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Journalistic "Bylines" and "Sources" in News Content of Palestinian Online Newspapers During the 2023 Gaza War: A Comparative Analysis of Felesteen and Al-Hayat

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Abstract

Objectives: This study explores similarities and differences between two Palestinian newspapers, Felesteen and Al-Hayat, in their use of "Bylines" and "Sources" within news content during the 2023 Gaza War.

Methods: Content analysis was employed to examine news reports from the websites of Felesteen and Al-Hayat. A temporal sample was selected, beginning on October 7, 2023, the first day of the Gaza War, and continuing for six months until March 31, 2024. A total of 177 news reports from each newspaper (354 in total) were analyzed.

Results: The study found substantial variation in the placement of primary information sources ("Bylines") and diverse use of news "Sources," categorized into multiple classifications. Despite political differences between the two newspapers, variation in their use of bylines and sources was not statistically significant.

Conclusions: The study recommends establishing clear, publicly known editorial policies concerning news byline attribution. It also emphasizes the importance of diversifying news sources, relying on experts, and implementing transparent policies regarding the use of Israeli sources to better represent the Palestinian perspective.

Keywords: Gaza War, bylines, sources, news content, Palestinian online newspapers, media framing, political alignment of newspapers.

"ذكر الصحفي" و"المصادر" الصحفية في المحتوى الإخباري للصحف الإلكترونية الفلسطينية خلال حرب غزة 2023 "تحليل مقارن لصحيفتي فلسطين والحياة"

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ملخّص

الأهداف: استكشاف أوجه التشابه والاختلاف بين صحيفتين فلسطينيتين "فلسطين" و"الحياة"، من حيث استخدامهما لـ"الاسم" و"المصادر" في المحتوى الإخباري المنشور خلال حرب غزة 2023.

المنهجية: اعتمدت الدراسة على تحليل المحتوى للتقارير الإخبارية من مواقع صحيفتين فلسطينيتين، (فلسطين - الحياة). وقد تم اختيار عينة زمنية، ابتداءً من اليوم الأول لحرب غزة في 7 أكتوبر 2023، وامتدت لستة أشهر حتى 31 مارس 2024. وتم تحليل ما مجموعه 177 تقريرًا إخباريًا من كل صحيفة، ما أسفر عن تحليل إجمالي لـ 354 تقريرًا إخباريًا

النتائج: وخلصت الدراسة إلى وجود تباين كبير في "ذكر الصحفي" على المواقع الإلكترونية للصحف الفلسطينية، إلى جانب تنوع استخدام "المصادر" الإخبارية، والتي تم تصنيفها إلى تصنيفات متعددة. كما وجدت الدراسة أنه على الرغم من الاختلافات السياسية بين الصحيفتين، إلا أن التباين في استخدام "ذكر الصحفي" و"المصادر" لم يكن ذا دلالة جوهرية.

الخلاصة: أوصت الدراسة بتبني سياسات تحريرية واضحة ومعلنة فيما يتعلق باستخدام "ذكر الصحفي". وزيادة تنويع "مصادر" الأخبار والاعتماد على الخبراء، إلى جانب تبني سياسة واضحة بشأن استخدام المصادر الإسرائيلية بما يخدم وجهة النظر الفلسطينية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: حرب غزة، اسم الصحفي، المصادر، محتوى الاخبار، الصحف الالكترونية الفلسطينية، تأطير وسائل الاعلام، التوجه السياسي للصحف

Introduction

Numerous studies have highlighted that three-quarters of news content originates from various sources (Garcia-Pires et al., 2017). Journalists rely on these sources and the information they provide to construct news stories based on the data gathered (O’neill & O’Connor, 2008). It is difficult to envision news content without sources, as they are fundamental to every story (Gonen, 2018). News sources play a crucial role in news production, particularly during crises and conflicts, by providing journalists with the context needed to understand and frame events (Gonen, 2018). Media discourse aggregates what is produced on specific topics and disseminates this information, especially regarding major issues like wars, which cannot be ignored (Meyer et al., 2018).

Identifying news sources during media coverage of specific events is both essential and ongoing, as it reveals how media outlets recruit and utilize these sources (Matthews, 2013). The media actively participate in conflicts, influencing either the escalation or de-escalation of violence. Analyzing the sources cited in media reports sheds light on the diversity of voices and perspectives presented (O’neill & O’Connor, 2008). These sources hold considerable power in shaping journalists' perceptions of conflicts or violent events, as reliance on particular sources can directly affect public understanding of a crisis (Gonen, 2018). News agendas are influenced by the sources included in reports, yet not all sources have equal access to media platforms (Anderson, 2017).

This study highlights the importance of identifying the primary source of information, specifically focusing on its origin, which is often indicated through "bylines." A byline refers to the author’s name and credentials, typically placed below the headline and before the main body of a news article, thereby signifying the journalist’s role (Khuhro & Adnan, 2023). As for the term "sources" refers to individuals whom journalists consult for information, often including officials, experts, and representatives of formal or societal institutions (Berkowitz, 2019). Editorial content does not emerge in a vacuum; rather, it is shaped by key actors whose actions are of public interest (Tiffen et al., 2014).

This study examines not only the "sources" journalists use to gather information but also the bylines that represent the "Bylines," primary source of content as recognized by media outlets, whether attributed to an individual journalist or a producing institution. Specifically, it investigates the "Bylines" and "Sources" of news articles published by Palestinian online newspapers during the 2023 Gaza War. Moreover, the study explores the similarities and differences between two prominent Palestinian newspapers: "Felesteen", published in Gaza, which aligns with resistance ideology and reflects the perspective of the Hamas party; and "Al-Hayat", published in Ramallah, which operates under the Palestinian Authority and represents the views of the Fatah party and the governing authority in Ramallah.

Literature Review

Several studies have explored the concepts of "Bylines" and "Sources". For instance, Reich and Boudana (2014) investigated bylines and authorship in news reporting, highlighting the significance of journalists and their roles in the news production process. Similarly, Meyer et al. (2018) examined the impact of non-governmental organizations on media coverage of conflicts, using the Syrian conflict (2011–2014) as a case study. Ketterer et al. (2020) focused on the contributions of content writers and the value they provide to readers, journalists, and the newspaper industry as a whole.

Somaini (2018) analyzed the role of bylines in news coverage, while Gonen (2018) examined the relationship between journalists and sources in violent conflict coverage, emphasizing how sources can shape journalists' perceptions and framing of events. Matthews (2013) investigated news narratives surrounding terrorism by assessing the diversity and usage of sources in UK news coverage of alleged Islamist plots. Berkowitz (2019), in his study "Reporters and Their Sources", emphasized the importance of examining reporters and their sources to understand the origins, biases, authority, and influence that shape the news presented to the public. Tiffen et al. (2014) explored the outcomes of media sourcing practices, noting differences and patterns across media outlets and countries.

