



Impact of Print Media Framing of the 2018 General Election on Pakistani People

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Riaz Ahmad *

Widad Mustafa El Hadi †

Bin Yamin Khan ‡

Abstract

Political communication and its perceived impacts are complex yet widely studied phenomenon during the past decade. In this regard, the current research focuses on examining the role of media, particularly newspapers, in framing the news content during the General Election of 2018 in Pakistan. Mainly supported by Framing theory, this research involves content analysis of six Urdu and English newspapers. Results of the study indicate a significant relationship between newspaper framing and the 2018 general elections ($p \geq .006$), newspapers and conflict framing ($p \geq .011$) and variations regarding coverage patterns of the political news ($p \geq .000$). Moreover, findings also revealed significant differences in print media coverage ($p \geq .012$) i.e. Urdu newspapers covered more reports than the English Newspapers ($p \geq .000$). On the other hand, Urdu newspapers cover the political campaigns positively as compared to the English newspapers during the 2018 elections in Pakistan ($p \geq .000$).

Key Words: Media Framing, General Elections Pakistan, Content Analysis, Democracy, Political Campaigns

Introduction

Media matters through promulgation and by misusing intellectual mix-ups that citizens make. Key hypotheses are those of media plan setting, preparing, and outlining, clarified beneath. The feelings of trepidation are that the media can control electors to act against their interests. For instance, depicting media outlining, (Entman, 1993) states, "By what means can even true democratic delegates react accurately to general supposition when exact proof of it has all the earmarks of being so moldable, so helpless against outlining impacts?" Krosnick & Kinder (1990) portray preparing impacts in the media as individuals being "cleared away by [an] torrential slide of stories and pictures". The news items are decided by media organizations and media individuals, just as the extent of the demand is determined for certain issues. The press also informs us about which subjects are the most important amid a variety of current issues. Due to a lack of resources, people rely on broad communications to obtain the information they need to understand challenges. Data is presented through the media in order to influence public opinions and attitudes (Berinsky & Kinder, 2006). Various media categories, including print media, give visibly world perspectives that influence us to frame and reshape our judgment of a specific topic. In the context of this, the media can influence public opinion by drawing out a strategy and structuring news. Pakistan's electronic media has grown rapidly since 2002 (Bangash, 2013), which, at long last, guaranteed that the media's role in the General Elections would be expanded (G.E.). Unexpectedly electronic media was utilized at an enormous scope during the General Elections G.E. 2013 mission by the ideological groups and applicants and their allies, who continuously operated electronic media advertisements as a hotspot for contacting their likely citizens (Saleem et al., 2013). Although the media assumed its part during General Elections G.E. 2008, in any case, its improved function during the General Elections G.E. 2013 to give data and direction to the citizens was featured and lauded at numerous gatherings. Their examination found, unexpectedly, that electronic media was utilized everywhere scale during the General Elections G.E. 2013 missions in Pakistan by the

* PhD Scholar of Information & Communication Sciences, Université de Lille, France.

† Professor of Information & Communication Sciences, Université de Lille, France.

‡ Lecturer, Department of Communication and Media Studies, Hazara University, Mansehra, KP, Pakistan.

Email: Khanbinjamin@gmail.com

ideological groups, which logically used T.V. media commercials to contact their expected electors (Saleem et al., 2013).

Similarly, the print media's role is of greater concern in Pakistan as many studies affirmed the strategic role of newspapers in framing the electoral process worldwide (Ergün & Karsten, 2019). According to O'gara, (2009), newspapers' coverage during the elections is strategic as the focus on soft aspects such as polling stations, candidates' reputation, campaign message, and others is comparatively increased. However, people experience comparatively less exposure to political parties' plans regarding public welfare and national affairs. Nonetheless, the media coverage of these aspects also affects the voters' perception, political participation, and voting decisions. Likewise, due to increased political instability, media framing and making suitable voting decisions is a crucial phenomenon in Pakistan. As the public widely prefers newspapers in Pakistan, people consider newspapers to bridge a gap between the public, politicians, and the electoral process (Chaudhry & Ashraf, 2012). In this regard, In addition, the current study attempts to analyze Pakistan's 2018 general elections print media framing. During political events, the media perform as a social institution and is considered to reinforce public wellbeing. Jan et al. (2013) consider print media in Pakistan as one of the most preferred and reliable political information sources as noted that opinion-based public news reports and articles are common in newspapers. Besides, personal appreciation for journalists, newscasters, reporters, and politicians also increases the role of the media framing on people's voting choices and process of participation.

