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Environmental and Climate Law and Policy in Mongolian Online Media: A Content Analysis and Institutional-Centered Model

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Abstract

The media sector in Mongolia has developed rapidly alongside technological advancements; however, systematic research on how environmental law and climate policy information are communicated to the public remains limited. This study examines the scope of environmental law and climate policy content in Mongolian online media. The study applies framing theory to examine issue prioritization and the relationship between the public sphere and legal awareness, and employs content analysis to analyze materials published on News.mn, Ikon.mn, Montsame.mn, Zindaa.mn, and Gogo.mn between 2008 and 2025. The findings indicate that information is presented in four main framings: legal and regulatory explanations, policy-related reporting, preventive or awareness-oriented content, and crime-related coverage. In terms of content characteristics, official sources dominate, short-form news is prevalent, and there is a recurring pattern of repetitive information dissemination. The media landscape is largely government-centered and policy-oriented, while content that supports citizen participation remains limited. The online media environment is characterized by inconsistency and a tendency toward post-event interpretation of legal information. These findings suggest that the Mongolian media sector should develop a multi-source, participatory, and behavior-oriented information strategy. This study contributes to the literature by empirically examining the relationship between media content and the dissemination of environmental legal information.

Keywords: Information Communication, Media Content, Legal Information, Policy Framework, Institutional Relevance, Mongolian Media

1. Introduction

Climate change and environmental degradation are not only ecological issues but also complex challenges affecting society, the economy, and human health. They have emerged as key priorities at both international and national policy levels [1,2]. In this context, the effectiveness of environmental law and policy extends beyond institutional regulation and depends on citizens' levels of information, participation, and legal awareness [3,4]. The media plays a significant institutional role in shaping public understanding and discourse by communicating, interpreting, and disseminating environmental policy and legal information [5-7].

In Mongolia, policy-level responses to climate change began with the signing of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development [8]. Since then, policy documents such as the *National Climate Change Program* (Government of Mongolia, 2011) have provided an institutional framework for addressing this issue [9]. This program was the first government policy to introduce measures for climate change adaptation and greenhouse gas emission reduction. This marked the beginning of systematic government efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. From this period onward, climate change increasingly

attracted the attention of the government, media, and the public. For example, in the early 2000s, the Government of Mongolia submitted national reports on climate change to the United Nations [10]. Since then, conditions have emerged that have led to climate change gaining broader public attention beyond policy circles, resulting in increased representation in media content.

Researchers have emphasized that media content not only transmits information but also shapes public attention and understanding [11]. From this perspective, the media shape the space for public discourse through issue selection, interpretive framing, and the dominance of particular sources and perspectives [6,7,11]. In this regard, the structure and interpretation of environmental law and policy information are closely linked to legal awareness, which in turn shapes citizens' understanding, attitudes, and behavior [3].

In the Mongolian context, systematic empirical research on media coverage of environmental law and policy, particularly regarding dominant topics, frames, and sources, remains limited. In particular, it remains unclear whether media content primarily reflects a state-centered information structure or facilitates inclusive spaces for multi-stakeholder participation.

Therefore, this study employs content analysis to examine how environmental law and climate change policy are represented in Mongolia's online media environment. It aims to empirically identify patterns in topic selection, information scope, and source structures. The findings are interpreted in relation to the media's role in shaping public legal understanding and participation. This study contributes to a deeper theoretical and practical understanding of the relationship between environmental governance and the information environment in developing countries.

2. Theoretical Introduction and Policy Framework

The interrelationship among climate change, environmental policy, legal frameworks, and the media is complex and multifaceted. Contemporary research highlights how these domains intersect social understanding, policy debates, and public participation [12,13]. Therefore, this study adopts an integrated theoretical framework to explain the role of online media in shaping environmental communication.

First, agenda-setting theory explains how the media directs public attention to specific issues. The perceived social importance of an issue is shaped by the extent and prominence of its media coverage [5,11]. Carvalho (2007) demonstrates that the extent of media coverage of climate change influences public understanding and policy debates [14].

Second, framing theory provides a framework for analyzing how information is constructed and interpreted, beyond its factual content. It structures information within specific contexts, thereby shaping and potentially constraining or expanding audience understanding (Entman, 1993). Nisbet (2009) finds that media coverage of climate change is often framed in terms of risks, disasters, or policy solutions [6].

Third, public sphere theory conceptualizes the media as a space for dialogue among the state, citizens, and civil society (Habermas, 1989) [7]. Cox (2013) argues that the media should provide a forum for open debate on policy issues, reflecting diverse sources and perspectives [13]. However, some studies suggest that media coverage is often dominated by state sources, thereby limiting opportunities for broader public participation [15].

