

## Information Flows of Reporting on Terrorism Attack by Online News Portals

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### Abstract

Issues related to terrorism have been reported excessively by the media in order to tell public by giving recent and significant information. Currently, online media are known to be a major source of news as they can provide information without any delayed to ensure the society stay connected with and being informed on the latest issues. Therefore, this article is specially designed to explore on how the main online news portals in Europe (<http://www.euronews.com/>) and Africa (<http://allafrica.com/>) report issues on recent attacks in Paris and Mali. The objectives in this article are threefold: to compare the coverage of news reporting; to identify the news sources used and lastly to identify the news themes that emerged in news reporting. To perform this, a qualitative content analysis approach on two different case studies have been employed and all the news samples were analysed using qualitative software namely QSR NVivo 11. The results indicated that Paris attack issues received 25 news coverage compared to Mali attack issues at 19 news coverage. In terms of news sources used, majority of the news articles used official sources such as Minister, Police officer, spokesperson, media, leader, authorities and security forces. The findings also revealed several news themes such as suspected attackers, rescue efforts, security efforts and death toll are emerged in this analysis.

**Keywords:** News Reporting, Paris Attack, Mali Attack, Online News Portals, Terrorism.

### 1. Introduction

The world has witnessed the powerful tool of the media especially the online media in disseminating information globally without delayed. According to Haque (n.d) the media has played significant roles especially in reporting issues related to wars, conflicts and resolutions. Hence, the role of the journalists in reporting news related to kind of war, attacks, conflicts

and others can be said is quite complicated. This leads to the importance of using the right sources to follow the ethical consideration and the professionalism in order to provide correct facts and information.

The issue of reporting war, attacks and conflicts has been discussed previously by Faridah et al. (2011). According to their study, journalists have to be very critical when disseminating news relating to war, attacks and conflicts. This is due to some pressures such as the deadline and the dangerous environment. The normal procedure to report news on war and conflicts is the journalists usually rely on the information subsidized by the government, authorities in the war zones, the army or other protagonists of war.

Terrorists and media have a reciprocal and symbiotic relationship. Both of them are intertwined in an almost inexorable and symbiotic relationship. Terrorism attempts of writing any drama – no matter how horrible to compel the media's attention" (Miller, 1982). This has led to special attention in covering terrorism related issue despite the type of media either it be print, electronic or new media yet news coverage made by the new media which is known as online news portal seems to have the highest number of readers since its nature that is convenient, fast and reachable. Thus, every online news portal has its own standards in providing in-depth coverage of the events such as house-style of reporting, length of the story, selection of photos, language use and others. Terrorists see that the higher of the media coverage towards a certain issue, then it indicates the success of the campaign (O'Donnell & Gray, 2012). Recent reports on terrorist attacks in Paris and Mali have sparked worldwide attention.

Massive research on terrorism and attacks as reported in the media have been done previously especially issues on terrorism happened in the Middle East such as Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and many more. The issues tackled on Arab spring, the struggle between Iran and Saudi Arabia, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and others have received much attention from media (Efrain, 2016; Hassane, 2012; Kuipers, 2009), These researches play a major role in highlighting issues related issues on Arab Spring and terrorism in the Middle East with various methodologies; qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Since, there are many studies conducted on Islam and terrorism in the Middle East countries, this study has an intention to fill the gap by finding new contemporary trend on how media reported about terrorism and Islam in another continent which are the Europe specifically in Paris and the Africa specifically in Mali as presented by two news portals.

Therefore, we shall attempt to discuss on how the information related to two recent attacks which are Paris and Mali attacks have been disseminated to public. The analysis of information about these attacks is derived from two international news portals; *Euronews* and *AllAfrica* which represent each attacks respectively. To understand the information flows of news related to war, this article highlights three aims; to compare the frequencies of news coverage pertaining to Paris and Mali attacks; to identify the types of news sources used in reporting these two attacks; and to explore the news themes in which it will direct the readers' attention to see the most highlighted issues that have been reported.

