

Media Coverage, Environmental Issues, and Sustainable Development in the UAE

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Preserving the environment is an issue worthy of scientific research and data analysis, especially as the causes of environmental pollution have multiplied. In addition to natural disasters, man has contributed to the spread of pollution beyond the tolerable limits, causing an environmental damage that threatens the continuity of life itself. Environmental conditions are of such intensity that they necessitate a different lifestyle for their improvement, as well as the development of a sustainable environment. Since the demand to create fundamental changes in the behaviour of the individual and his/her habits towards the environment is urgent, the media comes to occupy an important position in the pursuit and realization of such changes. A new media branch has emerged, under the name of Environmental Media, which contributes, most notably, in developed countries, to raising public awareness about environmental issues. It thus alerts and encourages governments to be more attentive to environmental problems. Given the reality of media practice with respect to environmental issues in developing countries, there is a gap between these media practices and their resonance with individuals. Such effect is sought by media outlets through the spread of their message of guidance and enlightenment, bearing social and cultural weight on the educational and political abilities of the society to create values and good attitudes. Study Problem: The objective of this analytical study is to address the global role of the UAE in the protection of the environment, and the promotion of sustainable development through. This is achieved by highlighting through the media the efforts exerted by the UAE in facing problems of the environment and sustainable development, at the local and international level; and also by analysing media trends in addressing some of the problems of the environment and sustainable development. This study will also evaluate the role of the daily UAE press in this regard, particularly as they are presented in Al Etihad and the Gulf newspapers.

Key words: *Environment and sustainable development, Media practice, Media coverage.*

Introduction

The environment and its problems are considered the most important issues that face man since the turn of the third millennium. Environmental problems become particularly evident when an imbalance occurs among the elements of nature that comprises natural, social, and cultural systems. Therefore, the environmental issues have increasingly attracted attention on international and local levels due to the serious consequences and intolerable damages they bring about. The environmental issues have a preponderant place in the agendas of countries and international organisations as they look to find a solution for the environmental deterioration that threatens the continuity of life on Earth. These parties also seek to enforce laws, international and local agreements for the purpose of preserving the environment, as well as find an end to the waste of resources under a frame of sustainable and continuous development to ensure the rights of future generations.

Significant technical development had a tremendous impact, particularly in the Arabian Gulf region. The post-oil period led to a social boom that resulted in sudden, large and gradual changes in the economic, cultural and social environment, which coincided with tangible and rapid changes in environmental conditions. These environmental conditions are represented in the problems resulting from the steady growth in commercial and industrial operations, the subsequent problems of pollution, and other problems such as environmental distortion, depletion of natural resources, and other major environmental problems. The UAE was not far from these problems. It is one of the oil-exporting countries and this led to several consequences due to its intensive use of seaports in transporting that oil. The UAE thrived economically and became one of the most important countries in the recycling of hydro materials, and it followed an imprudent approach toward dealing with soil treatment and exploitation, in addition to facing the problem of moving sand dunes. Thus, the UAE has tended to strengthen its international cooperation in the field of environmental protection.

Protecting the environment and preserving its resources are the most important issues that the UAE has been interested in since its foundation. This constantly growing interest is increasingly manifested in the community awareness of the need to preserve the environment, and in stringent legislations and laws. The UAE is one of the leading countries to execute green strategies by constructing environmentally-friendly buildings, and spreading green belts, which serve as green lungs that help in reducing pollution. The State's efforts are not only limited to this. The State has also undertaken environmentally-friendly technologies and projects with the purpose of protecting natural resources from depletion, and developing safe alternatives to mitigate against environmental challenges. This originates from the belief that an individual's safety is achieved not only through governmental efforts, but also through everyone who lives in the environment, as collective actions and environmental awareness are a basic means for developing any society, and having a developed and sustainable



environment that is free from pollution and harm. The UAE's efforts in the field of environmental preservation and development have helped it take a prominent place on the world environmental map, thus it has become a favourite venue for many regional and international conferences and meetings, which attract an increasing number of participants. The UAE has recently hosted an important group of international environmental conferences and has launched many initiatives and advertisements that were linked to its name. The world has witnessed an increasing interest in the role of mass media in serving the causes of society due to the tangible impact of media and its ability to convince and guide. To fulfil public needs, the mission of the media within society has evolved; it has enormous potential to change trends and form the mental images that influence public opinion toward the issues at hand. Newspapers represent a suitable forum for discussing the subject of addressing environmental issues, thanks to their ability to present divergent views, interpret and analyse events, and reveal the truth about what is raised on environmental issues and problems, in addition to the space and margin of freedom made available for these newspapers to discuss controversial issues (Yassin, 2014).