According to Universidad de Guanajuato & Díaz Jiménez (2017), media framing of political matters, especially elections, is a considerable phenomenon. Previous studies have widely witnessed the occurrence of media framing worldwide. In this context, the current research also highlighted the media framing during the General Elections of Pakistan in 2018 as examining the different aspects of media framing and its impacts are of greater significance as political communication during elections is a delicate phenomenon and needs to be studied well (Swafford, 2012). Therefore, The following research questions were addressed in this study:

R1: What was the frequency of framing in news coverage regarding the 2018 elections in Pakistan?

R2: What was the most preferred framing strategy used by newspapers during elections?

R3: Did the newspapers' reporting vary during the 2018 elections?

R4: Were there any significant differences regarding reporting patterns between Urdu and English newspapers?

R5: Which newspapers covered more political news during the elections in 2018?

R6: How did Urdu newspapers cover the political campaigns during the 2018 elections in Pakistan?

Literature Review

Media Framing During Elections

Patterns of election coverage are a center of attention for media researchers. In advanced democracies, election campaigns are planned, partial, and framed (Strömbäck & Luengo, 2006). The researchers further analyzed the media coverage of the 2004 elections in both Spain and Sweden. The experimental design was used by researchers and undertaking a content analysis of a total of $n=6$ newspapers both from Sweden and Spain. Results indicated that the political campaign was purely a strategic game in media coverage instead of focusing on public issues. Both Spanish and Swedish newspapers used game frames. However, the coverage patterns and schedules were different between both countries. As noted by Chong & Druckman (2007), framing happens when both personal and collective political interests are under consideration. Despite the fact that the public has their personal opinions, media coverage shapes the opinion by framing the political scenario in a particular manner. Although media coverage helps to bridge a communication gap between politicians and the public, this role is highly partial and discriminatory.

Another example of media reporting and biased can be cited from the United States media. During elections and even in normal scenarios, media content aims to frame the news stories and support the particular political parties and politicians. Although more than 70% of Americans believe that news media coverage is biased, they still consider it a crucial source of political information (DellaVigna & Kaplan, 2007). To affirm this, Hänggli & Kriesi (2010) examined the framing strategies used by political actors in Switzerland. The researchers used campaign coverage of Swiss elections, especially the reaction of politicians to tightening the Swiss asylum laws.

Results revealed that all the political actors were making decisive demands regarding the asylum laws. The political actors were using their frames and arguing about the rationality of their personal opinions. Also, the media platforms respected frame ownerships and supported the politicians' opinions accordingly. The researchers concluded that the results did not only identify the media framing also indicated the role of political economy. Nonetheless, Jackson (2011) considered new media coverage during elections as a part of political strategy. Instead of focusing on public concerns, media platforms frame the political news that further divert the attention from the considerable issues. The researchers further examined British media reporting in terms of framing and political matters. The researchers selected an experimental approach and carried out the content analysis of $n=786$ news reports published over three months. Results showed that almost all of the news reports were focused on political issues between European Union and the British government. The newspapers used conflict frames, and –public issues were barely discussed. Several researchers also found strategy and horseshoe frames as primarily dominant in print media coverage during elections. Another study to confirm this phenomenon was carried out by Swafford (2012). The researchers examined print media framing during elections in Missouri, United States, and performed the content analysis of $n=292$ newspaper articles. Results revealed that conflict frames and literacy frames were the most prevalent in newspaper articles. However, the researchers concluded that community-level elections are framed less as compared to national-level elections. During the community-based elections, framing also aims to spread political literacy, and conflict framing is prevalent.

