

**RESEARCH PAPER****Perception of Youth about Coverage of Political Problems in Newspapers of District Karak, KP****<sup>1</sup>Nadir Saeed Sarhadi\* <sup>2</sup>Zahir Ullah Khan <sup>3</sup>Wali Ullah**

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**\*Corresponding Author:** Sarhadi025@gmail.com**ABSTRACT**

The current study identifies the perception of youth about coverage of political problems in newspapers of district Karak, KPK in light of agenda setting and framing theories. The four leading Urdu dailies: The Karak Time, Awami Dastak, Sada-e-Lawaghar and Janisar-e-Pakistan were selected. The data were collected through written questionnaire, using simple random sampling technique in both genders and students of different educational background, aged between 18-30 years at Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak (KKKU.K) and other affiliated collages, (Government post graduate College Karak (GPGC) and Government Degree College/ GDC), analyzed by using SPSS. The results indicate that these four leading papers covered the political problems on the agenda of politicians to propagate their political ideologies to the common masses to gain their political gain and given more salience to maximize their profit. Youth in District Karak, KPK have a negative perception about coverage of political problems in newspapers.

**Keywords:** Agenda Setting, Framing and Political Ideology, Newspapers Coverage**Introduction**

Print media includes those media of communication which are controlled by space rather than time. It can be read at any available time and can be kept for record. Print media is the printed version of telling the news, primarily through newspapers, books, magazines and other forms of printed journals. Before the invention and use of printing presses, printed materials had to be written by hand. It was a painstaking process that made mass distribution impossible.

Print media is one of the elementary forms of mass communication. It contains Book, Newspapers, Periodicals, Newsletters, Pamphlets and Leaflets, Billboards, Posters and other forms of printed journals. But, the researcher investigated about the coverage of newspaper in all over print media. The newspapers cover different issue in different regions, but in the current study the researcher covers the perception of youth about coverage of political problems in newspaper of District Karak, KPK.

A newspaper is piece of writing which holding news, information, and different types of advertisements frequently published on low quality or price paper is called newsprint. The material could be common/superior attention, and it is usually circulated every day or one day in week (Encyclopedia, 2022). The newspaper, often referred to as the "Fourth Estate," plays a critical role in democratic societies and is considered by many as the fifth pillar of the state. Newspapers serve as a watchdog, scrutinizing the actions and policies of the government, holding it accountable for its decisions and ensuring transparency in its operations. (Mhango, 2014, Quackenbush, 2013).

## **The role of Newspapers in District Karak**

The district Karak newspapers providing information, news, and insights to the local population they serve as a primary source of local news, covering a wide range of topics, including political events, social issues, and local government activities. Newspapers also play a vital role in political awareness among the people Karak. They report on regional and national political developments, elections, and government policies, encouraging political discussions and public engagement in the democratic process and fostering political dialogue and civic participation and contribute to the preservation and promotion of the district's social and cultural events (Shabeer Ullah, et al., 2020). Local newspapers in Karak often include educational content, such as articles on health, agriculture, and technology, benefiting residents in areas where access to formal education might be limited. In regions with limited internet access, newspapers play a critical role in bridging the digital divide, ensuring that even those without online connectivity can stay informed about local and national news. Newspapers in the district Karak, KPK, mostly fulfill a diverse range of, political awareness (Rahman, 2021).

Despite these reservations, there is a subset of young people who actively engage with newspapers for their political coverage. They view print media as a reliable source of in-depth analysis and value its role in providing a comprehensive understanding of complex political problems. This group often perceives newspapers as a bastion of journalistic integrity, appreciating the depth and context they offer compared to more ephemeral online sources (Yaseen, & Shah, 2020).