O’Neill and O’Connor (2008) provided an empirical analysis of how certain sources can dominate news coverage, proposing a framework for evaluating trends in local journalism. In a separate study, Okasha (2010) explored how news sources influenced the portrayal of the hijab crisis in Egyptian journalism, concluding that a greater variety of sources

reflects a broader range of opinions and perspectives.

Garcia-Pires et al. (2017) examined the relationship between news sources and media organizations, framing it as an informal contract grounded in trust and accountability. Their study assessed how this relationship affects the comprehensiveness of news coverage. Reich (2010) traced the historical development of bylines in journalism through four phases: (1) an initial preference for anonymity to preserve an authoritative voice; (2) strategic use of bylines to fulfill institutional objectives; (3) selective attribution of bylines to a limited group of staff writers, creating inconsistency in crediting; and (4) a gradual decline in editorial control over byline use as journalists increasingly sought public recognition. Zanuddin and Almahallawi (2018) examined how the media framed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, using Ma'an News Agency as a case study.

Framing "Bylines" and "Sources"

News sources play a critical role in shaping media coverage and influencing public discourse. As Matthews (2013) noted, sources are "key determinants" of news, helping to define the boundaries of public debate by steering attention toward particular issues. However, media portrayals of these issues can vary significantly between local and international outlets, often shaped by ownership and editorial policies (Zanuddin & Almahallawi, 2018).

While journalists are central to reporting, sources often initiate news by issuing press releases, organizing press conferences, staging events, or leaking information (Berkowitz, 2019). Despite the influential role of sources in setting the agenda and framing content, journalists ultimately determine what gets published, how it's framed, and which voices are heard (Gonen, 2018). Analyzing the sources used in news coverage helps reveal the diversity or lack thereof of perspectives represented (O'neill & O'Connor, 2008). Both journalists and sources are crucial: journalists gather and interpret information, but the way they disseminate it influences public understanding (Gonen, 2018).

Splitting "Bylines" and "Sources"

It is essential to distinguish between two types of information sources: the author of the news item "the byline" and the origin of the information "the source". According to journalistic standards, a "byline" includes the journalist's name and credentials, typically placed beneath the headline and before the article, signifying authorship (Khuhro & Adnan, 2023). Including a "byline" increases transparency and contributes to a journalist's reputation (Reich, 2010). "Bylines" also enhance content credibility in the public eye (Reich & Boudana, 2014). Historically, newspapers resisted "bylines", viewing them as adding a personal touch that might undermine the perceived objectivity of the article (Somaini, 2018).

Authors have categorized "bylines" in various ways. Awdallah (2014) grouped them into four categories: correspondent, other media, multiple sources, and no source. Meshref (2016) offered a more detailed classification, including delegate, correspondent, newspaper name, international/regional/local news agencies, private agencies, websites, and foreign, Arab, and Israeli newspapers, among others. Dalou (2015) used a similar structure with categories like correspondent, no source, local news agencies, multiple sources, and international agencies.

In contrast, "sources" refer to individuals from whom journalists obtain information, often officials and experts within societal institutions (Berkowitz, 2019). These sources are instrumental in producing editorial content, as news rarely emerges in a vacuum but rather from public figures whose actions are of interest (Tiffen et al., 2014). Sources often have privileged media access due to their societal roles, status, or expertise (Anderson, 2017). Including multiple sources enhances the media's ability to verify information and present balanced perspectives (Tiffen et al., 2014).

Various classifications exist for journalistic sources. Gonen (2018) identified types such as government/military officials, experts, fighters, NGOs, citizens, news agencies, blogs, and journalists. Abu-Taha (2016) grouped sources into four categories: the Palestinian axis, the Israeli axis, the international axis, and the Arab and Islamic axes. Al-Kronz (2018) categorized sources as Palestinian, Israeli, Arab, and international figures.

Meshref (2016) further detailed these into official and unofficial Palestinian sources (e.g., presidents, prime ministers, ministers, legislative council members, political parties, analysts, activists, academics, and researchers); Israeli sources (e.g., presidents, prime ministers, Knesset members, academics); and official and unofficial Arab, Islamic, and international figures.

The Gaza war 2023

On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched a large-scale, coordinated attack on southern and central Israel, capturing global attention and deeply impacting the Israel. The assault involved breaching Israeli borders, engaging with Israeli forces, and launching between 3,000 and 5,000 homemade rockets (Kasmani, 2025). Approximately 1,400 Israelis were killed, and about 5,600 were injured, marking the deadliest event in Israel’s history. Additionally, more than 240 individuals were taken hostage (Kaim et al., 2024). Israel suffered major losses during both the initial attack and its subsequent military response (Antonopoulos, 2023).

In response, Israel launched "iron swords war" on October 8. This included extensive aerial and ground bombardments and a full-scale ground invasion of Gaza. The assault caused widespread devastation, including thousands of Palestinian deaths and severe damage to infrastructure such as hospitals, universities, mosques, churches, and schools (Buheji, 2024a). The destruction triggered a humanitarian crisis, as Israel blocked food and medical supplies, leading to widespread famine (Hassoun et al., 2024). Israel also targeted civilian shelters and displaced persons’ tents without prior warning, justifying these actions by alleging the presence of militants (Elessi, 2023).

Israel intentionally and indiscriminately fired upon Palestinian civilians and committing war crimes, including using civilians as human shields. These actions were widely reported by international media (Antonopoulos, 2023). Israeli forces also targeted hospital solar panels after restricting fuel supplies, claiming Hamas was using the energy systems for operations. Reports from the World Health Organization, the Red Cross, and the Red Crescent indicated that dozens of medical workers, both local and international, were killed. Medical facilities, ambulances, and vehicles belonging to humanitarian organizations were systematically targeted (Elessi, 2023). Additionally, a significant number of journalists were killed while covering the conflict (Tzannatos, 2023).

Method

This study investigates the use of "Bylines" and "Sources" in the news content of Palestinian online newspapers during the 2023 Gaza War. Two newspapers were selected as case studies for their representation of divergent Palestinian perspectives: Felesteen and Al-Hayat. Felesteen is published in the Gaza Strip and is affiliated with the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), while Al-Hayat is based in Ramallah and reflects the views of the Palestinian National Authority and the Fatah Movement.

Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, established in 1994, began as a weekly publication before transitioning to a daily format. It serves as the official voice of the Palestinian National Authority and is headquartered in Ramallah (Abu-Zaida, 2017). The newspaper launched its website in 2004, primarily featuring materials originally published in its print edition (Lubbad, 2014).

