

# Framing of Climate Change Issues in Pakistani Media

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim of the Study:** First and foremost, the media directly used scientific, economic, political and human-interest frames to pull the audiences' attention and change their perception over climate change issues. This study aimed at identifying how climate change issues have been framed in Piraeus for Pakistan's English print media. The aim of the study was to identify and trace frames on climate change through the selected news stories of Dawn and Express Tribune.

**Methodology:** Quantitative and qualitative content analysis was performed on the sought-out news stories. The source media stories consisted of written articles and opinion pieces by journalists reporting on and/or expressing opinions on climate change related issues; all the stories were analyzed through systematic coding and thematic content analysis and coding processes that facilitated the categorization of specific themes and framing of climate change related information in media.

**Findings:** Having analyzed the news stories in Dawn and Express Tribune, four programs/dominant frames emerged regarding the portrayal of climate change. In Dawn, Scientific frames dominated the news driven by the features that dominated content such as data and research. On the other hand, Express Tribune mainly focused on political and human interest which includes government laws, effects on community and individual stories. This difference in the dominant frames shows the difference on the AMRC media outlets have adopted in pursuing the climate change narrative.

**Conclusion:** This research endeavored to offer knowledge by filling a gap within the scholarly domain through exploring the manner in which climate change was pitched within media outlets. It also rendered in enhancing the knowledge of the participants belonging to the media sector, policymakers and communicating climate change science regarding the use of media for conveying awareness of climate change.

**Keywords:** Climate Change, Pakistani Media, Climate Change Communication, Policymakers, Awareness Raising.

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## **Introduction**

Climate change as an issue is complex and opened issues of social and communication sciences to embrace it since it cannot be contained within the scope of the traditional natural sciences. The media assumes a very important responsibility in mediating between scientific research and the public and it does this within a variety of scientific, economic, political and human interest frames to precisely inform the public especially on issues of climate change (Entman, 2012; Nisbet, 2009). The purpose of this study is to expand the current knowledge regarding the matter of climate change and how the theme is constructed in the context of Pakistan's English print media, more precisely, newspapers Dawn and Express Tribune.

To achieve these research goals, the following research questions are formulated: In the first place, the study aims to investigate the distinctive facet of the method that would help in the systematic and empirical examination of the framing of climate change related issues in the Pakistan's English print media. While understanding the position of media mattering in the construction of the image of a specific phenomenon or issue is paramount to the analysis of media texts, it is equally crucial to identify how climate change is represented in the selected media outlets. Secondly, the research aims at examining and evaluating the framing strategy which the media employs in presenting information on climate change. By identifying and coding the verbal and nonverbal content in the media texts and focusing on the patterns that emerge and exploring them in detail, this study adheres to the principles of qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2015; Neuendorf, 2016).

In the current world where climate change is of paramount importance and needs appropriate social attention, it is essential to discover how the media address the topic. In an effort to contextualize these findings for the benefit of media practitioners, policymakers, and climate change communicators, this paper fills the theoretical-practical scholarship gap on climate change communication by synthesizing practical knowledge that can help create a more effective information-driven audience.

In this way, construction of climate change in the media and representation at the forefront not only impacts the ways in which the general public perceives the problem, but further forms part of the discursive construction of how policy and society more generally responds to climate change. Through this investigation of the structure of news stories concerning climate change in Dawn and Express Tribune, this study shall enhance the existing knowledge on media framing and the perception of climate change in the Pakistani media. By analysing different frames and their implications for the study, this research aims to investigate the power that media framing might have on the 'constructing' of climate change knowledge and policy in Pakistan.

## ***Research Objectives***

- To analyze the framing of climate change issues in Pakistan's English print media.
- To identify the key frames used by the media to present climate change-related information.

## ***Research Questions***

1. How do Dawn and Express Tribune frame climate change issues in their English print media coverage?
2. What are the predominant themes and narratives used by Dawn and Express Tribune when reporting on climate change?
3. Why do Dawn and Express Tribune emphasize different frames (Scientific vs. Political and Human-interest) in their coverage of climate change issues?