## **2. Terrorism and Media**

The role of media is not only about presenting and depicting information and images; they also have the ability in shaping opinions, and presenting a particular version as reality. Based on this view, all parties involved whether the terrorists or the authorities, have to put an effort to cooperate with the media since they are regarded as the sole agent in giving information and instilling awareness to the society about any existing crucial issues (Aly, 2007). According to Walter Laqueur (2002), media plays a major role in making any terrorists operation a success and this was one of the main reasons for the shift from rural guerrilla to urban terror in the 1960s. For instance, many think that September 11 was a thunderstorm in a blue sky, or that it was related to what has been called by Samuel Huntington (1992), among others, "a clash of civilizations". However, the storm became more complicated when the western media came into place with a lot of forays in minds by relating it with Islam.

"Terrorism", according to Andrew Silke (2003) is the term used to show a violated act and the act is considered as violated and violent due to its nature which is against the norm and human's rights. Cassidy (2008) claims that the war on terrorism will have lasted for years, making it much longer than the American Civil War or World War II. In fact, the Current American national security and military strategy documents, framed this war as a protracted struggle, where one may see persistent conflict lasting for several decades. According to Laqueur (2002), the original terrorism has emerged in many different forms such as in religious movements, political revolts as well as social uprisings. He further claims that one good example of the earliest terrorism was during the period of the French Revolution in the 1790s and it was somehow a synonym for "reign of terror".

The word terrorism has been specifically defined in media since 1960s in the labelling and framing some issues or events. Terrorism is becoming common in news coverage and sometimes becomes an exclusive genre both in televisions and newspapers (Mc Quail, 1995). Severin and Tankard (2001) categorize terrorism as one of the seven propaganda devices which is classified as 'name calling' that gives an idea and a bad name, used in rejecting or threatening without investigating based on given evidences.

In relation to this, the issue of fighting against violent attacks or mostly termed as terrorism has been the most important agenda prioritized by any media. They have played a significant role in influencing the whole world to fight and protest against terrorism. Some media are prone to identify and associate terrorism issue with certain groups that are labelled as extremists, militants or Muslim extremists (Zulkifli, 2009).

There are several views on the role of reporting on terrorism in the media. Media sometimes are known as the main agent in transmitting messages to society on the danger of attacks or terror incidents. According to Mc Quail (1995), in certain conditions, media can help the government in dealing with terror issues by giving a negative label or name to terrorist groups and generating some panic situations to terrorists through the information spread. Without the collaboration of the media, terrorism would be impotent. By dramatizing the terrorist's threats and demands and by refusing to condemn them outright, the media often contribute to the moral confusion which tends to romanticize the terrorist and leave his victim forgotten (Lowenthal, 1989).

Despite all contributions made by media in creating awareness on the danger of terrorism which then leads to having a sense of hatred among society, media are said to be able to give publicity as well as legitimacy to certain terrorist political agenda due to some failures made by the government (Mc Quails, 1995). Researchers on terrorism believe that one of the reasons of any terror acts or sabotages done by terrorists is for publicity or to attract society's attention. According to Simonsen and Spindlove (2000), media give negative effect in handling terrorism even though a government does some filtrations in selecting information for neutralization purpose.

Based on this role, Winegar (2008) claims that all parties namely the government and terrorists seemed working hard to have good relationship with media. Should the media refuse, they will experience harmful effects; the government may implement hindrance such as some strict filtrations of any information disseminated by the media while allowing only information on terrorism provided by the government itself. Hence, Hashim (2009) stresses out that media and terrorism related issues are always perceived from three aspects; terrorists' objectives on media, government's objectives on media and media's own objectives on related incidents linked to terrorism.

