

# NEWSPAPER REPORTING OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS DURING THE GENERAL ELECTIONS OF PAKISTAN 2018

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## **Abstract**

*This research study aims to investigate the reporting patterns of newspapers during the general elections of Pakistan 2018 in the light of agenda setting and framing theory that enlightens the coverage of political parties of Pakistan in the two leading English newspapers Daily Dawn and The Nation. Content analysis of Opinion pages (of 1 month) was conducted to measure the frequency, placement and the tone of the news coverage of political parties. The result indicates that The Nation covered more items on its editorial page than the Daily Dawn. It is found that both the newspapers have given more salience to PMLN as compared to any other political party. The results also show that other political parties like MMA, BNP, ANP and BAP were under representation in both the newspapers. Also, most of the coverage of these newspapers re PMLN portrays the pro approach. The study also draws attention to the fact that there seems no equality in the coverage of the political parties. On the other hand, the Dawn has given space to public voice via letters to editors whereas the Nation focused on their editorials.*

**Keywords:** Newspaper, Political Coverage, Political Parties, General Elections 2018, The Dawn, The Nation, Pakistan, Elections. PMLN, PTI, PPPP

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In today's modern world most of the people depend on the media as one of the important sources for getting the information of public affairs. Media is one of the most significant forces in today's contemporary era (whether it is the press or the broadcast media). However, among these media outlets, newspaper is one of the prominent and important sources to get the desired information. Most of the political parties as well as political leaders use this medium as a tool to convey their messages to their party workers, voters and other leaders re different social issues and other political concerns. For that reason, the mass media have the potential to play an important role in determining and shaping the public opinion while imposing their agendas on people's minds. The impact of media on today's global societies has been

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studied and researched by number of researchers and theorists including their social, psychological, economic and political impacts (Botan, 2010). However, this study investigates and explores the inclination of Pakistani English newspapers towards the political parties of Pakistan during the general elections of 2018.

According to the definition of Merriam Webster Dictionary (2021), an election is an act or process of selecting a person or the political leader as the governor or the custodian of the public office. It is a process where people vote as per their choice for a particular person, party or group to hold an official position. Elections across the world get extensive media attention and coverage. The elections in Pakistan also draw its attention across the globe in national and international mediums where the different innovative strategies, election campaigns and elections issues also got intense coverage (Graber and Dunaway, 2017).

Media is a key source for getting the information about politics as a whole. The press as well as the electronic media has the capability to place their agendas, opinions and narratives into the minds of the general masses making them understand what is important in politics and for the country all together. As a result, media's role is of significance in the political communication with masses. The political viewpoint and the narrative advocacy now are being taken into consideration through the media. Its role in creating, enhancing and projecting the democratic norms and values is essential because it will create the awareness among the general public regarding the political viewpoint (Khan, 2005).

The world's well-established democracies and their political parties use the method of setting the debates and interaction with their voters and other candidates to shape the public opinion and set their agendas. However, in weak democratic cultures, the political parties shape the political attitudes and behaviors of their voters through the use of media and the press. Media and politics have a strong connection and that bond gets stronger during the election period because the earlier role of the media was as an informant between people and the state, voters to political leaders and states to states which now have been transformed and more widened (Muhammad, 2011). Now, the political leaders set their agendas and work in the environment which media shapes. Media can never be independent whether it works under the state or the influencers as it has become money making business and it has been used to shape the perception of political leaders and people especially during the time of political crises i.e., elections (Sohail, 2008). Another influential role and relationship of mass media and political parties is through the political communication owing to their party newspapers. Political parties'

newspapers are the central organ, strengthening two main purposes; to inform and to propagate. Thus, the political communication includes all the verbal and written elements which are taken from the party meetings, conventions and debates (McNair, 2012).

### **1.1 Historical Background of Media and Political Connections**

The media and political connections have their historical backgrounds. In past days, political parties were accustomed to use print media as the main communication tool for propagating their agendas. In 1970, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) established the Daily *Masawat* which aimed to cover up the political campaigns being led in that period. The daily *Jasarat* was another newspaper of that era which was launched by the Jamat-i-Islami (JI), a religious political party who also owns different weekly and monthly publications like *Asia* and *Friday Special, Takbeer*; most of the publications were in Urdu. Apart from these newspapers, several other newspapers whose owners or editors have been attached with the parties or are inspired by their ideology includes Ummat group of publications, Insaf group of publications etc. Jamait-i-Ulema Islam (JUI FazalurRehman Group) which is another religious and mainstream political party has a Monthly Urdu language magazine i.e., *Al-Jamiah* which is published from Rawalpindi. In 2008, ten different television channels covered the whole electoral process while being in competition with one another. The political parties and candidates were covered through the means of modern communication. Website, texts, articles, news reports, features, Facebook links, blogs and emails were widely used by the political parties during the electoral process (Pildat, 2013).