Fourth, legal literacy theory examines how citizens understand and interpret laws and policies in everyday life [3]. The media serves as a key source of information in shaping this understanding, as argued by Cotterrell (2006) [16]. However, media coverage may simplify legal content and omit complex interpretations, potentially limiting public understanding [17].

Fifth, the environmental communication approach emphasizes the effective and accessible communication of environmental information [13,18]. However, some scholars argue that media coverage is often dominated by short-form reporting, which inadequately reflects in-depth policy analysis and causal relationships [19].

Taken together, these theories suggest that the media shape public perceptions of environmental policy and law through four interrelated dimensions: (1) issue selection, (2) modes of explanation, (3) the actors and sources represented, and (4) the construction of citizens' legal understanding.

The limited empirical research integrating these dimensions in the Mongolian context underscores the theoretical and practical significance of this study.

3. Environmental Policy and Legal Framework in Mongolia

Mongolia's environmental legal system is comprehensive and is grounded in the Constitution, sectoral legislation, policy documents, and international commitments [8,20]. The Constitution of Mongolia guarantees citizens the right to live in a healthy and safe environment and establishes the shared responsibility of the state, citizens, and businesses to protect [21]. This constitutional provision forms the legal foundation for environmental policy. Mongolia has adopted more than 20 environmental laws, as well as numerous international treaties, national strategies, and programs [20,22]. Key legislative and policy instruments include the *Law on Environmental Protection* (1995), the *Law on Specially Protected Areas* (1994), the *Law on Forests* (2012), the *Law on Water* (2012), the *Law on Air* (2012), the *Law on Soil Protection and Desertification Prevention* (2012), and the *Law on Waste* (2017), as well as the *National Climate Change Program* (2011) and the *National Biodiversity Strategy* (2015) [9,23-29]. The *Law on Environmental Protection* (1995) regulates the relationship between environmental protection, sustainable resource use, and citizen participation, incorporating principles of transparency and public engagement [23]. The *Law on Environmental Impact Assessment* (2012) implements the precautionary principle by requiring prior assessment of the environmental impacts of projects and programs, while ensuring public participation [25-

29]. Mongolia has set targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 22.7% by 2030 and to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 (Government of Mongolia, 2019) [30]. At the international level, Mongolia is a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, and has committed to greenhouse gas mitigation and climate adaptation policies (UNFCCC, 1992, 2015) [8]. In this context, Mongolia's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and related policy documents have been adopted. At the national policy level, *Vision 2050* (2020) and the *Green Development Policy* (2014) identify environmental sustainability as a development priority and promote greater public participation and transparency in information [31].

The Constitution of Mongolia defines environmental protection not only as a matter of state policy but also as a system of interrelated rights and obligations between citizens and the state. For example, Article 17(2) of the Constitution states that "*it is the moral duty of every citizen to work, protect their health, raise their children, and protect the environment*" [8]. This provision indicates that environmental protection is not only a state responsibility but also a legal obligation of every citizen.

Article 38(4) of the Constitution further identifies environmental protection and the proper use and restoration of natural resources as fundamental functions of the state [8]. This confirms that environmental protection is an integral component of state policy and regulation.

From this perspective, environmental protection can be understood as a multi-stakeholder governance system involving three key actors: citizens (participation and responsibility), the media (information dissemination and mediation), and the state (policymaking, legal regulation, and implementation).

Thus, the constitutional definition of environmental protection as a combination of rights and duties enables its interpretation within a multi-stakeholder governance framework. Environmental protection operates as a complex process across three interconnected levels: (1) citizen participation and responsibility, (2) state policy and legal regulation, and (3) media engagement, which facilitates information dissemination and mutual understanding among stakeholders.

Fulfilling environmental protection responsibilities extends beyond legal enforcement to encompass civic ethics, accountability, and awareness. The media plays a critical role in shaping citizens' environmental awareness. Disseminating accurate, evidence-based, and accessible information contributes to the development of responsible citizenship. Aligning citizens' legal knowledge, cultural values, and information literacy with transparent and accountable governance strengthens the rule of law, social justice, and accountability. Such alignment enhances the effectiveness of environmental protection and supports the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Constitution of Mongolia, which enshrines environmental protection, establishes that citizens are not only rights holders but also active agents responsible for participating in environmental protection. This suggests that environmental issues extend beyond state policy and institutions and constitute a collective social process grounded in citizen participation and responsibility.

In the media sector, journalists and media professionals represent a key group capable of fulfilling civic responsibilities alongside their professional roles. When communicating environmental issues, journalists function not only as information transmitters but also as mediators. They interpret legal regulations, social responsibility, and sustainable development concepts, thereby influencing public attitudes and behaviors.

