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## **PRINT MEDIA AND AGENDA SETTING ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH DAILIES IN PAKISTAN**

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### **Abstract**

A detailed analysis of media-public relations was carried out in this research paper by applying agenda-setting, and priming theories. The Basic research question was whether and how the media sets the public agenda. On the footprints of the previous studies, a mixed-method research strategy based on content and survey analysis was applied to investigate the relationship. The researcher took newspapers as a population of the content study and selected two mainstream English newspapers, The Nation and Daily Dawn for the period of nine months from 1st August 2020 to 30th April 2021 for sampling purposes. Five widely published news issues

during the study period include unemployment corruption, governance, corona, and inflation were selected. The results illustrate low  $> .17$  to moderate  $> .68$  relationships between media and public agenda on five issues of the study. In few issues, there were strong reverse correlations found. Another major finding of the study was the similarity in the media coverage and media agenda and there has not been any big difference between the agendas of both the newspapers.

## 1. Introduction

Media have placed a common person into a hot tub of news and information, with thousands of reporting actions occurring at the same time. The print and electronic media articulate what is and what is not imperative. The media does not simply distribute truthful facts but make an opinion on the issues facing society. About fact, they frequently may not choose or deny the day's news. McCombs (2002) as cited by Riaz (2008) that "writers and publishing supervisor direct their consideration to and shape audience perceptions on today's most compelling news by selecting and publishing content. The way editors shape their stories creates and redefines our images of the world. This is regarded as the media's agenda-setting role."

Agenda-setting is a concept and its name is derived from the idea that the media can recognize the significance of issues on their news agendas and then transmit them to the public agenda. He further quoted McCombs that over 75% of probable day-to-day news articles are excluded and never published in a traditional daily newspaper. Newspapers do not have enough room to publish every available item. There is no other option than choices. The majority of news is written in a larger and displayed prominently. Others are given inadequate devotion. Newspapers undoubtedly claim the editorial value of a report by placing the title, page, and duration.

According to agenda-setting, the audience gains power on issues through the media (print and electronic, social), incorporating similar interests in their agendas. The news media does not merely inform us about the world in general, but it also provides us with an important component of our world image. It also affects the significance of certain elements of such images. According to the agenda-setting theory, the media has an impact on public belief when it pays attention to certain issues while ignoring or avoiding others. People are more likely to learn about these topics as the mass media focuses and adopts the priority assigned to various subjects. The theory emphasizes learning rather than a shift in attitude or opinion. People usually hear about the topics and how essential they are on the media agenda. In addition, two other media effect theories, framing, and priming can be used to achieve valence effects on the general public's agenda.

Pakistani media is comparatively enjoying independence in content generation and dissemination since the democracy back on track in 2007 after a long military rule of General Pervez Musharraf. This independence has granted great leverage and freedom to the media outlets in their business. Raza (2014) stated that the rapid influx and expansion in electronic and print media in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Pakistan has changed and altered the information production and consumption patterns altogether. However, media has to face political, social, religious, and economic pressures in dealing with and existing among other social institutions. These pressures, sometimes, keep them away from the soul responsibilities and objectivity of journalism. To safeguard their interest, mass media prioritize and ignore some issues. Advertisers, extremists' groups, government regulations, party affiliations, media policies, internal and external pressures are the main factors that help and force media to set their agenda according to the situation. Agenda-setting function of Media has been observed particularly during the last two decades like, Lawyers movement 2007, Lal masjid, 2005, fall of General Musharraf, war-on-terror, law and order, restoration of democracy, elections 2008, 2013 and 2018, corruption, are few significant and widely covered media events.

The main aim of the present study is to examine the impact of the print media agenda on the public agenda in Pakistan. On the other hand, the research would concentrate on the print media's agenda-setting role in Pakistan on five national issues; corona, inflation, unemployment, governance, and corruption that these newspapers have widely covered. To investigate and analyze the association between the public agenda and the media agenda in Pakistan, content analysis and survey research methods are used, taking into consideration the scope and specifications of the research. For this purpose, two widely circulated newspapers Daily Dawn and The Nation were selected.