The media plays an effective role in raising a citizen's environmental awareness, and instilling the right concepts toward the environment in individuals and industrial organisations, as well as toward the resulting damage and the problems of pollution. The media also warns that the increasing pollution may lead to health, economic and social disasters. The press also plays a key role in disseminating and establishing new ideas in people's minds. However, in developing countries, including the Arab countries, where illiteracy is high, the role of the press is not as strong as mass media such as radio and television. The press as a whole can't transform a certain audience, and it lacks the proper means for this process. With the growing importance of environmental issues and the problems arising from the environment, particularly the problems of environmental pollution (air, water, soil), depletion of natural resources, desertification, global warming, and hazardous waste and their health, psychological, social, and economic impact, environmental media has emerged and its important role has become evident. Environmental media can be defined as the type of media that sheds light on environmental problems and increases public knowledge and awareness. It is also defined as a type of media that supports environmental issues through its role in activating and supporting the participation of the public in preserving the environment, protecting its renewable and non-renewable resources from depletion and sabotage, and working to improve and develop these resources for better protection both in the present and future.

Environmental media provides various audiences with information, news and facts on different environmental issues and problems. It also adopts the principles of sustainable development, using all traditional and digital media in order to create an environmental

awareness that is based on sound practical knowledge about the environment, and to establish an ecological citizenship capable of addressing its issues.

The media attention to environmental protection dates back to 1870, in Minnesota, USA, thanks to Hallock magazine, which took interest in environmental issues, especially wildlife. In 1920, the US media began to show interest in the environment. In 1962, Rachel Carson's book "Silent Spring" was published. In 1963, 300,000 Americans participated in the Earth Day protest, and President Nixon announced the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency. In 1970, UK Prime Minister Edward Heath established the Ministry of Environment, and then the media began to address environmental issues. In 1992, the Earth Summit was held in Brazil.

Western studies have noted that environmental issues moved up on the international media's list of interests, ranking second in the issues of science and technology after medicine and health. Public opinion polls in Canada, Britain, the United States, and Egypt confirm that the environment occupies a place between the first and second rank in the public opinion.

Environmental media in the Arab world is considered a relatively recent phenomenon compared to the other types of Arabic media. During the past three decades, environmental issues have been dealt with superficially, but the indications tend to be positive. There is recently an increasing interest in topics such as environmental protection and sustainable development in developing countries, which have witnessed economic and social growth. This interest in the environment and environmental media in the Arab world began after the Rio Conference on the environment that was held in 1992. This interest has been reflected in the volume of interest the Arab media has in environmental issues, which despite lacking a clear strategy, is still an indication of its interest. On the official level, it can be said that the international interest demonstrated itself in the Arab world in the form of establishing ministries, authorities and associations that are concerned with the environment and environmental media.

Objectives of Environmental Media

To succeed in providing environmental information, influencing the target audience in accordance with the objectives set out for the protection of the environment, and in keeping with the existing situations and circumstances, the environmental media will have to coordinate and cooperate with the various types of media to work in one direction through an integrated media plan. The media with all its forms is the main source of information about the environment, and it has a significant impact on shaping the environmental concerns of various sectors of the population. Consequently, the media sector has to continuously address the environmental issues at hand.



Since the environment or environmental media itself is a branch of developmental media, the concept of sustainable development in all forums and conferences discusses the need for a modern economy that does not harm the environment. The existing economy is based on foundations contradicting the elements of a sound environment. This will create opportunities for future generations to bring about fundamental changes in their lifestyles and help them achieve a better life.

Previous Studies

The research surveyed early scientific literature on journalism and its role in addressing environmental and sustainable development issues. It sorted these studies chronologically; from the newest to the oldest as follows:

(Abdul Aziz, 2003); (Ajwa, 2004). “The Bahraini Newspapers’ Coverage of Environmental Issues”

The study sought to identify the extent of coverage of environmental issues in the Bahraini newspapers, and to know if this coverage was in conformity with the environmental policies and regulations of Kingdom of Bahrain. The study has surveyed all the issues of both Akhbar Al Khaleej and AlAyam newspapers for a whole year. The following are some of the most significant findings of the study:

- Most the issues covered by the Bahraini newspapers were other environmental issues that had no relevance to Bahrain’s environmental reality such as the pollution caused by volcanic eruptions.
- The environmental issues were rarely addressed by local newspapers. More than 66% of these topics covered two columns, and only 29% of these articles used subjective images to reflect the environmental issues they discussed. The environment-related materials published in coloured pages were not more than 4%, and more than 64% of the environmental news was short news that did not provide explanations or deep insights into environmental issues.

(Bain & Bongiorno, 2020); (Griggs, 2013). “The Role of Social Media in Promoting the Sustainable Environmental Awareness of University Students.”

The purpose of this study was to shed light on the role of social media in promoting sustainable environmental awareness of university students. The following are some of the most significant findings of the study:

- Facebook is one of the most popular social media websites used by the research subjects.