The perception of youth regarding the coverage of political problems in newspapers is diverse and influenced by various factors. While some view traditional newspapers with skepticism and seek alternative sources for their political information, others find value in the depth and integrity that print media can provide. Understanding these perspectives is crucial for media organizations seeking to bridge the gap and engage effectively with the youth demographic in matters of political discourse (Mhango, 2014). According to Hunt (1850), the growth of the print media was ongoing from the time of the Johannes Gutenberg when he initiated testing with printing in France in 1440. The dominance of the print media is largely due to its historical experience, especially its connection to freedom struggles and movements for social liberation, reform and improvement (Patil, 2011).

## **District Karak Political Problems**

The district Karak is belonging to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province Pakistan. It consists of three tehsils. It is located in the south of district Kohat and also their boundaries are connected with Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Mianwali and Waziristan districts (Report, 2009). The district Karak is not considered in the list of development districts because of political clashes among the politicians. There are three MPAs as per three tehsil, and one MNA for whole district, there are great political issues among the general people and political personality. The District Karak is not able to touch the line of development because of political instability in District Karak. There is no equal distribution of rights such as using the faultier material in every government infrastructure, especially in road construction, and enlisted those incompetent candidates for post through commission.

The district Karak problems are solved by the quantities of the vote instead of equal distribution of right among the general people. The politician induces the discrimination by providing job opportunities to those who have large amount of vote. The politician exploited the general people of the District Karak through the oil & gas development company limited (OGDCL) organization which aren't provided proper gas to people. The people of District Karak are deprived from the well facilitated educational institutions, hospital, and police station etc., because of political conflict among the politicians. As we know about the current flooding disaster in 2022 which destroys most of the infrastructure due to the

mismanagement for the disaster, and also too many dams construction is pending because of political clash (Relief, 2022).

### **Literature Review**

A literature review is a review of scholarly sources that make available an outline of a particular topic. The current study literature belongs to newspapers coverage regarding political issues. Print media and electronic media both play an important function to lead the society toward positive and negative direction. In district Karak, the people utilized print media to protected wide coverage of messages through different newspapers and other publishing tools. Newspapers as a traditional media play key character in the coverage of political problems in any district.

### **Newspaper as a Political Source**

Newspapers have evolved over centuries to become one of the most influential political sources in modern society. This transformation can be attributed to several key factors. Firstly, newspapers emerged as a means of disseminating information to a wide audience; as a result, they became a primary source of news, including political developments (Bari, & Soomro, 2021).

Over time, newspapers developed dedicated sections and columns specifically focused on politics. This specialization allowed for in-depth analysis, opinion pieces, and investigative reporting on political matters. As the demand for political information grew, newspapers began to employ trained journalists who were tasked with covering and scrutinizing the activities of governments, politicians, and political parties (Ishaq, 2020).

### **Media Influences on Political Behavior**

The establishment of editorial boards and journalistic standards further solidified newspapers as reliable political sources. These standards emphasized accuracy, objectivity, and fact-checking, ensuring that the information presented to the public was credible and trustworthy. This reputation for accuracy and integrity enhanced the credibility of newspapers as a political source (Khan, 2019). Newspapers played a pivotal role in shaping public opinion on political issues through their editorial endorsements and commentary. The opinions expressed in influential newspapers could sway public sentiment and, in some cases, even impact election outcomes. (Wojcieszak, & Smith, 2014).

Newspapers became a significant political source through a combination of historical development, specialized reporting, journalistic standards, editorial influence, and adaptation to digital technology. Their role as a trusted source of political information has been crucial in informing and shaping public discourse, making them a cornerstone of political communication in modern societies (Jacobi, Kleinen & Ruigrok, 2016).

According to Broersma, and Graham, (2015) like most of other media, newspapers seek to notify, encourage and entertain their audiences and lay before them presenting messages of national, provincial, state and city scope. Newspapers seem more regularly than once a week. Thus, their writers and editors, although usually part of small group of employee that must meet targets the same as other media personal, often have more time to dig into problems and circumstances than do those on everyday newspapers.