Another concept was about the party press newspapers that were used to disseminate the information regarding the party initiatives and concerns. The initial structure and design of the press were first appeared in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in which most of the party newspapers were owned by the large business groups and political parties. *Avante* was the official newspapers of the Portuguese communist party (PCP). The focus of *Avante* content was to resist the Salazar regime in order to defend the proletariat values. A common pattern of *Avante* was a lot of information, continuous use of the slogans and the framing of the content in the feelings of unity against repression (Espirito et.al, 2016).

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Media plays an important role in the functioning of the electoral process and the political coverage in democratic societies. Media editorial shapes the information for their voters (Kamenica and Gentzkow, 2011).

Modern surveys suggest that the newspaper readers know more about the politics than the non-readers (Robinson & Levy, 1986; Weaver & Drew, 1993). Moreover, the newspapers give a brief account of political coverage rather than other alternate mediums.

Muhammad Rashid Khan (2005) examined the connection of the political communication and the democratic process in Pakistan. The results of the study revealed the role of media in constructing the democratic values and norms in the society. It was found that the media have been used as a channel to disseminate the political viewpoints. He further argued that the media has always supported the freedom of expression and the general public in order to participate in the democratic process through electoral process, policy making and decision making. A report by the International media support as cited in Javed Ahmed and Shahid Hussain (2016) also revealed that the media's role is important in the electoral reforms. It also explains that the transition of the governments through electoral reforms have become possible today due to the liberalization of the mass media in the past.

A research study revealed that a news story related to the American hostages held in Iran was played and published just few days before the 1980's presidential elections between Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan. Most of the public opinion polls before that story were indicating a close call between both the candidates. But when the election results came, Regan won the victory in all the six states and District of Columbia. This outcome lies in the concept of agenda setting and framing theory. By publishing and playing with the hostage story, the news media frames the public awareness of the hostage issue that might move from the low position to high position which suddenly caught the high level of voters for Regan in those few days (Severin et.al, 1997).

Prat (2018) states that in US, the media group owners with having the huge dedicated audiences have the media power and the ability to engineer an elections victory for a candidate and the party. A news report published by the Harvard Kennedy School states that the news coverage given during the general elections 2016 were entirely negative in tone towards Hilary Clinton and Donald Trump both. Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) explores that the fake framed news during the general elections of 2016 in US were widely shared through all the platforms of social media and those stories were titled and framed in favor of Donald Trump. Total 115 pro-Trump fake framed stories were shared on Facebook with a total of 30 million times while 41 pro-Clinton fake framed stories were shared with a total of 7.6 million times. The impact of media coverage on electoral outcomes of 1999 parliamentary elections in

Russian regions led to the decreased vote for the governing party 8.9% with an increase of 6.3% for the majority party (Enikolopov et.al, 2011).

DellaVinga and Kaplan (2007) analyzed the coverage patterns of fox news in the US which indicates the change in presidential elections due to its coverage by which the republicans gained the 0.4 to 0.7 percentage point in between the years 1996 to 2000 in the cities that had access to fox news coverage. Puglisi (2011) gives an account on the topics covered by the New York Times in the period of 1946-1997. He explores that the Times has been pro-Democratic throughout its coverage. During the presidential campaigns the New York Times gives more coverage to the democratic topics i.e. civil rights, health care, labor, and social welfare when the president was from the republican. After 1960's and in the last four decades, the New York Times also gives more coverage during the presidential campaigns to the republican issues of defense when the president was from the democratic.

A research study conducted on the 1972 election campaign found that the Richard Nixon received more and better coverage of his issues and positions from the media than George McGovern (Hofstetter, 1976). It was further argued that during the presidential election campaign Richard Nixon was not very much available to media while his opponent presidential candidate George McGovern makes himself regularly available for the media. However, the coverage patterns were entirely different for both the candidates. Lott and Hassett (2004) analyzed the tone of the newspaper coverage on the official economic data indicators. The research coded the tone as positive – negative of the newspaper headlines with the relationship of the sitting president. The results of the study revealed that during the president from Republican Party, the newspapers gave 9.6 and 14.7 percent fewer positive stories.

### **3. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 Agenda Setting and Framing of English Newspapers**

This study has its theoretical linkages with the agenda setting and framing theory. Agenda setting and framing theory is based on the information that media selects, and transmits in order to shape and mold the public opinion and perception during the general election campaign through the political coverage of different political parties. One objective of this study is to analyze the public opinion and perception shaped through these newspapers towards any particular party and also their agendas through their political coverage.

Media in general do not tell the masses "*what to think*" but rather "*what to think about*". While covering certain issues especially during the elections, media can legitimize any story or marginalize the entire story or

certain aspects of it. Media by showing an interest in a particular political candidate can lead the situation towards or away from the issues important to candidate or the general public. Media has its significant control on substances and topics of public appeal. It has the ability to construct and shapes any narrative which helps to create the perceptions among the masses especially in voters during the election campaigns McCombs and Shaw (1972).