- Thanks to the role it plays, Facebook has greatly contributed in promoting sustainable environmental awareness, and has become an important source of news and information in various areas, particularly after becoming one of the new media applications. Most the research subjects use Facebook to know about the current environmental situations and their problems.

Nawal Daf' Al-Said. 2015. "The Role of Journalism in Raising Awareness of the Environmental Issues: The Plant Cover as a Model"

This study aimed at identifying the role which the Sudanese press plays in raising awareness of the environmental issues in light of the increasing interest in the environment. The study made several findings the most important of which are the following:

- The press doesn't see environmental issues as exclusives, thus their news neither hits the headlines nor appears on front pages except in the event of disasters.
- The press focuses on news coverage more than raising the environmental awareness. The environmental topics lack the appropriate means to be in focus.
- Newspapers don't take initiatives to raise awareness of environmental issues, and environment-related organisations and bodies play a weak role in raising the awareness of these issues.
- Editors-in-chief and columnists lack interest in environmental issues and in following-up on them on a continuous basis.
- The environment pages don't continue and there are no specialist journalists.

Yasin (2014). "The Tendencies of the Emirati Press toward the Environmental Issues and Problems"

The purpose of the study was to learn about the tendencies of the Emirati press toward environmental issues and problems. Following are some of the study's most important findings:

- Compared to other newspapers that the study included, Al Khaleej provided a wider coverage of environmental topics and issues. The newspapers examined by the study took great interest in the technical templates of news at the expense of opinion materials.
- Press editors and the Emirates News Agency were a primary source of environmental topics, as opposed to journalists, reporters, and public relation offices. The local environmental issues gained a wider interest and space in terms of publishing opportunities in the newspapers included in the study, compared to international environmental issues that came in the second rank, and the regional environmental issues that came in the third rank.

Baileg. 2010. “The Public Media knowledge Gap”

The goal of the study was to recognize the role of media as a primary source of environment-related information for individuals, and to reveal the relationship between one’s average age and his knowledge of environment and its problems. For this purpose, opinion surveys were carried out for two separate groups from Madison and Wisconsin cities. The first group comprised 63 people whose opinion and information would be surveyed before April 22 which marked the Earth Day anniversary (Kates et al., 2005); (Khaled, 2007). The second group comprised 106 people whose opinions were surveyed after the Earth Day anniversary and took into consideration the different age levels in the two groups. The study made several findings the most important of which are the following:

- There were statistically significant differences between the level of environmental awareness (level of environmental knowledge) and an individual’s average age. These differences came in favour of middle and young ages; that’s to say a child is capable of assimilating information about the environment more than others, but this ability decreases with age.

(Mahmoud, 2008); (Mark, 2005) “Environment in the Arabic Media and the Future Challenges”

The study covered 15 Arab countries to determine how far Arabic media was interested in covering environmental issues, by reviewing the content of local media during the period of November 2005 and September 2006. This study led to the following findings:

- Less than 10% of the Arabic media has a dedicated editor for environmental affairs and sustainable development. The same percentage of newspapers dedicates a weekly page, journal, or specific space for the environmental affairs.

- Newspapers with dedicated regular pages for the environment cancel them in favour of advertisements, and political and economic events. These pages are often published for a while and then stopped, either permanently or to return after months or years. This can’t happen with the fixed pages which are dedicated for politics, economy, sports and society.

- Many environment-dedicated pages in the Arabic media receive support from government environmental agencies, thus they lose their neutrality and become unable to criticize these agencies (McGowan et al., 2018); (Mequail, 2005).

- It has been noticeable that topics such as industrial pollution and desertification were the focus of the Algerian media. Topics such as water had a priority in the Sultanate of Oman and

Jordan, but they almost overlooked topics such as air pollution (except for disasters), rationalization of energy consumption, land use, and urban planning.

Grossman (2005). “Alternative Media Aims at Environmental Issues”

This study noted that US media didn't address environmental issues on a large scale. 15 years before the time of the study, commercial media didn't feature topics on environment, nuclear power, and clean energy, but the new electronic media helped the general public get engaged in the environmental issues. It became possible to watch environment-oriented programs that managed to obtain awards in international festivals which focused on the environment, renewable energy, nuclear power, and pollution. These programs were able to attract the public attention.

