problems at 3.3%.

Al-Bayan website was interested in fifth place in official and popular responses to sustainable development issues. 10.8%, after that, were interested in describing development problems 6.2% then presenting official and popular responses to confront development problems 3.1% then analysing the causes of the problems 2.3% and finally presenting previous experiences that can be used to solve contemporary problems 1.6%.

### **Q 5: What is the tone of news coverage in the two sites?**

The positive framing tone was more than the negative framing tone in Arab news sites, as the positive tone in Al-Ahram received 88.2% and the negative 11.8%, and in Al-Bayan the positive tone was 89.5% and the negative 10.5%.



### **Q 6: What sources are relied upon in building news frames?**

The results revealed a complete similarity in the types of information sources in the two sites, as official sources were the most important sources of information in news reports related to sustainable development issues, with a percentage of 61.2% in Al-Ahram and 53.2% in Al-Bayan. Then in second place were sources from international organizations, with 16.6% in Al-Ahram and 21.3% in Al-Bayan. Then experts with 11.1% in Al-Ahram and 8.5% in Al-Bayan.

### **Q 7: What are the types of news coverage used in the two sites?**

The Arab news websites adopted the simple coverage of events to a greater extent, at 90%, which is the style that focuses on one event within the news report, while the complex coverage style that contains more than one event within the same report was 10%. The detailed results revealed that Al-Ahram website used simple coverage in all the news reports it published on sustainable development, while Al-Bayan used simple coverage at 86.8% and complex coverage at 13.2%.

The Arab websites focused on news coverage that narrates information and statements from sources more than the style that presents personal experiences. Al-Ahram website relied 100% on the first style, while Al-Bayan website relied on the style at 97.4%, while the style of presenting personal experiences to the audience or sources received 2.6%.

The Arab websites also used rational evidence in reporting reports at a rate equal to twice the rate of emotional evidence. Rational evidence on Al-Ahram website received 70.6%, and emotional evidence at 29.4%, while rational evidence in Al-Bayan received 67.1% and emotional evidence at 32.9%. Arab websites were keen to explain the development and environment terms they used in news reports to a greater extent than to leave the terms without explanation. Al-Ahram website was keen to explain the terms by 76.5% and left the terms without explanation by 23.5%. Al-Bayan explained the terms by 89.5% and 7.9% for the terms whose meanings were not explained, in addition to 2.6% for the reports that contained mixed terms, some of which were explained and others published without an explanation of their meanings.

## **HYPOTHESIS TESTS**

H 1: The results revealed that the first hypothesis was not valid, as there was no correlation between the ranks of issues in the two sites, as the strength of the correlation was weak (0.024) and the significance (0.925), which confirms the rejection of this hypothesis.

H 2: The results showed that there were no differences between the two sites in the tone of framing sustainable development issues, as the value of (F) was (.036) and the significance (.849), which indicates the rejection of the second hypothesis.

H 3: The results revealed that there was no correlation between the types of news frames in the two sites, as the value of the Pearson test was (0.75) and the significance (0.000). Therefore, the third hypothesis is accepted.



H 4: The results revealed the existence of a strong correlation between the types of information sources in the two sites, as the value of the "Pearson" test for binary correlation was (0.980) with a significance (0.003), which confirms the acceptance of the fourth hypothesis.

H 5: The results of the analysis revealed that there is no significant correlation between the framing objectives in the two sites, as the value of the Pearson coefficient was (0.458) and the significance was (0.183), so the fifth hypothesis is rejected.

H 6: The results showed that there are no differences between the two sites in the evidence used in news coverage of sustainable development, as the value of (T) was (.553) and the significance was (.459), which confirms the rejection of the sixth hypothesis.

