



Election 2013: editorial treatment of major political parties by daily Nawa-i-Waqt during the time period between March 1, 2013 to May 9, 2013

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Abstract

This research study was an effort to search out the editorial treatment of major political Parties (Pakistan Muslim League-N, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and Pakistan People's Party) by Daily Nawa-i-Waqt during the time period between March 1, 2013 to May 9, 2013. Content analysis was used and all the editorials and editorial notes published on the editorial pages were taken as the Unit of Analysis. Keeping in mind the nature of the present study, researchers selected all the papers published during the study's stipulated period for analysis. Overall, 70 newspapers were analyzed. Coding sheet is used to limit the number of categories. To control the problem of data collection scientifically and for data reduction, ten columns a coding sheet was created. The findings of the study indicate that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published more favorable sentences for PML-N. Outcomes of the study also illustrate that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published a huge amount of sentences in favor of PTI also. It also published unfavorable sentences for PTI. Results depict that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt

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published nothing in favor of PPP as comparison with PML-N and PTI. It portrays that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published a huge amount of sentences against PPP.

Keywords: Editorial treatment, Nawa-i-Waqt, unit of analysis

Introduction

The 2013 elections in Pakistan are different from the last elections held in 2008. This election happened at that important point in our history when the country is facing suicidal attacks and people are worried because of suicide bombers, and every segment of the population in Pakistan is facing problems just as shortage of power, gas, flour and other basic necessities of life. The recent election in 2013 was serious to the existence of Pakistan as a nation. It is also more important for Pakistan for its global perception. A large number of scholars argue that the elected governments in Pakistan always serve and save their own interests. However, many research studies show that democratically elected countries are economically more prosperous. Democracy creates unquestionably long term effects on a country which are more beneficial. The people remain uncertain as to whether the election would be free and fair, although everyone, including the observers, remains clueless as to how they might be rigged. The fear of suicide attacks has virtually eliminated the fun of the exercise as people are reluctant to attend meetings and rallies. Workers are sometimes dragged to the meetings against the wishes of their loved ones (Madni, 2013).

Mass media is a most important factor for bringing purposive and positive change in society. Media plays a very dynamic role in formulating, reshaping and reflecting public opinion: mass media provide a platform for people to connect with the world. The media generate strong social and cultural effects upon society. According to theorists such as Louis Wirth and Talcott Parsons the importance of mass media as great tool of social control. After the twenty first century the two-way relationship between mass media and public opinion is beginning to change because of the rise of the internet and new technologies. Lerner stated “while there is a heavy emphasis on the expanding of the mass media in developing societies, the penetration of the central authority into the daily consciousness of the mass has to overcome profound resistance” (Yaser, 2009).

The press is a central element because it provides a platform for discussing national, international, political and social issues. As the national English daily newspaper “The News” noted, “The press has in fact replaced what think tanks and political parties in other countries would do. Columnists engage in major debates and discussions on issues ranging from national security to the social sector. The competitive nature of politics helps to ensure press freedom, because the media often serve as a forum for political parties, commercial, religious, and other interests, as well as influential individuals, to compete with and criticize each other publicly. Islamic beliefs, which are

taught in the public schools, are widely reflected by the mass media. Although the press does not criticize Islam as such, leaders of religious parties and movements are not exempt from public scrutiny and criticism". Privately owned newspapers freely discuss public policy and criticize the government. They report remarks made by opposition politicians, and their editorials reflect a wide range of views. The effort to ensure that newspapers carry their statements or press releases sometimes leads to undue pressure by local police, political parties, ethnic, sectarian, and religious groups, militant student organizations, and occasionally commercial interests. Such pressure is a common feature of journalism and can include physical violence, sacking of offices, intimidation and beating of journalists, and interference with distribution of newspapers. Journalists working in small provincial towns and villages encounter more difficulties from arbitrary local authorities and influential individuals than their big-city counterparts do. Violence against and intimidation of journalists, however, is a nationwide problem (Sajjad, 2012).