Comments on the Aforementioned Studies

The aforementioned studies reveal a set of problems that face the media while dealing with environmental issues. These problems can be summed up as follow:

- While addressing environmental issues, newspapers focus primarily on the issue of pollution and its various types, though pollution is one of the issues that arose from man's irrational intervention in various ecosystems.
- Absence of a proper and correct definition of the environment in press stories. The concept of the environment needs to include the concept of sustainable development, which newspapers missed while addressing these issues.
- Approaches to environmental issues are incomplete, and lack continuity, following-up, and rectification. The facts about the environmental problems are severed and inaccurate. It's rare for follow-ups and investigations into the scientific causes of what happened to be carried out, and this leaves the public with no clear scientific briefing.
- Almost all the approaches to environmental issues in the press took a news format. The art of news writing was most prominent in the newspapers which the study included, while the other arts of an interpretative nature, which are probably more useful and appropriate in addressing these issues, fell behind (Nilsson et al., 2016); (Palen, 2005).

The importance of this research emanates from the originality of specialised studies on environmental media in the Arab region and the scarcity of studies that tackle environmental issues in the UAE press in particular. Exploring previous research in environmental and media libraries, we can see that there is limited academic research that creates a direct link between

media and environmental issues. Therefore, this study is intended to follow an academic approach to fill the gap and serve as an initiative that brings environmental issues to the attention of the UAE society.

The Concept of Environmental Media

There is a close connection between environmental issues and the media through the process of sustainable development. The media can spread awareness to a wide public in terms of their environmental rights and responsibilities. In its modern sense, developmental media is a chief contributor to sustainable development, as various communication channels are keen to offer media initiatives, public dialogues, awareness advertising, and guidelines about the environment.

The media also communicates people's interests and opinions to decision makers and development planners; so that people feel that they are actively involved in development projects. There have been numerous definitions of developmental media, the most remarkable of which are:

- Using all types of media to raise people's awareness and provide them with enough information to maintain the safety of the surrounding environment (Niveen, 2005);
- Using all written, visual and audio media to spread information, facts and opinions about environmental issues to individuals and groups in the society (Suzan and Salah, 2019);
- Environmental media refers to the information, news and facts passed to the public about different environmental issues, and the adoption of sustainable development principles using a range of traditional and digital media to create environmental awareness that is based on sound knowledge about the environment and to establish ecological citizenship that is empowered to address its issues (Sawsan and Nouredine).

Most countries around the world are notably concerned with achieving sustainable development; a goal that requires maintaining natural resources and managing them in a way that serves the development process, changing unsustainable production and consumption patterns, and reducing environmental pollution. However, future generations should have their share in natural resources, particularly water, land and energy. Since environmental media are, on their own, a form of developmental media, the concept of sustainable development in all events and conferences discusses the need for a modern economy that is environmentally friendly. The current economy is based on principles that are not in line with the basics of a healthy environment, a fact which increases the responsibility of future generations to make drastic changes in their lifestyle to enjoy a better life (Kawthar, 2006). The United Arab Emirates has been focusing on the economic and social dimensions related to sustainable



development. Therefore, many governmental institutions and bodies have been established to develop programs and policies that boost sustainable development (Amal, 2012).

As for environmental media in the UAE, environmental issues are discussed in the media almost every day, relying primarily on news from the Emirates News Agency (WAM).

Press Coverage of Environment and Sustainable Development Issues

In handling environment-related reports, different types of media, including visual, print and audio, should take into account that the audience of such reports is broad in terms of age, educational background, profession, and other individual qualities that make individuals different from each other. Therefore, media messages should be presented in a way that is as diverse as the audience (Zeina, 2011).

There are two types of media coverage of environmental issues:

News Coverage

Investigates environmental issues including: environmental phenomena, e.g. black smoke clouds, soil contamination; environment-related issues, e.g. afforestation, scientific research, pollutants, pollution prevention and treatment solutions; and news, efforts and statements of public figures working in the environment section, e.g. the minister of environment, reports about the Chairman of the Environment Agency, scientists and environmental experts, etc. A piece of news can be local or international, simple or complex. Environmental news should cover current and important information, using interesting input.

Analytical Coverage

Presents, explains and interprets environmental issues and phenomena, and makes an in-depth investigation of reasons and outcomes. This should be done within a more comprehensive framework that connects the different dimensions of a phenomenon to other phenomena. It is necessary to determine which authorities are responsible for an issue and outline the responsibilities of each to start the actual diagnosis and analysis and, finally, introduce a preventive treatment. The role of environmental media is not only shedding light on an environmental issue or phenomenon. It needs to be supported with the ability to provide information and answers to all the questions of the public. In this way, the media will manage to awaken public interest and involvement in environmental issues. Stimulating public interest is an essential step towards effecting the desired behavioural change, which is indispensable for the success of any environment-preservation program. Examples of analytical coverage



include press releases, articles and reports. Since showing all the statistics made is impossible, some representative examples will be given.

Research Methodology

The research is based on surveys, since they represent the most suitable approach to collect and analyse field data about a specific phenomenon, and to explain relations between the variables of that phenomenon (Paul and Tim, 2019); (Philip et al., 2019). It also helps a researcher generalize the findings of the research.