Impacts of Media Framing

The third main point is the impact of that message on the mind of the public. Crowds process information from the news media and keep it in their mind. The conventional agenda-setting method depends based on memory-related models of data handling and, accordingly, an availability model (Solinger et al., 2008). Agenda setting impacts accept that the locations of impact lie with the increased availability a subject gets from its in the news treatment (Tewksbury & Rittenberg, 2009). In this manner, it isn't data regarding the issue that has the effect; the reality of the issue has gotten a specific measure of handling time and consideration that conveys the impact. Conversely, the fundamental encircling methodology accepts that the location of impact exists in the portrayal of an issue or the mark utilized in news inclusion regarding the issue. The focal impact of a casing is the key interpretative blueprints that have been rendered pertinent to the issue. The essential distinction on the mental between two level motivations setting and preparing, from one viewpoint, and surrounding, then again, is hence the contrast between whether we consider an issue and how we consider it. It has been contended that we can build up an increasingly tightfisted comprehension of encircling, preparing, and plan setting if we subsume every one of the three ideas under the bigger umbrella of motivation set. Specifically, McCombs & Shaw (1972) have contended that encircling is the most corrected variant of plan setting. Encircling, from that viewpoint, implies making parts of an issue increasingly notable through various methods of introduction and, along these lines moving individuals' dispositions. He names this wonder 2nd level ideology building." The idea of 2nd level ideology building isn't without legitimacy. It simplifies the first motivation-setting speculation, which has for some time been censured for being fairly oversimplified in its attention on expansive issues and for overstating rank-request factors between these wide issue classes in media inclusion and general assessment reviews (Funkhouser, 1973). Indeed, S. H. Kim et al. (2002) showed that 2nd level or trait motivation setting could have a significant effect on individuals' view of the general significance of different parts of an issue. All these elements make news stories important for the public and give a new direction to the event and the public thinks that this issue is most important and neglects other issues. This gives a new direction to the news story. All of these honesty implications, according to Mayntz (2003), are dependent on memory-based data management methods. The global agenda-setting and preparation system assumes that the media can make certain problems or sections of issues more open (i.e., effectively reviewed) for individuals, hence influencing the instruments they use when forming attitudes toward candidates and political issues. This isn't the same as being in the vicinity of a significant effect.

Theoretical Framework

To analyze the media framing during elections and the impacts of framing on the voter's decisions and their engagements, the researchers employed the "Framing Theory" proposed by Goffman. The term "framing" refers

to the process of creating a unique plan. However, it extends the investigation by focusing on the substance of current challenges rather than a single topic. The framing hypothesis proposes that the media draws attention to specific occurrences before placing them in a larger framework (Leitch, 2018). In general, the outline framing technique posits that how something is presented to the public (referred “the framing”) has an impact on the judgments people make about how to manage that data. . . . Frames are reflections that help to organize or shape the meaning of a communication. The framing theory approach is an intellectual inclination that impacts our dynamic when expressed in various ways. At the end of the day, how a similar certainty or question is introduced has an effect on us. Take, for an instant, two yoghurt pots. One says “10% fat,” while the other says “90% fat-free.” Framing theory is a strategy for organizing or introducing a problem or an issue. Outlining involves describing and depicting the problem's context in order to elicit the most help from your audience. Your crowd is vital to outlining. The way a subject is presented, or described, should represent your audience's viewpoints and convictions. (Chong & Druckman, 2007a). Political promotions give important exercises in outlining. In one promotion, President Obama touts his record of job creation, citing the addition of more than 4 million jobs to the economy since he took office. In a separate advertisement, Governor Mitt Romney criticizes President Obama's job creation, pointing out that unemployment remains at 8%, and the economy requires 261,000 jobs that were lost during the president's tenure. The two adverts are based on a similar set of facts. In any case, one promotion highlights the data positively, while another does it negatively (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

Research Hypotheses

- H1:** There is a crucial positive connection between newspaper framing and the 2018 general elections.
- H2:** The newspapers in Pakistan widely used conflict framing to represent the electoral news.
- H3:** The newspapers' reporting patterns significantly varied during elections
- H4:** There were significant differences in print media coverage during the 2018 elections in Pakistan
- H5:** Urdu newspapers covered more reports than the English Newspapers during the 2018 elections in Pakistan
- H6:** Urdu newspapers positively covered the political campaigns during the 2018 elections in Pakistan

Research Methodology

The current study is exploratory in nature, which according to Bannan-Ritland, (2003), is procedures and methods to gather and analyze the data that a researcher needs. Moreover, the study population involves all the newspapers being published daily in Pakistan. According to Mughal (2011), there are more than two-hundred-fifty newspapers currently working in Pakistan. Despite immense political pressure on print media in Pakistan, these newspapers are making contributions and keeping the people updated.