Therefore, media content on environmental issues should be evaluated not only in terms of volume and frequency but also in terms of its impact on citizens' perceptions, values, and participation. Key dimensions of media social responsibility include explaining environmental laws and regulations, disseminating traditional knowledge and best practices, and critically exposing environmentally harmful actions based on evidence. In this context, the dissemination of environmental information by media organizations and journalists is strategically significant for supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. This study, therefore, aims to analyze and evaluate this issue at the content level.

The media serve not only as information channels but also as intermediary institutions. It shapes citizens' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, explains government policies and legal frameworks, and facilitates public participation. Therefore, analyzing how environmental issues are represented in the media is not merely a matter of content analysis; it directly affects the effectiveness of environmental governance and the quality of public participation.

When considered collectively, these policy documents share several common objectives: increasing public participation, ensuring transparency of information, and strengthening preventive and educational functions. Examining how the media fulfill these functions in relation to the aforementioned theories provides significant implications for journalism theory and practice in developing countries and offers a benchmark for future research.

4. Research Questions

This study examines how Mongolian online media report on environmental policy, climate change, and legal information, addressing the following research questions.

- RQ1. What are the frequency and proportional distribution of environmental policy, climate change, and legal information in media content?
- RQ2. What types of framing are used by the media in reporting environmental policy and legal information?
- RQ3. Which sources and stakeholders are most frequently represented in media coverage of environmental issues?
- RQ4. To what extent does media coverage provide explanatory

depth in presenting environmental legal information to the public?

- RQ5. What patterns and representational characteristics emerge from these dimensions in media content?

5. Research Methodology

This study employs quantitative content analysis to examine how environmental policy, climate change, and legal information are reported in Mongolian media. Content analysis is widely used in media research because it enables the systematic, replicable, and objective classification of content [32,33].

The study is guided by an analytical framework that identifies the structure and representation of media content [34]. This framework examines media content across four key dimensions. These dimensions include importance and frequency, information format, source and stakeholder representation, and legal conceptualization [3,5,7,11]. Together, these dimensions enable an analysis of how media content structures social understanding and policy discourse [12,13].

The most visited news websites in Mongolia are *News.mn*, *Gogo.mn*, *Ikon.mn*, *Zindaa.mn*, and *Montsame.mn* were selected for the study. These sites were considered representative of the Mongolian online news environment in terms of information flow, audience reach, and editorial characteristics. The study period spans 2008–2025, during which major climate change policies and environmental legal regulations were implemented. The sample was selected purposively through keyword searches

for “*environment*,” “*climate change*,” and “*environmental law*,” followed by filtering to identify materials that met the research objectives [35]. The inclusion of first-page search results reflects users’ typical information-seeking behavior. The final sample consisted of 200 news articles, with each article serving as the unit of analysis.

Within the content analysis framework, media texts were coded according to theoretically derived categories [32]. The coding scheme included the following main categories: topic frequency, risk framing, policy coverage, solution orientation, attribution of responsibility, source type, and the level of legal explanation. These dimensions enable the systematic measurement of content structure and representational patterns [33].

The coded data were analyzed using statistical techniques, including frequency distributions, counts, percentages, cross-tabulations, and comparative analysis. These methods facilitate the identification of common patterns and differences in media representations.

6. Research Results

A content analysis of 208 articles published between 2008 and 2025 on environmental law and climate change across five leading Mongolian websites revealed the following results. The quantitative data indicate that while the overall distribution of content across the selected websites was broadly similar, notable differences were observed in coverage patterns.

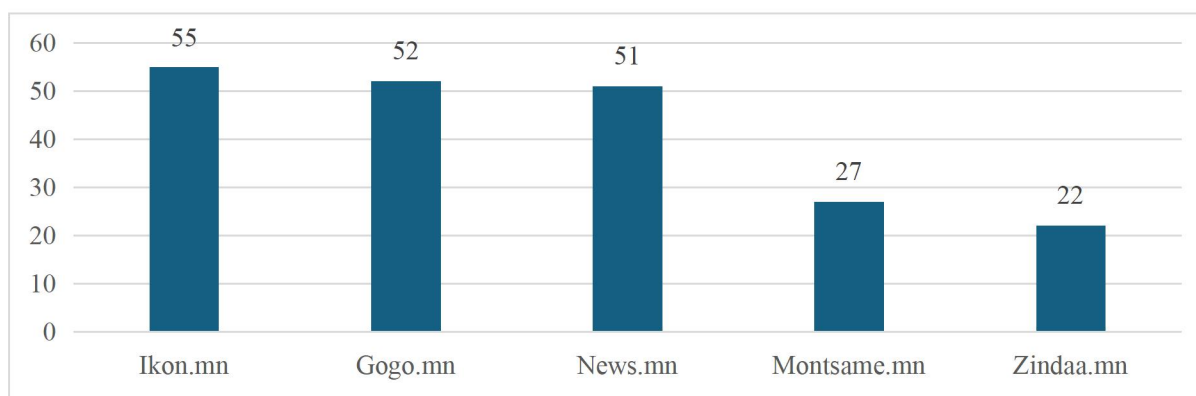


Figure 1: Number of articles by website (2008–2025)

Commercial news websites, including *Ikon.mn*, *News.mn*, and *Gogo.mn* published more articles than other outlets. The results

show that the number of news articles related to environmental law and policy increased unevenly over the period 2008–2025.