During the period of March 1, 2013 to May 9, 2013, many important events took place on the political scenario of Pakistan. Pakistan is a Frontline state in the War against Terrorism but there are some serious threats to the security and economy of Pakistan. Pakistan has suffered a lot due to this so called War against Terrorism, which was announced by a dictator, Musharraf, as the War of Pakistan. Due to this policy of adopting the war as our own, it has been shifted to the settled areas of Pakistan. Elections 2013, in Pakistan have great significance in the history of Pakistan. These elections are being held on a stage when the country is facing suicidal attacks and bomb blasts and people of Pakistan are facing shortage of energy, poverty & unemployment. It was a time when a new political force in the form of PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) came on screen after the huge procession that was held at Minar-e-Pakistan on October 30, 2012. After the emergence of PTI, it became a big threat for all political parties especially for PML-N. The main focus of PTI was youth and they started to motivate youth on the name of Change and for engaging youth PTI changed the procession style of Political Parties. After that, when PML-N considered PTI real threat, it also started to give importance to youth, and it announced different packages for youth through Punjab Government, i.e. Laptop Scheme, Scholarships, Internships, Jobs & Punjab youth festival etc. PML-N also spent lots of money in traditional and social media. During the election campaigns both political parties PML-N and PTI used media forcefully and main theme of their media packages was to attract youth. In view of the above scenario, it will be a matter of great interest to explore Pakistani Urdu newspaper Nawa-i-Waqt to check their editorial treatment of three mainstream political parties (Pakistan Muslim League-N, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf and Pakistan People's Party). The purpose of the selection of Daily Nawa-i-Waqt was that there was a general perception about Nawa-i-Waqt that it was a newspaper that favors PML-N because both PML-N and Daily Nawa-i-Waqt have the same ideology and policy.

Literature review

Mass media is a main influential key of the political process is key: the media give opportunity to discuss directly with large amount of people. During election campaigns, mass media plays very important role. Both the electronic and print media are obviously a significant part of the democratic political system. Politicians fully utilize mass media during election campaigns and on Election Day as well, as the races go on till the end of polling day (Baadur, 2004).

Despite journalistic conventions of objectivity and balance, the media contribute to the political process in a variety of ways (as in the selection of news topics and the priority assigned to stories). The media also contribute directly to political debate, through editorials and 'commentary' journalism. As we have already seen, the media are significant political organizations, which exert great influence over the political process. The media just do not disseminate the political messages of political parties and political leaders, but also one of the major participants to political debate (Bansal, 2007). Bardhan *et al.* (2007) stated "allegations of political bias in the media are common, although there is considerable controversy concerning the nature of this bias: neither liberals nor conservatives are pleased. Conservatives allege that the media exhibit a liberal bias. On the other hand, liberals allege that the media exhibit a pro-corporate, plutocratic bias. However, we believe such charges rely on a faulty and simplistic analysis of the American political and economic spectrum (for a better understanding of that spectrum, see the linked diagrams, politics and economics). The truth is that the apparent liberalism of some of the mass media is primarily cultural, and rarely economic. In effect, and like most other American institutions, the mass media advance the economic interests of the wealthy few at the cost of the interests, and values, of the majority; and the self-indulgent, empire-building interests of the wealthy few are not those of either liberals or cultural conservatives". According to Hillygus (2005) "A naïve assumption of liberal democracy is that citizens have adequate knowledge of political events. But how do citizens acquire the information and knowledge necessary for them to use their votes other than by blind guesswork? They cannot possibly witness everything that is happening on the national scene, still less at the level of world events. The vast majority are not students of politics. They don't really know what is happening, and even if they did, they would need guidance as to how to interpret what they knew. Since the early twentieth century, this has been fulfilled through the mass media. Few today in the United States can say that they do not have access to at least one form of the mass media, yet political knowledge is remarkably low. Although political information is available through the proliferation of mass media, different critics support that events are shaped and packaged, frames are constructed by politicians and newscasters, and ownership influences between political actors and the media provide important short hand clues to how to interpret and understand the news".