## **1.2 Issues of the Study**

Following are the particulars and context of the news issues:

### **1.2.1 Coronavirus**

The world faces an extraordinary public health emergency and consequent massive socio-economic impact due to the outbreak of a novel type of coronavirus known as COVID-19. Literature suggests the significance of media, as this pandemic has forced a lot of people into lockdown, making masses dependent on media for vital information during this global crisis. The mass media is the greatest powerful means for disseminating such drives to alleviate public anxiety and boost public confidence.

In Pakistan, the number of COVID-19 cases is steadily increasing. Nonetheless, as compared to developing countries, Pakistan has a lower-case fatality rate. Furthermore, a nationwide emergency was professed, resulting in quarantines, lockdowns, the closing of offices, the suspension of public transportation, schools, outpatient services, and the suspension of religious congregations (Ahmed et al. 2020).

A variety of initiatives were also launched by the electronic and print media, religious leaders, and NGOs. The media has begun to play an important part in raising consciousness, provided that conversant info, fostering individual protection and societal estrangement, inspiring people to donate in cash and kind, and ensuring high confidence for all forefront personnel, such as health care workers and law enforcement officers. Due to its wide coverage in the media, the issue has been included in this study.

### **1.2.2 Corruption**

Corruption, on the other hand, is a worldwide problem. Unfortunately, corruption, defined as the misuse of authority for personal advantage, is predominant in Pakistan. No stage, no structure, and no state-owned workplace are omitted from this. It has a widespread. It has infiltrated every state agency, including the legislature and judiciary, all of which are independent of the executive. It is not a stretch to say that this ailment is affecting the complete body of the state of Pakistan, which is sobbing under its weight. Per Transparency International's 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index, the incidence is so severe that Pakistan ranks 120<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries in terms of corruption.

Beforehand the newly elected PTI government came into power, Pakistan had been plagued by corruption for years (Khan, 2007). During the PTI rule, there has been extensive coverage of corruption in the media. Sitting Prime Minister accused the government of Nawaz Sharif of being accountable for Pakistan's rampant bribery, which was contributing to the country's demise. Similarly, many unproven corruption scandals were revealed in opposition to the Nawaz Sharif government.

In terms of anti-corruption, all the Pakistani print, electronic and digital media are keen to cover stories of corruption owing to their viral nature and tendency to spread further in a smaller period. Media in this regard has an agenda to get exclusives or stories that have greater traction

and scandal, intending to get as many eyes on their paper or outlet as possible. The Pakistani media is providing an important channel for broadcasting information about government, constitutional, and commercial practices in society, giving the public the right to grasp those in power responsible. The mass media significantly increases the politically aware risk of those uncovered for unethical practices while also encouraging critical civilian community awareness by finding, exposing, notifying, and humanizing around the adverse effects of corruption on the social order at large (Mendes, 2013). The mass media contributes to the political system's openness and accountability. Transparency is seen as a critical factor in evaluating the state of fairness around the world, emphasizing the value of a free press (Freedom House, 2019).

### 1.2.3 Unemployment

Pakistan is experiencing the worst unemployment condition in its history. Working with various individuals to acquire those revenues that are used to meet their daily desires is what the word "employment" usually refers to. Unemployment, on the other hand, is a stage in which people are actively looking for work and mentally preparing themselves to work at every pay level that previously happens in the viable market. Dependent on the necessity and relevance of the issue matter, it has many issues.

Since unemployment has become a major issue in Pakistan, it has caused both direct and indirect economic problems. Though, if facilities in Pakistan are used properly, this issue can be eliminated. There are various works obtainable on the subject that highlights the root cause and various consequences of rising unemployment rates. Kalim (2003) investigated the factors of joblessness in Pakistan. She investigates the association between real GDP growth rate, unemployment, and population growth. During the period 1986-1999, there is a constructive connection amongst populace and joblessness and a negative relationship between GDP and unemployment. The administration should keep population growth under control and use debt for beneficial tenacities. It is critical to improve the rule of law and regulate corruption to increase both domestic and foreign investment and reduce unemployment. Being widely covered of the issue in print media, it has been studied to bring out the possible association between media agenda and public agenda.