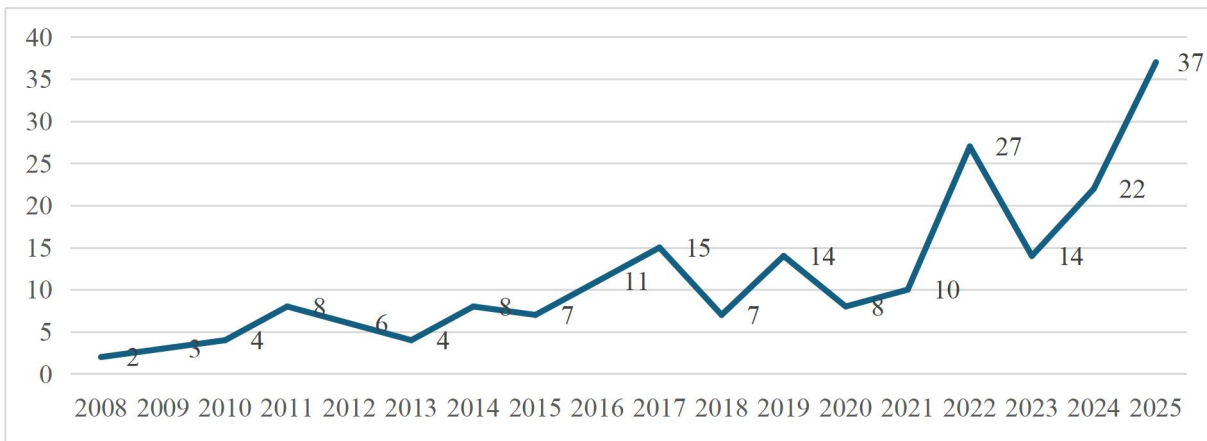


Figure 2: Growth in the number of news articles across all sites (2008–2025)

Overall, the number of articles remained relatively low during the early years of the study period. A noticeable increase occurred in 2016–2017, with approximately 11–15 articles published annually. A further increase was observed in 2019. The most substantial increase began in 2022, with 27 articles recorded. This upward trend continued, reaching 22 articles in 2024 and peaking at 37 articles in 2025, the highest level observed during the study period. These findings suggest that environmental policy and legal issues have become increasingly prominent in media coverage over the past few years. The increase observed after 2022 may

be associated with policy developments, international agreements, and domestic environmental conditions. This trend may reflect the media's growing role in prioritizing environmental policy issues.

A chronological analysis indicates an overall increase in the volume of environmental policy and legal information over time. This trend may be associated with climate policy initiatives, international commitments, and national programs such as the “Billion Trees” initiative.

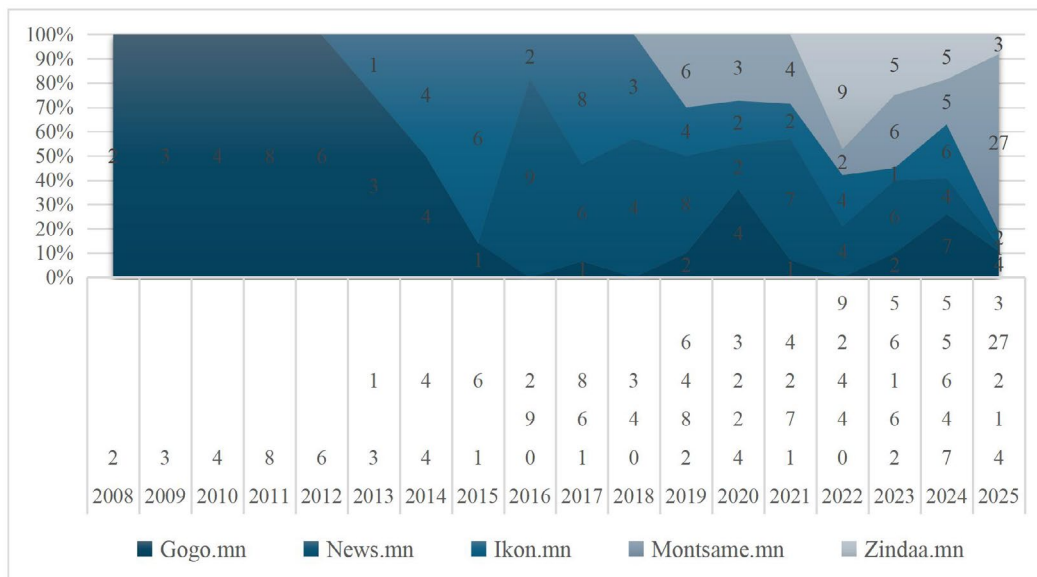


Figure 3: Annual distribution of environmental law and policy coverage by website (2008–2025)