Bartels (2010) quoted “Newspapers are so important that even the manner in which elections are conducted and campaigns are managed have undergone considerable transformation to make more effective use of available media. This can be seen in countries like the United States, the United Kingdom and France. This includes the design of speaker platforms at political conventions, the timing of important releases to match the deadlines of newspapers and efforts to make the headlines. All the various political events including the nominating of candidates by parties, the design and implementation of campaign itineraries, the holding of various types of meetings and rallies, matter to the media and the people being served. Newspapers therefore need to follow developments avidly, to observe and report on what they have seen, what they have heard”. Jamieson & Campbell (2005) stated, “High quality empirical evidence from shows that mass media influences voters, but it is not clear that the media imparts a bias. It could be that improving access to any media informs voters and prompts them to turn against an embattled incumbent. A group of Yale researchers (Daniel Bergan, Alan Gerber and Dean Karlan) conducted an interesting experiment. Three weeks before the 2005 gubernatorial election, the researchers contacted about 1,800 people living in the Washington area, and offered half of them (chosen at random) a free subscription to a daily newspaper. Half of those lucky chosen one (also chosen at random) received a subscription to the Washington Post, a center-left newspaper (favoring the Democratic candidate). The other half received a subscription to the Washington Times, a newspaper known for its conservative opinions (favoring the Republican candidate). The authors were then able to obtain electoral data to study the effects of the newspapers on participation in the election (the vote itself is anonymous, but not whether one has voted), and they carried out a complementary telephone survey. It was not a good time for President Bush and the Republicans. The bad news about the war in Iraq, in particular, dominated both newspapers. Nevertheless, the researchers showed that the Washington Times had the tendency to present bad news in a more favorable light than the Washington Post. It could therefore be expected that the two newspapers had a different effect”.

Methodology

Research design describes an association between the research purpose and research method. This research study is intended to find out and analyze editorial treatment of major political parties of Pakistan i.e. Pakistan Muslim League- N, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf and Pakistan People’s Party by Daily Nawa-i-Waqt during the election campaign from March 1, 2013 to May 9, 2013. For this study quantitative content analysis was used to explore editorial treatment by Nawa-i-Waqt. Urdu newspaper Daily Nawa-i-Waqt from March 1, 2013 to May 9, 2013 was the Universe of the present study. All the editorials and editorial notes published on the editorial pages of the selected papers discussing the three political parties, i.e. PML-N, PTI and PPP during this period were taken as the Unit of Analysis. The Researchers selected all the papers published during the study’s stipulated

period for analysis. The reason behind the selection of all the newspapers is that during the selected period so many important incidents occurred. Overall, 70 newspapers were analyzed. Coding sheet is used to limit the number of categories. 10 column coding sheet was used to handle the problem of data collection and data reduction.

Coding sheet

Daily Nawa-i-Waqt									
Date	PML(N)			PTI			PPP		
	*F	UF	N	F	UF	N	F	UF	N

* F= Favorable, UN= Unfavorable & N= Neutral

One Line= 17 to 25 Words Approximately

Findings and discussion

The analysis of the selected Daily Nawa-i-Waqt treatment of Election 2013 shows that newspaper has specified a reasonable space in editorials and editorial notes published during election campaign 2013.

The findings of the study indicate that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published more favorable sentences in the month of April (88) followed by March (80) and May (26). Results also show that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published very little amount of unfavorable sentences in the entire period. It also published neutral sentences more in March (41) followed by May (33) and April (28) in editorials and editorial notes (Figure 1).