### 1.2.4 Governance

Governance has been a major problem in Pakistan since its creation. Right after independence, the establishment of Pakistan in the name of an Islamic democratic state is affecting in a twisted mode from several perspectives, for example, the foundation of public view in terms of power in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, political situations, the position of party-political leaders, and military acts. Pakistan has experienced several difficulties and crises in the past as a result of its dysfunctional internal domestic policies and the resistance of several administrators to assigning any superior measure. Pakistan's dispersion and divergence include a wide range of issues and circumstances, including social, spiritual, racial, territorial, and general issues and circumstances.

Pakistan's antiquity demonstrates that the country suffers from poor social, political, and economic governance categories. Pakistan's political platform is moving down a path marked by doubt, misunderstanding, and a lack of decisiveness. Legislative and political intentions and behavior are changing in a rough house, and it sounds like a fighting situation is brewing in Pakistan's democratic state. Although it is true that during campaigning, leaders, soldiers, and bureaucrats are on a fruitful quest, they are unable to solve the country's problems. There are flaws in the rules and policies.

The above-mentioned commendations for good authority must be strengthened by reducing violence, corruption, illiteracy, unemployment, terrorism, and drug trafficking. Pakistan's poor governance is best related to this as good power, lengthwise with stable ties with civilization and state organizations, has stout partisan constancy in political issues. Governance is concerned with

laying the groundwork for explanations to public-sector problems. Good governance contributes to the creation of an integral structure for the effective observation of poverty alleviation and broad-based economic growth. In a nutshell, governance has been one of the major factors in the transition of the democratic system. Due to the wide coverage in print media, the issue of governance was included in the study to bring out the agenda-setting effects on the public.

### **1.2.5 Inflation**

The high index of increasing prices, combined with currency trailing its real value, has always been concerning, as it increases the price of living, lowers savings, and harms financial and societal well-being (Greenidge, 2005). Piao et al. (2004) described inflation as a consistent and noticeable increase in the overall level of costs. As a result, for an increase in the general price level to be called inflation, it must be consistent, long-lasting, and sustained, and it must affect almost any product and not be time-limited (Demberg & McDougall, 2004).

Inflation has become a major issue in developing countries. Pakistan is also dealing with the issue of high prices, which is primarily caused by a rise in money supply brought on by the State Bank of Pakistan's excessive printing of currency notes. It is right to say that price hike has been remained all-time much covered and debated issue in the country. The wide and continuous coverage of the issue demands to bring about the relations between media coverage and media consumption.

## **1.3 Rationale for Selection of Newspapers**

### **1.3.1 The Nation**

The Nation is one of Pakistan's oldest English newspapers, initially established in the late 1980s in Lahore. Its origins can be traced back to 1940 when Nawa-i-Waqt was created, then it was not officially introduced until the end of 1986. Arif Nizami was the first editor of this paper, and he was laid off by the late Majid Nizami, the editor-in-chief of Waqt Media Group. Shireen Mazari was the editor of the Daily Nation, but she was quickly changed by Saleem Bukhari.

According to his creator, the reason for launching The Nation was not to make a lot of money. The concept was easy enough: provide a forum for people to unite as a country (The Nation, 2015). Previously, this group of publications supported Pakistan's establishment. This community consistently supports the need for Pakistan to establish a robust distrustful position in contradiction of its fellow citizen and endorses Islamic values in the region (Sarwar, 2001, p. 8).