Surveys are used in this research to scientifically describe how the media highlights the UAE's role in protecting the environment and fostering sustainable development. For this purpose, a sample of UAE newspapers is selected and analysed. Since it is difficult to cover all newspapers, the study focuses on Etihad and Khaleej newspapers due to their effective role in raising people's awareness of contemporary issues.

The study discusses how far both newspapers highlight the environment and sustainable development issues and what attitudes they take towards these issues. The research sample is specific to reports on the UAE's role in protecting the environment and fostering sustainable development during the Industrial Week in 2017.

The content is analysed as a tool to collect the target data which will allow us to understand and investigate how environmental and sustainable development issues are presented by the UAE media in general, as well as in Khaleej and Etihad newspapers in particular. The study includes all the relevant reports issued by the two newspapers.

Thanks to its profound influence, ability to persuade, and control public reactions, there has been a growing world interest in the role of mass media in supporting social issues. Based on public needs, the responsibilities of the media in the society have developed. The media has an enormous ability to change attitudes and shape emotional narratives that influence public opinion regarding current issues. Newspapers offer a perfect platform to discuss how environmental issues are addressed, given that they allow different views, analysis and interpretation incidents, and work towards the truth of environmental issues. Moreover, newspapers enjoy much freedom in discussing controversial issues.

Quantitative Estimation and Analysis of Content

In an attempt to feature the analytical study sample in newspapers coverage of the UAE's international role in supporting environmental and sustainable development causes, I have chosen Khaleej and Etihad newspapers and surveyed a weekly sample of their press coverage

during 2017. Based on that survey during the analysis period (3 months), it was found that the researched topic appeared in a total of 186 articles, as shown in the table below:

Table 1: The number of newspapers that related to the role of the UAE internationally in environmental issues and the promotion of sustainable development

The newspapers	Q	%
Khaleej	105	56.5
Etihad	81	43.5
Total	186	100

Findings of the analytical study

Table (1) shows the number of press articles reviewed for the purpose of this study in relation to the UAE's international role in supporting environmental causes and boosting sustainable development. Table (2) outlines the type of press templates used in the study, including reports, reportages, editorials, articles and releases.

Table 2: Reflects the following

Total		Etihad		Al Khalij		Newspapers Press template
%	Q	%	Q	%	Q	
59.7	111	67.9	55	53.3	56	Press report
26.9	50	28.4	23	25.7	27	The News
7	13	3.7	3	9.5	10	Article
5.4	10	-	-	9.5	10	Press report
1.1	2	-	-	1.9	2	Editorial
100	186	100	81	100	105	Total

Reports play the biggest role in highlighting the UAE's international role in supporting environmental causes and boosting sustainable development. It has been rated as the most common template used by UAE daily newspapers – the sampled content (59.7%). Press



releases came second (26.9%), as the cited newspapers covered key news stories and details. Meanwhile, articles accounted for 7%, reportages 5.4%, and editorials 1.1%.

Looking closely at the sampled newspapers, findings on press templates show that Al-Ittihad Newspaper uses reports the most (67.9%), followed by press releases (28.4%). However, in Al-Khaleej, articles and reportages contribute to the largest part of press coverage, making 9.5% each, followed by editorials, 1.9%.

Findings also show that no reportages or editorials have been made by Al-Etihad Newspaper. They are only found in Al-Khaleej. Both newspapers, however, showed little interest in reportages, though they are among the most significant press templates that reflect how far the press can spot failures in performance and decide who to blame. A maximum of 10 reportages were conducted during the time of the study, despite the fact that environmental causes are important both officially and socially and should have gained a reasonable amount of focus when exploring issues of public opinion.

No focus has been given to “press interviews,” although they are important for the audience and offer an overview of the viewpoints and attitudes of officials in relation to the UAE’s international role in supporting environmental causes and boosting sustainable development.

Findings agree with many studies regarding the highest press coverage, in comparison with other press templates (reportages, talks and analytical articles).

Findings also show that there is a statistical relationship between the variant of press coverage templates on the one hand, and the UAE sampled newspapers on the other hand. The value of Chi-square reached 13.222, with less than 0.05 statistical significance.

