

Content Analysis of Mustafa Amir Murder Case: A Comparative Study of ARY News and Geo News

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: This study examines the contrasting media narratives surrounding the Mustafa Amir Murder case in Pakistan, focusing on coverage by ARY News and Geo News. The research aims to analyze how these influential news outlets framed the case and explore the potential implications for public perception and societal discourse about justice and accountability.

Methodology: Using qualitative content analysis, the study systematically compares prime-time news segments from both channels. The analytical framework incorporates Entman's Framing Theory and McCombs and Shaw's Agenda-Setting Theory to evaluate differences in thematic focus, linguistic tone, and narrative construction. Data was collected from official YouTube archives covering the period from the victim's disappearance to the perpetrator's confession.

Findings: The analysis reveals divergent reporting approaches: ARY News employed sensationalist framing, emphasizing police incompetence and systemic failures through emotionally charged language, while Geo News maintained a fact-based focus on forensic evidence and judicial procedures. These distinct narratives demonstrate how selective framing can shape public understanding of crime and justice, with ARY News potentially mobilizing calls for reform and Geo News reinforcing institutional legitimacy.

Conclusion: The study highlights the media's powerful role in influencing public discourse on high-profile crimes in Pakistan. It underscores the need for responsible journalism that balances investigative rigor with ethical reporting standards. Despite only focusing on two broadcasters, the study offers insightful information about the effects of media framing and recommends that digital platforms and longitudinal analysis be used in future research to better understand the influence of media on society.

Keywords: Public Discourse, Agenda-setting, Content Analysis, Media Framing, Crime Reporting, Pakistani Media.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The media plays a vital role in shaping societal point of views toward renowned crimes, particularly in nations like Pakistan, where structural imbalance and judicial incompetence often influence public conversation. A remarkable example is the murder of Mustafa Amir, a young man whose burned body was found inside a vehicle, a case that sparks massive outrage and broad media coverage. Beyond its legal implications, this incident highlights the challenges within Pakistan's criminal justice system, including delayed inquiry, systemic weaknesses, and the wider struggle for trust in the justice system.

The Mustafa Amir case has also rekindled debates about media code of conduct, the credibility of law implementation, and the pressing need for systematic legal amendments. In this context, this study examines how two of Pakistan's most influential news networks 'ARY News and Geo News' channels shape their reporting of the event. Through a comparative content analysis, the research explores differences in framing of stories, thematic focus, and editorial predilection, offering insights into how media depiction shape public opinion and policy dialogue in Pakistan

According to (Tolson, 1991), media outputs' informative substance can occasionally be influenced by ideologies. The media has become a trustworthy source of information about news, entertainment, and education. The significant impact that mainstream media has on our kids, teens, and society as a whole, however, must be acknowledged (al, 2021). According to (al A. e., 2022), this evolution started with the telegraph and has since progressed to include the radio, newspapers, magazines, television, and the internet. (Entman, 1993) goes into more detail about framing, contending that the media selectively emphasizes particular facets of a problem, affecting how the audience interprets it (Shabir et al., 2015; Shabir et al., 2013).

Sensationalism frequently predominates in media coverage of crimes, especially when there is violence or social injustice involved (Surette, 2015). Media narratives often reflect societal power structures. Power dynamics in society are frequently reflected in media narratives. Compared to underprivileged populations, elite victims receive a disproportionate amount of attention (Jiwani, 2009; Shabir et al., 2015a; Shabir et al., 2015b).

1.1 Problem Statement

Pakistan has been plagued by enduring conflict with systemic injustices that perpetuate inequality and diminish the rule of law. Nonetheless, the role of Pakistani media in this situation has been entangled and varied. One of the most prominent incidents that have taken place in is the Mustafa Amir Murder case. Mustafa Amir was brutally murdered and was found in a burned out car. This case took a lot of media attention and allegations of police incompetence. According to the investigation into the case, a gang of people abducted Mustafa Amir, ill-treat him, and then killed him. Main concerns have been raised by this murder case, including the effectiveness of Pakistan's law enforcement.

The main objective of this study is to execute a comparative content analysis of ARY News and Geo News coverage of Mustafa Amir Murder case, inspect how these two ruling Pakistani news channels assemble and created the narrative of this eminent crime.

In any place injustice exists, justice in every corner is at risk. "Letter from a Birmingham jail" by Martin Luther King Jr. (1963). The public's viewpoint and the liability of those in command are profoundly affected by the media. Yet it must report in answerable and authentic manner (Alam, 2015).