### **Media Ownership Agenda and Political Economy**

Newspaper ownership exerts a profound influence on the content, tone, and overall character of a publication. This impact can be seen in various ways. Firstly, the ideological and political leanings of the owner or owning entity often shape the editorial stance of the

newspaper. Owners who have strong political affiliations or specific ideological perspectives may use their newspaper as a platform to advance their beliefs. This can result in a publication that leans towards a particular political party or agenda. (Thembo, 2013).

Owners who prioritize profitability may exert pressure on editorial decisions and editorial independence to generate revenue, potentially leading to a focus on sensationalism or entertainment-driven content at the expense of more substantive reporting. Conversely, owners who are more concerned with public service and journalistic integrity may be willing to invest in quality journalism even if it is not immediately profitable (Shmykova, 2013).

This concentration of ownership can result in a narrower range of perspectives being represented in the media landscape, potentially limiting the diversity of ideas and viewpoints available to the public (Jan, 2013). The newspaper ownership exerts a substantial influence on the publication's content, editorial stance, financial priorities, and overall character. It shapes the way news is presented to the public and can significantly impact the diversity of voices and perspectives represented in the media landscape (Rennhoff, & Wilbur, 2012).

### **Media Algorithms and Citizen Perceptions**

A media algorithm refers to a set of computational rules and processes that determine how content is selected, organized, and presented to users on digital media platforms. These algorithms are employed by social media platforms, search engines, streaming services, and other online content providers to optimize the user experience and increase engagement. They use a variety of data points, such as user behavior, preferences, location, and interactions, to tailor content recommendations to individual users (Majid & Boudreau 1995).

Media algorithms play a pivotal role in shaping citizen perception in today's digital age. These algorithms are sophisticated systems designed to curate and deliver content to users based on their preferences, behaviors, and engagement patterns (Shabeer Ullah, et al., 2021). While they aim to enhance user experience and increase engagement, they also inadvertently influence the way individuals perceive the world around them. By tailoring content to match a user's existing interests and beliefs, media algorithms create echo chambers that reinforce pre-existing opinions, limiting exposure to diverse viewpoints (Jan, 2013).

Njeze, (2013) assumed that this phenomenon has significant implications for society. On one hand, it fosters a sense of validation and belonging among like-minded individuals, creating a sense of community within digital spaces. On the other hand, it can lead to the spread of misinformation and the exacerbation of polarized viewpoints.

The media might or might not work as realistic watchdogs. Editors and journalists enjoy substantial independence in deciding what is important and what is not, and these selections influence the perception of people around which matters are related and to what extent (Puglisi, & Snyder.2008).

Newspaper use is usually associated to superior political belief and inferior political cynicism; backup a negative connection between television use and political belief and a positive one between newspaper use and political belief. Newspapers, still, provide more thematic and antique context than episodic reporting, highlight more difficult problems and policies than simpleminded planned terms and game framing (Lee & Wei, 2008).

Moreover, media algorithms can inadvertently amplify sensationalism and clickbait content, prioritizing engagement metrics over journalistic integrity. This can lead to the

proliferation of sensationalized news stories and the spread of misleading or false information. As a result, citizens may struggle to discern credible sources from sensationalist or biased content, further eroding trust in the media landscape, (Walgrave, 2006). Ultimately, the relationship between media algorithms and citizen perception is a complex interplay that requires careful consideration. Striking a balance between personalization and exposure to diverse perspectives is crucial for fostering an informed, engaged, and cohesive society in the digital age (Eilders, 2000).

### **Research Hypotheses**

**H1:** Youth in District Karak, KPK have a negative perception of the coverage of political problems in newspapers.

**H2:** The perception of youth about the coverage of political problems in newspapers is influenced by political affiliation.