### **1.3.2 The Daily Dawn**

On October 26, 1941, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, founded the publication of the Dawn in New Delhi. In accordance to Quaid.e.Azam, the newspaper's strategy would be to primarily recommend and support the source of the Muslim League, but then it would not disregard the motives and wellbeing of the citizens of the subcontinent (Aqeel-uz-zafar, 2004). The Dawn was first published as a daily newspaper in October 1942, one year after it was first published. The Daily Dawn is Pakistan's most widely distributed English newspaper, with national sway. As of 2010, it has an everyday circulation of over 109,000. It has a significant impact on shaping public belief on international, local, and overseas policy topics (Hanan, 2006).

### **1.3.3 Objectives of the Study**

1. How and to what extent does the print media agenda have on the public agenda on national issues?
2. To measure how the agenda of the media impacts the public agenda.

## **1.4 Problem Statement**

The primary goal is to investigate the association amongst the agenda of the public and print media in Pakistan by exploring the effects of agenda-setting. The issues such as corruption, corona, inflation, unemployment, and governance were part of the research study. This research aims to better comprehend the impact of agenda-setting on the public by measuring the coverage of leading English Dailies; The Dawn and The Nation.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

- Q1. Does the media agenda influence the public agenda on corona?
- Q2. Does media agenda influence public agenda on corruption?
- Q3. Does media agenda influence public agenda on unemployment?
- Q4. Does media agenda influence public agenda on governance?
- Q5. Does media agenda influence public agenda inflation?

## **2. Review of Literature**

### **2.1. Role of Press**

Daily media coverage keeps us informed about current affairs and deviations that happen in the world outside. As a consequence of this miracle, perceptions of the people in this world are based on second-hand information provided by media outlets. Not only do media networks submissively broadcast info by repetition of an authorized sources' terms or accurately relaying an event happening. The journalists and editors concentrate their efforts on the selection and presentation of news stories to impact the public's discernments of the most pressing topics of the day. This is how reporters frame their news reports. Our worldview is being shaped and refined through media. This is referred to as the media's agenda-setting role (Riaz, 2008). According to the related literature, ensuring a high-performing press can foster information about political problems in society. It would increase public participation in political activities. It would lower the level of corruption in society (Nielsen et al., 2016).

### **2.2 Press and Public Opinion**

The press has a contentious position. It has a main impact on public view. This is due to the in-depth coverage and interpretations of monetary and political problems, activities, and decisions (Mahfoodh, 2017). No general or particular theory explains how public belief is shaped. Though, the public view is regarded as one of the components of political life. It is one of the components of a civilized society. Being complex, changing, and unpredictable are examples of such characteristics. It should be noted that political development measures cannot be transmitted without the use of media (Al-Enaimat, 2010). Public perception is influenced by a variety of factors. Internal and external causes are examples of those factors. The press is now regarded as having the greatest impact on public culture. The press is also ranked first in this category because it aims to address and examine political and social problems. As a result, it can influence and shape public opinion (Abed Al-Qader, 2015).

### **2.3 Role of Media in Shaping Public Opinion**

Journalism is to offer information, but with such obligations, any evidence that is not on an errand of community or unethical should not be dispersed by the mass media. Journalism contracts with ways to persuade the community on a delinquent which is regarded as one of the features that might generate this synchronization amongst the memorandum of that information that is in provision with aforesaid at features should not be exposed. The mass media does not permit us to think about it. This is what the mass media do when the intensification of common societal problems occurs as a result of the media's role. People begin to believe aspects of problems that are fully manipulated by mass media representatives.

The function of the media is to shape public opinion on a variety of topics because influential communication by media content will lead the general public to have both positive and negative opinions about various subjects. Because of this role, the press media is regarded as a force capable of changing people's minds, also known as a social change agent. The convincing role is to gather public views on specific topics of social and political significance. These issues have various facets of journalism's role, which can direct the public and may be measured as a modification manager of society. Political and societal conditions may affect issues. Public opinion, like media, may provide accurate information and elaborate the significance of an issue, guiding the general public to form an opinion about it. Many media contents are capable of doing so. One example is the amplification of news on specific issues, which includes editorials.