Similarly, study methods involve direct content analysis and critical discourse analysis. The researchers randomly selected a sample of $n=6$ daily newspapers

($n=3$ English, $n=3$ Urdu) published in Pakistan. The researchers gathered $n=400$ reports published from June 20, 2018, to August 21, 2018, including news articles, features, editorials, and columns for the content analysis and qualitative discourse analysis (Manzoor et al., 2019).

Data Analysis & Findings

Newspapers Framing & General Elections

In the first research question i.e. “What was the frequency of political news coverage regarding the 2018 elections in Pakistan?”, the researchers tried to explore the frequency of framing in reports covered during the electoral process. Descriptive analysis of total frequency revealed that from June 20, 2018, to August 21, 2018, the selected newspapers published $n=967$ news reports containing framing of the electoral process. However, the $n=202$ or 26.3% of news reports did not contain any framing of the relevant political process ($M=3.40$, $SD=1.85$).

Table 1. Below summarizes the descriptive statistics, identifying the frequencies and percentages concerning print media framing during 2018.

Newspapers	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
The News	241	24.9%		

The Nation	117	12.1%		
DAWN	58	6.0%		
Jang	153	15.8%		
Nawa-i-Waqt	201	20.8%	3.40	1.85
Daily Express	136	14.1%		
Total	967	63.4%		

Conflict Framing & Electoral News

The second research question of this study i.e. “What was the most preferred framing strategy used by newspapers during elections?” questioned the particular type of framing which was more prevalent during the elections. The table below shows the number of news reports i.e. $n = 967$. The researchers found that Conflict Framing was the most prevalent framing technique which was $n = 583$ or 60.3% of the total news stories. However, $n = 216$ being 22.3% contained economic frames, and $n = 107$ being 11.1% included generic framing ($M = 1.47, SD = .697$).

Table 2. Summary of Results regarding Conflict Framing & Electoral News

Types of Framing	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
Conflict	583	60.3%		
Economic Frame	216	22.3%	1.47	.697
Generic frames	107	11.1%		
Total	967	100%		

Variations in Newspapers’ Reporting Patterns

For the third research question i.e. “Did the newspapers’ reporting vary during the 2018 elections?” the researchers tried to examine the mean values and standard deviations of the gathered news reports. In this context, the results identified explicit differences among the report patterns of the selected newspapers ($M = 1.36, SD = .481$).

Table 3. Summary of Results regarding Variations in Newspapers’ Reporting Patterns

Newspaper	Mean	N	SD
The News	1.5643	241	.241
The Nation	1.4103	117	.117
Dawn	1.3103	58	.580
Jang	1.2745	153	.153
Nawa-i-Waqt	1.2388	201	.201
Express	1.2868	136	.136
Total	1.365	906	.481

Differences between Print Media coverage Patterns (Language)

The data collected regarding the fourth research question i.e. “Were there any significant differences regarding reporting patterns between English and Urdu newspaper? Revealed moderate discrepancies according to the language of the selected (Urdu-English) newspapers ($M = 1.22, SD = .501$).

Table 4: Summary of Results regarding Differences between Print Media coverage Patterns

Newspaper	Mean	N	SD
The News	1.38	241	.679
The Nation	1.30	117	.579
Dawn	1.10	58	.307
Jang	1.21	153	.412
Nawa-i-Waqt	1.08	201	.278

Express	1.16	136	.369
Total	1.22	906	.501

Varying Frequencies among English & Urdu Newspapers

The fifth research question was that “Which newspapers covered more political news during the elections in 2018”. The data gathered from six different newspapers revealed that, out of the total number of reports i.e. $n=241$, The News was the prominent newspaper with the highest frequency of publishing the relevant news reports. Similarly, Nawa-i-Waqt covered $n=201$ news reports, followed by Daily Jang ($n=153$) and The Daily Express ($n=136$), and The Nation published $n=117$ news reports. While, daily DAWN News published the lowest number of news reports i.e. $n=58$, being 7.5%, regarding the political activities during the elections ($M=1.77$, $SD=.411$).