Another objective of the study is to analyze the frequency of political coverage given to the political parties and their agendas during the general elections of 2018. Also, the number of stories published during the general elections of 2018 with respect to pro, anti or neutral frame of coverage. Framing is a process of presenting the opinions, narratives, viewpoints to a certain target according to the desired interpretation by emphasizing some aspects of that story while ignoring others and making the connections with them (Entman, 2007). A framing effect as a communication effect is caused due to the variations in how a given story is being presented in a public discourse (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2014). Therefore, the manner in which the certain news story, article, and editorial is contextualized determines how the information is interpreted.

Framing actually explains that how media focuses on certain topics and issues and their subjects within a field of sense. It states that how something have been portrayed to the general masses. It explains that how the things are being framed keeping the agendas under consideration. The theory manipulates the opinion of the masses by shaping and molding the process of the information. Some of the communication experts have conceptualized the framing as the dichotomy between the "frame in communication or media frame" and "frame in thought or individual frame" (Druckman, 2001, p. 228).

A comparison of news framing during the general elections is of much importance since the perception and the opinion that the media shapes during the election will lead to a certain direction. However, both the agenda setting and framing are relatable and attached with each other for the reason that both are focusing on how media depicts the certain issues to the masses through which the agendas have been set.

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Research Design and Findings**

In this study content analysis is conducted, one of the widely used research design that is based on the analysis of the "media agenda." In order to analyze the framing of media coverage, two elite class English newspapers of Pakistan i.e., "*Daily Dawn*" & "*The Nation*" are taken into consideration. The

Opinion pages of these newspapers are selected as a sample, in order to examine how the selected newspapers have shaped the public and political perception of the leaders on their voters' mindsets, during the election and to what extent the coverage has been given to the political parties of Pakistan. The Opinion pages of one month i.e., 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2018 to 20<sup>th</sup> July are selected to measure the frequency, tone and placement of the coverage. In the study, frequency is the number of editorials, articles, and letter to editors published during the general elections 2008 were counted and analyzed in the light of agenda setting and framing. Tone of those editorials, articles and letter to editors were measured in which the framing is to be coded as pro, anti or neutral towards the government or any political party and its leaders. These analyses were made on the basis of contextual unit. Article is one of the essential parts that people used to refer during elections and it plays an important role in determining and shaping the agendas on the voters especially during the elections. In this context, the placement of articles was scrutinized as "upper half, lower half or centered". However, the placement of other items was excluded.

Editorials play an important role in disseminating the information following their own editorial policies which differentiates one newspaper from another paper by presenting their viewing platform on the concerned issues by the editor or the owner of the paper. Editorials are considered as the narrative or the voice of the newspaper, they may be considered as the heart of the newspaper policy.

The reasons behind choosing these English newspapers are that they have the credibility and vast circulation which are widely read among the political leaders and the voters both. These newspapers are considered as the prominent icon of the English press and have the ability to strengthen, shape and mold the public opinion. The scheduled time frame of 15<sup>th</sup> June to 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2018 was selected due to the peak of movements of election campaigns, rallies, party meetings etc. of all political parties which examines the results as to what extent the coverage was given to the specific political parties and their agendas.

Print media newspapers have an ability to shape the public opinions and the perceptions of the political leaders and also their voters. Among them these newspapers have multi-dimensional approach on different key issues whether they are related to national or international concerns.

The results found a great difference in coverage patterns of the political parties during the general elections 2018 in both the newspapers. The data indicates that the media has given more coverage to some of the specific political parties and framed the news in their favor at certain point in time.

**Table 1:** Frequency of coverage on opinion pages of both newspapers

Content	Daily Dawn	The Nation	Total
Articles	28 (43.08%)	37 (56.92%)	65 (100%)
Editorials	19 (34.54%)	36 (65.56%)	55 (100%)
Letters to Editor	21 (87.5%)	03 (12.5%)	24 (100%)

The findings of this research study discovered that the Daily Dawn has published 28 (43.08%) articles having the political coverage while the Daily Nation has published 37 (56.92%) articles. It was found that the editorials published in Daily Dawn were 19 (34.54%) and the amount of the letters to editor was 21 (87.5%). However, the Daily Nation covered 36 (65.56%) editorials and 03 (12.5%) letters to editor.

**Key to the Acronyms used in the tables mentioned below.**

PILDAT- Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency

PPP- Pakistan People’s Party Parliamentary

PMLN- Pakistan Muslim League (N)

PTI- Pakistan Tehreek-I-Insaf

MMA- Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal

BNP- Balochistan National Party

ANP- Awami National Party

TLP- Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan

PTM- Pashtun Tahafuz Movement

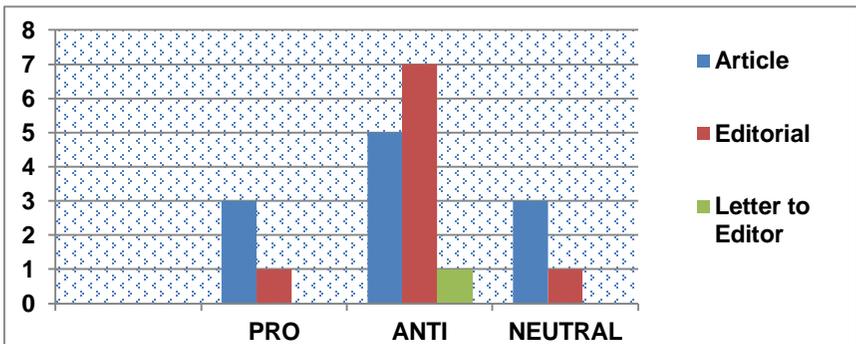
**Table 2:** Representation of Political Parties on Opinion Pages of Daily The Nation