The Felesteen newspaper was established in the Gaza Strip on May 3, 2007, under the auspices of the Al-Wasat Foundation. Dr. Ahmed Al-Sa’ati serves as the Chairman of the Board and the responsible editor. Both the print and online editions were launched simultaneously in 2007 (Turban & Lubbad, 2017). The digital version operates independently from the print edition, with the editor-manager of the print newspaper not involved in the website’s editorial decisions. The online platform is managed by a separate editorial team that includes several journalists, a dedicated website manager, a site engineer, and a technician (Habib, 2014).

Selecting two out of the four major Palestinian newspapers was deemed adequate for achieving the study’s objective of identifying and analyzing the "Bylines" and "Sources" used in Palestinian online newspapers during the 2023 Gaza War. Al-Hayat represents the editorial policy of the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah, while Felesteen reflects the editorial stance of the Hamas movement. This contrast enables a comparative analysis to highlight editorial differences.

This study employed a content analysis approach to examine the use of "Bylines" and "Sources" in the news content of the selected newspapers. The researchers used time-based sampling covering the period from October 7, 2023, to March 31, 2024, capturing the initial attack and subsequent developments. Reports were collected from the official websites of the two newspapers and systematically analyzed.

A systematic random sampling method was applied, with one news report selected per day over six months. This resulted in the analysis of 177 news reports from each newspaper, totaling 354 news reports. This sample size and time frame were considered sufficient to meet the research objectives and provide a comprehensive overview of the newspapers' reporting practices during the war.

Researchers consider this time period adequate for examining the role of journalistic bylines and sources in the news content of Palestinian online newspapers during the 2023 Gaza War. Additionally, the volume of news reports analyzed is sufficient to meet the research objectives. Furthermore, selecting these two newspapers—each representing distinct editorial policies—offers a valuable foundation for comparative analysis.

A comprehensive coding scheme was developed, comprising two main categories: "Bylines" and "Sources", each with several subcategories defined according to the study's objectives.

The first category, "Bylines", refers to the journalist's name and credentials, typically appearing beneath the headline and above the article's body. It identifies the author and indicates their position within the news organization (Khuhro & Adnan, 2023). Subcategories under "Bylines" include: Reporter name, Site name, More than one, International news agencies and newspapers, Palestinian news agencies and newspapers, and Anonymity/None.

The second main category, "Sources", refers to the individuals or entities journalists rely on for information. These may include officials, experts, civil society actors, and private citizens (Berkowitz, 2019). Subcategories within "Sources" include: Palestinian sources, Israeli sources, International and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Arab official sources, Foreign official sources, Experts and protesters, and Media sources. Each of these subcategories contains further classifications to capture the diversity and specificity of the sources used.

The coding of all reports was conducted by a single researcher. To ensure inter-coder reliability, a second researcher independently coded a small, random sample from the dataset. The level of agreement between the two coders was assessed, yielding reliability scores exceeding 0.8 for all major categories. These high inter-coder reliability scores affirm the consistency and validity of the coding process and the credibility of the study's findings.

This study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- To identify the "Bylines" used in the news content of Palestinian online newspapers during the 2023 Gaza War.
- To identify the "Sources" used in the news content of Palestinian online newspapers during the 2023 Gaza War.
- To examine the similarities and differences between Felesteen and Al-Hayat newspapers in their use of "Bylines" and "Sources" in reporting on the 2023 Gaza War.

Finding

The Bylines finding

(Table 1. 1) provides an analysis of the "bylines" in the news content of Palestinian online newspapers, Al-Hayat and Felesteen, during the 2023 Gaza war. This categorization of bylines across six distinct categories reveals significant trends within the news reports.

Table 1.1 Bylines in the Palestinian online newspapers

Bylines	Felesteen		Al-Hayat		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Reporter name	16	9.0	20	11.3	36	10.2
Site name	99	55.9	120	67.8	219	61.9
More than one	2	1.1	0	0.0	2	0.6
Palestinian news agencies and newspapers	0	0.0	26	14.7	26	7.3
International news agencies and newspapers	52	29.4	5	2.8	57	16.1
Anonymity-None	8	4.5	6	3.4	14	4.0
Total	**177**	**100**	**177**	**100**	**354**	**100**

Table 1.1 presents an analysis of byline distribution in *Al-Hayat* and *Felesteen* newspapers throughout the 2023 Gaza War, categorized into six distinct types: site name, reporter name, more than one, Palestinian news agencies and newspapers, international news agencies and newspapers, and anonymity (no attribution).

Site Name: The data show that the most common byline across both newspapers was attribution to the publishing site itself, comprising 61.9% of the total. This trend was more pronounced in Al-Hayat (67.8%) than in Felesteen (55.9%), indicating a reliance on in-house or institutional authorship rather than individual reporters or external

International news agencies and newspapers: Reports attributed to international sources accounted for 16.1% of the total. Felesteen showed a significantly higher reliance (29.4%) on international agencies compared to Al-Hayat (2.8%), reflecting Felesteen's broader engagement with global perspectives or content syndication practices.

Reporter Name: Articles carrying the name of an individual reporter comprised only 10.2% overall, with Al-Hayat slightly leading at 11.3% compared to Felesteen's 9.0%. This suggests a modest commitment to authorial accountability and personalization in news writing.

Palestinian News Agencies and Newspapers: Bylines citing other Palestinian news outlets represented 7.3% of the total. Here, Al-Hayat showed notable engagement (14.7%), while Felesteen did not cite any Palestinian news agencies. This may indicate editorial preferences or ideological selectivity in source citation.

Anonymity-None: Reports with no byline or source attribution constituted 4.0% of all items analyzed. Felesteen had a slightly higher rate (4.5%) compared to Al-Hayat (3.4%). Research suggests such anonymity can stem from legal protections or editorial policies, especially during conflict (Somaini, 2018). In the Palestinian context, nondisclosure might serve political or strategic functions (Ahmad et al., 2023). For instance, Felesteen—with its editorial stance aligned with Hamas—may deliberately avoid citing sources it deems illegitimate or politically adversarial, particularly Israeli sources. It may also omit attributions to advance a specific political agenda by controlling the narrative.

Conversely, Al-Hayat's uncredited reports largely concern news from Gaza, whose governing authority (Hamas) the newspaper does not formally recognize due to the internal Palestinian political divide (Alijla, 2019). As a result, Al-Hayat may withhold attribution when citing information originating from Hamas-controlled institutions.

Anonymity in news reporting can reduce transparency and weaken the perceived credibility of the information. As noted by Somaini (2018), readers tend to trust content more when the author is known, and the absence of a byline may obscure the accountability and editorial process. Furthermore, research by Ketterer et al. (2020) confirms that audiences are less critical of anonymous content, which can increase susceptibility to biased or misleading information.

