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Mediatization of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM): A Case of leading Pakistani Newspapers of English Language

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
	After the 2018 general elections, Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) formed government. It was unconventional as it went against the two-party system that had long been prevailing in Pakistan. Ultimately, more than 10 parties formed a united front titled Pakistan Democractic Movement (PDM) to oppose PTI narrative. Enough research has been dedicated to evaluate populism in PTI's public discourse. Little work was done to measure how mainstream Pakistani newspapers treat PDM. Hence, objective of this study is to fill this gap and evaluate editorials of newspapers to measure the manner and volume of editorials written on PDM. Using empirical method of content analysis, editorials of Dawn, Pakistan Today, The News, The Express Tribune and Daily Times from September 2020 to September 2021 were put in positive, negative and neutral categories. We found that Pakistan Today framed PDM as 29 (59.18%) positive editorials, followed by Dawn, The News, Express Tribune and Daily Times. We are convinced that more research needs to be conducted on this topic as a content analysis always opens avenues for further research.

Introduction

In today's complex-mediated societies, media play a significant role in the construction of reality (Lippmann, 1922; Yousaf, 2018), framing the image of nations (Saleem, 2007; Ji, Hu & Muhammad, 2016), and framing conflicts (Yousaf, Bushra& Yousaf, 2020). Media depicts what and how society works as it is the reflection of our society. Alongside, it also helps in entertaining the masses, educating them and making them aware of current happenings (Gaurav &Nity, 2017).

Pakistan has had various modes of government since its independence, including Parliamentary, Presidential, Martial Law, and Democracy. Pakistan had a legislative regime under the 1956 constitution, but the constitution was abolished two years later, and General Ayub Khan declared martial law in 1958. Ayub Khan adopted the presidential structure under the 1962 constitution, initiating the system of basic democracy in Pakistan. However, owing to populism, electoral fraud, and

nepotism, this method was unable to thrive in Pakistan (Pardesi, 2012). Furthermore, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was Pakistan's first elected Prime Minister, serving a five-year term. However, Zia-ul-Haq, who instituted martial law in Pakistan in July 1977, skewed the political structure once more. As a result, from 1977 to 1988, Pakistan was once again ruled by an undemocratic regime. Following the death of Zia-ul-Haq, an election was held in 1988, and Benazir Bhutto was named Prime Minister of Pakistan. The Pakistan People Party (PPP) administration, on the other hand, was dissolved in 1990 due to allegations of abuse and weak governance. From 1993 to 1996, the PPP was again the governing party, but it could not complete its term and was pressured to resign owing to corruption allegations. The Pakistan Muslim League (PMLN) governed from 1991 to 1993 and again from 1997 to 1999. Again, the elected government of the PMLN was unable to complete its term, and in October 1999, General Musharraf proclaimed martial law in the region. Pakistan's democratic transition has been repeatedly derailed. President Musharraf, on the other hand, has stated that he would leave behind a secure democracy in Pakistan that will prevent possible military takeovers. He also promised that his government would provide enough employment prospects, human capital, reduce hunger, and enhance simple living conditions, but he failed to deliver on any of these commitments. From 2008 to 2018, Pakistan's parliamentary democracy saw the smooth succession between two governments as they completed their respective constitutional terms. The PPP and PML-N completed their terms and handed over authority after polls, which was unparalleled in Pakistani political history (Chaudhary, 2013; Shah 2013).

Literature Review

The country's leading opposition parties while giving a formal shape to their alliance with the name of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and demanded resignation of Prime Minister Imran Khan. The country's major opposition parties on September 20, 2020, announced and launched a three-phased anti-government movement under an "action plan". This action plan started from October last year with countrywide public meetings, protest demonstrations and rallies in December and will be followed by a "decisive long march" towards Islamabad after the senate elections (Opposition parties form alliance to oust govt, 2020).

The PDM after the multi-parties conference announced that they would use all the political and democratic options to oust Prime Minister Imran Khan and his PTI government including no-confidence motions and mass resignations from parliament, to seek "the selected prime minister's resignation and an end to the role of the establishment in politics" (Dawn, 2020). The PDM parties also signed a 26-point declaration which was presented in the form of resolution with demands, such as the "end of establishment's interference in politics, new free and fair elections after the formulation of election reforms with no role of armed forces and intelligence agencies, the release of political prisoners, withdrawal of cases against journalists, implementation of the National Action Plan against terrorism, speeding up of the projects under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and across the board accountability under a new accountability law", ("Opposition parties form alliance to oust govt", 2020).

Framing Theory

The media are using framing to carry out those political goals. The wealthy's needs are met, and the press guarantees the financial well-being of the media companies by presenting knowledge that is emotionally salient instead of comprehensive. Currently, the media usually functions as a watchdog, doing so on behalf of the public at home and in the international sphere.