Environmental Causes Supported by the UAE at the International Level

Figure 1. Environmental issues that have attracted the attention of the UAE at the state level

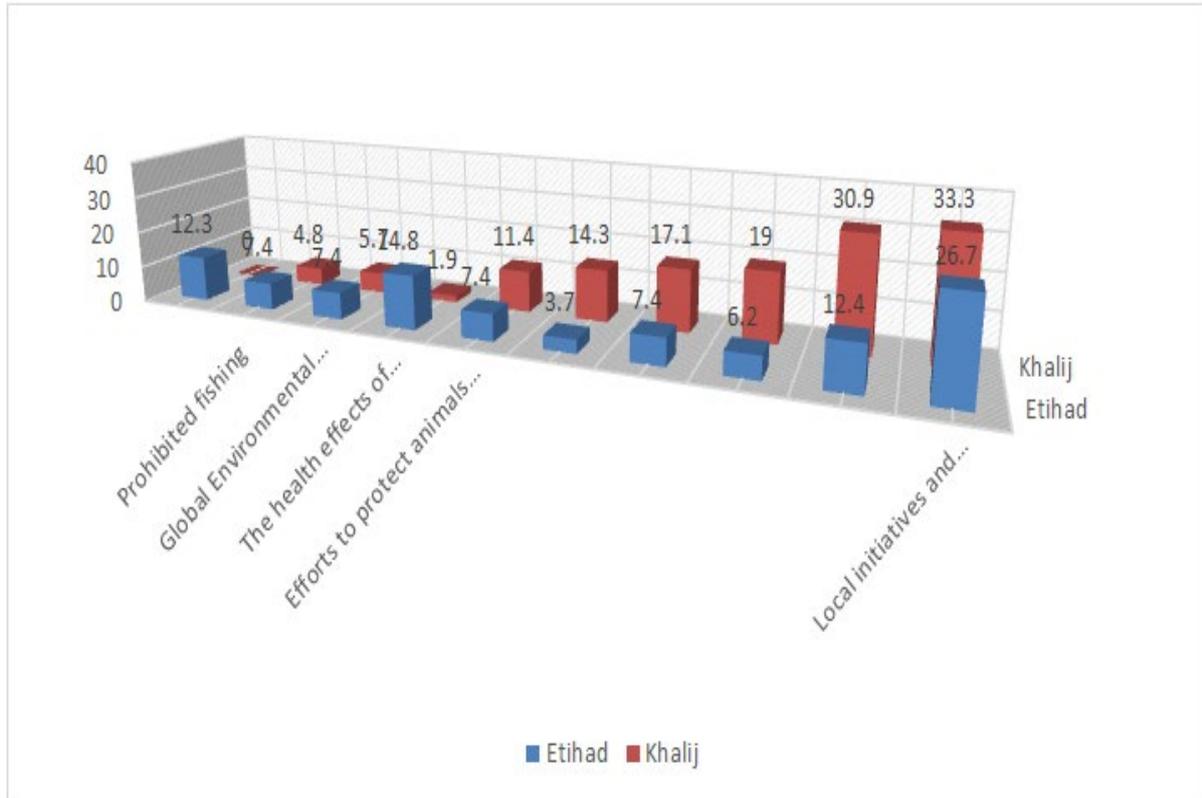


Figure 1. shows the issues and problems discussed by the sampled newspapers:

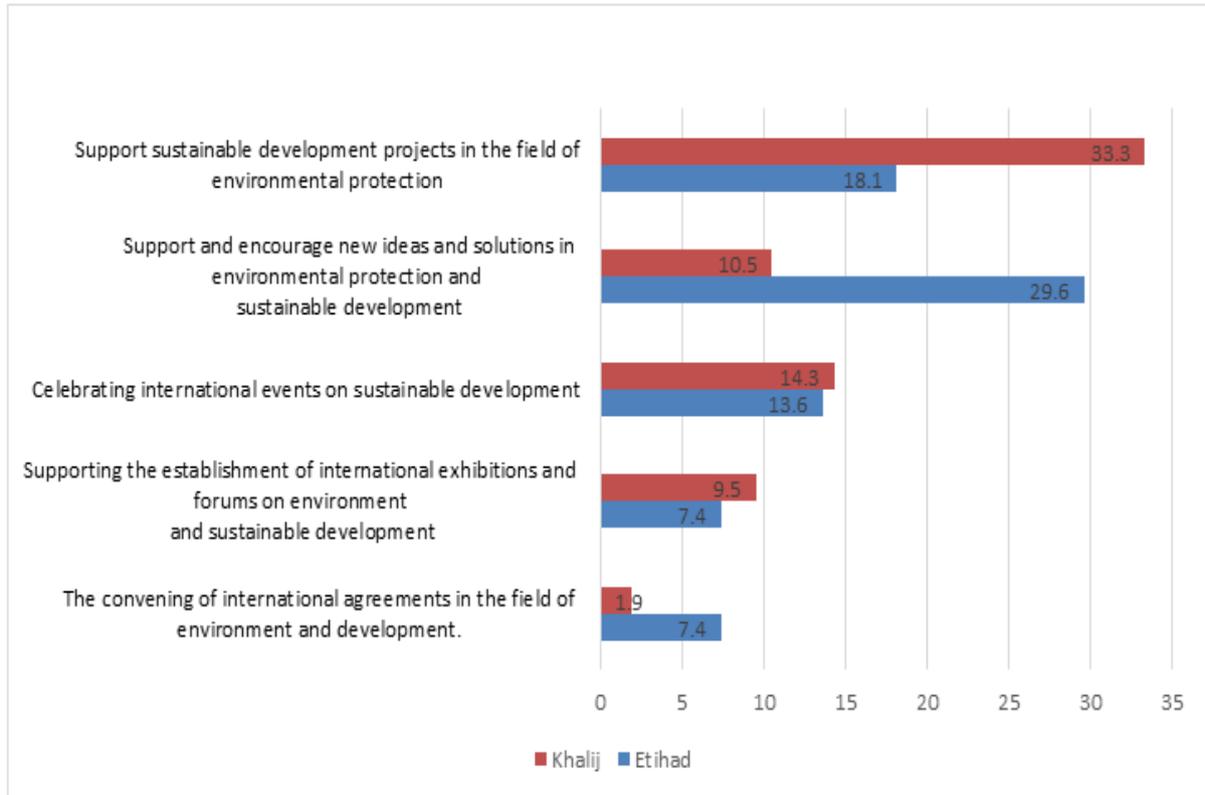
- The topic of “local initiatives and projects for supporting environment protection” was the most common topic handled by the UAE at the international level. It represented 29.6% of press coverage by the two researched newspapers. Then came the topics of “efforts for protecting the environment and natural resources” (20.4%), “issues of climate and environmental change” (13.4%), “the importance of organising workshops to spread environment conservation awareness” (12.9%), “supporting environmental tourism projects” and “efforts for saving endangered animals and birds” (9.7% each), “the effects of environmental pollution on man’s health” (7.5%), “international awards for environment protection” (6.5%), “banned fishing” (5.9%), “marine environment pollution” (4.5%), and “energy conservation” (4.8%). Following that, the newspapers also discussed “international experience in the field of environment conservation” (4.3%), “environmental pollution caused by waste” and “air pollution” (3.8 % each), “bird trafficking” (2.7%), “enhancing the capacities of environment protection officers” (2.2%), “banning the supply of underground water outside the UAE” (1.6%), and finally “the establishment of nature reserves” (1.1%).