Table 5. Summary of Results regarding Varying Frequencies among English & Urdu Newspapers

Newspaper	Mean	N	SD
The News	1.79	241	.403
The Nation	1.92	117	.267
Dawn	1.72	58	.450
Jang	1.83	153	.376
Nawa-i-Waqt	1.79	201	.407
Express	1.60	136	.491
Total	1.77	906	.411

Print Media & Positive Opinion

The data received regarding the sixth research question i.e. “How Urdu newspapers’ covered the political campaigns during 2018 elections in Pakistan”, revealed that Urdu newspapers published $n=687$ or 75.8% of reports with a positive attitude. However, $n=276$ or 30.7% of English newspapers were found positive in their reports. So, we can claim that the Urdu newspapers contained a comparatively more positive approach than the English newspapers ($M=1.76$, $SD=.427$) towards political news.

Table 6. Summary of Results regarding Print Media & Positive Opinion

Newspaper	Mean	N	SD	Range
The News	1.8008	241	.400	1.00
The Nation	1.8974	117	.304	1.00
Dawn	1.7241	58	.450	1.00
Jang	1.8039	153	.398	1.00
Nawa-i-Waqt	1.7363	201	.441	1.00
Express	1.5735	136	.496	1.00
Total	1.76	906	.427	1.00

Hypotheses Testing

Based on the nature of the data, the researchers utilized the Chi-square test, One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, and the Mann-Whitney U evaluates to test the hypotheses. In the first study hypothesis, the researchers executed a Chi-square test to examine the proposed link between Print Media Framing and the General Elections of 2018. With the Pearson Chi-square value of 16.485, the results indicated a moderately significant relationship between media framing and general elections with the significance values of $p \geq .006^{**}$.

Table 7. Summary of the relationship between Print Media Framing and General Elections of 2018:

	Value	df	Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	16.485 ^a	5	.006

Likelihood Ratio	16.844	5	.005
Linear-by-Linear Association	.666	1	.415

For the second hypothesis, the researchers again conducted the Chi-square test to assess the proposed relationship between print media and conflict in Pakistan. Analysis revealed a significant relationship between these proposed variables. Moreover, with the significance values of $p \geq .011^{**}$, this value is assumed to be moderately significant. Table 8 below summarizes the results of the relationship between newspapers and conflict framing:

Table 8. Summary of the relationship between newspapers and conflict framing:

	Value	df	Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	22.918 ^a	10	.011
Likelihood Ratio	22.280	10	.014
Linear-by-Linear Association	.236	1	.627

To examine the potential variations in the newspapers’ coverage patterns, the researchers employed One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test. As noted by Cleophas & Zwinderman (2016), as statistical processes are full of variations, One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test provides an in-depth analysis of the data to find out these variations. Thus, in the current study, One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test revealed great, significant differences between the newspapers’ coverage patterns with the significance value of $p \geq .000^{***}$ (Standardized Test Statistics= 21.983) and observed median value = 4 (See Fig 1).

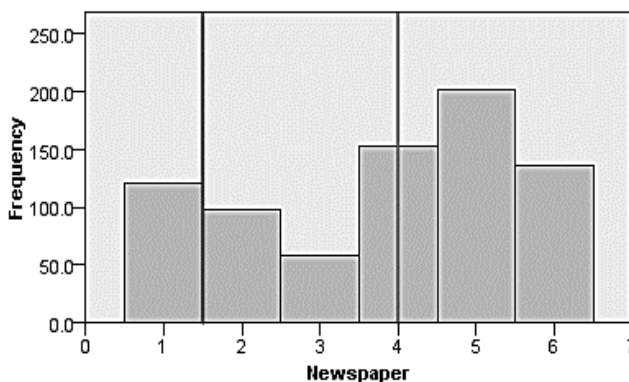


Figure 1: One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test

To investigate the proposed variations in the coverage patterns of Urdu and English newspapers over the chosen time period, The researchers utilized the Mann-Whitney U test. According to Shier (2004), the Mann-Whitney U test is one of the most commonly used non-metric tests for discovering differences between pairs of variables. In this situation, the researchers discovered that the Mann-Whitney U test was the best fit for the data collected by the content analysis technique. As a result, the coverage patterns (English, Urdu) of the selected publications revealed moderately significant variances ($p \geq .012^{**}$). The following **Table 9** summarizes the results of the Mann-Whitney U test.