## DISCUSSION

The research aimed to identify the framing of sustainable development issues in Arab news websites and examine the differences between the Egyptian Al-Ahram website and the Emirati Al-Bayan website. The research was able to achieve its goal, answer the research questions, and test the hypotheses. The two websites covered the three areas of sustainable development, although the two websites were more interested in sustainable economic development than in social development, environmental issues, and climate change. Despite the two websites' interest in economic development, they differed in the sub-economic issues included in sustainable economic development due to the influence of official information sources in building frames. Therefore, the Al-Ahram website was more interested in covering development, industry, and innovation projects, while Al-Bayan was more interested in covering the issue of energy and the issue of optimal utilization of resources. These results are consistent with the study by Zat et al. (2024), which found that issues of sustainable economic development and the environment were the ones that received wide and positive coverage in the UAE national newspapers.

The two websites differed in other development issues, as each website focused on local issues that constitute a national priority for its government. Therefore, Al-Ahram focused on water pollution, and Al-Bayan focused on the issue of the desert environment. These results are also consistent with the findings of Khalaf et al. (2024), who revealed significant differences in reporting on the SDGs among the newspapers selected for the study. On the other hand, Al-Ahram website was like Al-Bayan website in its interest in global environmental issues such as climate change and global warming. Perhaps the interest of the two websites in these issues is because they were the most prominent issues raised for global discussion at COP27, hosted by Egypt, and COP28, hosted by the UAE.

The analysis reveals the interest of Arab websites in covering sustainable development issues in all three of its fields, which reached more than 17 sub-issues. These results are consistent with Lopez-Carrión (2023), who noted that the number of news stories mentioning sustainable development issues in Spanish digital newspapers increased by more than 1000% between 2015 and 2022, making 2020 a turning point in the Spanish media agenda. The analysis revealed that the Arab websites use a simple coverage style that focuses on one development event in the news report, more than paying attention to complex coverage in which one report contains several events.



The Arab websites also paid more attention to explaining the development and environmental terms that they mention in the reports than leaving these terms without explaining their meaning. Rees SD (1997) explains that this is one of the reasons why the media resort to specialized sources that can provide information with news value to reduce the level of uncertainty among the public.

Regarding discussing the results of the hypotheses, the Spearman test revealed that there was no correlation between the ranks of the sub-issues in the two websites. The issue of climate change took priority in Al-Ahram, while the issue of energy was the most prominent issue in Al-Bayan. Therefore, this hypothesis was rejected. The reason for the lack of correlation between the two websites may be due to the difference in official sources in each website, which naturally focus on the issues of their local community.

Timber and Palmer (2010) explain this by saying that journalists frame events in their coverage through the government sources they use. The analysis showed that there were no differences between the two sites in the tone of sustainable development coverage, with positive tone prevailing in most news stories. These results are consistent with the study conducted by Felix et al. (2024) which found that Nigerian newspapers presented the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a positive tone.

Pearson's test for measuring the binary correlation also revealed the validity of the third hypothesis, as there was a correlation between the types of frames used previously in the Al-Ahram website and the types of frames used in the Al-Bayan website, as the government support frame was a priority in both sites. Pearson's test for measuring the binary correlation also showed a strong correlation between the types of information sources used in the two sites, which confirms the validity of the hypothesis. The researcher can interpret this as the fact that government sources formed the frames in the two sites, and these results are consistent with Hamilton's (2010) findings that attributing information to sources provides evidence of the validity and credibility of the news story.

Pearson's test for measuring the binary correlation showed no association between the framing objectives of Al-Ahram website and the framing objectives of Al-Bayan website, and therefore this hypothesis is rejected. This can be explained considering the difference between each website regarding the most important development issue in its country, as Al-Ahram focused on the issue of climate change and its negative impact on the water level of the Nile River, while Al-Bayan focused on the issue of energy, given that the UAE is one of the largest oil producers in the world. These results are consistent with the results of Lopez-Carrion (2023), who discovered an inverse relationship between the increased interest of Spanish websites in sustainable development and interest in the sustainable development goals announced by the United Nations in 2015.

The t-test did not reveal any difference between the two websites in the evidence used in writing the news, as the two websites relied on logical evidence more than emotional evidence. These results can be explained by the fact that sustainable development is mostly scientific issues based on facts.