- At the level of the sampled newspapers, findings show that the topics that received the biggest amount of focus in UAE press were “issues of climate and environmental change” (19%), “workshops to spread environment conservation awareness” (17.1%), “supporting environmental tourism projects” (14.3%), “efforts for saving endangered animals and birds (11.4%), “environmental pollution caused by waste” and “enhancing the capacities of environment protection officers” (3.8% each), and finally “the establishment of nature reserves” (1.9%). Meanwhile, Al-Khaleej ignored a number of environmental causes, including: “marine environment pollution”, “desert protection” and “banning the supply of underground water outside the UAE”.

- As for Al-Ittihad, findings show that the most frequently discussed environment topics were: “local initiatives and projects for supporting environment protection” (33.3%), “efforts for protecting environment and natural resources” (30.9%), “effects of environmental pollution on man’s health” (14.8%), “marine environment pollution” (12.3%), “international awards for environment protection”, “banned fishing”, “energy conservation” “international experience in the field of environment protection”, and “desert protection” (7.4% each). After that came the topics of “air pollution” (%6.2), “forestation week”, “bird trafficking”, and “banning the supply of underground water outside the UAE” (%3.7). Nevertheless, the newspaper did not handle such issues as “enhancing the capacities of environment protection officers” and “the establishment of nature reserves”.

Figure 2 shows the remarkable international efforts of the UAE in supporting environmental causes and boosting sustainable development, as well as the topics covered by Al-Ittihad and Al-Khaleej

Figure 2. The role of the UAE in environmental issues and the promotion of sustainable development



- Regarding the press coverage done by both newspapers of the UAE’s international role, the most frequently discussed topics were “supporting sustainable development projects in the field of environment protection” (24.7%), “supporting and encouraging new ideas and solutions in the field of environment protection and sustainable development” (18.8%), “addressing environment-threatening practices” (14%), “celebrating international events on sustainable development” (8.6%), and finally “organising exhibitions and forums on environment and sustainable development” as well as “drafting international agreements in the field of environment and sustainable development” (4.3 % each).

- Findings also show that Khaleej focused most prominently on “addressing environment-threatening practices” (14.3%) and “celebrating international events on sustainable development” (9.5%).

However, Etihad paid considerable attention to such topics as: “supporting sustainable development projects in the field of environment protection” (33.3 %), “supporting and encouraging new ideas and solutions in the field of environment protection and sustainable development” (29.6%), and finally “organising international exhibitions and forums on environment and sustainable development” (7.4% each).