Party	Article	Editorial	Letter to Editor	Total
PTI	11(52.38%)	09(42.85%)	01(4.77%)	21
PPP	07(87.5%)	01(12.5%)	-	08
PMLN	13(38.23%)	20(58.83)	01(2.94%)	34
MMA	-	01(50%)	01 (50%)	02
ANP	-	01(100%)	-	01
TLP	-	01(100%)	-	01
PTM	-	01(100%)	-	01
Overall	06 (75%)	02(25%)	-	08
				76

**Table 3: Representation of Political Parties on Opinion Pages of Daily Dawn**

Party	Article	Editorial	Letter to Editor	Total
<b>PTI</b>	05 (31.25%)	05 (31.25%)	06 (37.5%)	16
<b>PPP</b>	02 (20%)	02 (20%)	06 (40%)	10
<b>PMLN</b>	12 (54.54%)	06 (27.28%)	04 (18.18%)	22
<b>MMA</b>	-	01 (100%)	-	01
<b>ANP</b>	-	01 (100%)	-	01
<b>BNP</b>	-	02 (100%)	-	02
<b>BAP</b>	-	-	01	01
<b>Overall</b>	09 (52.94%)	02 (11.77%)	06 (35.29%)	17
				<b>70</b>

**PTI's Coverage**

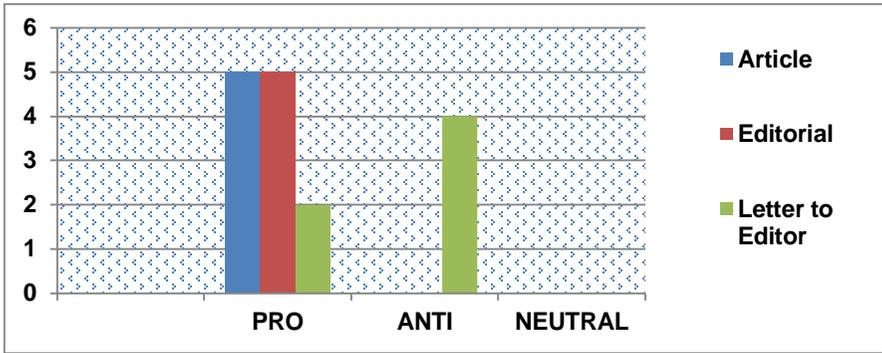


**Graph: 1** Tone of PTI's Coverage (The Nation)

Among total of 11 articles covered during the time frame of 20<sup>th</sup> June to 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2018, 3 (27.7%) articles were contextualized and coded as "PRO PTI" while 5 (45.6%) articles were coded as the "Anti PTI" and the number of the neutral articles were 3 (27.7%).

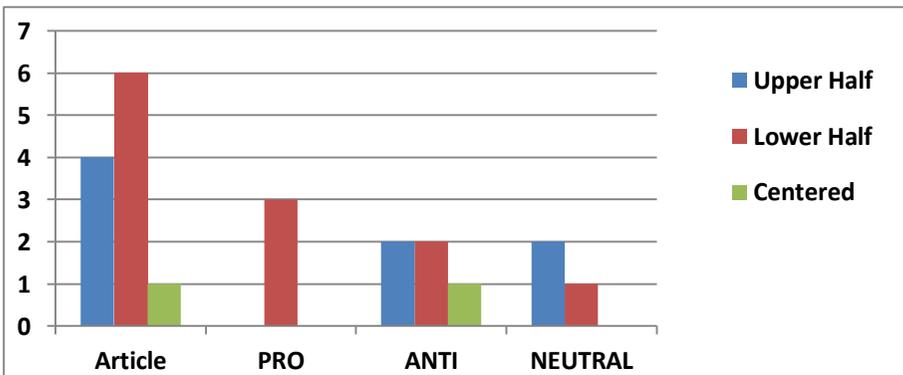
Editorials are considered as the viewpoint of the newspaper. The editorial coverage of the PTI in the leading newspaper was entirely negative and anti towards the PTI. The result indicates that the Nation has covered 09 editorials in total among which the 7 (77.78%) editorials were entirely negative towards the PTI while 1 (11.11%) editorial was covered in the favor of PTI and 1(11.11%) editorial was considered as showing the neutral viewpoint.

It was found that zero number of letters to editor was published during the time frame regarding PTI. The nation did not give a single space to the letters to editor written in PRO, ANTI or in Neutral manner.