According to Walter Lippman, the Framing principle is based on the premise that "The real world and the internal representations in our minds are the same" (Lippmann, 1922). He was the first to prove how the media provide a basic framework for people to understand events. Goffman (1974) pioneered framing as an investigative tool, while Entman (1991) pursued its use to detail the media's impact on public debates. The theory of mass communication is now described as "framing". When interpreting a perceived fact, pick several aspects to make them salient in the text to highlight an issue, such as better understanding the dilemma, possibly proposing a solution, drawing the reader's attention to possible implications, and so on (p. 52). Entman (1991) uses the term "information processing schemata that highlights some data and elides others" (p. 7) (p. 53). Two main terms matter for qualitative correspondence: "presence of..." and "absence of..." Certain journals contain these words and thus do not consider qualitative work, although some do. Entman also goes on to describe them as "presence of..." or "absence of some keywords throughout the document" (p. 52). Therefore, particular facts may be made relevant using well-chosen keywords or maintained by lying in a specific place in the news material. Related pieces of knowledge acquired popularity through their connection with cultural icons also (p. 53). The order in which tales are shared has a significant influence on public opinion.

Research Questions

Following are the questions to be answered in the study.

R.Q 1: Out of *Dawn*, *Pakistan Today, The News, The Express Tribune and The Daily Times,* which newspapers wrote more editorials on the ongoing tussle between the government and PDM?

R. Q 2. What kinds of stances/frames were used in the editorials of *Dawn, Pakistan Today, The News, The Express Tribune and Daily Times,* while writing about the government or PDM's stance?

Material and Methods

The study's goal is to frame the PDM for September 2020 to September 2021. Newspaper editorials were used as the media texts for this study. "Newspapers thrive where television news fails," according to McClure and Patterson (1976, p. 45), "because newspapers can clearly illustrate the importance they assign to a specific topic." Long stories, short stories; stories with pictures, stories without pictures; large headlines, small headlines; front page, back page; above the fold, below the fold;. As a result, the print media provides readers with a powerful, long-lasting visual sense of importance."

Population of the Study

The major English newspapers of Pakistan are the population for this research.

Sampleof the Study

The editorials of five English newspapers namely *Dawn, Pakistant Today, The News, The Express Tribune and Daily Times* are sample of the research study.

Sample Size

The editorials of five English newspapers namely *Dawn, Pakistan Today, The News, The Express Tribune and Daily Times are* sample size of the research study.

Sampling Technique

The researcher use the systematic sampling technique for data collection from the time period September 2020 to September 2021.

Rationale of the Newspapers

Daily Times, Dawn, Pakistan Today, The News and The Express Tribune chosen for investigation because they are considered to be Pakistan's most influential elite publications. *Dawn* is a well-designed publication with a large following. It is mostly read by strategy makers, foreigners, and upper-class individuals. It has a large circulation that is steadily increasing. The News is the second most popular newspaper in terms of circulation. People who are interested in current national and worldwide events and subjects are among *The News* readers. *The News* is read by a large number of people. *Daily Times* is the most widely read English-language newspaper, with concise and useful viewpoints and excellent news reporting. *Daily Times* is not just a popular option among opinion leaders, but also among Pakistan's youthful future leaders.

Editorials

According to Van Dijk (1992), an editorial is "the expression and persuasive transmission of viewpoints." He also stated that editorials provide valuable substance for evaluating major philosophical pronouncements across the world. As a result, the significance of the difference "between 'Us' and 'Them'" is based primarily "on the political structure of the newspaper." In general, there are three sorts of editorials.

1. They offer an overview of the situation and a summary of the news event.

2. They give their opinion on the current situation in the news event.

3. They proceed to give the practical findings in the form of expectations, ideas, views, and warnings (Van Dijk, 1992).

Content Analysis

The content published in the sampling newspapers will be analyzed as the research approach for this study. This approach of text analysis is commonly utilized in mass media contents. Examining media material is a professional and effective technique. "Content analysis is a research approach that is objective, systematic, and quantitative in description," according to Berelson (1952). The content analysis allows the researcher to focus on more complex aspects of the communication process and outcome.

Coding Unit

Variables	Categories	operational definitions
1. Economic Issues	Trade and Investment	Editorials related effects of PDM on economic losses/gains
2. Security Issues	Law and order situations	Editorials related to the law and order situations due to PDM
3. level of conflict	Democratic accountability Reaction of sitting Government-public interest Political meetings	Editorials related to the democratic accountability, reaction of sitting, government-public interest and political meetings
Frame	▪ Positive	Editorials that represent the PDM as positive (supremacy of parliament/sanctity of vote).
	▪ Negative	Editorials that represent the PDM as negative (not good for development of country).
	▪ Neutral	Editorials that do not talk about categories.