Figure 3 presents the distribution of environmental law and policy coverage across the selected websites between 2008 and 2025. During the early years of the study period (2008–2013), coverage remained relatively low and stable across all sites, followed by a gradual increase after 2016. A substantial increase is observed across all sites from 2022 onwards, peaking in 2025.

A comparison across websites shows that *Zindaa.mn* and *Montsame.mn* have covered these topics more frequently in recent years, while *Gogo.mn* has remained relatively stable at a lower level. *News.mn* and *Ikon.mn* exhibit fluctuating but overall increasing trends.

These results suggest that environmental policy and legal issues have gained increasing prominence in media coverage. This increase may be associated with major policy developments and legal reforms. For example, amendments to the *Law on Environmental Protection* have been introduced since 2010. The *National Climate Change Program* (2011), the *Law on Air Pollution* (2012), the *Paris Agreement* (2015), and the *Sustainable Development Vision* (2016) have further shaped the policy environment [9,25-29]. More recently, the “*Billion Trees*” national movement, initiated in 2021, has also contributed to increased media attention. Media outlets also regularly report on parliamentary agendas, including draft environmental laws, committee reports, and policy discussions. This report often includes explanatory information on legislative processes, policy decisions, and implementation outcomes. Another key feature of environmental legal reporting involves coverage of violations such as illegal hunting, resource exploitation, and water pollution. Such reports frequently include references to relevant legal provisions and associated penalties. These patterns reflect the media's growing role in agenda-setting.

Media coverage is often aligned with real-time events and policy activities. This reflects the media's dual role in reporting events and promoting public awareness of government initiatives.

The findings indicate that Mongolian online media report environmental policy and legal information through several stable content frameworks. These frameworks integrate functions

such as policy explanation, legal promotion, monitoring, critical evaluation, and prevention. The policy and strategy explanation framework represents a dominant pattern in media coverage. Media coverage primarily focuses on explaining and reporting government policies and programs aimed at addressing climate change. Within this framework, institutional-centered narratives emphasizing “*government leadership*” and “*decision-making*” are particularly prominent.

A consistent pattern is also observed in the reporting of legislative processes. Media coverage regularly includes draft legislation, parliamentary sessions, standing committee activities, and policy discussions. This reflects a process-oriented presentation of the legal environment.

In addition, media coverage emphasizes legal accountability for violations. Reports on violations such as illegal hunting, resource exploitation, and environmental pollution often include explanations of relevant legal provisions, along with information on penalties and fines. This approach not only informs the public but also reinforces legal awareness and deterrence. Furthermore, content related to prevention and public participation has increased in recent years. This trend is reflected in the growing number of campaigns, recommendations, and citizen participation initiatives implemented by environmental enforcement agencies, government institutions, and non-governmental organizations.

Framework	Description	Frequency	Representative Content
Policy and Strategic Framework	Explaining policies and programs	82	Paris Agreement, “Billion Trees” national campaign
Legal Process Framework	Coverage of legislative processes	48	State Great Khural (Parliament), Standing Committees
Legal Compliance Framework	Report on legal violations, sanctions and accountability	61	Illegal hunting, fines and penalties
Public Participation Framework	Promoting prevention and encouraging public engagement	16	Campaign, public recommendations

Table 1: Thematic Framework of Environmental Law Coverage

Overall, these platforms function both as channels for information dissemination and as mechanisms for fostering citizens’ legal awareness and ecological responsibility. However, the predominance of official sources suggests limited diversity of perspectives and a relatively low level of independent critical

analysis. Therefore, Mongolian online media outlets tend to present environmental legal information in an institution-centered and policy-oriented manner, with limited space for critical perspectives and public participation.