1.2 Research Question

How are the narratives surrounding the Mustafa Amir Murder case framed and constructed differently by ARY News and Geo News, and what effects do these variations have on Pakistani public opinion and societal change?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Public opinion is greatly influenced by the media, especially when it comes to high-profile criminal cases. The extent to which the media shapes public opinion has long been a topic of discussion among academics. According to (Shaws, 1972) agenda-setting theory, the media not only instructs people on what to think about, but also on how to think about it. Sensationalism frequently predominates in media coverage of crimes, especially when there is violence or social injustice involved (Surette, 2015).

The way the media portrays these kinds of events has the power to either increase public indignation or draw attention away from structural problems. (Greer, 2010), for example, emphasizes how media narratives can portray victims as "innocent martyrs" or criminals as "monsters," influencing public perception and policy reactions. Social power systems are frequently reflected in media narratives.

Alam, (2015) Victims of the elite are given more attention than victims of marginalized groups (Jiwani, 2009). Crimes involving wealthy families, like the Noor Mukaddam case, make the news in Pakistan, but comparable incidents in underprivileged areas go unreported (Abbasi, 2022). Class divisions are strengthened by this bias, which also distorts popular calls for justice (Cottle, 2006).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study engages a qualitative content analysis view point to inspect the framing and plot development of Mustafa Amir Murder case by Geo News and ARY News. The research will examine 9pm broadcast and discourse from both channels to differences in thematic significance, terminology and framing techniques.

3.2 Sample Selection

News sections from "Geo News" and "ARY News" covering the Mustafa Amir murder case. Coverage from the date of the incident (initial reporting) to the latest updates (ongoing investigations or case developments). Data was collected from official YouTube channels and archives of both news outlets. Tracking news reports over specific period and data was classified based on categorizing reports based on how crime is portrayed (systematic failure, police ineptitude, mob violence, political pressure). Classifying reports based on tone (Publicist, neural, preliminary, and imputative). Identifying main themes (Justice detain, victimization, police transparency, societal consequences).

3.3 Analytical Framework

"Framing theory" (Entman, 1993) is used in this study to evaluate how each media outlet raises narratives around the case. In addition "Agenda setting theory" (Mc Combs & Shaw, 1972) will help examine how the media emphasize certain aspects of the case over others.

3.4 Data Analysis

Topical Analysis: Identifying repeated themes in both channels

Converse Analysis: Examining phraseology (e.g., "brutal murder" vs. "alleged killing").
Comparative Analysis: Contrasting the prevalence and deepness of reporting on crucial matters.

The focal point of the comparative analysis is to distinguish how Geo News and ARY News frame the Mustafa Amir case. This involves examining:

Narrative Emphasis: Does one channel show up police inability, while the other focuses on political intrusion?

Tone & overemphasis: Is the coverage more intense (e.g., dramatic headlines, graphic descriptions) in one channel compared to the other?

Source dependence: Which voices influence and impact the reporting (e.g., law enforcement officer, bereaved family, legal advisor, Politicians)?

Frequency & Deepness: Which outlet provides more frequent updates or in-depth forensic reports?

3.5 Ethical Considerations

- Guaranteeing equitable representation of both news networks.
- Preventing preferential distortion during information gathering.
- Rigorously documenting references citing to preserve scholarly credibility.

3.6 Limitations

- Confined to two broadcasters (may not represent all media perspectives).
- Scheduling constraints during report compilation.
- Interpretative variability in classification and assessment.

3.7 Comparative Analysis of Mustafa Amir Murder Case

The Mustafa Amir case was reported by ARY news which focuses on significant advancements and starting Revelation this is a synopsis of their broadcast with the dates.

Geo News:

- 23-year old BBA student named Mustafa Amir disappeared on January 6 after going to his friend Armaghan Qureshi's home in Karachi's defense housing society are ransom demand of 20 million was made to his family in order to free him on January 25 are ransom call was received and a formal complaint was filed following the ransom phone call the CIA to over the investigation.
- February 9: Armaghan was arrested after a raid that resulted in an armed struggle the keys aspect Armaghan Qureshi was taken into custody.
- February 14: Following an argument with the anti-violent crime cell (AVCC) inside his DHA house.
- February 20: Admitted to torturing and killing Mustafa saying he had beating him with an iron rod and set him burn in his vehicle close to the hub the iron rod that was used in the salt was found by police the main developments regarding the Mustafa Amir case that Geo News reported on between January and may are as follows are 23 year old previous student Mustafa Amir when is on January 6 after going to his friend in Karachi defense housing society ransom demand of 20 million was made to his family in order to free him.