**Graph: 2** Tone of PTI's Coverage (Dawn)

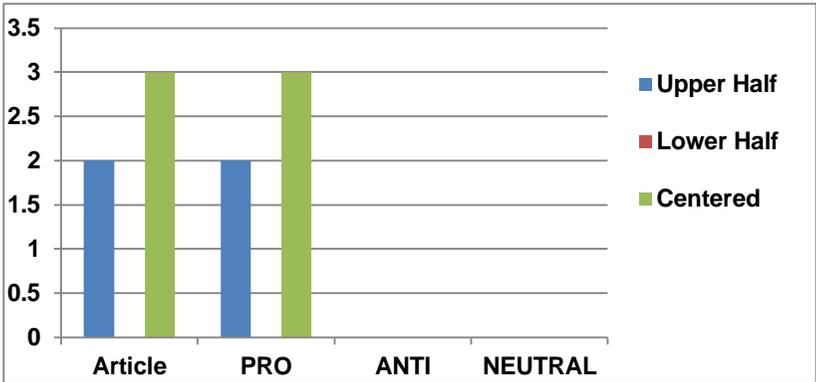
The result of tone of PTI's coverage in Daily Dawn reveals that total 05 (100%) articles were published and all were coded as "Pro-PTI" whereas the quantity of covered editorials was 05 (100%) and all the editorials were "Pro-PTI" whereas the total of published letters to editor in Daily Dawn was 06 (100%). Among which 02 (33.34%) were contextualized as "Pro-PTI" and 04 (66.66%) of them were coded as "Anti-PTI".



**Graph 3:** Tone & Placement of Articles in the Nation towards PTI

Placement plays an important role in determining and shaping the narratives among the masses. A total number of 11 articles were covered and published during the above-mentioned span of time. Among which 4 (36.36%) articles were placed on the upper half of the page while 6 (54.55%) at the lower half and 1 (9.09%) on the center position of the editorial page.

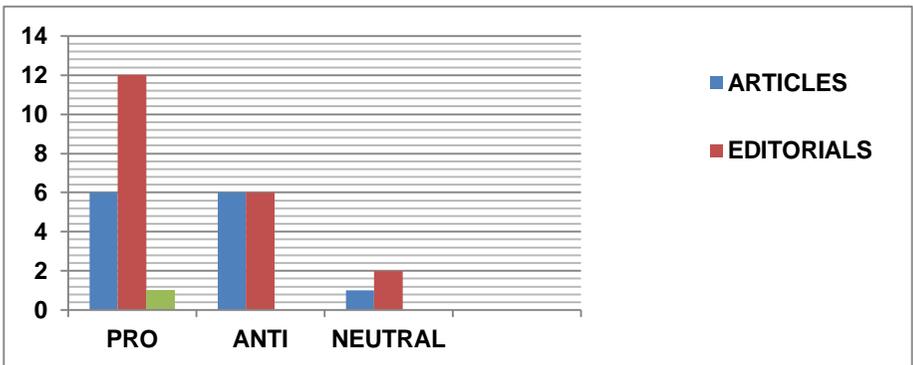
All the 3 (27.28%) "PRO PTI" articles were placed on the lower half of the page while 2 (18.18%) of the "Anti PTI" articles were placed on upper half, 2 (18.18%) on lower half and 1 (9.09%) anti-article on the center position. The 2 (18.18%) articles that were covered in a neutral manner were placed on upper half in which 1 (9.09%) neutral article was placed on lower half.



**Graph 4: Tone & Placement of Articles of PTI (DAWN)**

Daily Dawn has published 05 (100%) articles covering the political party PTI where all the articles were contextualized as showing Pro approach. As far as the placement of articles is concerned, the daily Dawn published its 02 (40%) articles on upper half and 03 (60%) on the center position of the editorial page.

**PMLN's Coverage**

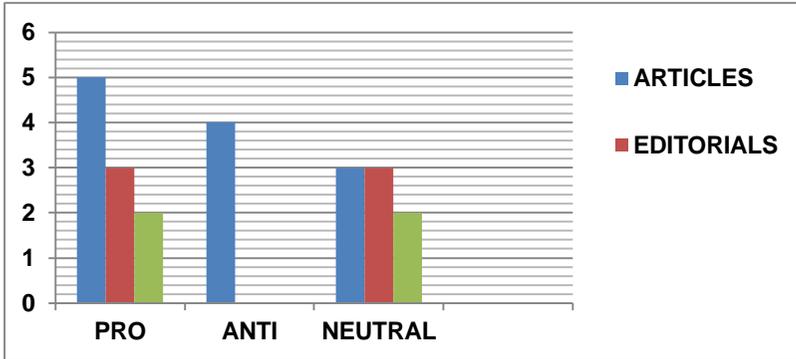


**Graph 5: Graphical Representation of Tone of PMLN's Coverage (The Nation)**

PMLN is considered as the rival of PTI. As compared to PTI, the Nation published 13 (38.23%) articles excluding 20 (58.83%) editorials and 1 (2.94%) letter to editor for PMLN. The numbers of "PRO PMLN" articles were 6 (46.15%)

while the "ANTI PMLN" articles were in the same quantity of 6 (46.15%) and only 1 (7.70%) article was covered in neutral perspective.

