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## **Reporting on suicide in Malaysia: Problem characterization and solution advocacy by media**

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**Abstract:** Rising incidents of suicide capture the attention of healthcare providers, government agencies, non-governmental organizations and media. Furthermore, public conversations about social problems are largely mediated by the media. It is noteworthy that media have the power to shape the way the public thinks about an issue by suggesting what the issue is about, what the cause is, and what should be done as a solution. The current study aims to examine suicide coverage in Malaysia, particularly the problem characterization and solution advocacy by *The Star* in reporting suicide from 2014 to 2018. *The Star* is the English-language daily newspaper with the largest circulation in Malaysia. Through content analysis, the study found that there was a statistically significant difference between the number of articles reporting suicide and the different years. Most of the coverage was published in the form of straight news with a negative depiction of suicide. There was reporting on both local and international suicide news. In addition, suicide was linked to various issues (e.g. mental health, relationship or marriage problems, financial problems, workplace stress, etc.) in the coverage. The study also found a significant difference between issue narrative styles and suicide solutions. The practical implications of the findings are discussed with regard to the role of media in raising awareness of suicide, promoting prevention and intervention efforts at the institutional level, as well as undertaking a more robust interpretive approach in addressing the issue.

**Keywords:** suicide, mental health, social problem, framing, content analysis