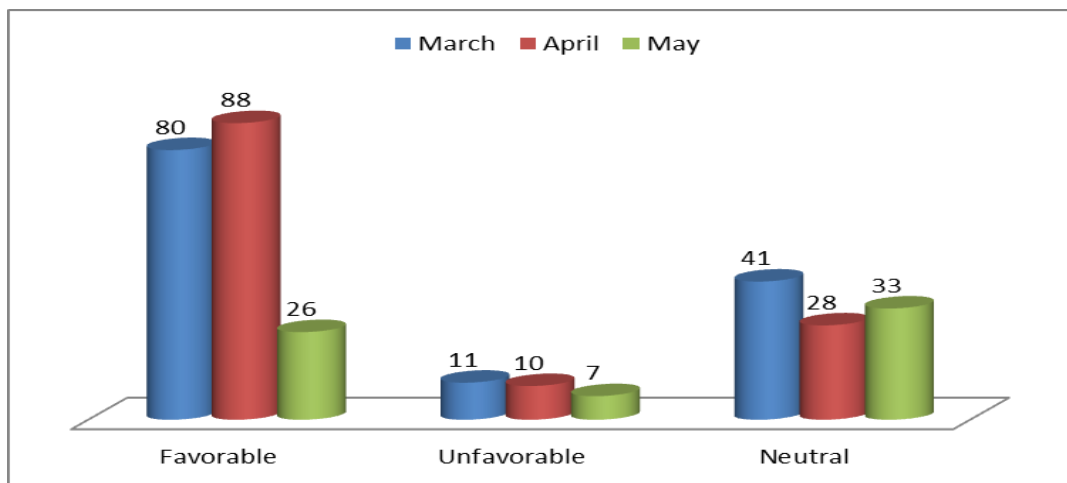


Figure 1: Coverage to PML-N

Outcomes of the study illustrate that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published a huge amount of sentences in favor of PTI also. It shows that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published more favorable sentences in the month of April (52) followed by March (45) and April (19). Where it published favorable sentences, it also published unfavorable sentences. Daily Nawa-i-waqt published more unfavorable sentences in the month of March (32). Furthermore, It published more neutral sentences in the month of May (27) (Figure 2).

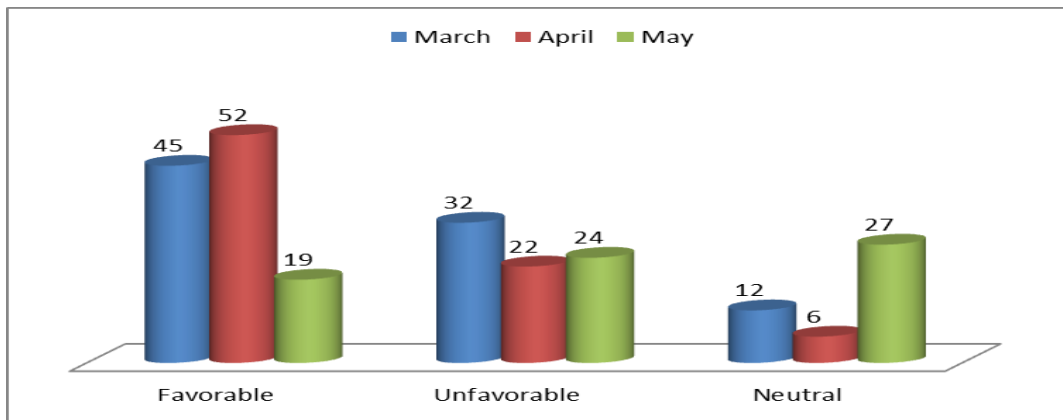


Figure 2: Coverage to PTI

Figure 3 depicts that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published nothing in favor of PPP as comparison with PML-N and PTI. It has published just 12 sentences in the favor of PPP in the month of April. Moreover, It portrays that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published a huge amount of sentences against PPP. It shows that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published more unfavorable sentences in the month of April (55) followed by May (44) and March (28). In terms of neutral sentences, it was observed that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published a very little amount of neutral sentences.