#### **2.4 Media as an Agenda Setter**

To examine agenda setting and framing, numerous studies have been achieved. Furthermore, because of the influence on the focused groups, the spectacle of numerous stages of agenda-setting has been examined. Dearing and Rogers (1996), cited Walgrave and Aelst (2006) as saying that "the media, on the whole report what's going on in government, rather than having a self-sufficient impact on agendas of the government." Kleinnijenhuis (2003) is also cited as saying that "only a very restricted media impact on politics."

According to Werner (1997), agenda-setting is one of the possible ways in which the mass media can affect the general community. The notion that the print media, through their presentation of stories, come to find out the problems on which the community thinks and speaks is referred to as agenda-setting.

According to Saqib (2008), a huge degree of the connection amongst these two political and social issue plans forms an association that developed a major chain of indication for the media's agenda-setting role. Saqib (2008) cited McCombs (2002), our image of the world is created and refined within the way journalists mount their news stories. Editing, presenting, and collecting information in the news is a difficult job for the mass media. A journalist cannot be an unbiased being as part of a social system. It is unbearable to eliminate bias and favoritism 100%.

Today's dynamic mass media not only actively transmits content but also considers which news to accept and which to reject. As a result, the media shapes our perception of the world and frames their news events consequently. The media have the power and capability to reform the news agenda into an agenda of the public by focusing on certain events while ignoring others.

Werner et al. provided an example about a few days earlier to 1980 presidential election between Carter and Reagan, utmost prominent view polls stated that the competition was too close to the finish line. The media reported two days earlier the elections that American hostages held in Iran may well be released. Since they do not seem to have been. When the election results were announced a few days later, Reagan had achieved a stunning win, taking six positions including the Columbia. He also mentioned that one conceivable reason for this outcome is the concept of setting the agenda. The media increased public awareness of the Iranian hostages by sharing the news of their release. That is, for numerous followers of the public, the subject of captives might have risen from a lower to a high position on a set of matters of apprehension. The hostage situation in Iran was at the bottom of the priority list, but it abruptly jumped to the top of the list of voters and became number one. The experts and stakeholders have noticed that media conglomerates control the media in Pakistan, and pressure groups are the main troupes in dealing with commercial and political challenges. As a result, they often set the agenda of the news, and viewers may also discover 'framed' news on these media shops.

According to Walgrave and Aelst (2016), the more people who need orientation on an issue, the further they will depend on media and be influenced by media exposure. We can live in a world of today without culture, but we cannot live without media. Walgrave and Aelst (2016) quoted Dearing and Rogers, (1996) "by and large, measurement the media agenda has been an impartially consistent practice, with most previous studies accepting alike selection and coding dealings." James (1984) as cited in Bernard Cohen, "the media is primarily a source of knowledge and opinion." According to Entman (1993), a border is determined in great part by its result or result: to frame is to select certain features of an apparent fact and create them further noticeable within the collaborative text, in such a way as to encourage a particular issue description, causal elucidation, moral assessment, and/or treatment commendation. The climate of Pakistani media is ideal for agenda setters because it contains a variety of elements that allow them to shape societal dashes of realism for their entrusted interests, such as political instability, illiteracy, media illiteracy, a non-democratic environment, pressure groups, a lack of self-regulation, and commercialization.

According to Tankard (1991), a border is a key organizing concept for news content that provides meaning and suggests what the complexity is by the use of selection, focus, elimination, and explanation." According to McCombs (1972), the sheer volume of exposure can result in mass communication effects. According to Miller (2002), framing is a mechanism by which the media emphasizes certain aspects of fact while downplaying others. According to Gatlin (1980), media reporting mostly benefits the top class and fosters their opinions. In this manner, the media edges seemed to be influential in society. Gatlin's arguments reflect the current dominance of the top class in utmost shares of the biosphere.