Table 3: Press coverage level of the UAE’s international role in the environment and the sustainable development issues

Total		Etihad		Khaleej		Newspapers Converge level
%	Q	%	Q	%	Q	
70.4	131	80.2	65	62.9	66	Introductory
4.8	9	2.5	2	6.7	7	Complementary
24.7	46	17.3	14	30.5	32	Follow up
100	186	100	81	100	105	Total

Introductory writing was ranked first in press coverage of the UAE’s international role in environmental and sustainable development issues (accounting for a total of 70.4% - 62.9% for Khaleej and 80.2% for Etihad. Then came “follow up” writing, with a total of 24.7% - 30.5% for Khaleej and 17.3% for Etihad. Finally, expository writing is featured at 4.8% - 6.7% for Khaleej and 2.5% for Etihad.

- Findings show that there is a statistical relationship between the variant of press coverage templates on the one hand and the UAE sampled newspapers on the other hand. The value of Chi-square reached 8.858, with less than 0.05 statistical significance.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The protection of the environment is a prerequisite for achieving sustainable, balanced and Comprehensive growth. Just as Sheikh Zayed (may God have mercy upon him) firmly believed that the responsibility to ensure a prosperous life for future generations cannot be achieved unless we address the immediate and urgent environmental problems (Rosalin, 2011); (Saleh Ahmed, 2010). The government has also endeavoured, through its various bodies and agencies, to assist various governmental and private institutions in achieving their obligations towards the environment and to integrate environmental considerations into all stages of planning and implementing development projects. As a result, the word sustainability today has become a word widely mentioned across various state institutions, and the majority of the projects announced are keen to conform to the goals and principles of sustainability.

The UAE attaches great importance to the blue economy, as it has chaired the Organisation of the Indian Ocean Countries, starting in October 2019 for a period of two years, according to

Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al-Zyoudi, Minister of Climate Change and Environment. The length of the country's borders is estimated at 1740 km, of which 730 km is a marine border.

The UAE has become a centre of economic and commercial connection between Asia, Africa and Europe and is a gateway into the Middle East region. Therefore, it is constantly committed to strengthening its cooperation with the countries of the Indian Oceanic region, in order to support the continuity of the ocean as a road of high importance for free trade and navigation.

The United Arab Emirates is the first country in the Arab region and the Middle East to host the work of the Oceans and Blue Economy Summit that took place between 5 and 7 March 2019.

Abu Dhabi's hosting of this event means strengthening the leadership position of the Abu Dhabi government at the regional level with everything related to preserving the environment, supporting the economy as well as making the UAE an active and pioneering player in the sustainable ocean community.

- Findings show that Khaleej Newspaper has given a wider coverage of the UAE international role in environmental issues and supporting sustainable development (56.5%), followed by Etihad (43.5%).
- At the international level, the topic of "local initiatives and projects for environment protection" came on top of the environmental issues that the UAE focuses on. Then came a series of other topics, including "efforts for the protection of environment and natural resources", "climate and environment change", "workshops for raising awareness of environment preservation", "supporting environmental tourism projects" and "efforts for saving endangered animals and birds". However, topics about "establishing nature reserves" came at the end of the list.
- Findings have also demonstrated that press coverage of topics about "governmental initiatives for achieving sustainable development" is strongest in relation to "sustainable development issues that captured the interest of the UAE". This topic was covered by the two newspapers at the international level. Less strong was the coverage of "sustainable development projects in the field of environment protection", "the organisation of international events and symposiums on sustainable development", "sustainable development international awards in the area of environment protection" and, finally, "initiatives of the private sector and the civil society in the field of sustainable development".
- In relation to the UAE's international role in supporting environmental causes and boosting sustainable development, the topic of "supporting sustainable development projects in the field of environment protection" came at the top of topics covered by the

two newspapers. Then came other topics including “supporting and encouraging new ideas and solutions in the field of environment protection and sustainable development”, “addressing environment-threatening attempts”, “supporting the organisation of international exhibitions and symposiums on environment and sustainable development” and “drafting international agreements in the field of environment and sustainable development”.

Based on the above findings, a number of recommendations and suggestions can be proposed to develop the performance of UAE newspapers in covering the UAE’s role in supporting environmental and sustainable development issues. The following are some recommendations:

- There should be a wider focus on the UAE’s role in supporting environmental and sustainable development issues. Content is needed to highlight and present such a role. Related news should be regularly published on the first and last pages of newspapers, since they are said to be the most read parts of a newspaper.
- Environmental causes should be handled within the overall context as well as in light of the circumstances, objectives, policies and programs of the society. Accordingly, press reports will be consistent with comprehensive development issues, given that environmental issues are closely interrelated with other issues of the country.
- Environmental content published by newspapers should be related to the needs of the target audience.
- Going beyond local environmental causes to discuss them from a global and regional perspective. Environmental issues transcend the limitations of place.
- It is necessary to make use of creative and attractive press techniques, and reports should be enriched with environmental concepts and values to improve citizen behaviour.

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