Results and Discussion

The research employed quantitative content analysis of five English national newspapers *Dawn*, *Pakistan Today, The News, The Express Tribune and Daily Times* to evaluate the framing of the PDM from September 2020 to September 2021. After categorized the data the researchers analyzed the data to conclude results.

Table 1
No. of Published Editorial in Mainstream English Newspapers

Name of Newspaper	No. of published editorial	Total
Dawn	38	
Pakistan Today	49	
The News	13	147
The Express Tribune	15	
Daily Times	32	

According to the table, total 147 editorials were published in five mainstream English newspapers from September 2020 to September 2021. *Dawn* published 38 editorials, *Pakistan Today* published 49, The News published 13, *The Express Tribune* published 15 and *Daily Times* 32.

Table 2
Framing of editorial coverage in Newspapers

Name of Newspaper	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Dawn	21(55.27%)	04 (10.52%)	13 (34.21%)	38 (100%)
Pakistan Today	29 (59.18%)	09 (18.37%)	11(22.45%)	49 (100%)
The News	09 (69.24%)	02 (15.38%)	02(15.38%)	13 (100%)
The Express Tribune	09 (60%)	02 (13.33%)	04 (26.67%)	15 (100%)
Daily Times	18 (54.54%)	07 (21.21%)	08 (24.24%)	33 (100%)

This table describe that the *Daily Dawn* was framed PDM in its editorial with following ratio 21(55.27%) positive, 04 (10.52%) negative and 13 (34.21%) was neutral. The *Pakistan Today* framed this movement as 29 (59.18%) positive editorials, 09 (18.37%) negative editorials and 11(22.45%) editorials were neutral. *The News* framed as 09 (69.24%) positive, 02 (15.38%) negative and 02(15.38%) editorial was neutral. *The Express Tribune* framed this movement in its editorial as 09 (60%) positive, 02 (13.33%) negative and 04 (26.67%) neutral. The editorials of *Daily Times* were 18 (54.54%)positive, 07 (21.21%)negative and 08 (24.24%) neutral.

Conclusion

The study focuses on the impact of print media coverage on the alliance of political parties as well as to understand the framing of media. Media framing is a critical strategy for ensuring that news coverage reaches its intended audience and influences their opinions.. To achieve this purpose content analysis of five mainstream newspapers were conducted.

Print media, particularly newspapers in Pakistan, were once regarded as mature and objective in their operations; nevertheless, the phenomena of 'popular and crispy' editorial style are now being investigated in order to enhance newspaper readership. According to Jan (2013), since the early 1970s, the perception that mass communication is a powerful force has become stronger, thanks in part to studies that show a correlation between the amount of media coverage an issue receives and the degree of public concern about the problem. The media informs people about the most significant problems. Our impressions of the world are primarily dependent on second-hand reality, which occasionally affects the information we receive via media or any other route of communication. As a result, the importance of the media in defining some parts of political parties/government/ some specific issues for particular audiences has grown dramatically in recent decades. According to the findings of the current study, a total of 147 editorials were published in five mainstream English newspapers from September 2020 to September 2021. *Dawn* published 38 editorials, *Pakistan Today* published 49, *The News* published 13, *The Express Tribune* published 15, and the *Daily Times* 32. The editorial regarding the conflict between the government and PDM was 105, and most of the editorials regarding the conflict were in *Pakistan Today*. The selected newspapers do not *frame the* PDM movement as anti-state. The editorials of all the included newspapers in this

study were not in favour of the government or PDM stance. These editorials indicate the supremacy of parliament and the sanctity of the vote, because 183 editorials out of 147 were positive. Most of the editorials regarding the supremacy of parliament and the sanctity of the vote were published in 'Pakistan Today' and fewer were published in The News.

The study concludes that newspapers use various techniques to make groups in and out to polarize the context. Similarly, the subjective and selective coverage shows the in-out groups and non-objectivity of newspapers towards the political parties. Further, framing leads to another perspective of giving voice to public after making their mindset according to their set agenda. Public voice is also a concern to the press that should be given adequate space and in newspaper industry; editorials may play a better role to learn what public is concerned about. Public opinion is the key to journalism and media industry as a whole. On the basis of findings, *Pakistan Today* is one of selected newspaper for this study frame more editorials positively. It's also indicated the all selected newspapers framed economic, security and conflict in their editorials.

This study raises further issues about how social media has influenced people's opinions and the role of social media in current politics. Furthermore, it is necessary to comprehend the shifting dynamics of political campaigns, as well as the amount to which social media is capable of affecting public attitudes about political leadership in a nation.

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