## Literature Review

Media framing of climate change communication has remained among the most captured areas of research interest in the broadly defined field of climate change communication research. Through this study, it was found that Climate Change is one of the most complex issues in the society to cover and present, but through the lens of this paper media closely reflects and influences how this central issue is viewed. According to Entman (2012), framing entails the processes of selection and traffic, which in a way concern with how an issue is being presented as well as its visibility. The scientific frame, one of the key frames identified in the climate change communication (Nisbet, 2009), pertains to rational thoughts that are supported by facts and/or opinions from other experts. In this frame, the importance of climate scientific issue is highlighted with an attempt to change the perception of G20 citizens on a particular subject concerning the seriousness of the problem.

The last broader view, that of economic perspectives, centers on the costs of climate change turned forth (Carvalho, 2010). There are frames that cover the view toward the economical potential and risks of climate change solution and adaptation plans, that forms the opinion of people in regards to what is possible to do economically addressing the issues of climate change. Political frames, expand on the other hand, look at the level of the government and the collaborations of the countries in the face of climate change (Borick & Rabe, 2012). Located in the political frame, climate change is shaped by political structures and impacts individuals' perceptions of governments and their actions and policies.

Those human-interest frameworks are still a relatively recent concept noted by researchers in terms of their effectiveness in the case of communication (O'Neill & Nicholson Cole, 2009. ). These frames focus on the effects of climate change gathered anecdotally, seeking to trigger emotions common to people. Incorporating such a strategy of developing climate change issue news stories that appeal to the human element that is relatable and close to home will help the media to engage the audience.

Previous literature has noted that various sources of the media in different countries participate in constructing/mediating climate change issues (Boykoff & Boykoff, 2004; Carvalho, 2005). Nevertheless, one of the research gaps that can still be discussed regarding climate change in Pakistan is the framing of climate change by journalists and media outlets. To fill this gap, this research will concentrate on the English print media of Pakistan with direct focus on Dawn and Express Tribune papers. But what if these media outlets already frame climate change within the said region and advance ways to influence the populace and the policies that they make?

This study also applied Qualitative content analysis which has been increasingly used in structuring research (Krippendorff, 2018). It is advantageous since it provides an organised way of comparing media content, thus enabling one to identify climate change frames used in media communication. This coding and thematic analysis cascade follows the best practices used in framing analysis, thus adequately coding and analysing the media content in the current study (Neuendorf, 2016).

The work on the portrayal of climate change in the mass media underlines that perception of this issue is critical for the public understanding of climate change and defining further policies (Borah, 2017). In concurrence with what Borah found regarding constructedivist analysis of climate change in U. S newspapers it can be stated that media framing not only shapes the viewer's perception but also hails political procedures and decisions. To start with, it is imperative to comprehend the manner in which this issue is discussed in mass media as this knowledge is essential for identifying the principle approaches for creating a better informed populace regarding the issue in question.

The construction of climate change threat is in turn significantly influenced and defined by cultural and contextual factors and therefore the understanding of framing must be examined in the thread of socio-political and environmental setting of Pakistan (Painter, 2011). It is therefore quite evident that cultural sensitivity, localized problems together with geo- politics can a great deal influence how climate change is reported in the news. This paper contributes to existing research on media framing by using a

theoretically and empirically grounded approach to analyze this phenomenon in Pakistan, a country that arguably has more diverse and potentially adverse environmental conditions than many nations and that is in a state of transition in terms of socio-political and economic development.

However, going by Antilla's (2005) perspective, the media goes further and touches policy making by informing policy decision. Media play a vital role in the shaping of peoples' opinions and this has relevance to policy making since policy makers depend on media coverage to measure the level of opinion to address on any given issue, including climate change policies. In a way, this study seeks to advance the state-of-the-art knowledge on media framing more specifically, what specific framing techniques Dawn and Express Tribune use and how this might affect policy debate on climate change in Pakistan. This paper's findings might be useful for the formation of climate policies that reflect the community's wishes and expectations more accurately.