More than One: The category "more than one" (multiple attributions) was exceedingly rare, accounting for only 0.6% of the total, and appearing exclusively in Felesteen (1.1%), with Al-Hayat not using this attribution type at all. This may suggest a stricter editorial structure in Al-Hayat, favoring single-source attribution or site-based bylines.

The Sources finding

(Table 1. 2) Details the results concerning the various sources of information, which are classified into the following categories: Palestinian sources, Israeli sources, international and non-governmental organizations, Arab official sources, foreign official sources, experts and protesters, and media sources.

Table 1. 2 : Sources in the Palestinian online newspapers

Sources	Sub- Categories	Felesteen		Al-Hayat		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Palestinian Sources	President and Presidency	0	0.0	13	9.6	13	4.7
	Ramallah Government	8	5.8	48	35.6	56	20.4
	Gaza Government	27	19.4	0	0.0	27	9.9
	Palestinian Governmental Organizations	10	7.2	25	18.5	35	12.8
	Palestinian NGOs	11	7.9	6	4.4	17	6.2
	Hamas	35	25.2	0	0.0	35	12.8

Sources	Sub- Categories	Felesteen		Al-Hayat		Total	
		No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
	Fatah and the PLO	0	0.0	8	5.9	8	2.9
	Other Parties	3	2.2	0	0.0	3	1.1
	Anonymous Sources	6	4.3	8	5.9	14	5.1
	Citizen witnesses	39	28.1	27	20.0	66	24.1
	Total	**39**	**100**	**135**	**100**	**274**	**100**
The Israeli Sources	Israeli Government and Ministers	14	63.6	3	23.1	17	48.6
	Israeli Occupation Army	3	13.6	10	76.9	13	37.1
	Israeli NGOs	1	4.5	0	0.0	1	2.9
	Israeli witnesses	4	18.2	0	0.0	4	11.4
	Total	**22**	**100**	**13**	**100**	**35**	**100**
International and non-governmental organizations	United Nations and its branches	25	51.0	38	57.6	63	54.8
	International organizations	24	49.0	25	37.9	49	42.6
	Arab and Islamic international organizations	0	0.0	3	4.5	3	2.6
	Total	**49**	**100**	**66**	**100**	**115**	**100**
Arab official sources	Ministers in Arab governments	10	37.0	22	75.9	32	57.1
	Presidents in Arab governments	3	11.1	6	20.7	9	16.1
	Arab organizations, parties and groups	7	25.9	1	3.4	8	14.3
	Arab international institutions	7	25.9	0	0.0	7	12.5
	Total	**27**	**100**	**29**	**100**	**56**	**100**
Foreign official sources	USA President and Government	14	42.4	3	15.8	17	32.7
	Governments of Western Countries Other Than America	15	45.5	15	78.9	30	57.7
	Heads of States Other Than America	4	12.1	1	5.3	5	9.6
	Total	**33**	**100**	**19**	**100**	**52**	**100**
Experts and Protesters	Experts	6	85.7	6	100.0	12	92.3
	Protesters and Demonstrators	1	14.3	0	0.0	1	7.7
	Total	**7**	**100**	**6**	**100**	**13**	**100**
Media sources	International News Agencies	7	25.0	0	0.0	7	15.6
	International Newspapers	10	35.7	3	17.6	13	28.9
	Israeli Media	5	17.9	1	5.9	6	13.3
	Satellite Channels	4	14.3	1	5.9	5	11.1
	International Websites	2	7.1	1	5.9	3	6.7
	Our Correspondent	0	0.0	11	64.7	11	24.4
	Total	**28**	**100**	**17**	**100**	**45**	**100**

The Palestinian Official sources

Table 1.2 illustrates the frequency and distribution of Palestinian official sources cited in Al-Hayat and Felesteen during the 2023 Gaza War. The data reflect how each newspaper engages with political institutions and entities, offering insights into their editorial orientations and ideological alignments.

President and Presidency: Citations of the President or the Presidency appeared in 9.6% of Al-Hayat reports, compared to only 4.7% in Felesteen. This significant difference underscores Al-Hayat's greater deference to the Palestinian

Authority’s leadership, particularly Mahmoud Abbas. In contrast, Felesteen's limited reference to presidential figures reflects its editorial distance from the Authority, consistent with the broader political divide between Hamas and Fatah.

Ramallah Government: The Ramallah-based government was cited in 20.4% of reports overall. Al-Hayat relied heavily on this source (35.6%), whereas Felesteen cited it sparingly (5.8%). This disparity illustrates Al-Hayat's strong affiliation with the Fatah-led administration in the West Bank, while Felesteen exhibits ideological dissonance with the Ramallah authority. This is in line with observations by Alijla (2019), who noted that Hamas-affiliated media tend to reject Fatah-led governance frameworks.

Gaza Government: Sources affiliated with the Gaza government were cited in 9.9% of all reports. Notably, Felesteen cited this authority in 19.4% of cases, while Al-Hayat omitted it entirely. This striking contrast underscores Felesteen's alignment with the governing institutions in Gaza, which are controlled by Hamas. In contrast, Al-Hayat's complete exclusion reflects its editorial rejection of Hamas’s legitimacy as a governing authority (Bushkar, 2023).

Palestinian Governmental Organizations: References to Palestinian governmental organizations accounted for 12.8% of the total. Al-Hayat cited these institutions at a significantly higher rate (18.5%) than Felesteen (7.2%), a discrepancy likely tied to the Ramallah-centric location of most official institutions. This again reflects Al-Hayat's political proximity to the Palestinian Authority and its administrative apparatus.

Palestinian NGOs: Engagement with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) was limited across both outlets, with a combined rate of 6.2%. Felesteen cited NGOs slightly more frequently (7.9%) than Al-Hayat (4.4%), suggesting both newspapers underrepresent Palestinian civil society actors in their coverage.

Hamas: Attributions to Hamas appeared in 12.8% of all reports. Felesteen prominently featured Hamas sources (25.2%), while Al-Hayat excluded them altogether. This stark dichotomy delineates the ideological divide: Felesteen embraces Hamas as a legitimate authority in Gaza, whereas Al-Hayat omits its presence, aligning instead with the Fatah-dominated leadership.

Fatah and the PLO: Citations of Fatah and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) were relatively rare (2.9% overall), with Al-Hayat accounting for all mentions (5.9%) and Felesteen offering none. This further underscores Felesteen's editorial opposition to Fatah-led institutions.

Other Parties: Mentions of other political parties were minimal, making up just 1.1% of citations overall. These were found exclusively in Felesteen (2.2%), indicating a slight engagement with non-mainstream political actors outside the Fatah-Hamas dichotomy.