### **3. Paris and Mali attacks: A brief review**

The Paris attack witnessed a massive shooting aimed at the public, suicide attacks and hostages being held at a full packed theatre and concert in November 2015. A total of 6 different locations were attacked, making it one of the worst incidents in French history. The number of death toll recorded was 137 but many more were reported to be injured, about 90 were critical when the report was written. The perpetrators were said to be terrorists from the Islamic state of Iraq or famously known as ISIS.

What was interesting was the string of attacks happened almost simultaneously. Following the attacks, French policemen carried out numerous raids nationwide and this even took place in their neighbouring country, Belgium. The first attack that occurred was at the Stade de France. It was targeted at the French President with hundreds of spectators watching a friendly football match between Germany and France. Three suicide bombers exploded themselves, all wearing the same jacket. Other attacks that followed were at a bar, a restaurant and a diner. At the restaurant Le Comptoir Voltaire on the Boulevard Voltaire, Braham Abdeslam killed himself by detonating a suicide bomb. But the deadliest attack of the night took place at a concert venue, the Bataclan Hall, on Boulevard Voltaire, also in the 11th district where Californian rock group Eagles of Death Metal was playing. It was an easy target as all 1500 seats were sold out. The bloodbath attack caused the country to be put under the state of emergency with border securities tightened almost instantaneously by the officials. Many were questioned and detained including Salah Abdeslam, the brother of Ibrahim Abdeslamv who detonated himself near the cafe on Boulevard Voltaire. Salah had been questioned by French police earlier but was not detained, a source close to the investigation into the Paris attacks said. He was driving toward the Belgian border when police stopped and questioned him hours after the attacks.

In the recent terrorist attacks in Mali, three groups have been linked to be responsible on the tragedy; Al Qaeda from the north, the Macina Liberation Front from outside the town and an ethnic Peul group from the southeast. The attacks were said to have links with three radical groups; encompassing ethnic and jihadists. What Jazeera has reported appeared to be

what the government referred to as a “coordinated terrorist attack” on a hotel in Bamako. With 17 fatalities and 35 wounded soldiers, the government is not having a second thought in retaliation. Mali's defence minister Tieman Hubert Coulibaly has assured the people that the attacks had military objectives and therefore “an appropriate military response is forthcoming”.

For many years, Mali has witnessed gun attacks among armed groups who claimed that they are fighting for the local grievances. Despite 2015 peace agreement, the country has not really reconciled the differences among ethnic conflicts. Violence is prevalent everywhere in the country. Under the United Nation flagship, the MINUSMA was established in 2013 to support the country's political processes and carry out a number of security-related tasks. Despite the deployment, a total of 60 fatalities among the troops have been recorded, making Mali one of the deadliest peace keeping mission for the UN.

#### **4. Method**

To further understand on how news related to Paris and Mali attacks were reported by *Euronews* and *Allafrica*, the qualitative approach which is qualitative content analysis has been chosen and applied. According to Patton (2002), qualitative content analysis is the process of condensing raw data into categories or themes from the careful examination of the researchers and constant comparison. Thus, to generate the findings for this analysis, we carefully examine and reread the whole article to explore the themes of categories found in the news articles. In a different note, Schilling (2006) emphasises that qualitative content analysis does not involve with counts and statistical significance but only reveals patterns, themes and categories to the particular phenomena and claimed that presenting the findings from qualitative content analysis is a challenging process. To realize this study, we collected news articles (online version) by selecting several keywords such as ‘Paris’, ‘Paris attack’, ‘Paris Attack 2015’ (for Paris attack issue) and ‘Mali’, ‘Mali attack’, and ‘Mali Attack 2015’ (for Mali attack issue). The qualitative content analysis covered the period of Paris attack from *Euronews* portals starting from 13<sup>th</sup> Nov to 20<sup>th</sup> Nov 2015. Whereas for Mali attack, the news articles have been collected from *Allafrica* news portals between 20<sup>th</sup> Nov until 27<sup>th</sup> Nov 2015. A search in the news archive resulted to 44 news articles. Of these articles, 25 news were collected for Paris attack and 19 news for Mali attack. All articles referring to Paris and Mali attacks in the two chosen news portals were then included. For sampling procedure, there are two divisions of sampling procedures; sampling for online news portals selected and sampling for related news articles in the selected news portals. The selection of the online news portals was based on purposive sampling while the selection of news articles that were examined followed the timeframe selected, that is, within one-week period after each attack. In terms of research instrument, we carried out the coding following the procedure in qualitative content analysis by using coding instructions as a guide. A qualitative reading of all articles supplemented the analysis of the frequency of news reporting, the identification of news sources, and lastly the exploring of the news themes. The coding sheet was used in the coding process and inter-coder reliability test was conducted for validity and reliability. For analysis purposes, we used a qualitative software namely QSR NVivo 11 for the process of data storage, importing files, analysing data, organising cases and characteristics, visualising findings and exporting findings.