This is the value of this research study because it may add more knowledge about media framing of climate change to the available knowledge. Thus, the objective of the study is to understand the mechanisms of climate change framing in Pakistani media outlets to derive insights that would be useful in the construction of more effective subsequent communication approaches. The research findings might also be useful in providing awareness to the existing and intending media practitioners, policymakers, and climate change communicators regarding the appropriate and efficient use of print media for creating awareness and enhancing evidence-based discussions on the concept and challenges of climate change in the context of Pakistan.

## **Methodology**

Analyzing media framing of climate change in the English print media of Pakistan has been conducted for this study by collecting news stories from two newspapers – Dawn & Express Tribune. In this quantitative study, purposive sampling technique was adopted to reach the aim of systematically covering as many important topics within the climate change domain as possible as reported in the selected leading media outlets. The selected news face was systematically coded and analyzed for themes to determine the frames that Dawn and Express Tribune used in presenting news on the issue of climate change. To increase the credibility, an attempt was made to perform inter-coder reliability test with two number of coders to make an analysis on two number of news stories. This flow of coding and thematically analyzing the texts provided a systematic approach to understanding how climate change is framed scientifically, economically, politically as well as with human-interest angles.

Moreover, compliance with ethical principles was a continuous concern throughout the whole process: respect for the principles of journalism as a profession and the principles of rational reporting. The conceptual approach of this study is to outline how Dawn and Express Tribune contribute to framing climate change in relation to Pakistan through delineating the discursive strategies used by these newspapers. Hence this study to provide important findings about the medias framing efforts by focusing on the Dawn and Express Tribune papers in Pakistan in an effort to enhance the understanding of the effects of climate change framing in Pakistan on the general awareness and policy-making discourse. The method used in this study corresponds to the general employments in qualitative content analysis, and the study seeks to present how the climate change topic is framed in the chosen English print media outlets.

## **Results**

Analysis of current affairs articles featured in Dawn, one of Pakistan's most popular English language newspapers, and the Express Tribune has provided valuable qualitative insights into how climate change is portrayed. By identifying four significant frames; Scientific, Economic, Political, and Human-interest frames, it becomes imperative to distinguish these four newspapers as the media significant in constructing the narrative on climate change. Dawn was more inclined to Scientific frames providing information and facts related to Data stories and Research, Express Tribune, on the other hand, provided a narrative with more inclination towards political as well as human interest frames, with concentration on

governmental policies and community effects and individual stories. It not only reveals the way in which the two publications have framed their specific case studies but also raises the question of the consequences that a certain framing entails when it comes to the public's consciousness and the formation of policies tackling climate change in Pakistan.

### ***Dominant Frames***

Having analysed the news stories in Dawn and Express Tribune, four programs/dominant frames emerged regarding the portrayal of climate change. In Dawn, Scientific frames dominated the news driven by the features that dominated content such as data and research. On the other hand, Express Tribune mainly focused on political and human interest which includes government laws, effects on community and individual stories. This difference in the dominant frames shows the difference on the AMRC media outlets have adopted in pursuing the climate change narrative. The breakdown of the news stories found in Dawn and Express Tribune pulls out four leading frames that greatly define the portrayal of climate change within the frame work of the prestigious English newspapers.

***Scientific Frames in Dawn:*** The reevaluation of visual theories in Dawn was marked by a highly significant shift commonly referred to as The Scientific frames trend. This frame was marked by a strict attention to the methodology and the presentation of definite statistics and research outcomes concerning climate change. Dawn often reported New with the twist mentioning scientific and logical reasoning that gave extensive view about effects of climate change with proofs and recommendations. The utilization of Scientific frames in Dawn shows its aim to give the readers more elaborate and informative content, which plays its part in shaping a contextual perspective with the combined science of climate change.

***Political and Human-interest Frames in Express Tribune:*** On the other hand, Express Tribune showed a very different selective pattern for Political and Human-interest Frames. The Political frame was characterized by an interest on government decisions and global partnerships to do with climate change. This approach of framing put climate change in the political dynamics and perspectives enabling the understanding of policy debates and governmental reactions. Further, the Human-interest frame in Express Tribune was identified through the following examples; Column {There were stories that detailed how climate change affected people and societies. Personal testimonies and enabling narratives as well as nationwide/local perspectives and community-based effects came into focus, developing an appealing and impactful psychological/emotional stream that makes climate change issue more persuasive.