### **Theoretical Framework**

There were two theories are implicated on the current study “perception of youth about coverage of political problems in newspapers of District Karak, KPK. The first one is Agenda Setting Theory which states that mass media organizations determine what the common population reflects newsworthy by determining how much consideration a news story receives. The term salience transfer is usually used and mentions to the ability of the media to transfer their agendas onto the civic. The second applicable is “Framing theory”, which is defined as the way in which we explain media offered to us, and that these frames purpose as a way to establish public senses. Since the media chooses what we view and how we view it, they also affected the way in which we understand information. In a sense, they state us what to think about, and how to think about it.

A research gap is issue that has not been lectured or answered in previous studies. There is a huge gap among the current and previous research regarding to the district Karak. In the previous studies the researcher covered the different issues from the different aspect. Saeed, and Rehman Ullah, (2021), investigated that how the university student use the news media among them for fulfill their needs. Jan and Rehman, (2020), investigated about the usability and accessibility of internet by the university students. Sha, Khan, Tahsin Ullah, and Shehr Yar, (2021), find out the satisfaction of District Karak users about library resources and their services. Salman, (2011), interpreted about the educational technology role at primary school level in District Karak. But current study consist the perception of youth about coverage of political problems in newspaper of District Karak, KPK. Now there are huge gap among these all research, the researcher successfully filled this gap in the current study.

### **Material and Methods**

This study was employing a quantitative research design. A comprehensive questionnaire was constructed including close ended questions, to get response from the respondent. The questionnaire was pretested on a small sample of respondents to ensure its reliability and validity. The whole District Karak was the universe of the current study.

Equal participation of both ganders and students of the Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak (KKKU.K) and other affiliated collages, (Government post graduate College Karak (GPGC) and Government Degree College/ GDC) were included in the survey. The required age for qualified samples was between 18-30 years old.

To measure the nature and frequency of coverage of four leading Urdu language newspapers have been selected. The rationale behind selecting these newspapers is that all

these fur dailies are popular and widely read papers in district Karak. These newspapers have the ability and strength to make and mold the public opinion. The variables space and frequency have been measured to bring out the phenomenon in the light of agenda setting and framing theory in these newspapers.

The researchers choose the simple random sampling technique for the data collection,. There were 384 sample sizes from the above mention population; through the Slovin's formula,  $(n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2})$ . Data was analyzed by using statistical software like SPSS. A two-step PLS-SEM technique is used to test the hypotheses and evaluate a conceptual model that consists of a measurement model and a structural model, evaluation of the measurement model. There are two types of variables are used in the current study. The first one is youths' perception, and the second one is newspaper coverage. The youths' perception is dependent variable and the newspaper coverage is independent variable in the current study.

### Data Analysis

The collected data was represented by statistical package of social science (SPSS) computer software. The results were obtained from almost 384 male/female respondents.

**Tables 1**  
**Covariance-Based Structural**

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Statements</b>	<b>SL</b>
Youth Perceptions	I contemplate about the role of newspapers in District Karak	0.482
	I read the newspapers for political purpose	0.484
	I take interest in political news	0.724
	I discuss political problems with your friends	0.866
	I take part in political campaigns	0.662
	Political coverage of newspaper has influential effect on political polarization and socialization	0.804
	Newspaper changes the perception of youth about political problems.	0.870
Newspapers Coverage	I sent written piece to newspaper about political problems	0.840
	Newspaper created fear environment for readers during news coverage	0.626
	Newspapers algorithm affected the political behavior	0.811
	Subjective role of newspapers in the coverage of political problems	0.650
	Dissemination of fake news about political problems in the newspapers	0.732
	It is the job of the newspaper to solve the political problem in District Karak?	0.851
Political problems	District Karak Newspapers have agenda to get political economy?	0.896
	I signed petition on paper about political problems	0.863
	High political coverage of newspaper is strongly associated with shaping political behavior	0.785

**Tables 2**  
**Construct Validity and Reliability**

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>SFL</b>	<b>(CR)</b>	<b>(AVE)</b>
Youth Perception	YP1	0.482	0.855	0.597
	YP2	0.484		
	YP3	0.724		

	YP4	0.662		
	YP5	0.804		
	YP6	0.870		
	YP7	0.840		
Newspapers Coverage	NC1	0.626	0.769	0.529
	NC2	0.811		
	NC3	0.732		
	NC4	0.851		
Political Problem	PP1	0.896	0.912	0.722
	PP2	0.863		
	PP3	0.785		

As per authors, the collinearity threshold count should not be more than 10. So every value should be less than 10 in any situation. It is clear from the table that every value is beneath the threshold value, so collinearity is not present.