Anonymous Sources: The use of anonymous or unnamed sources was present in 5.1% of all content. Al-Hayat showed a slightly higher usage (5.9%) than Felesteen (4.3%). This suggests a modest and relatively balanced reliance on confidential sources across both publications, possibly to protect identities during a time of heightened conflict or to support politically sensitive narratives.

Citizen Witnesses: Citizen witnesses emerged as the most frequently cited non-official sources, accounting for 24.1% of all references across both Felesteen and Al-Hayat. Notably, Felesteen demonstrated a higher reliance on grassroots perspectives, citing citizen witnesses in 28.1% of its content, while Al-Hayat cited them at a lower rate of 20.0%. This finding underscores the newspapers’ responsiveness to on-the-ground realities and reflects the centrality of ordinary citizens in shaping public discourse, particularly during times of crisis such as the 2023 Gaza War.

This reliance on citizen testimony is noteworthy given the well-documented predominance of official and institutional sources in news reporting. Fontenot et al. (2009) assert that daily news content is heavily influenced by government sources, while Berkowitz (2019) explains that journalists’ pursuit of reliable and authoritative information naturally elevates the prominence of these sources. Similarly, Anderson (2017) contends that official sources, due to their institutional power, are often prioritized in media narratives, resulting in the dominance of state-centric perspectives.

Supporting these observations, Matthews (2013) found that approximately 75% of news sources in mainstream coverage originate from government or institutional actors, largely because they are perceived as credible and representative. This trend is especially pronounced in conflict zones, where journalists often face restricted access and are compelled to rely on official briefings and statements (Gonen, 2018). Ayyash (2015) confirmed this pattern in the Palestinian context, where

newspapers were shown to significantly depend on governmental sources for coverage.

In alignment with these prior studies, the current research found that government and official sources made up 70.8% of all cited references, while non-governmental sources, including citizen witnesses and anonymous informants, collectively constituted only 29.2%. Although citizen witnesses were the most frequently cited among non-governmental sources, they still represented less than one-quarter of the total, reinforcing earlier findings regarding the dominance of official narratives in the media.

Nevertheless, the relatively high visibility of citizen voices, particularly in Felesteen, may reflect an editorial commitment to showcasing local narratives and grassroots experiences, especially during times of military escalation. Their inclusion adds nuance and immediacy to news reporting, presenting perspectives that might otherwise be marginalized in state-centered discourse. The disparity between the two newspapers in this regard may also reflect their differing levels of access to affected communities, editorial ideologies, or journalistic strategies during conflict.

The Israeli Sources

Table 1.2 presents the distribution of Israeli sources cited by Felesteen and Al-Hayat during the 2023 Gaza War, offering insights into how Palestinian online newspapers engage with Israeli entities in their reporting.

Israeli Government and Ministers: The Israeli Government and Ministers emerged as the most frequently cited Israeli sources, comprising 48.6% of all Israeli-related attributions. Felesteen demonstrated a markedly higher reliance on these sources, citing them in 63.6% of cases, compared to Al-Hayat's lower citation rate of 23.1%. This suggests that Felesteen actively utilizes official Israeli statements, albeit not for validation, but to critique and expose the Israeli position. The newspaper's strategy appears to involve using direct quotations from Israeli officials to highlight perceived injustices or contradictions with international norms and conventions.

Israeli Occupation Army: Israeli Occupation Army sources constituted 37.1% of the total Israeli references, with a clear divergence between the two newspapers: Al-Hayat cited the Israeli military extensively (76.9%), whereas Felesteen made limited use of these sources (13.6%). This difference underscores Al-Hayat's emphasis on military developments and battlefield reporting, likely reflecting an editorial preference for documenting actions rather than political rhetoric.

Israeli Witnesses: Israeli Witnesses were cited in 11.4% of cases, appearing exclusively in Felesteen (18.2%) and not at all in Al-Hayat. The inclusion of Israeli eyewitness perspectives, though limited, demonstrates Felesteen's attempt to draw on diverse narratives. However, it is important to note that these testimonies are often employed not to amplify Israeli viewpoints, but to substantiate Palestinian claims, particularly in instances where Israeli civilians inadvertently confirm the effects of military actions on Gaza.

Israeli NGOs: Israeli NGOs were marginally represented, making up only 2.9% of total Israeli sources. Again, Felesteen was the only newspaper to cite them (4.5%), while Al-Hayat did not reference any Israeli NGOs. This minimal engagement may reflect a broader editorial reluctance to rely on Israeli civil society organizations, or perhaps limited access to their reports during wartime.

It is critical to emphasize that both newspapers utilized Israeli sources not to affirm or legitimize Israeli narratives, but rather to challenge them. Citations of figures such as Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who declared a total siege on Gaza, stating, "No electricity, no water, no fuel"—are strategically employed to reinforce the Palestinian perspective and expose alleged human rights violations. In this way, Israeli sources serve a dual function: providing factual content while also functioning as rhetorical devices within a counter-narrative framework.

The differences between the two newspapers also reveal their respective editorial orientations. "Felesteen", aligned with Hamas, does not shy away from directly engaging with controversial Israeli statements to denounce what it views as oppressive or racist policies. In contrast, "Al-Hayat", which is closer to Fatah and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), avoids extensive confrontation with Israeli sources. This may reflect a political calculus rooted in maintaining the legitimacy of official agreements, coordination mechanisms, and diplomatic protocols with the Israeli government.

In sum, the use of Israeli sources across both newspapers underscores the complex dynamics of media reporting in conflict zones. While Israeli voices are present in Palestinian reporting, they are filtered through a critical lens that aligns

with each outlet’s political and ideological stance.

The International and non-governmental organizations

Table 1.2 analyzes the engagement of Felesteen and Al-Hayat with international and non-governmental organization (NGO) sources during the 2023 Gaza War, highlighting their interaction with global institutions in shaping news narratives.

United Nations and its Branches: The United Nations and Its Branches were the most frequently cited sources in this category, constituting 54.8% of all international and NGO references. Both newspapers displayed considerable reliance on UN-affiliated agencies, with Al-Hayat referencing them slightly more frequently (57.6%) than Felesteen (51.0%). This consistency reflects a shared editorial recognition of the United Nations as an authoritative and credible source in international conflict reporting. The prominence of UN sources reinforces the newspapers’ effort to ground their coverage in globally recognized frameworks of legality and human rights.

International Organizations: International Organizations, excluding the UN, accounted for 42.6% of citations in this category. Felesteen cited these organizations in 49.0% of relevant instances, compared to Al-Hayat’s 37.9%. The data suggests that Felesteen was slightly more proactive in incorporating perspectives from a wider range of global institutions, possibly to diversify its sources and bolster its claims with additional international backing.