***Disparity in Dominant Frames:*** Thus, the difference in the relative prevalence of the intended dominant frames in Dawn and Express Tribune suggests that it is in fact two very different media outlets which pursue different strategies in relation to constructing the climate change narrative. While Dawn adopts scientific analysis that focuses on facts and figures within the issue, Express Tribune has chosen a more complex narrative approach to present climate change issue, following political contexts and personal stories. This divergence shows that climate change is a mixed bag in the media when it comes to communication where outlets opt for strategic choices with the intention of selling a specific narrative, albeit with the loophole of framing to achieve the goals of journalism.

Table 1: *Frame Dominance Overview*

Media Outlet	Scientific Frames	Political Frames	Human-interest Frames
Dawn	Predominant	Limited	Minimal
Express Tribune	Limited	Predominant	Predominant

This table provides a cross tabulation of the frames that are dominant in Dawn and Express Tribune. Dawn uses mostly Scientific frames, while Express Tribune from Pakistan largely relies upon Political and Human-interest frames in reporting climate change. Altogether these are valuable insights, offering an analysis of the rather complex and specific approaches used in these media sources and how they can influence the public perception of climate change.

## ***Patterns in Portrayal***

Observably, a dominated emphasise on economic repercussion was noticeable in both Dawn and Express Tribune, reflecting a general concern with the fiscal impact of climate change. It was found that Dawn used Scientific frames more often; in fact, she focused on Climate specifics, analyzing data and studies. On the other hand, Express Tribune demonstrated a blend of the findings; it included Political and Human Interest most frequently, so it appeared that ET's coverage of climate change is less simplified and politicized as ABC news; it incorporated implications for policy and humans' suffering. These patterns augment awareness of how media outlets decide to frame some elements of the climate change narrative. This analysis of the news stories found in Dawn and the Express Tribune unveils patterns in how the two media outlets portray climate change, revealing that their coverage highlights specific aspects of the issue.

***Consistent Emphasis on Economic Consequences:*** There is a possible pattern that manifested itself across both outlets: there was a particularly strong focus on stating potential economic repercussions. Virtually, both Dawn and the Express Tribune focused on the financial impacts of climate change asserting the economic impacts of the shift in climate. This shared focus may imply acknowledgement of the financial implications of climate change that might be dear to those who are closely monitoring the business side of contemporary issues.

***Dawn's Scientific Emphasis:*** Compared to dusk which had more overwritten percentages of Scientific frames, Dawn demonstrated more concrete breakdown of climate data and scientific investigations. This scientific focus is primarily aimed at depicting the climate change phenomenon as thoroughly researched and based on prognostications and historical information. Hence, Dawn's proposed approach focusing on real facts and engaging authorities assists in positioning the newspaper as a source readers rely on for comprehensive knowledge regarding scientific perspectives about climate change.

***Express Tribune's Diverse Narrative:*** On the other hand, Express Tribune using more Political and Human-interest aspect with regards to Propaganda Frame in the issue of climate change. By incorporating different storytelling and presentation of disorder, a deeper message can be conveyed that is not solely limited to the field of science. The direction is toward the use of Political frames which hint at the paper's focal interest in terms of the political aspects and policies of climate change as mediated by Express Tribune. Also, the use of Human-interest frames suggests that there is an active attempt to humanize the broader issue, invoking emotions and interpreting the impacts through personal experiences.

## ***Notable Examples***

As such each of the frames identified was reinforced by preferred news stories written and airing on the headlines of various news stations. For instance, in Dawn, a news story titled "Rising Global Temperatures: A Comprehensive Analysis" can be included into the Scientific frame, while in Express Tribune the story, which is actually called "Local Heroes: Stories of Resilience Amidst Climate Challenges" can be attributed to Human-interest frame. This work delivers practical examples that illustrate how climate change is constructed in this process and can provide crucial experience about how story telling is done in the media. The detailed examination of these examples lays the foundation for the subsequent encyclopedic exploration of the implications of Dawn and Express Tribune's framing strategies with regards to the public understanding and policy concern for climate change.