---

## CONCLUSION

The sustainable development issues covered by the Arab websites varied, and each website focused on the issues that are a priority on its government's agenda. Therefore, Al-Ahram website focused on the issue of climate change due to its relationship and effects on the Nile water level, while Al-Bayan focused on the issue of energy, because the UAE is one of the largest oil producers in the world.

The official support frame for sustainable development, which highlights government efforts, was the dominant frame in the coverage on both websites. Also, the Arab websites focused on the episodic frames more than on the thematic frames. The positive tone dominated the framing in both websites due to the websites' reliance on official sources in building the frames.

The research revealed the absence of a correlation between the two websites in two variables, namely the variable of arranging the sub-issues of sustainable development and the variable of framing objectives, while the research discovered a correlation between the two websites regarding four variables, namely the variable of framing tone, types of framing, sources, and evidence.

The study revealed that Arab news websites do not care about sustainable development in a manner commensurate with the issue that has become part of humanity's concerns and has received the attention of Arab governments and international organizations that have given it priority in their plans in recent years. One of the strengths of this research is that it reveals the limited interest in sustainable development and calls for increased attention to it in news coverage. The research also warns of taking advantage of the advantages of digital media in spreading the culture of sustainable development among the Arab public, which has begun to use the Internet at high rates, reaching about 92% of the population in the GCC countries (Statista, 2023).

## RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The research does not claim to fully cover all aspects of news coverage of this issue, as the research could have also studied the impact of this coverage on the audience in Egypt and the Emirates but reaching an audience from other countries where the researchers do not reside remains difficult.

One of the merits of the research is that it applied the frame theory to sustainable development, although this theory was developed to frame issues and events during wars and conflicts. This enabled the researcher to propose new news frames that suit the issue of sustainable development.

Studying only two sites in two of the largest Arab countries in terms of economic, technological, and media capabilities, namely Egypt and the Emirates, may not realistically reflect the rest of the Arab countries that have less economic, technological, and journalistic capabilities, such as Yemen, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, and others. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize the results of this study to all Arab countries, so the research opens the way for researchers to conduct future research in digital media and sustainable development in other countries in the Middle East.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The need to increase the interest of Arab researchers in examining the role of digital media in sustainable development because it has become the most widely used medium among the Arab public.
2. That Arab websites increase their interest in covering sustainable development.
3. That Arab websites focus on thematic frames more than on episodic frames in news framing.
4. That Arab websites employ more digital media, such as multimedia, links, and news updates, and that websites pay more attention to audience interaction with the content they publish with the aim of increasing the public's practice of sustainable green behaviours in their lives.
5. These websites rely on critical analysis methods and investigative journalism and do not limit themselves to simple news coverage.

## REFERENCES

- Alberto E. López-Carrión, Myriam Martí-Sánchez, (2023) Analysis of the coverage and discourse of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda in the Spanish digital press (2015-2022), Published: 03/08/2023
- Bantum, Erin O'Carroll, Owen, Jason E., *Evaluating the validity of computerized content analysis programs for identification of emotional expression in cancer narratives*. Psychological Assessment, Vol 21(1), Mar 2009, 79-88. <https://psycnet.apa.org/buy/2009-03401-011>
- Bennett, 1990. Toward a theory of press-state relations in the United States. *Journal of Communication* 40, pp. 103-127. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.1990.tb02265.x.
- Cozma, 2014. Were the Morrow Boys warmongers? The relationship between sourcing, framing, and propaganda in war journalism. *Journalism studies*. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2014.882098.
- Daniel Riffe, Stephen Lacy, Brendan Watson, Frederick Fico (2019), *Analysing Media Messages: Using Quantitative Content Analysis in Research*, March 2019, Fourth Edition, ISBN: 9780429464287.
- Druckman, N. (2001). The implications of framing effects for citizen competence. *Political Behavior*, 23(3), 225-256. doi:10.1023/A:101500690731.
- Druckman, James N. (2001). On the limits of framing effects: Who can frame? *The Journal of Politics* 63 (4): 1041–1066. doi:10.1111/0022-3816.00100.
- Geir B. Asheim, (1994) *Sustainability: Ethical Foundations and Economic Properties*, The World Bank, Policy Research Department, Public Economics Division, May 1994, pp. 4-7
- Hamilton, John Maxwell, and Regina Lawrence (2010). Foreign correspondence. *Journalism Studies* 11 (5): 630–633. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2010.502787.
- Hermida, Lewis, S. C., and Zamith, R. (2014). Sourcing the Arab Spring: A Case Study of Andy Carving's Sources on Twitter During the Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 19(3), 479-499. doi:10.1111/jcc4.12074