Arab and Islamic International Organizations: Arab and Islamic International Organizations were markedly underrepresented, comprising only 2.6% of total international and NGO references. Interestingly, these citations appeared exclusively in Al-Hayat (4.5%), while Felesteen made no reference to such entities. This discrepancy could be attributed to Al-Hayat’s broader regional orientation and editorial alignment with mainstream Arab and Islamic diplomatic frameworks, particularly given its ties to Fatah and the Palestinian Authority, both of which maintain cooperative relationships with such institutions.

The inclusion of international and NGO sources by both newspapers reflects a broader media trend in conflict reporting. NGOs and international institutions have increasingly become critical players in disseminating frontline information, particularly in war zones where journalists' access is severely restricted. Scholars such as Gonen (2018) and Mercado-Sáez et al. (2019) have emphasized the role of NGOs in supplying primary data from conflict zones, with some, like Human Rights Watch, even operating as de facto news agencies (Meyer et al., 2018). These organizations offer timely and credible reports, often disseminated through digital platforms and official press releases, making them valuable assets to journalists. Moreover, the heavy reliance on UN sources and international NGOs aligns with the newspapers’ efforts to frame the Gaza War within a human rights and humanitarian context. As Buheji (2024b) notes, international entities lend significant legitimacy and global resonance to local narratives. Despite differences in political orientation and editorial stance, both Felesteen and Al-Hayat displayed a relatively comparable commitment to incorporating these sources, acknowledging their perceived credibility, global reach, and influence among international audiences. International and NGO sources played a vital role in the news coverage of both Palestinian newspapers during the 2023 Gaza War. Their inclusion underscores the importance of authoritative, third-party voices in shaping public understanding of conflict, particularly when direct access to the battlefield is limited.

Arab official sources

Table 1.2 offers insights into how Palestinian online newspapers engaged with Arab official sources during their coverage of the 2023 Gaza War, highlighting the role of Arab political and institutional voices in framing the conflict.

Ministers in Arab Governments: Ministers in Arab Governments emerged as the most frequently cited Arab official sources, comprising 57.1% of all Arab-related references. Al-Hayat demonstrated a notably higher reliance on this category, citing Arab ministers in 75.9% of its references, compared to 37.0% in Felesteen. This disparity suggests that Al-Hayat places particular emphasis on formal Arab diplomatic positions, likely reflecting its editorial orientation aligned with mainstream Arab political frameworks and its support for Fatah and the Palestinian Authority.

Presidents in Arab Governments: Presidents in Arab Governments accounted for 16.1% of total Arab citations. Again, Al-Hayat cited this group more frequently (20.7%) than Felesteen (11.1%), reinforcing the newspaper’s stronger alignment with official Arab state discourse at the highest levels of leadership.

Arab Organizations, Parties, and Groups: Arab Organizations, Parties, and Groups represented 14.3% of the total. In contrast to its handling of state leaders, Felesteen demonstrated a greater focus on this category, citing such groups in 25.9% of cases, while Al-Hayat referenced them only 3.4% of the time. This suggests that Felesteen is more inclined to include the perspectives of Arab political movements and grassroots entities, possibly reflecting its ideological orientation and affiliations with Hamas, which has historically emphasized the importance of regional resistance groups.

Arab International Institutions: Arab International Institutions comprised 12.5% of total Arab references, and were cited exclusively by Felesteen (25.9%). Al-Hayat made no references to this category, further underscoring the editorial divergence between the two outlets. Felesteen's inclusion of pan-Arab institutions such as the Arab League reflects its broader regional framing of the conflict, one that seeks to situate the Palestinian struggle within a collective Arab narrative.

This emphasis on Arab sources aligns with the long-standing framing of the Palestinian cause as a pan-Arab issue. As Ahmad et al. (2023) observe, Palestinian media often endeavor to contextualize the conflict within the wider Arab geopolitical sphere, recognizing both the rhetorical and diplomatic support offered by Arab governments, parties, and institutions. Despite their ideological differences, both Felesteen and Al-Hayat adopt this broader Arab framework to varying degrees. In sum, while Al-Hayat prioritizes high-level Arab governmental voices—especially ministers and presidents—Felesteen demonstrates a more diversified approach, incorporating political groups and regional institutions alongside formal state actors. This nuanced difference reflects the papers' respective editorial strategies and political affiliations, yet their shared use of Arab sources overall underscores the continued salience of pan-Arab solidarity in Palestinian journalistic discourse.

Foreign official sources

The analysis presented in Table 1.2 explores the use of foreign official sources defined as governmental entities outside the Arab world in the coverage of the 2023 Gaza War by two Palestinian online newspapers. These sources provide insights into how international perspectives, particularly from Western countries, were integrated into the news narratives of Felesteen and Al-Hayat.

Governments of Western Countries Other Than America: Governments of Western Countries Other Than the United States constituted the majority of foreign official sources, accounting for 57.7% of the total. Both newspapers cited these sources, yet Al-Hayat exhibited a markedly higher reliance, referencing them in 78.9% of its foreign source citations, compared to 45.5% in Felesteen. This suggests that Al-Hayat places significant emphasis on the positions of European and other Western governments, possibly reflecting its alignment with diplomatic channels associated with the Palestinian Authority and Fatah, which maintain cooperative relationships with European nations.

USA President and Government: U.S. President and Government sources represented 32.7% of the total foreign references. Interestingly, Felesteen cited U.S. government sources more frequently (42.4%) than Al-Hayat (15.8%). This suggests that Felesteen not only monitors American political rhetoric closely but also strategically incorporates these statements to critique U.S. foreign policy, particularly its alignment with Israel. As Miladi and Miladi (2023) note, such usage often frames the United States as complicit in supporting Israeli military operations against Palestinians.

Heads of States Other Than America: Heads of State Other Than the U.S. were the least cited among foreign official sources, comprising only 9.6% of the total. Nevertheless, Felesteen again featured these voices more prominently (12.1%) than Al-Hayat (5.3%), indicating a slightly broader engagement with global state leadership beyond the conventional Western powers.

The editorial strategies underlying these sourcing patterns reveal important ideological and narrative distinctions. *Felesteen*, known for its affiliation with Hamas, appears to adopt a globalized framing of the conflict, portraying the Gaza War as an international issue with wide-reaching geopolitical implications. This approach reflects Hamas's broader attempt to garner global sympathy and frame the Palestinian struggle within a larger discourse of international justice and anti-imperialism (Oktavina et al., 2024).

Conversely, *Al-Hayat* tends to privilege voices from European governments, aligning with its institutional affiliation to Fatah and the Palestinian Authority, which engage in formal diplomacy with Western nations and international institutions.

Its relatively limited use of U.S. sources may be interpreted as a strategic editorial choice to maintain a diplomatic tone, avoiding overt criticism of key international actors involved in the peace process.