Table 9. Summary of Mann-Whitney U test

Test	Opinion
Mann-Whitney U	5081.000
Wilcoxon W	12341.000
Z	-2.502
Sig. (2-tailed)	.012

Differences in Urdu and English Newspapers' Coverage (based on language)

As suggested the language differences between the selected newspapers, to examine for any group differences, the researchers used the Mann-Whitney U test once more (Shier, 2004). A higher Mann-Whitney U 21780 result is obtained when using the Mann-Whitney U test. Similarly, with the crucial value of $p \geq .000***$, As a result, we find that there exist considerable language disparities between English and Urdu newspapers.

Table 10. Language-based Mann-Whitney U test summary

Test	Language
Mann-Whitney U	21780.500
Wilcoxon W	140608.500
Z	-20.271
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

Urdu Newspapers & Positive Opinion

To find how much more positive coverage of the elections was given in Urdu newspapers, the researchers carried out a Chi-square test. The Chi-Square Study's Findings test for non-parametric statistics is an important and widely used test of significance (Amin, 2019). The Chi-square value of 56.48 was obtained. Furthermore, a strong crucial association between Urdu publications and positive reporting was confirmed by the significance value of $p \geq .000**$. Figure 2 Here are the findings of the Chi-Square analysis, as well as a comparison of English and Urdu news reports:

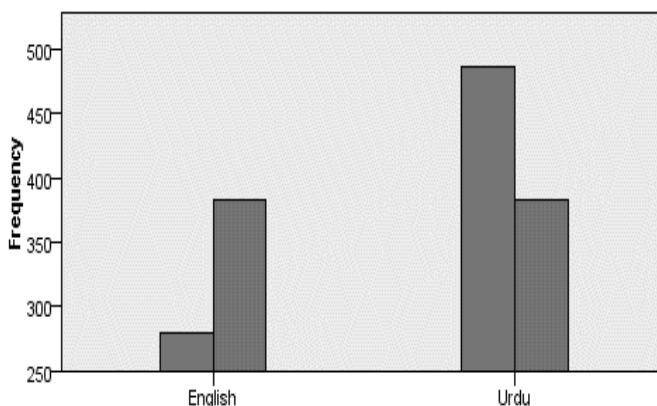


Figure 2: Chi-Square analysis

Discussion on Results

The actual role and responsibility of mass media today are greatly replaced by commercial and political interests. An increased political interest further hinders attaining objective, impartial, and real-time information. In this context, Goffman's Media Framing Theory helps us in validating and witnessing the function of politics in media content (Fortunato & Martin, 2016). Here, Araújo & Prior also gave an example of Brazilian news reporting on the framing of political news reports during the general elections, when framing remained dominating.

Therefore, Regarding the first study hypothesis, the importance value of $p \geq .006**$, we found a robust and important link between media framing and newspapers. These results are highly consistent with the study conducted by Vasudevan (2017) as the researchers also found framing in the Indian news media during the Lok Sabha Elections. Here the media focused more on the Bharati Janta Party than other political parties in India. During the elections, Indian media not only portrayed Narendra Modi as a strong prime minister candidate; but also represented him as a prospective political leader capable of bringing social and economic development to the country. Moreover, the second hypothesis proposed conflict framing as the most prevalent framing strategy

during the General Elections in 2018. With the importance value of $p \geq .011^{**}$, we found a moderately crucial link between newspapers and conflict framing during the elections in Pakistan. These findings are also in line with earlier research, such as (Eibl & Gregor, 2019; Bartholomé et al., 2018; Krasteva & Vladislavjevi, 2017; Nebojsa Vladislavjevic & Voltmer, 2017), as they also found conflict framing as a substantial, part of media content during the elections in Canada, United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Israel, Egypt, South Africa, Kenya, and Serbia respectively.