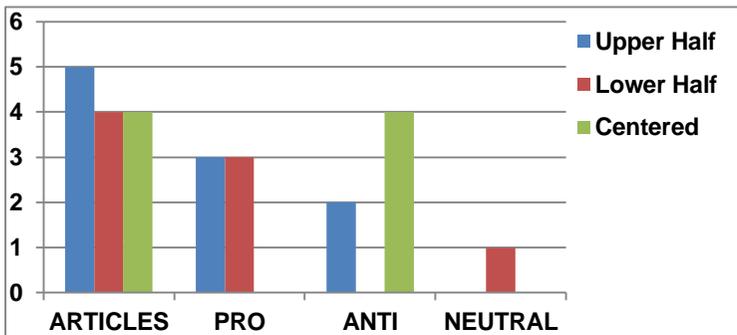
Among 20 editorials published as reporting the PMLN in which 12 (60%) can be coded as the "PRO" while the 6 (30%) editorials were covered as "ANTI" and 2 (10%) were covered in neutral framing. Only 1 (100%) letter to editor which was given space in the newspaper was coded as "PRO PMLN".



**Graph 6:** Graphical Representation of Tone of PMLN's Coverage (DAWN)

The result of this research study shows that Daily Dawn has covered 12 (100%) articles in total, among which the "PRO PMLN" articles were 05 (41.66%), "ANTI PMLN" 04 (33.34%) and "Neutral" articles were 3 (25%). As far as the editorials are concerned, it was observed that the Daily Dawn published 03 (50%) "PRO PMLN" editorials, in contrast the 03 (50%) editorials were coded as "Neutral".

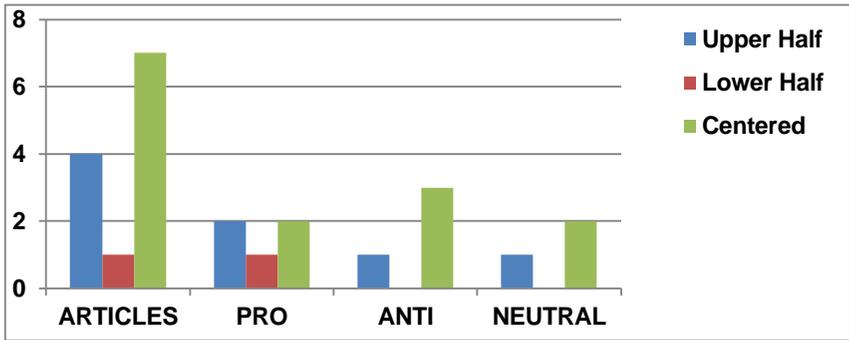
Furthermore, it was found that the total number of published letters to editor was 04 (100%); among which the "PRO-PMLN" letters were 02 (50%) and the other 02 (50%) editorials were "ANTI-PMLN".



**Graph 7:** Tone & Placement of Articles of PMLN's Coverage (The Nation)

As far as the placement of PMLN’s coverage is concerned it seems different than PTI’s coverage. Among all articles, 5 (38.46%) articles were placed on the upper half, 4 (30.77%) on the lower half and 4 (30.77%) covered the center position of the page.

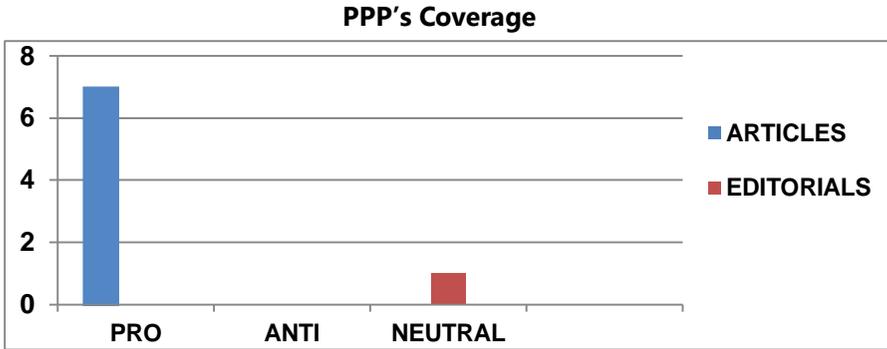
In addition, the “PRO” articles that were placed on upper half were 3 (23.07%) and on the lower half 3 (23.07%). The “ANTI PMLN” articles were placed as 2(15.39%) on upper half, 4(30.77%) on the center position of the editorial page. There was only 1 (7.70%) neutral article which was placed on the lower half.