ARY News:

- February 15: After filing a formal complaint the district south police made in initial effort to resolve the matter but the CIA took over the instrument after the ransom call.
- February 16: Near Hub Chowki, a burnt out automobile and cheered body while discovered they were eventually identified as belonging to Mustafa the Eidhi Foundation buried the body.
- February 21: Following a gun fights with the Anti-Violence Crime Cell (AVCC) in DHA house. The main suspect, Armaghan Qureshi, was taken into custody. At Armaghan's house, police discovered stains of blood and Mustafa's phone.

- February 24: DIG Muqaddas Haider confirmed that the burnt car and body recovered from her likely those of Mustafa Amir DNA profiling was being conducted to confirm the victim's identity.
- February 27: The Sindh high Court directed authorities to produce Armaghan before the court following the police failure to secure his demand February and burning Mustafa alive he revealed that he had beaten Mustafa with an iron rod and then set him on fire in his car near hub police recovered the iron rod used in the assault.

3.8 Data Extraction Criteria

Analyze reports by January 6 (disappearance) to February 20 (confession) for clarity.

Track the frequency and consistency of updates.

Table 1: Classification Framework

Category	Framing	Tone	Key themes
Sub-category	Institutional failure/ Police incompetence/ Mob violence/ Political influence	Publicist/ Fact-finding	Unbiased/ Injustice/ victim portrayal/ police liability / social influence
Coding example	Police foot-dragging	Condemnatory/ Disclosure	Personal side of the tragedy/ emotional vs. forensic details (technical)

3.9 Analytical Framework

The study concuted under the light of framing theory (Entman, 1993). In Despite notably each channel highlight ARY draw attention police incompetence (e.g., delayed FIR, failed raids). Geo emphasizes forensic evidence (DNA, weapon recovery) and legal process (court directives).

The study also verfiy the Agenda setting theory (Mc Combs & Shaw, 1972). Determine priority differences.

ARY: random drama (January 6, 2025) arrest spectacle (February 14 shootout)

GEO: judicial process (FIR, DNA tests) admitting details (February 20)

3.9 Data Analysis

Table 1: Thematic analysis

Theme	Police Duty	Accused Portrayal	Victim Framing
ARY concentration	news As a result of local police ineptitude, CIA took charge	A victim was tortured by an elite killer (class angle)	Innocent student Assassination (emotional)
Geo concentration	news DNA match verified by DIG (systemic trust)	Innocent life taken (emotional)	Identified body by forensic reports (fact based)

3.10 Discourse Analysis

3.10.1 Language Comparison

ARY: Uses emotionally charged language describing the murder as brutal and revelations as outrageous

Geo: Alleged killer, judicial remand (objective terminology)

3.10.2 Frequency & Depth

ARY: Occasional climaxes (ransom call, shootout arrest)

Geo: Constant streamlines (FIR DNA court sessions).

3.11 Theoretical Analysis

3.11.1 Framing Differences

ARY's framing presents a narrative that is both alarming and morally charged.

Geo: Endorse the judicial narrative (bureaucratic procedures)

3.22.2 Agenda setting impact

ARY's focus on police negligence might encourage public suspicion.

Geo's emphases on forensic/ courts strengthen systemic legitimacy.

3.12 Ethical Concerns

Fair representation: Analyzing equal screen time for both channels for better clarity and ensures accuracy.

Bias Relief: Use precise quotes to avoid explanatory distortion.

Source Citation: Note the time of all broadcast references (e.g., "ARY 9 PM, February 14 ")

3.12 Limitations

Scope: Excluding social media fragments and talk shows.

Subjectivity: Articulation requires inter-rater reliability checks to ensure consistency.

4. KEY FINDINGS/RESULTS

ARY news depicts the case as a systematic failure (focuses on police negligence and elite exemption). On the other hand Geo News approached it as a matter of penal legislation. This difference in framing likely influenced their audiences ARY's coverage may drive calls for structural reform, while Geo's reporting could lead viewers to focus on legal proceedings.