Such examples are useful in giving definite illustrations and therefore, the examination of the specific Dawn and Express Tribune issues helps in giving concrete examples that support the argument and shed more light on how these news outlets operate in the communication of climate change. Dawn's Scientific Frame Example: As evident from above, Scientific frame found in Dawn has been identified from the news story titled 'Rising Global Temperatures: A Comprehensive Analysis.' This article likely provides an account of temperatures in the world and if not, then uses empirical data to produce a detailed rise in the global temperatures. That he refers to the form of analysis as 'comprehensive analyses indicate a demeanor providing adequate attention to scientific facts and

findings, which corresponds with the variety of Dawn in focusing on the scientific aspect of climate change.

Express Tribune's Human-interest Frame Example: Express Tribune's 'Local Heroes: Stories of Resilience Amidst Climate Challenges' On the same note is Human-interest frame, Express Tribune has an article that captures this frame well, 'Local Heroes: Stories of Resilience Amidst Climate Challenges'. In all probability, this is a story that reflects the experiences of people or groups bearing the brunt of climate change. Express Tribune also universalizes the problem by giving people a face, with personal stories of struggle and which makes people empathize with the larger issue at hand. This is an example of how Express Tribune consciously sought to personalize climate change to evoke the audience's empathy towards it.

## **Discussion**

The conclusions reached in this study, regarding the mechanisms used for climate change framing in two Pakistani newspapers: Dawn and Express Tribune conforms with prior studies done on media framing and climate change communication. It is gratifying that most of the Scientific frames being evident in Dawn's coverage especially when holding the issue up for analysis as balanced and embodying more of a problem-solving approach rooted on research findings hence giving the reader concrete data about the issue within specific socio-political context as argued by Painter (2011). This focus on formal data and analytical reasoning aligns with Antilla's (2005) study to prove that scientific rationales may help improve public awareness of climate change in the society and inform policy-making processes where applicable due to media.

On the other hand, Express Tribune is inclined towards the Political and Human-interest frames citing policies of government, effects on communities, and real-life stories of victims which are closer to the human-interest framing identified by Boykoff (2011) & Nisbet (2009) to solidify the audience's concern and elicit emotional appeal towards climate change issues. Human-interest stories that focus on affected people and their narratives may also engender sympathy and get readers' attention in a way a more abstract argument or discussion of global climate statistics may not.

Drawing from such comparisons it is clear that different media outlets employ different frames to portray climate change messages, as witnessed in the case of Dawn and Express Tribune newspapers. Analyzing the models used by Dawn and Express Tribune, it can be noted that while Scientific frames used by Dawn offers a more concrete view grounded in research-based facts and evidence, Express Tribune's use of Political and Human-interest frames is also useful in painting a well-rounded view of climate change, which is in tune with the recommendations provided in the framing strategies elucidated by Entman (1993) and Gamson & Modigliani (1989). This supports other findings regarding the usage of multiple framing strategies including scientific and political and human-interest where utilization of both frames can help change communication as it has been established that different people have different preferences and thus the more frames that are used, the more effective climate change communication will be.

In sum, the present study provides distinctive insights to media framing of climate change, hence underscoring the relevance of using various framing approaches for the purpose of communication of environmental concerns. Hence, the significance of strategic framing choices in constructing peoples' perceptions and rehabilitating policy discourses with regards to climate change is clearly supported by aligning with already available research on the effects of scientific and human interest framing on climate change.

## **Conclusion**

Thus, summing up the implications of the present research based on the climate change framing restrictions in the samples of the Pakistan's English print media outlets – Dawn and Express Tribune – the critical outlook at the discourse strategies under consideration has been elaborated. The four frames of Scientific, Economic, Political, and Human-interest are highly valuable in capturing the complex nature

of climate change reporting. Dawn was more inclined towards Scientific, with propence towards analytical and research aspects, on the other hand Express Tribune had variety of frames, it was more aligned with Political and Human-interest frames. These discrepancies reveal different strategies used by these media outlets and demonstrate their interest in sharing climate change; of prominently different frames.