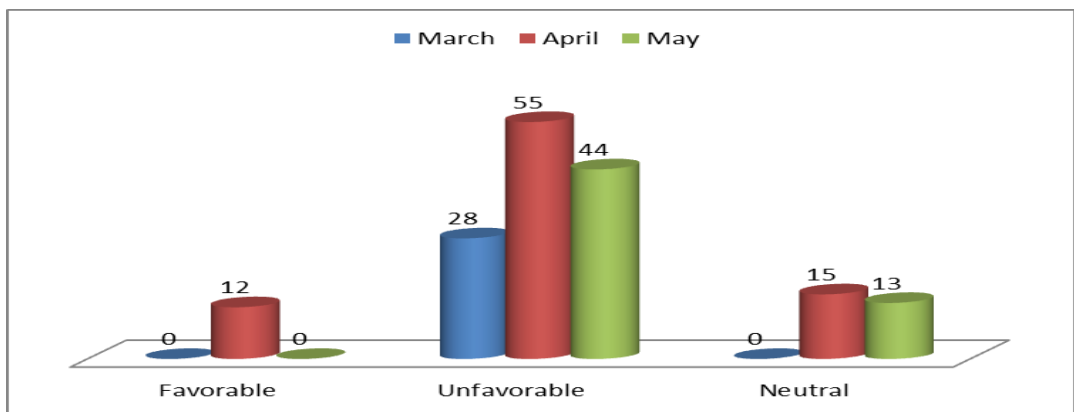


Figure 3: Coverage to PPP

Comparative analysis of political parties in terms of treatment shows that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published a great number of sentences (194) in favor of PML-N followed by PTI (116) and PPP (12). Analytical review also indicates that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published a huge amount of sentences against PPP (127). In terms of Neutral sentences, it also reveals that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published more neutral sentences for PML-N than others (Figure 4).

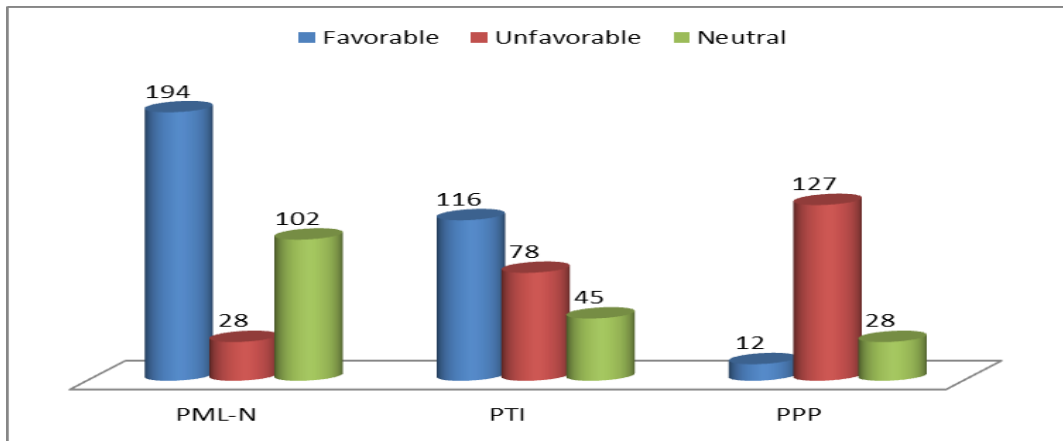


Figure 4: Coverage to political parties by Nawa-i-Waqt

Conclusion

This research effort was designed to dig out the editorial treatment of major political Parties (Pakistan Muslim League-N, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and Pakistan People’s Party) by Daily Nawa-i-waqt during the time period between March 1, 2013 to May 9, 2013. This study was conducted during this time period in view of the general elections held on May 11, 2013. During the study, the researcher investigates about the comments and policy of newspapers towards the three mainstream political parties. Researcher tried to find out the favorable, unfavorable and neutral comments of selected newspaper towards the selected political parties.

The findings of the study indicate that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published more favorable sentences in the month of April (88) followed by March (80) and May (26) for PML-N. Outcomes of the study also illustrate that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published a huge amount of sentences in favor of PTI also. It shows that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published more favorable sentences in the month of April (52) followed by March (45) and April (19). It also published unfavorable sentences for PTI. Results depict that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published nothing in favor of the PPP as comparison with PML-N and PTI. It has published just 12 sentences in the favor of the PPP in the month of April. Moreover, It portrays that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published a huge amount of sentences against PPP. Overall,

comparative analysis of political parties in terms of treatment shows that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published a great number of sentences (194) in favor of PML-N followed by PTI (116) and PPP (12). Analytical review also indicates that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published a huge amount of sentences against PPP (127).

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