Figure 1: Coverage frequency

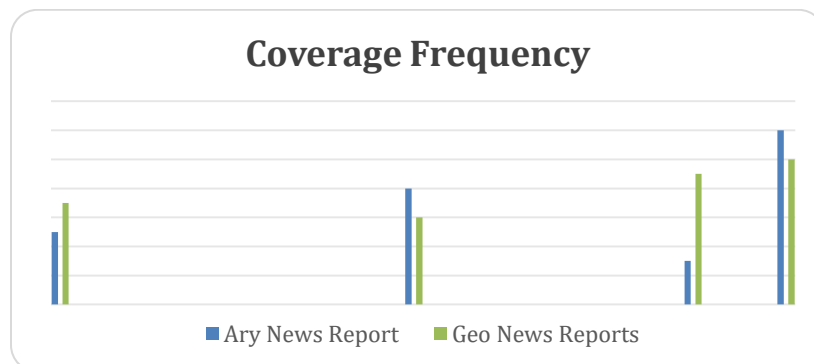


Figure 2: Framing Focus (ARY News)

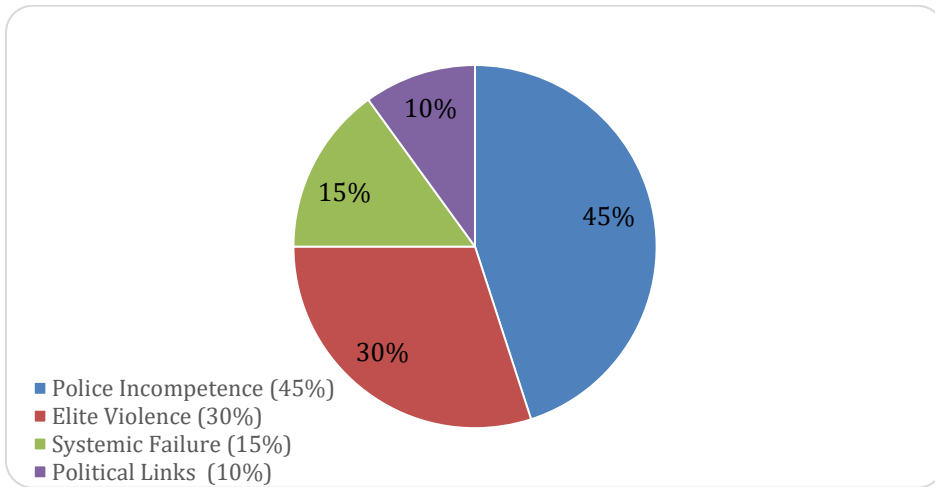


Figure 3: Framing Focus (GEO News)

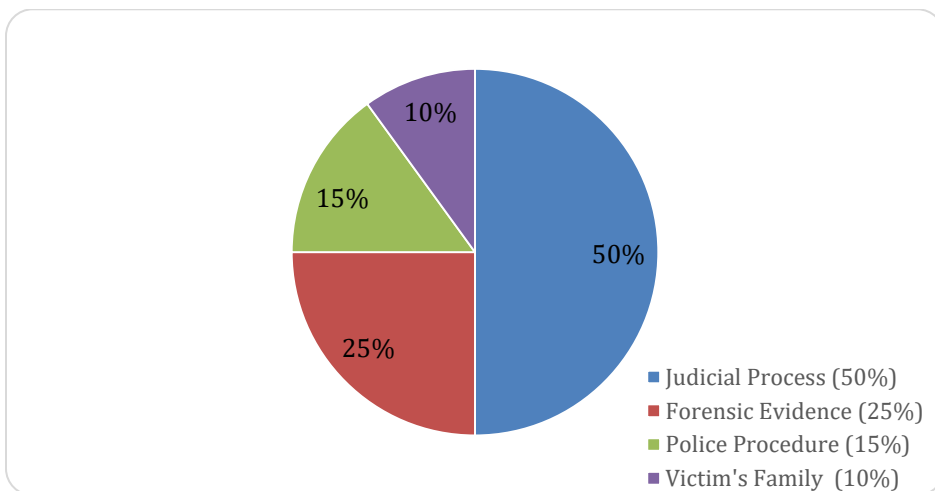


Figure 4: Emotional Intensity (GEO & ARY News)