In conclusion, both newspapers utilize foreign official sources to shape and legitimize their narratives, yet they differ in their emphasis and intent. *Felesteen* leverages these sources, particularly those from the U.S., to critique international complicity and highlight global injustices, whereas *Al-Hayat* emphasizes Western governmental voices in a more conventional diplomatic context. This contrast further illustrates how editorial positioning and political affiliations shape source selection and framing in Palestinian war reporting.

Experts and Protesters

Table 1.2 examines the use of experts and protesters as sources in the news content of Palestinian online newspapers during the 2023 Gaza war, reflecting the inclusion of both specialized and grassroots perspectives.

Experts: Experts represent the predominant portion of this category, accounting for 92.3% of the total sources. Both newspapers prioritize expert opinions; however, Al-Hayat exclusively relies on expert sources (100%), while Felesteen features them in the majority of cases (85.7%). This underscores a significant emphasis on specialized and informed analysis in both newspapers' reporting.

Protesters and Demonstrators: Protesters and Demonstrators, by contrast, are cited minimally, comprising only 7.7% of the sources within this category. These sources appear solely in Felesteen (14.3%), with Al-Hayat making no references to them. Felesteen's inclusion of protesters suggests a limited but notable attempt to integrate grassroots voices into its coverage.

Experts, including academics, analysts, and former government officials, are frequent contributors to conflict reporting, providing analysis and commentary that is often viewed as authoritative (Albæk, 2011). However, despite not officially representing institutional positions, many experts have backgrounds in government or military service, which can introduce ideological or political bias into their commentary (Gonen, 2018; Johnson-Cartee, 2005). Conversely, protesters are often cited by journalists to humanize conflict narratives, adding emotional depth and drawing audience sympathy (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2009).

The tendency of media outlets to seek out experts who reinforce their editorial stance was evident in Felesteen's coverage of the 2023 Gaza War. In addition to expert sources, Felesteen regularly cited protesters, emphasizing the international and regional significance of the war following the pivotal events of October 7 (Oktavina et al., 2024).

Media sources

Table 1.2 also explores the use of media sources in the news content of Palestinian online newspapers during the 2023 Gaza war, highlighting their dependence on various international, regional, and domestic media outlets.

International Newspapers: International Newspapers constitute 8.9% of the total media sources, with Felesteen relying more heavily on them (35.7%) compared to Al-Hayat (17.6%). This suggests Felesteen's greater engagement with established global print media.

Our Correspondent: Our Correspondent is a source category that comprises 24.4% of the total, appearing exclusively in Al-Hayat (64.7%). Felesteen does not use this category, instead attributing its information directly to named sources. The prominence of "our correspondent" in Al-Hayat may reflect an editorial decision to obscure specific source identities, possibly to avoid direct association with contentious sources.

International News Agencies: International News Agencies account for 15.6% of the overall references, all of which are cited by Felesteen (25.0%). Al-Hayat does not reference any international news agencies, indicating differing strategies in sourcing external information.

Israeli Media: Israeli Media is referenced in 13.3% of cases, with Felesteen citing these sources more frequently (17.9%) than Al-Hayat (5.9%). However, it is important to note that Felesteen primarily employs Israeli media to support the Palestinian perspective and critique the Israeli narrative.

Satellite Channels: Satellite Channels comprise 11.1% of the total, with Felesteen again making more frequent use (14.3%) compared to Al-Hayat (5.9%). Notably, Felesteen's references are exclusively to Al Jazeera, while Al-Hayat cites

the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International (LBCI).

International Websites: International Websites make up 6.7% of total references, with both newspapers showing limited engagement: Felesteen at 7.1% and Al-Hayat at 5.9%. This points to a relatively low reliance on online platforms for international content.

Research indicates that journalists often depend on news agencies and media outlets during conflicts, particularly in the early stages when verified information is scarce (Van der Meer et al., 2017). These media sources are frequently reshaped by journalists, who edit and reframe the material to align with their editorial agendas and cater to their audiences (Tenenboim-Weinblatt & Baden, 2018). In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, these transformations can dilute or alter the original intent of the sources, leading to narratives that diverge significantly from the original reportage (Baden & Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2018).

Result

The analysis of bylines in Felesteen and Al-Hayat highlights both significant differences and notable similarities in how these newspapers attribute authorship within their news content. The predominant category in both publications is "Site name," with Felesteen attributing 55.9% of its news reports to its website name, while Al-Hayat does so at an even higher rate of 67.8%. This indicates a clear preference for institutional attribution over individual authorship. The use of individual "Reporter name" remains relatively low in both newspapers, 9.0% in Felesteen and 11.3% in Al-Hayat, suggesting limited recognition of individual journalists.

A key distinction emerges in the use of "Palestinian news agencies and newspapers" compared to "International news agencies and newspapers." Al-Hayat makes considerable use of Palestinian news agencies, accounting for 14.7% of its content, all of which are attributed to the Wafa News Agency, operating under the Palestinian president's office. In contrast, Felesteen does not reference any Palestinian news agencies (0.0%). Conversely, Felesteen relies heavily on international sources, comprising 29.4% of its content, while Al-Hayat includes them in only 2.8% of its reports, highlighting a stark divergence in sourcing practices. The use of the "Anonymity–None" category remains minimal in both newspapers, at 4.5% for Felesteen and 3.4% for Al-Hayat. The "More than one" category is used infrequently, appearing only twice in Felesteen and not at all in Al-Hayat.

In terms of "Palestinian sources," Al-Hayat aligns more closely with West Bank institutions and the central Palestinian leadership, while Felesteen emphasizes the perspectives of Gaza-based authorities and grassroots voices. These differences reflect divergent editorial strategies and underscore the political and geographic divides within Palestinian society. Notably, despite the conflict occurring in Gaza, Al-Hayat refrains from citing any governmental sources from Gaza—likely due to its non-recognition of the governing authority there. Conversely, while Felesteen officially acknowledges the government in Ramallah, it cited Ramallah-affiliated sources on only eight occasions, a pattern that reflects the broader Palestinian political division. Official sources are considered foundational in news reporting, as they provide critical information, opinions, statements, and comments that significantly influence the quality and scope of coverage (Ibrahim, 2004).

Felesteen references "Israeli sources" more frequently (22 instances) compared to Al-Hayat (13 instances), indicating a broader engagement with Israeli entities. While Felesteen diversifies its Israeli sources to include witnesses and NGOs, Al-Hayat focuses mainly on the Israeli government and military. Importantly, all Palestinian media outlets, including these two, employ Israeli sources strategically to support the Palestinian narrative and counter Israeli perspectives (Hamas Elmasry, 2024).