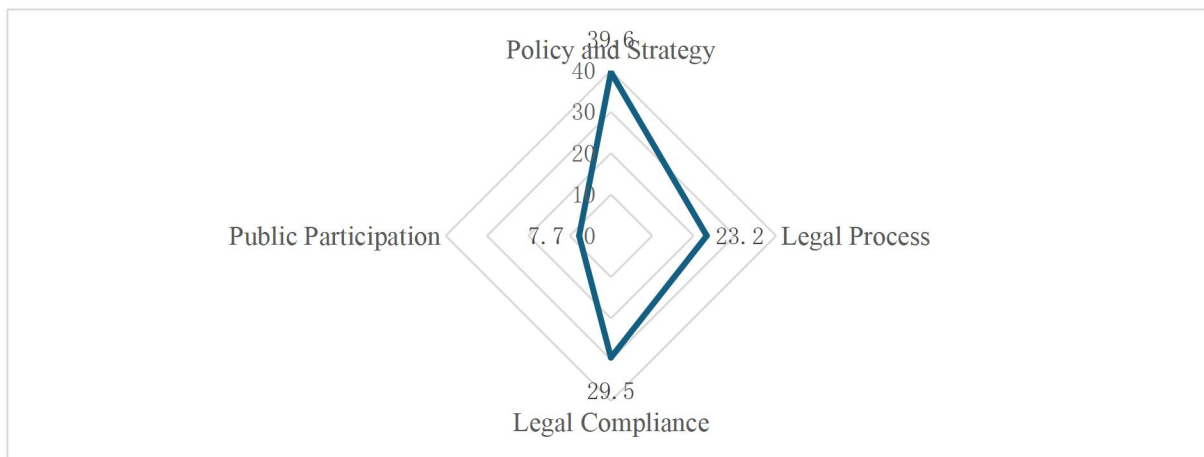


Figure 4: Distribution of environmental law and policy coverage across media platforms

The analysis of environmental law and policy coverage shows that the policy and strategy framework was the most prevalent, accounting for 39.6%. This was followed by the law enforcement and violation framework (29.5%) and the lawmaking process framework (23.2%). The public participation and prevention framework accounted for only 7.7%, representing the lowest share. These findings indicate that Mongolian online media primarily frame environmental legal issues from a state- and institution-centered perspective, with limited attention to citizen participation and preventive approaches.

The analysis also examined the sources and stakeholders most frequently used in reporting on environmental law and policy issues. The results indicate that approximately 90% of the content is based on official sources. These sources include government institutions (ministries, agencies, Parliament, and standing committees), law enforcement bodies (such as the ecological police), and official reports and statements. In particular, official statements and information from institutions such as the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Environment, Food and Agriculture, and the Ecological Police Service were most frequently cited. This pattern reflects the nature

of the topic and aligns with the media's role in communicating government policies, decisions, and legal frameworks to the public. References to international commitments and policy documents were also common.

However, the participation of citizens, civil society organizations, independent researchers, and experts remains limited. For example, even in coverage of law enforcement issues, information from official institutions predominates. In contrast, the perspectives, experiences, and independent analyses of citizens are rarely represented. These findings suggest that environmental legal issues are primarily communicated through an institution-centered, one-way communication model, in which "*the government informs, and the public receives.*" While this approach enhances the reliability of information, it may also limit opportunities for diverse participation, critical analysis, and the inclusion of citizens' perspectives.

Analysis of content types shows that news items dominated, accounting for 63.3% of the total sample. This was followed by reports (25.6%) and interviews (10.1%), while article-type content accounted for only 1.0%.

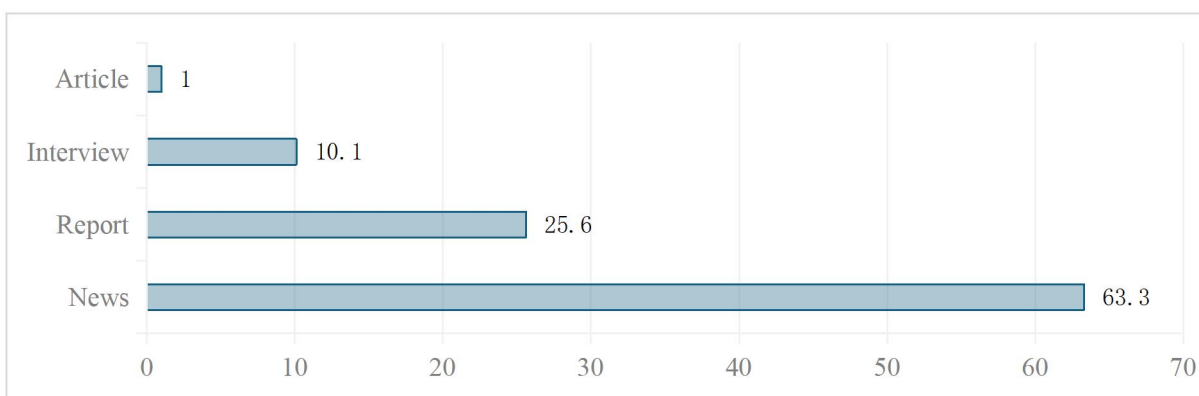


Figure 5: Distribution of content types

Overall, the high proportion of news content can be attributed to MONTSAME's role as the country's primary news agency. Specifically, 26 of the 27 items collected from the Montsame.mn website was published as news articles. News websites such as Gogo.mn, News.mn, and Ikon.mn presented approximately 45% of the content through detailed news reports and video clips.