**Graph 8: Tone & Placement of Articles of PMLN's Coverage (DAWN)**

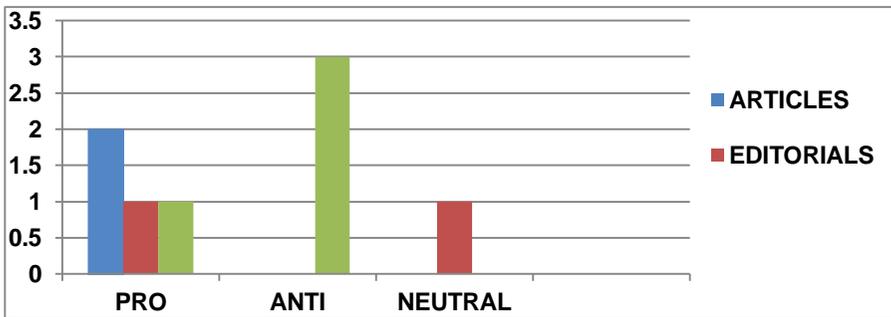
The placement of the Daily Dawn items reveals that among all 12 (100%) articles, 04 (33.33%) were placed on upper half, 01 (8.33%) on the lower half and rest 07 (58.34%) on the center position. Among which the PRO articles that were placed on upper half were 02 (40%) on the lower half 01 (20%) and on the center position 02 (40%).

The total number of Anti articles were 04 (100%), among which 01 (25%) was placed on the upper half and the rest of the 03 (75%) were placed on the center position. The result of placement of neutral articles reveals that among 03 (100%) neutral articles, 01 (33.33%) was placed on upper half and the other 02 (66.67%) on the center position.



**Graph 9:** *Tone of the Articles of PPP Coverage (THE NATION)*

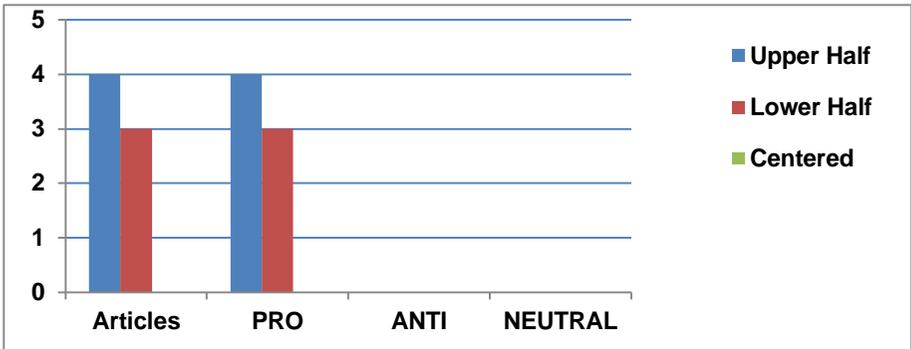
PPP is another one of the largest political parties of the country. The data indicates that the 7 articles were covered as reporting PPP in which all the 7 (100%) articles were entirely positive and coded as "PRO PPP". Only a single number of editorial (100%) was published which was reported with neutral approach. The results show that the zero number of "ANTI-PPP" articles was published during this time period which shows the positive inclination of the editorial policy of newspaper towards PPP.



**Graph: 10** *Tone of the Articles of PPP Coverage (DAWN)*

The political coverage of PPP reveals that the Daily Dawn has published total 02 (100%) articles and all of them were coded as "PRO-PPP" while the editorials that were covered were 02 (100%) in which 01 (50%) was "PRO PPP" and the other 01 (50%) was covered in "Neutral" perspective.

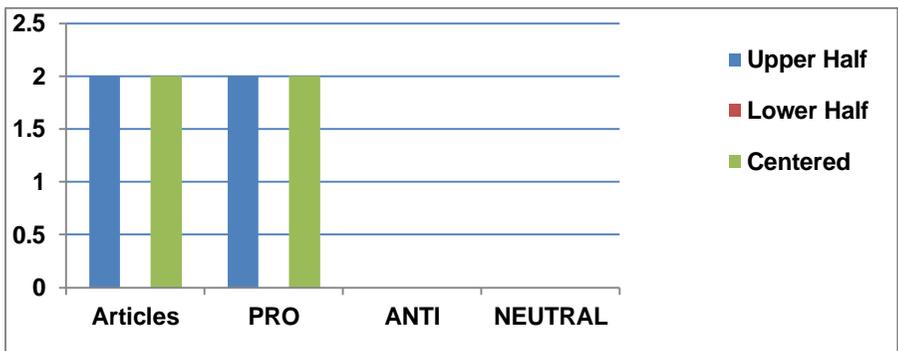
The placement of letters to editor reveals that the Daily Dawn has published 06 (100%) letters.



**Graph: 11** Tone & Placement of Political Coverage for PPP (The Nation)

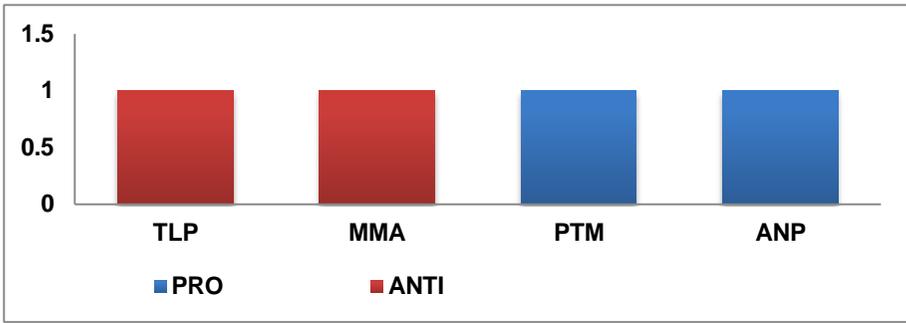
As it is mentioned above that none of the articles were written in negative or anti perspective of PPP. The placement of the article reveals that 4 (57.14%) articles were placed on upper half while 3 (42.86%) on the lower half among which all the articles were “PRO PPP”.