Methodologically, this research has filled the gap in the field of media and terrorism in which the researchers have chosen and made comparisons between two online news portals which cover two incidents happened in two different continents, Africa and Europe. Most previous research showed the analysis done on either one single online news portal (Fauziah & Siti Zobidah, 2017) or analysis on social media instead of online news (Panda & Choudhary, 2015). But there is no other research done before that analyse two online news portals from different continents and covered two different incidents on the same issue, which is terrorism.

## 5. Findings

### 5.1 The Frequent of Coverage on Paris and Mali Attacks

Table 1 shows the frequencies of reporting between *Euronews* and *Allafrica* pertaining to the issue of Paris and Mali attack. We have listed its frequencies by showing the date and also the title of the news.

Table 1:

The Frequencies of News Reporting on Paris Attacks by *Euronews*  
(13<sup>th</sup> Nov – 20<sup>th</sup> Nov 2015)

No	Date	News Title
1	14 NOV	Sombre mood after Paris attacks
2	2015	France 'at war' with Daesh, says PM Manuel Valls
3		'We came to help out!' Unexpected support helped hospital cope with
4		Paris attacks
5		IOC condemns Paris attacks, says "we are all French"
6		Paris Attacks: who were the attackers?
7		Paris security tightened after attacks
		Witnesses caught up in Paris attacks speak of terror
8	15 NOV	Brussels arrests in connection with Paris shootings
9	2015	Belgium: two people detained on terror charges over Paris attacks
10		Tributes from around the world for Paris victims
11	16 NOV	Who were the people behind the Paris bomb attacks?
12	2015	Climate change a difficult topic for G20 summit says Ussal Sabhaz
13		'We will eradicate terrorism' Hollande vows in defiant response to Paris
14		slaughter
15		Questions asked over Syrian passport found by body of a Paris suicide
16		bomber
17		France fears economic impact of Paris terror attacks
		'Wanted and dangerous' – Still no sign of Salah Abdeslam after Paris
		attacks
		Egypt pays tribute to victims of Paris attacks
18	17 NOV	France intensifies airstrikes against ISIL, calls for "single coalition" to
	2015	oppose them
19	18 NOV	Life goes on as Parisians refuse to let terror rule their lives
20	2015	Belgium questioned 'terror brothers' before Paris attacks – but didn't
		tell France

21	19	NOV	Italy raises security level in wake of Paris attacks
22	2015		New York mayor downplays terror threat video
23			Rector of Paris mosque Dalil Boubakeur angry at mistakes leading up to attacks
24	20	NOV	Third body found in wreckage of Paris apartment stormed by police
25	2015		Paris: tight security as Muslims attend Friday prayers

The above table showed the frequencies of reporting specifically on Paris attack issues by *Euronews*, one of the France news online portals. The incident of Paris attack has shocked all the people around the world. The incident has destroyed café, restaurants and a music venue at the central Paris through suicide bombings and mass shooting. The news reporting on Paris attack issue displayed 25 news reports within one-week coverage between 13<sup>th</sup> November until 20<sup>th</sup> November 2015. For an example, at the beginning of the week, on 14<sup>th</sup> November, there were seven news in particular discussed on Paris attack issues. Among of the news raised was an issue on who are the attackers, the tight security after attacks, the disclose of witness of the tragedy and others. In mid-week, the *Euronews* mostly reported on the impacts of the attack, the effort to counter terrorist attack, prays for Paris victims and others. However, there were only two news reported on the last day of the time studied which is on 20<sup>th</sup> November reported on the third body of victims found and also the security towards Muslims in France.