In terms of video content, coverage increased following national initiatives such as the “Billion Trees” movement announced by the President of Mongolia (President of Mongolia, 2025). Media outlets frequently produced video reports, event coverage, and in-depth interviews related to these initiatives. This content structure indicates that media primarily rely on event-based, brief reporting formats to convey environmental legal information to the public. The dominance of news formats suggests that interpretation remains largely descriptive rather than analytical.

In reporting and interview formats, some efforts were made to provide more detailed explanations of legal and policy content and to analyze underlying causes and impacts. However, these formats accounted for only a relatively small proportion of the overall content. In addition, there was a notable lack of article-type content providing legal knowledge and in-depth educational explanations. These findings indicate that environmental legal information is primarily conveyed through short news formats, with limited depth of explanation and educational content.

An analysis based on the study's key dimensions, information scope, sources, content types, and levels of explanation, reveals consistent patterns and representational characteristics in the reporting of environmental legal issues by Mongolian online media.

Dimension	Key Findings	Pattern of Representation
Framework	Dominance of policy and implementation-related content	State-centered framing
Sources	Predominance of government and official institutions	Institutionally dominated representation
Content Type	Dominance of news format	Event-driven information structure
Level of Explanation	Predominantly descriptive and general reporting level	Limited orientation toward legal awareness development

Table 2: Summary of representative patterns in Mongolian online media coverage

In terms of information scope, content related to policies, strategies, and law enforcement is most prevalent, reflecting a tendency to frame environmental issues primarily in relation to state policies and institutional activities. This pattern suggests that environmental issues are primarily addressed at the systemic level, while information related to citizen participation and preventive approaches remains limited.

In terms of sources, official institutions predominate, with content largely based on statements and perspectives from state bodies and law enforcement agencies. However, the voices of civil society, independent experts, and citizens remain underrepresented, thereby limiting the diversity of perspectives.

In terms of content types, news formats account for 63.3% of the sample, indicating a tendency toward short, event-based reporting. In contrast, more in-depth formats such as reports and interviews constitute a comparatively smaller share.

Overall, Mongolian media are developing a representation model characterized by an institution-centered orientation, a dominance of news formats, and a focus on descriptive reporting. While this model enhances the reliability of information, it constrains the potential to foster diverse participation, critical engagement, and public legal education.

7. Research Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that Mongolian media exhibit an institution-centered, news-dominated, and descriptive orientation

in their coverage of environmental law issues. This pattern is shaped by the interaction of multiple factors, including the media's social role, the information environment, source selection, content structure, and the depth of interpretation [36].

The prominence of policy and implementation-related content reflects a tendency to closely associate environmental legal issues with the activities of state institutions. This finding is consistent with framing theory, which posits that the media do not simply reflect reality but actively construct it by selecting and emphasizing certain aspects, thereby shaping public understanding [6]. As a result, environmental issues are predominantly framed in terms of state policy, regulation, and implementation, while citizen participation, social responsibility, and preventive approaches remain secondary. Previous studies have highlighted that such framing may institutionalize public perceptions, potentially reducing the perceived importance of citizen participation in problem-solving processes [37].

The source structure reflects the dominance of state institutions, suggesting a high degree of institutional influence over the flow of information. This is consistent with indexing theory, which posits that media coverage often aligns with and reflects the range of perspectives expressed by official sources [15]. In this context, information tends to be relatively reliable and authoritative; however, it may also limit the diversity of perspectives, critical debate, and participation by civil society. The findings suggest that the limited presence of independent experts and citizens undermines media pluralism. This finding aligns with previous

research showing that media discourse tends to concentrate around authoritative sources [38].

In terms of content typology, news formats account for the largest share (63.3%), reflecting an event-driven, concise, and immediate style of information delivery. This pattern is consistent with broader trends in the contemporary media environment, which prioritize speed and accessibility of information [39]. However, the predominance of event-driven coverage limits opportunities for in-depth explanation, causal analysis, and evaluation of policy effectiveness. The limited proportion of more analytical formats, such as reports and interviews, further constrains deeper examination of these issues.

This structural pattern directly shapes the level of explanation, with content largely remaining at a descriptive reporting level. This suggests that the media's monitoring function is more prominent, while its roles in facilitating citizen participation and public deliberation remain comparatively weak [40]. In other words, while the media effectively report events, their role in explaining underlying causes, legal implications, and societal impacts remains limited.