## **2.5 Agenda-Setting Influence of the Mass Media**

The importance of elements of the agenda of news affects their prominence on the public agenda. This influence method starts with the agenda of items attracting the most devotion in the media. The word "object" is used herein the same way as "attitude object" is used by social psychologists to refer to something on which we have a view. While agenda-setting studies have focused an agenda of public issues, public figures, agencies, and businesses are the objects on the media agenda.

Newspapers convey several cues on the relative importance of the objects on their everyday agenda. The placement of a news article on the front page and the inner page, the headline size, and the length of a story all communicate info about the significance of various objects on the news agenda. For all of the mass media, the most important message about an object's salience is repeated exposure to it day after day. The overall public uses media salience signs to prepare their schedules, deciding which topics, individual, or other matters are the most relevant.

As the influential Chapel Hill thesis throughout the 1968 presidential election (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), these effects of the agenda-setting have been identified in over 300 studies for a wide range of nationwide and natural problems, throughout elections and more inactive political periods, and in a diversity of native and nationwide situations in Spain, Japan, United States, Germany, Argentina, and many other nations (McCombs & Reynolds, 2002).

## **2.6 Agenda-setting in the mass media**

The news media play a major role in setting the agenda. Empirical surveys have now spanned four decades, examining a wide range of news media, including magazines, and news dailies (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), television (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987), internet media (Roberts et al., 2002), and social media (Russell Neuman, Mo Jang, & Bae, 2014). The key explanation we would theorize the effects of agenda-setting varying transversely different media outlets is their exceptional ability to bear central societal issues (Chaffee & Metzger, 2001).



Newspapers, rather than TV or magazines, often have further space to cover functional news matters (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Though internet media (e.g., electric bulletin boards or newspaper online versions) are more beneficial in providing extensive reporting of various problems, they also permit for greater liveness in discerning exposure (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008), which may limit their ability to attract the public's attention to major matters (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2002). However, the experimental study yields mixed results. News dailies are found to have strong agenda-setting effects than newscasts (McClure & Patterson, 1976; McCombs & Shaw, 1972), whereas newspapers have extra room for timely issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) and perform well in attracting the attention of the public (Strömbäck & Kiousis, 2010). Though, this restricted impact of television networks on agenda-setting effects doesn't grasp true in countries other than the US. Strömbäck and Kiousis (2010) discovered no clear indications of alterations linked with mass media outlets (print, television, and radio) in their study of the effect of agenda-setting throughout the 2006 Swedish parliamentary election.

### **2.7. Psychology of Agenda-Setting Effects**

These theoretical distinctions, for instance, explain the exceedingly high connections identified in the novel Chapel Hill analysis of unsure voters. The significance of election news was strong for these people who planned to vote in the constitutional election. Since these voters were unsure, there was also a high level of uncertainty. In a nutshell, the Chapel Hill study looked at a stratified group of voters who had a high need for coordination. Though there has been a limited additional study of the need for orientation meanwhile its introduction in the 1972 Charlotte research, these have mostly been clear repetitions of Weaver's (1977) work. Researchers have recently returned to additional investigate this idea. Gunho Lee (2005) reconsiders significance in terms of personal contribution and ambiguity in terms of knowledge. According to the findings of the before-and-after investigational design, both personal engagement and exertion to attend to the message had a durable and equivalent effect on issue salience.

### **2.8 The Influence of the pictures in our mind**

According to Walter Lippmann (1922), the news media's agenda-setting effect extends beyond the initial phase of concentrating public consideration on a specific issue. The media also impact the following phase in the communiqué process, as well as our understanding and viewpoint on current events. When considering the agenda in general words, the potential for a wider view of media impact on public view develops quite clear. The matters of all the agendas we have focused on are public, but they may also be other matters or subjects, such as political contenders' agendas throughout an election.