The placement further reveals that PPP articles which were entirely positive throughout the period have never been published at the center of the editorial page. It was also found that some of the PPP articles were written by their own party members. Only the placement and space were given by the Nation.



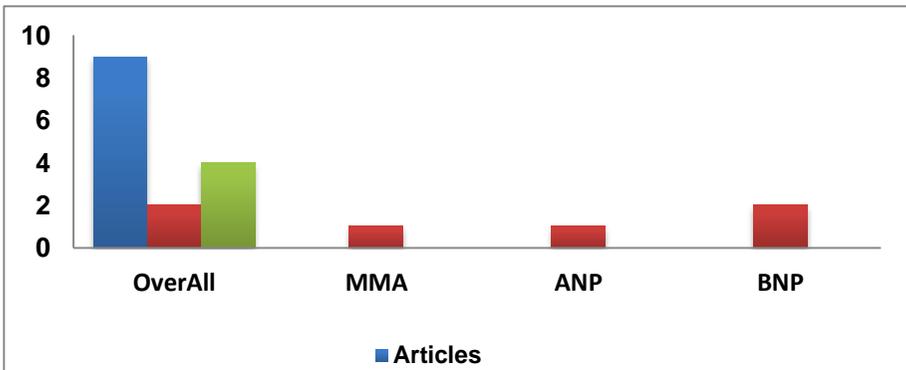
**Graph 12:** Tone & Placement of Political Coverage for PPP (The Nation)

The findings of Dawn’s coverage of PPP’s placement shows that total 02 (100%) articles were published in that time period and all of them were coded as “PRO PPP” and they were placed on the center position.



**Graph 13:** Editorial Coverage to Other Political Parties (The Nation)

The other political parties were less covered during the crucial time of the elections. It was found that only 4 (100%) editorials were published for other small, local and religious political parties. Editorial coverage given to other political parties includes TLP (25%), MMA (25%), PTM (25%) and ANP (25%). The least number of coverage were given to all these political parties in which the editorials which featured the TLP and MMA were coded as negative while PTM and ANP editorials were covered with positive perspectives. The result indicates that there has been less coverage to the smaller political parties during the most crucial time of the election. It was found that the smaller parties are being marginalized in the crucial time of transforming the democratic values in the country.



**Graph 14:** Editorial Coverage to Other Political Parties (DAWN)

The editorial coverage of other parties in Daily Dawn shows that the overall covered articles were 09 (100%), editorials 02 (100%) and 04 (100%) letters to editor. The Daily Dawn published 01 (100%) editorial on MMA, 01 (100%) on ANP and 02 (100%) on the BNP. The overall articles were covered in neutral perspective while the other articles were coded as "PRO",

## 5. CONCLUSION

It was found that both the newspapers covered PMLN more than any other political party. Moreover, it was observed that the total 76 items were published during that period in Daily Nation while the Daily Dawn published 70 items including articles, editorials and letters to editor.

Comparatively, it was found that Daily Nation gave more coverage to politics than Daily Dawn. Further, the coverage of political parties shows that the Daily Nation has published 37 (56.92%) and the Daily Dawn has covered 28 (43.08%). The editorial coverage shows that 19 (34.54%) editorials were published in Dawn and 36 (65.56%) in The Nation. However, the coverage in letters to editor shows that the Daily Dawn covered 21 (87.5%) letters more than the Daily Nation which were in least number 03 (12.5%). The findings show that the PMLN got more coverage in both the newspapers while the other political parties which got the highest coverage after PMLN were PTI, PPP, MMA, ANP, BNP and BAP respectively.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings, it is recommended that the newspapers should review their editorial policies and viewpoints to prioritize the other political parties as well especially during the time period of elections. Also, newspapers should address the political parties with equality despite covering one party as 'PRO' and other as 'ANTI'. Every media channel has set certain rules and regulations to follow (Agha & Husain, 2017), the same way the press outlets have their own. But objectivity is one of the prime concerns that the Press seems lacking. The disparity in the coverage questions the impartiality and objectivity of press institutions (Khalil et.al, 2020). Media framing is the vital tool that helps news coverage reach its desired public and make their opinion accordingly. As (Rafiq et.al, 2021) found that media 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. Also, the Dawn has given preference to letters to editor whereas The Nation has gone ahead in editorial category. Public voice is also a concern to the press that should be given adequate space and in newspaper industry, letters to editor 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.

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