From a journalistic theory perspective, the media are expected not only to inform but also to educate the public, promote participation, and foster social debate [36]. However, the patterns identified in this study suggest that these roles are not fully realized in Mongolian online media. Given that environmental legal information directly affects citizens' daily lives and decision-making, its explanatory and educational functions require strengthening.

Furthermore, this representational pattern may be linked to the structural conditions of the Mongolian media system. Previous research has shown that factors such as market pressures, resource constraints, and variations in professional capacity contribute to the dominance of news formats and institution-centered information dissemination [40]. In this context, strengthening editorial policies, professional standards, and source diversity is essential for developing a more balanced and pluralistic information environment.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research showing that the media are not only a means of informing about environmental issues but also an important mechanism for shaping public perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. For example, a study conducted by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism in collaboration with GGGI and IRIM found that 85.4% of respondents expressed interest in receiving media coverage of climate change [10]. However, levels of trust in information sources varied significantly. For instance, 67.5% of respondents trusted television, and 83.6% trusted local government sources, whereas only about 30% trusted online media [10]. This suggests that the quality, reliability, and depth of information directly influence public trust. Furthermore, 76.9% of respondents reported not having taken any action to adapt to climate change. This suggests that, although information is available, media coverage

remains insufficient to influence behavioral change [10]. This finding is directly related to the "reporting-dominated" pattern identified in this study.

Therefore, online media outlets should move beyond purely reporting-based content and provide more science-based, accessible, user-centered, and trustworthy information. In particular, developing targeted communication strategies that account for differences in perceptions between urban and rural populations may enhance effectiveness.

8. Conclusion

This study systematically examines how Mongolian online media outlets report on environmental law issues across four key dimensions: coverage, sources, content type, and level of explanation. The aim of the study was not only to identify content structures and patterns but also to explain their implications for social perceptions, policy implementation, and public participation.

The findings indicate that Mongolian media outlets exhibit an institution-centered, news-dominated, and reporting-focused pattern of representation in their coverage of environmental law issues. This pattern shapes media coverage through a predominantly institutional perspective and suggests a mechanism through which public perception may be guided in the Mongolian context.

Regarding the policy environment, the findings suggest that although Mongolia has established environmental laws and strategic documents, their effective implementation remains limited. This is particularly evident in the low levels of public understanding and acceptance reflected in media content. In other words, the effectiveness of the policy environment and legal regulation depends not only on the existence of laws and regulations but also on how they are interpreted and understood by the public.

The analysis demonstrates that these findings can be interpreted through a theoretical lens, revealing that this structure strengthens the media's monitoring role while weakening its roles in education, participation, and critical public debate. This may be attributed to limitations in the quality of information, the depth of analytical interpretation, and the practical applicability of content in this domain. Therefore, media content should evolve from a purely informational level toward a more advanced "*perception-belief-behavior*" hierarchy of influence.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in its multidimensional analysis of media content and in the identification of a unified model for the representation of environmental legal information in Mongolia. This contributes to a clearer understanding of the relationship between policy, institutions, content structures, and public perception within the media system of a developing country.

This study also examines the integration of environmental rights and responsibilities, as enshrined in the Mongolian Constitution, in relation to the media's role. It proposes an approach that positions

journalists and media professionals as active participants in social responsibility, rather than merely as information providers.

In terms of practical implications, this study offers recommendations for media organizations, policymakers, and development agencies in the following areas. These include:

- (1) increasing the diversity of information sources;
- (2) expanding the proportion of analytical, interpretive, and educational content;
- (3) developing science-based, accessible, and user-centered information; and
- (4) implementing communication strategies tailored to local contexts and target audiences. These measures aim to position the media not only as information providers but also as institutions that foster public participation, promote behavioral change, and support policy implementation.

In other words, this study emphasizes the need to conceptualize media content within an “*information–perception–belief–behavior*” hierarchy of influence and proposes a new approach to assessing the effectiveness of environmental information.

This study has several limitations. The scope and temporal limitations of the selected online media outlets, as well as the reliance on content analysis, may restrict the ability to fully capture the nuances of information quality. Therefore, future research should examine the impact on audience acceptance, trust, and behavior, while also integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods.

In conclusion, the way environmental law issues are covered in the media is not merely a matter of content structure and format, but also carries strategic significance for the effectiveness of environmental governance. The Constitution of Mongolia defines environmental protection as a combination of rights and duties for both citizens and the state, thereby providing a foundation for understanding this issue within a multi-stakeholder framework. In this context, the media function as intermediaries that facilitate information exchange, foster public understanding, and promote participation between citizens and the state. As such, they represent a key factor in aligning environmental policy, social responsibility, and sustainable development goals.

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