Other patterns give the further clarification to the understanding of the media's strategies in certain ways. Economic implications of climate change were a frequently discussed topic by both Dawn and Express Tribune, which demonstrates that, as journalists, they understood the matter in terms of economic impacts. As seen above, Scientific frames occur more frequently in Dawn than Kikuyu which situates Dawn to provide deeper scientific information to the readers. However, as Political and Human-interested frame have been adopted by Express Tribune the paper clarify that it aims to provide a much closer and thereby more realistic view to the audience about climate change.

Notable examples from Dawn and Express Tribune, such as "Rising Global Temperatures: Two of the analyzed newspapers offer practical examples of how these media outlets construct climate change: "A Comprehensive Analysis" and "Local Heroes: Stories of Resilience Amidst Climate Challenges." Dawn's example can be categorized to Scientific frame; Express Tribune's exemplar, on the other hand, a Human-interest framing, as these advocate for different approaches to narration.

Therefore, this research adds significant knowledge to the discourse on climate change communication, which stresses the importance of complexity and cultural diversity in media framing. The study has key thrusts for media practitioners, the policymakers and the communicators of climate change in that it offers a directional pathway as how the climate change awareness can be best within the Pakistani population. In an era where climate crises are quickly becoming an imminent global disaster, these insights are ever more critical in driving the public narrative and policy development.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the insights derived from the analysis of climate change framing in Dawn and Express Tribune, several recommendations come up that would possibly improve the efficiency of climate change communication in Pakistani media context:

- It is crucial to encourage the media outlets to adopt a more diverse framing media production strategies that will enable them cover a broad range of topics. Though Scientific frames can ideally help build horizoning efficiently, the integration of Political and Human-interest frames adds emotional appeal to the climate change stories.
- Promote media-scientist cooperation in the dissemination of climate information. Helping senior journalists is important for adding more thorough and substantiated conclusions to the process of disseminating climate data and other related information.
- They should unsustainable continue economic impacts of global climate change a stressing. Since both Dawn and Express Tribune give considerable importance to this aspect, the continuation of such coverage for economic impacts can go a long way in enlightening the general reader about the complex nature of climate change.
- Promote various media outlets in regard to the importance of reporting events from their own region. The fact that the Express Tribune dwells on Human Interest sections like the "Local Heroes," indicates that the paper could potentially have a good portraying of such Hopefulness in a targeted or localized setting. It can help build what is referred to as the "social salience" of an issue to local audiences, making them feel like it is something which directly affects them and which therefore requires their attention.
- Encourage system-wide case and best practice discussions across media organizations. This can bring better awareness of climate change and the resulting problems and can help media



practitioners to be more conscious of their responsibility in tackling this common enemy of global society.

- Increase advocacy on the need to allocate more resources to climate change education among journalists. Introducing facts about climate change in their scientific form maybe useful in a way that will assist journalists to effectively relay information to the public hence contributing to a better informed public.
- Utilizing air and various other facets of digital outlets for climate change communication. Both media outlets should consider how they might reach out to audiences in new and multi-media ways and while it might be useful to provide a sample weekday/weekend schedule, realizing that there is an opportunity to communicate with people through interactive graphics, podcasts and media personalities and videos.
- Carry out the study to know the knowledge demands of audience in order the target audience with requisite information. Using principles of interest based communication, media framing strategies would benefit from being positioned within the range of what the target audience wants and is concerned about in relation to climate change.
- Promote agenda-setting theory by suggesting that media outlets focus more on solutions-oriented reporting. While providing examples of transitions and effective measures in combating climate change, as well as stressing particular actions in the text, it is possible to motivate readers to support sustainable practices.
- Ensure there is proper tracking and feedback system that enables analysis of climate change reporting outcomes. Moreover, regular assessments can provide data on changes in perceptions and framing strategies dependent on the target audience for future framing projects..

By implementing these suggestions, the media houses of Pakistan are in a position to aggressively contribute towards initiating a consciousness towards the altered climate change situation in Pakistan as well as the world because climate change is a problem that needs the active engagement of all nations.

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