Similarly, the third study hypothesis involved the One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank as one of the most significant non-parametric tests also validated the research assumption. With the significance values of $p \geq .000^{***}$, we found great differences among all the newspapers' coverage patterns regardless of their language, circulation frequency, and others. These results are compatible with the study conducted by Ghadeer (2018), as the researchers also found explicit discrepancies in the new reporting coverage of the Jordanian newspapers. Likewise, the study conducted by Ayhan (2016) also showed similar results as the researchers examined the media reports about Ukrainian Crisis in the Turkish News media outlets. It is also notable that, besides the familiar media platforms, the researchers also assessed these differences in terms of media types (conventional and new media). Further, the fourth research hypothesis also witnessed a significant value of $p \geq .012^{**}$. We found moderately significant differences between the types of news mainly reported in both newspapers. Notably, Urdu newspapers focused on more elections campaigns, Panama Leaks, and Court trials against Mian Muhammed Nawaz Sharif, emphasizing strict trials and punishment against corruption. English newspapers, on the other hand, primarily focused on supporting Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf, demanding consideration towards financial instability and Tehreek e Insaf's mandate to create an Islamic Welfare State and maintain friendly bilateral relations with the international community. The fifth study hypothesis proposed differences based on the languages of the Urdu and English newspapers. To statistically affirm this proposition, firstly, the Mann-Whitney U Test conducted by the researcher, and with the significance value of $p \geq .000^{***}$, the data revealed significant differences. Also, during the content analysis of newspapers, these differences were largely found. For instance, English newspapers mainly utilized words like prospects, progress, successful, fair elections, stability, peace, conflict resolution, and others. Urdu newspapers, on the other hand, mostly involved news reports regarding corruption, Panama leaks, and ongoing court trials against Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, so the discourse was used accordingly. Finally, the sixth study hypothesis assumed a significant relationship between Urdu news pares reporting and positive elections coverage in Pakistan. Notably, by positive, we mean objectivity, constructivism, and optimism in reporting the news (Setyawati & Rahayu, 2018). Hence, with the significant value of $p \geq .000^{**}$, we again found a robust crucial link between positive coverage and Urdu news reports. For instance, during the content analysis of the news articles, a majority of news reports were found encouraging voters to vote and actively participate in the elections as their national responsibility. Some of the reports also focused on the young voters and represented them as a brighter future for the country.

Summary & Conclusion

This investigation aimed to examine the potential relationship between news media reporting, framing, and its impacts on the general voters. I have conducted this study in a Pakistani scenario during the General Elections of 2018 and selected $n= 6$ Pakistani newspapers to examine the framing and the other relevant phenomenon. The study was based on the quantitative approach to provide a broader picture of news media framing. As a result, from the beginning of the study of mass media, media platforms have been recognized as a source of information and communication for the audience. Eventually, the focus was solely on TV and radio, but as the area of mass media studies gained in popularity, print media has also become a key point. Here Groombridge stated that media is an important part of civilizing our "arid communal existence". Media systems have had a critical role in bringing to highlighting a wide range of social, economic, and political issues. In this context, Political communication is an important aspect of media material that also helps to build democracy (Gurevitch et al., 2009). The importance of the media in a democracy is not only theoretical, as early research revealed the media's role in disseminating political information, framing them, and influencing citizens' voting participation and decision-making processes (Rexha, 2014). Pioneering research Gérard, (1969) Harlan, (1970), and Blumler, (1979) cleared the way for media research on political communication and its perceived impacts.

Recommendations for the Future Research

By keeping in view the scope and results of the current investigation, the researchers also make recommendations for future researchers. In this regard, future studies should be carried out about:

1. Potential media framing on other media platforms, particularly social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and others.
2. The framing of political populists in Pakistani media and its perceived impacts on the audiences.
3. The role of demographical factors such as age, gender, and provincial affiliation should be scrutinized through micro-level studies.
4. Newspapers with comparatively less circulation frequency should also be taken under consideration. Here regional newspapers in regional languages can provide even more in-depth details about the media framing and its perceived impacts.
5. The role of other individual factors such as an economic background in determining the voting decisions of the public.

Thus, to attain more insights, it is important to take the above-mentioned recommendations under consideration, as these recommendations are not merely suggesting more studies; also, they are indicating a potential research gap regarding Pakistan's political communication and media involvement.

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