Table 2:

*The Frequencies of News Reporting on Mali Attacks by AllAfrica (20<sup>th</sup> Nov – 27<sup>th</sup> Nov 2015)*

No	Date		News Title
1	20 2015	NOV	Mali: Security Forces in Mali Free All Hostages From Luxury Hotel, At Least 27 Dead
2			Mali: UN Condemns Attack On Hotel in Bamako
3			Mali: Gunmen Takes 170 Hostages At the Radisson Blu Hotel in Mali
4			Mali: Half of Hotel Hostages Freed, Reports
5			Nigeria: Dangote Denies Being Held Hostage, As Gunmen Attack Bamako-Mali Hotel
6			Algeria: Attack At Radisson in Bamako - 18 Bodies Found, No More Hostage Held
7	21 2015	NOV	Nigeria: Mali Attacks - Buhari Condoles With Obama, Putin, Others
8			Seychelles President Condemns 'Despicable and Cowardly Act' Following Hotel Siege in Mali
9			Mali in Mourning After At Least 27 Die in Hotel Siege
10			Mali: State of Emergency As Three Bamako Hotel Attackers Sought
11			African Press Review
12	23 2015	NOV	Mali President - Al-Mourabitoun Not Behind Attack

13			Maliens Pick Up the Pieces After Hotel Attack
14			Mali Police Launch Search for Hotel Attack Gangsters
15			Mali: Security Tight As Bamako Mourns Terror Victims
16			Mali Enters State of Mourning As Attackers Remain Unknown
17	24	NOV	Mali: Tunisia Condemns Terrorist Attack in Bamako
	2015		
18	25	NOV	Mali: Germany to Send 650 Soldiers to Mali
	2015		
19	26	NOV	Mali: Is Stability Ever Going to Return to Mali?
	2015		

A week after Paris has been attacked, The Radisson Blu Hotel in Bamako, Mali has been attacked by assaults which caused at least 21 people dead. This terror attack indicates the growing vulnerability of extremist violence. Table 2 showed the frequent of news reporting by *Allafrica* towards the issue of Mali attack. About 19 news reporting have been found within one-week time studied. On 20<sup>th</sup> November, most news were reported on security issues at Bamako hotel, the hostage, the number of the victims and others. Apart from that, news reported on 21<sup>st</sup> November and 23<sup>rd</sup> November specifically on searching of the Mali attackers, tighten the security, Mali's mourning and others.

### 5.2 The Sources Used in Reporting News on Paris and Mali Attacks

In reporting the issue especially on attacks, it is very important to have an appropriate and accurate sources to provide the information. According to Wilson (2010) the used of trusted sources or official sources are needed in giving information, facts and also the data in order to avoid conflict. For an example, the information of the number of victims involved, the location of the incidents, the reason of attacks and others required credible sources. In this present study, we have presented the types of sources used by *Euronews* and *Allafrica* in reporting the issue of Paris and Mali attacks. The official and unofficial sources have been visualised by the QSR NVivo 11 as in the table below:

Table 3:

#### List of Official Sources

	Minister	Police Officer	Spokes person	Media	Leader	Authorities	Security Force	Total
<i>Euronews</i>	6 (23.08%)	1 (33.33%)	1 (16.67%)	3 (12.50%)	4 (80%)	2 (33.33%)	0 (0%)	<b>17</b> <b>(22.37%)</b>
<i>Allafrica</i>	20 (76.92%)	2 (66.67%)	5 (83.33%)	21 (87.50%)	1 (20%)	4 (66.67%)	6 (100%)	<b>59</b> <b>(77.63%)</b>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	