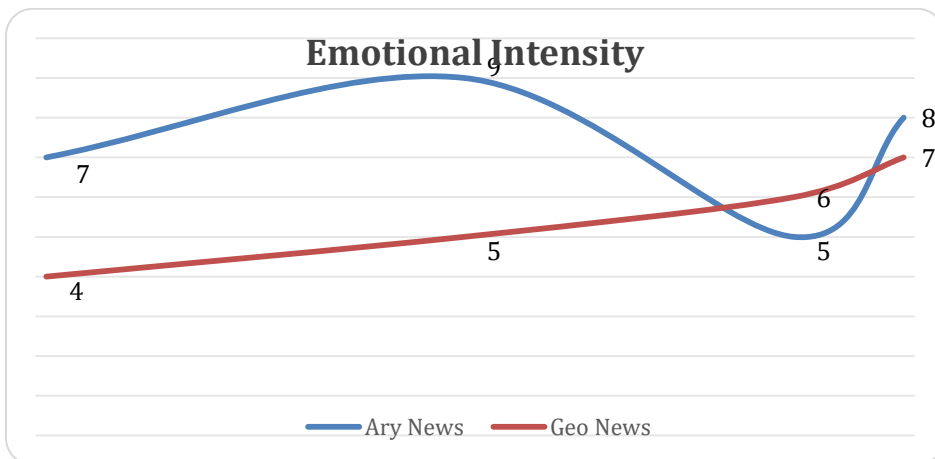
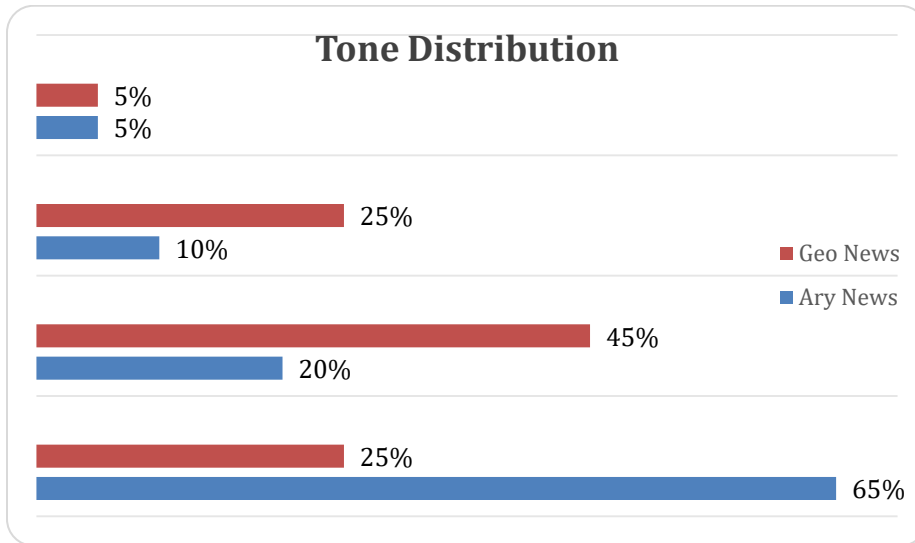


Figure 5: Tone Distribution (GEO & ARY News)



5. CONCLUSION

The coverage of the Mustafa Amir Murder case by ARY News and Geo News differs significantly in terms of story construction, thematic focus, and framing, according to a comparative content analysis. In order to provoke public indignation, ARY News uses emotionally charged language to highlight systematic flaws, police incompetence, and the class dynamics of the crime. By emphasizing forensic evidence, court procedures, and procedural transparency, Geo News, on the other hand, took a fact-based stance and strengthened public confidence in legal institutions.

The media's significant influence in influencing public opinion and conversation on high-profile crime is shown by these disparate depictions. While the impartial reporting of Geo News may increase trust in the legal system, the sensationalist framing of ARY News may incite calls for structural reforms. The results support Mc Combs and Shaw's Agenda-Setting Theory and Entman's Framing Theory by showing how theme priority and selective emphasis can influence public opinion and policy discussions.

The study does, however, acknowledge many shortcomings, such as its exclusive focus on two broadcasters and its omission of digital media outlets. To evaluate the long term effects of media framing on societal transformation, future studies could broaden their focus to include social media narratives and longitudinal analysis. In Pakistan 's changing media environment, this study ultimately emphasizes the necessity of responsible, balanced journalism to guarantee truthful coverage and educated public debate. By critically analyzing media biases and their effects on society, this study adds to larger discussions about justice reform, media ethics, and the relationship between public accountability and journalism.

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