- [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/239775198\\_The\\_Efficiency\\_of\\_Constructed\\_Week\\_Sampling\\_for\\_Content](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/239775198_The_Efficiency_of_Constructed_Week_Sampling_for_Content)
- [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331835488\\_Analyzing\\_Media\\_Messages\\_Using\\_Quantitative\\_Content](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331835488_Analyzing_Media_Messages_Using_Quantitative_Content)
- <https://www.mdif.org/news/role-of-media-driving-change-sdgs/>
- The role of media: Driving change towards the SDGs
- <https://onlinenewspapers.com/oman.shtml>
- <https://onlinenewspapers.com/egypt.shtml>
- <https://onlinenewspapers.com/united-arab-emirates.shtml>
- <https://onlinenewspapers.com/djibouti.shtml>
- <https://www.statista.com/topics/5550/internet-usage-in-mena/#:~:text=Around%202092.>  
Internet usage in MENA—statistics & facts
- Jiaqi Li, Dickson K. W. Chiu, Kevin K. W. Ho, and Stuart So, The Use of social media in Sustainable Green Lifestyle Adoption: Social Media Influencers and Value Co-Creation Sustainability 2024, 16(3), 1133; <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16031133>
- January 2019, 9(3):131-142, DOI:10.24247/ijcmsjun201914.
- Joe Hester, Elizabeth Dougall (2007), The Efficiency of Constructed Week Sampling for Content Analysis of Online News, Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly 84(4):811-824: 1177/107769900708400410.
- Khadijah Baffa Hamza, (2023) Sustainable Development Goals and Media Coverage in Nigeria: Analysis of Daily Trust and the Guardian Newspapers, International Journal of Advances in Engineering and Management (IJAEM) Volume 5, Issue 3 March 2023, pp: 1812-1826 [www.ijaem.net](http://www.ijaem.net) ISSN: 2395-5252.
- Khalaf That et al. (2024). Analysing the newspaper's coverage of sustainable development goals in the UAE, Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies, 14(3), Received: 19 Mar 2024. <https://doi.org/10>
- Panel Tímea Czvetkó, Gergely Honti, Viktor Sebestyén, János Abonyi (2021) The intertwining of world news with Sustainable Development Goals: An effective monitoring tool Brief, Volume 36, June 2021.
- Reese, SD (1997). The news paradigm and the ideology of objectivity: A socialist at the Wall Street Journal. In: Berkowitz D (ed.) Social Meanings of News: A Text Sage: Thousand Oaks, pp. 420–440.
- Sarah Cardey et al. (2023). Communication for Development: Conceptualising Changes in Communication and Inclusive Rural Transformation in the Context of Environmental Change. Social Sciences, Volume 13, Issue 6, 3390/socsci13060324  
<https://www.mdpi.com/2076-0760/13/6/324>
- Sharmila Kayal, Ruma Saha (2019) Role of social media in the creation of awareness for sustainable development goals in higher education  
January 2019, 9(3):131-142, DOI:10.24247/ijcmsjun201914
- Talabi, Felix, and Adaja, Alex, and Sanusi, Bernice (2024). A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs) CAMPAIGN, volume {24}. June 2024
- Tumber, and J. Palmer (2010). Media at war: The Iraq crisis. London: Thousand Oaks, California, London: Sage Publications.