### 5.3 Identifying Themes in the News

Studying the themes of the news is the core of this study. In this present study, we have listed news themes found in both reporting. To analyse the news themes, we chose by paragraphs as the unit of analysis in order to obtain the specific news theme. However, there were some paragraphs which contained no frame as they mainly covered the background of the event without further elaboration on the particular issue. Table 5 below showed the total number of units of analysis which is number of paragraphs that are suited to be analysed in this study (see Table 5).

Table 5:  
*Units of Analysis/Number of Paragraphs Studied*

News Portals	Gross Paragraph	Paragraph without Frame	Unit of Analysis	Percentage (%)
<i>Euronews</i>	191	68	123	44.57%
<i>Allafrica</i>	206	54	153	55.43%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

A total of 397 paragraphs were identified in this study from both news portals online which have been identified before the deletion of having no frame. Table 5 as above shows number of the paragraphs studied for *Euronews* at 123 number of paragraphs, meanwhile 123 number of paragraphs in *Allafrica* have been selected and fit to be analysed. The number of paragraphs studied in this analysis showed that *Allafrica* is higher than number of paragraphs studied for *Euronews*. Next is the distribution of news themes according to each news portals.

Table 6:  
*The Distribution of News Themes in Euronews*

News Portal	Themes	Total	Percentage (%)
<i>Euronews</i>	Warning	2	1.63%
	Suspect Attacker	14	11.38%
	Support	28	22.76%
	Security Efforts	11	8.94%
	Rescue Efforts	12	9.76%
	Penalty	4	3.25%
	Number of Hostages	0	0.00%
	Mourning/Condolences/Sadness	11	8.94%
	Motive of Attack	3	2.44%
	Mechanisms of Attack		
	• Stormed	0	0.00%
	• Shoot	4	3.25%
	• Fired	0	0.00%
	• Assaulted	3	2.44%
	• Explode	6	4.88%
Information about Attack	2	1.63%	

	Impact		
	• Tourism Impact	5	4.07%
	• Economy Impact	6	4.88%
	• Administration Impact	0	0.00%
	Death Toll	4	3.25%
	Condemn	7	5.69%
	Claimed Responsibility	1	0.81%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>123</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

The above table listed the news frames that have been analysed by the researchers. It showed 15 news frames that have been found recurring in *Euronews*. The highest news themes found in *Euronews* is support at 22.76%. Some of the paragraphs that showed support themes are as below:

*"I feel strong and determined," said one woman. "We must not be brought down and plunge into negative emotions, we must be resolute, and we must continue to live normally."*

(*Euronews*, Nov 14, 2015: 8)

*One Berlin resident said: "We are all human beings, part of one world and we're sad about anything like this that happens anywhere in the world. This was especially sad because it (the attack) was on another level."*

(*Euronews*, Nov 15, 2015: 7)

Apart from that, the least frames found were on number of hostages, stormed, fired and administration impact were each at 0.00%. The table also showed *Euronews* highlighted on the issue of suspect attacker which constitute 14% and 12% for rescue efforts issue. Below are the examples of news excerpts:

*One of the attackers from Le Bataclan has been formally identified by his fingerprints. He was born on 21 November 1985 in France, was known by authorities for petty crimes but never jailed, said Molins.*

(*Euronews*, Nov 14, 2015: 15)

*But France has not publicly confirmed that the passport-holder is a suspect attacker and Greece has warned against mixing the two issues.*

(*Euronews*, Nov 16, 2015: 9)

The above table showed that 123 of news paragraphs have been analysed into each frames that have been determined through emergent coding by the researchers. It showed that *Euronews* concentrated on several themes such as support, suspect attacker, mourning/condolences/sadness, security efforts and rescue efforts. To compare with news themes highlighted by *Allafrica*, see the table below:

Table 7:

*The Distribution of News Themes in Allafrika*

News Portal	Themes	Total	Percentage (%)
<i>Allafrika</i>	Warning	1	0.65%
	Suspect Attacker	1	0.65%
	Support	14	9.15%
	Security Efforts	14	9.15%
	Rescue Efforts	18	11.76%
	Penalty	3	1.96%
	Number of Hostages	21	13.73%
	Mourning/Condolences/Sadness	8	5.23%
	Motive of Attack	5	3.27%
	Mechanisms of Attack		
	• Stormed	8	5.23%
	• Shot	7	4.58%
	• Fired	1	0.65%
	• Assaulted	1	0.65%
	• Explode	0	0.00%
	Information about Attack	4	2.61%
	Impact		
	• Tourism Impact	0	0.00%
	• Economy Impact	0	0.00%
	• Administration Impact	2	1.31%
	Death Toll	27	17.65%
	Condemn	7	4.58%
Claimed Responsibility	11	7.19%	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>153</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

The above table displayed the list of news frames that were found in reporting on Mali attack by *Allafrika*. From 153 news paragraphs being studied, it showed that the highest news themes was on the number of death due to the Mali attack which constitute at 27 times (17.65%). Below are the examples of news excerpts for detail:

*Six Russians were killed in the hotel attack, Russia's foreign ministry said Saturday.*  
(*Allafrika*, Nov 21, 2015:36)

*The East African's main headline reads "No more hostages after Special Forces raid". The regional paper says at least 18 people died and two soldiers were wounded when the Radisson Blu Hotel in Bamako was stormed by Special Forces after gunmen had taken 170 people hostage.*

(*Allafrika*, Nov 21, 2015: 7)

*Allafrika* was highly concentrated on the number of death due to the incident of Mali attack. Some of the excerpts showed that the nationality of the dead and also the amount. It followed by focusing on the hostages' issues such as the nationality and the amount of the

hostages in which *Allafrica* had highlighted in their news reporting at 21 times (13.73%). Some of the excerpts detailed out the nationality of the hostages and also the amount of the hostages.

*The hostages included Americans, Chinese, Indian, Turkish, Algerian and European citizens.*

*(Allafrica, Nov 20, 2015: 24)*

*"Gunmen seize 170 hostages at hotel in Mali," was South African paper BusinessDay's early take on the situation.*

*(Allafrica, Nov 21, 2015: 18)*

Both of the news excerpts above showed the examples of news themes about the hostage issues when reporting on Mali attack. Surprisingly, to compare with reporting on Paris attack, there was no issues on hostages have been highlighted. Therefore, there is a difference between Mali attack and Paris attack in which Paris did not have any issue on hostages compared to Mali whereas the attack at the Radisson Blu Hotel had seized some hostages.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this article has revealed the common patterns made by the online news portals when covering news on terrorism and we found similarity in the pattern with that of print media (Sofia Hayati et al, 2013). Apart from that, we have also discovered that there is also an association made by the online news portals between the attacks and some extreme religious groups. This finding has been also supported with the findings made by Noor Mayudia and her colleagues (2010), Mohd Faizal & Sofia Hayati (2010) and Sofia Hayati et al (2013) that there is a similar pattern of media in associating terrorism issues with some religious groups particularly those related to Islam. This article also concludes that online news portals seem to quote news taken from official sources more than unofficial sources while news sources from other media online news portals are mostly preferred. This shows significance of the news itself in terms of its worthiness as official sources can provide accurate facts (Fauziah, 2011). Generally, the most popular news themes framed by online news portals when covering stories on terrorist attacks are *supports, security efforts & rescue efforts*. This gives the image that online news portals pay more attention in rescue and supports rather than focusing on the crimes convicted by the terrorists despite the news reporting used frequently the words of attacks in news stories.

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