Both newspapers also show strong reliance on international and non-governmental organizations, particularly the United Nations, to strengthen their credibility and present global perspectives on the conflict. Al-Hayat cites a higher number of international and NGO sources overall (66 instances) compared to Felesteen (49 instances). However, Al-Hayat includes Islamic international organizations in its sourcing, suggesting a slightly broader approach. This reliance on external sources enhances the perceived neutrality and authority of the news content while reinforcing Palestinian viewpoints (Meyer et al., 2018).

“Arab official” sources appear with similar frequency in both newspapers—27 instances in Felesteen and 29 in Al-Hayat, but their use reveals different editorial preferences. Al-Hayat emphasizes formal governmental voices, particularly those of Arab ministers, reflecting a top-down narrative. In contrast, Felesteen includes both governmental and non-governmental Arab entities, indicating a broader regional perspective. The deliberate emphasis on Arab sources stems from the newspapers’ intent to position the Palestinian issue within its wider Arab and historical context (Hashish et al., 2023).

In the “Foreign official” category, Felesteen cites more sources (33 instances) than Al-Hayat (19 instances), signaling greater engagement with international actors. Al-Hayat shows a strong preference for Western governments, excluding the U.S., whereas Felesteen balances its citations between the U.S. and other Western countries. Felesteen’s frequent reliance on U.S. sources can be interpreted as part of its broader effort to hold the United States accountable for its perceived role in perpetuating the conflict, portraying it as a complicit actor (Warshagha et al., 2024).

In the “Experts and Protesters” category, Felesteen cites slightly more sources (7 instances) than Al-Hayat (6 instances). Both newspapers prioritize expert commentary, highlighting their commitment to analytical and informed reporting. However, Felesteen adopts a slightly more inclusive approach by referencing protesters, albeit infrequently, thus incorporating grassroots sentiment into its coverage. Research by Ayadi (2016) supports the notion that citing experts enhances credibility and reinforces the reliability of news content.

Finally, Felesteen cites more media sources overall (28 instances) than Al-Hayat (17 instances). While Felesteen draws on a diverse range of international and regional media outlets, Al-Hayat tends to rely more on its own correspondents. This contrast reflects differing editorial policies: Felesteen favors diverse external perspectives, whereas Al-Hayat appears more inward-focused in its sourcing strategy.

Dissection of the result

This study offers a comprehensive analysis of the use of “bylines” and “sources” in the news coverage of the 2023 Gaza War by two prominent Palestinian online newspapers: Felesteen and Al-Hayat. Building upon previous research, the study investigates how authorship, denoted by “bylines”, is documented and how various “sources” are incorporated into news content. Specifically, the research aims to uncover both the similarities and differences in the practices of these newspapers during a critical period of armed conflict.

This study contributes to the analysis of the use of “Bylines” and “Sources” in the news content of Palestinian online newspapers during the 2023 Gaza War. Building on previous research, it examines how Felesteen and Al-Hayat document authorship—referred to as 'Bylines'—which indicate the names of the writers or editors. The study also aims to identify and analyze how these Palestinian online newspapers utilize “Sources” within their news content throughout the conflict. Ultimately, it seeks to reveal the similarities and differences in the way these newspapers employ “Bylines” and “Sources” in their reporting during the war. The analysis revealed that both newspapers utilize six distinct types of bylines: Reporter Name, Site Name, Multiple Authors, Palestinian News Agencies and Newspapers, International News Agencies and Newspapers, and Anonymity/None. Among these, the Site Name category emerged as the most dominant, appearing in 55.9% of Felesteen's articles and 67.8% of Al-Hayat's. This trend suggests a preference for attributing news content to the institution rather than individual journalists. Such a practice may reflect editorial norms whereby content is compiled and edited by a central news team, particularly when reports are sourced from multiple correspondents in the field. This observation aligns with Somaini (2018), who argued that the absence of a specific byline often indicates limited direct contribution from individual reporters. Additionally, Manama (2018) noted that the site name itself is often perceived by readers as a credible source of information.

In contrast, the use of individual reporters' bylines was relatively low, with Felesteen at 9.0% and Al-Hayat at 11.3%. A significant point of divergence between the newspapers lies in their use of International News Agencies and Newspapers. Felesteen relied heavily on these sources (29.4%), whereas Al-Hayat used them in only 2.8% of its content. This disparity highlights different editorial strategies regarding international engagement and the validation of news narratives through external sources.

When analyzing sources used in the coverage of the Gaza War, both newspapers showed notable overlap in their reliance on Palestinian sources and minimal use of Israeli sources, suggesting a shared national framing of the conflict. This is consistent with Manama's (2018) assertion that despite political differences, Palestinian media tend to converge around core national issues.

However, differences become more pronounced in other areas. Al-Hayat cited International and Non-Governmental Organizations more frequently than Felesteen, indicating a stronger reliance on global institutional perspectives. Meanwhile, both newspapers demonstrated similar usage patterns regarding Arab Official Sources, suggesting a shared regional orientation. Variability in the use of Foreign Official Sources was observed, but was not substantial enough to suggest stark editorial divergence.

In terms of Experts and Protesters, both newspapers employed similar strategies, showing a commitment to analytical depth while giving limited voice to grassroots perspectives. However, Felesteen relied more heavily on Media Sources (28 instances) than Al-Hayat (17 instances), pointing to a broader and more diverse media engagement on its part.

Despite the clear editorial differences between the two newspapers, Al-Hayat being aligned with Fatah's more moderate, diplomacy-oriented stance, and Felesteen supporting Hamas's resistance-driven narrative, the findings suggest that political division did not significantly influence the use of bylines and sources during the 2023 Gaza War. Both newspapers appeared to adopt a unified national approach, minimizing internal discord in favor of presenting a coherent Palestinian narrative. This convergence reflects a shared understanding that internal political divisions should not overshadow the broader national struggle during times of external conflict.

Recommendations

- Encourage the Use of Individual Bylines: Palestinian online newspapers should increase the attribution of news content to individual journalists rather than relying predominantly on the website's name. This practice enhances transparency, accountability, and professional recognition.
- Establish Clear Editorial Guidelines: Media institutions should develop and publicly share editorial policies that outline criteria for author attribution and source selection. This will foster consistency in reporting practices and build trust with the audience.
- Enhance the Role of Field Correspondents: News outlets are encouraged to invest in and rely more on field correspondents for firsthand reporting. Reducing dependence on aggregated sources or anonymous editorial contributions will enrich the content with grounded and contextually relevant narratives.
- Develop a Framework for Using Israeli Sources: Newspapers should adopt editorial guidelines that specify the conditions under which Israeli sources are cited. These guidelines should ensure that such sources are critically assessed and used within analytical frameworks that align with Palestinian national interests.
- Support Further Research: Future studies should explore the effects of byline attribution and source usage on audience perceptions, credibility, and trust in Palestinian journalism. Such research would contribute to the formulation of more effective and audience-centered media strategies.

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