**Tables 3**  
**Latent Variable Correlation**

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Youth Perception	0.744	0.741
Newspaper Coverage	0.618	0.614

R-square demonstrates how the independent variable affects the variation of the dependent variable. The Factors in the model account for 51.9% of the variability in youth perception. In spite of this, 48.1% of the variance remains unexplained due to factors that are not included in the model.

**Tables 4**  
**Structural Estimates**

Hypothesized Path	B	t-value	P-values	Results
H1: YP	0.705	13.359	0.001	Accepted
H2: NC	0.124	2.72	0.003	Accepted

YP=Youth Perception, NC =Newspaper Coverage

Based on the university and affiliated collages results, we found that newspaper coverage and Political Problems had a significant negative impact on the youth perception in the university and affiliated collages. So, we found that our proposed hypotheses H1 and H2 are accepted for newspaper coverage and youth perception.

## Conclusion

To conclude the data, the current study was conducted within the framework of agenda setting and framing theory of the social science to investigate the Perception of Youth about Coverage of Political problems in newspapers of District Karak, KPK. The findings show that the newspapers of the district Karak cover those political problem which maximize their profit, Youth in District Karak, KPK have a negative perception about coverage of political problems in newspapers, newspapers is influenced by factors such as political affiliation, education level, and socio-economic status. Therefore, it is clear that the coverage of political problem in district Karak newspaper can create a vivid picture of about the vision of a political party and its performance.

The questionnaires are the best possible explanatory items for the investigation the researcher ever thought although there are so many other scales can be generated to explore the concept further. The present study made a significant contribution to the field

of political socialization which can be fruitful especially for those researchers who want to go further to investigate the area of political socialization and media impacts and how behavioral shifts occur in a mass society.

### **Recommendations**

The area of propagating the ideology of political is broad and wide. There are plenty of opportunities for future research works available for researchers. As the process of newspaper coverage is quite different from country to country, region to region, censorship, ownership, newspaper to newspaper, ethnicity, and economic status, can be much more influential in the coverage process therefore; the future research work can be based on any of the above agents. Since the process of political coverage of the newspaper is multifarious in nature therefore, there is a huge research opportunity for future research work available.

Controlling political impacts on newspapers necessitates a multifaceted approach aimed at upholding journalistic integrity and safeguarding the independence of editorial decisions. Firstly, it is imperative to establish and enforce clear ethical guidelines that prioritize principles such as accuracy, fairness, and impartiality. Editorial independence must be maintained, ensuring that decisions regarding coverage and content are made autonomously, free from undue political pressures. Diverse newsroom staffing, encompassing various political perspectives and backgrounds, is crucial for offering a broad spectrum of viewpoints in news coverage. Additionally, transparency in ownership and funding sources is essential.

Newspapers should openly disclose any potential conflicts of interest, enabling readers to assess potential biases. Rigorous fact-checking processes should be in place to verify the accuracy of information, bolstering the paper's credibility and trustworthiness. To prevent sensationalism and bias, a commitment to balanced reporting should be upheld, avoiding partisan language that could distort the news. Creating a clear distinction between news reporting and opinion pieces, and providing a platform for a diverse range of perspectives, helps maintain transparency and trust. Finally, implementing channels for reader feedback and appointing a public editor or ombudsman can serve as checks and balances, addressing concerns and ensuring accountability. Through these measures, newspapers can effectively navigate the complex landscape of political influence, prioritizing accurate, unbiased, and responsible reporting.



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