### **2.9 Agenda-Setting Attribute and Tone**

According to McCombs (1972), "mass communication effects can result from the sheer volume of exposure." The phenomenon is established by first-level agenda-setting effects. However, as both feature agenda-setting and priming demonstrate, giving more attention to the specific content of mass media messages, counting the tone of these messages, offers a more detailed perspective of the imageries in our minds, as well as the attitudes and opinions that follow from such images. The tone variable has a significant effect on the audience's decision-making process.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Content Analysis**

For this study, the content of two news dailies, The Nation and the daily Dawn Islamabad, was investigated over three months. (From the 1st of August, 2020 to the 30th of April, 2021.) Both of these newspapers were chosen because they are the most commonly read English newspapers in Pakistan. The Daily Dawn and The Nation examined the content of newspapers printed on even dates (2, 4, 6, etc.) As a result, the contents of 150 copies of the Daily Dawn

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and 150 copies of The Nation newspapers were closely examined, and the news on the study's problems was to taledand length was measured in words.

### **3.2 Conceptual Definitions of Variables**

In this research project, four independent variables were analyzed, which caused rating and opinion-forming by the viewers as dependent variables. The independent variables are as follows:

#### **I) The Frequency of Stories**

The frequency in which news articles about the research study were published in particular newspapers was determined by the frequency assumed on the front and back pages.

#### **II) Position of News Stories**

Individuals are more likely to pay consideration to the front-page titles than to the topic addressed in the middle or back of the newspaper. As a result, placement, like agenda-setting, is an imperative variable in media effects studies. It is important in newspapers to consider where the news item is available, such as the front page, back page, and inner page. As a result, there were three main classes in the settlement of stories in this research project.

### **3.3 Operational Definitions for Variables of Content Analysis**

#### **i) Frequency**

Every news article in a newspaper lasting 25 words about the research study's issues was included in the sampled results.

#### **ii) Placement**

In media effects studies such as agenda-setting, placement is an important variable. For the placement of news articles in particular newspapers, the researcher has used the five categories mentioned below.

- i. Front Page (Upper half)
- ii. Front Page (Lower half)
- iii. Back Page (Upper half)
- iv. Back Page (Lower half)
- v. Opinion Pages

### **3.4 Survey Analysis**

To examine the association between media and public agenda, a survey of 300 Islamabad residents who read these newspapers regularly was carried out. The list of subscribers to these newspapers was compiled by news hawkers in the respective areas. A systematic random sampling technique was used to collect the data in face-to-face meetings.

#### **3.4.1 Variables for Survey**

##### **i) The Ranking of Issues**

The issue's significance was assessed using an ordinal scale, with a list given for assigning a rank order. It is necessary to prescribe a rank order to compare the contents of the newspapers with the rank order of the readers.

##### **ii) Standpoint on Issues**

The standpoints of readers were measured by posing few questions.

### **3.5 Theoretical Framework**

#### **3.5.1 Agenda Setting**

The agenda-setting theory explains how the mass media influence the creation of a specific issue as a public program. The chief emphasis or key topic of interest for members of society or the general public is the public agenda. The term agenda-setting theory was coined by

McCombs and Shaw (1972). This theory explains the connection between the emphasis imposed by the mass media as a subject and the media viewers or the public's response or traits to such a problem (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

The agenda-setting theory starts with an explanation of the effect of mass media on changing the pattern of political behavior during elections (Cohen, 1963). A theory inspired and produced hundreds of future investigations of how the mass media primes and frames issues for their audiences. Not only that, but the debate also revolves around how the mass media covers a specific incident for their media audiences (Nor, 2014). As a result, the mass media must be held answerable for manipulating and determining public opinion and the schedule. Such mass media impact on public agendas or opinions may happen both deliberately and unintentionally (Lyengar & Kinder, 1987). Continually, agenda-setting theory is an imperative theory that applies not only to mass communication but also to other similar social scientific studies such as political communiqué (Reese, 1991). According to the agenda-setting theory, the mass media cannot set the general public agenda, particularly in matters of thoughts or attitudes (Cohen, 1963).

### 3.5.3 Priming

Priming is a term used to describe the process of enhancing the media effects on individuals by providing human thoughts with a clear understanding to make choices grounded on presumptions that are previously kept in our memory. Priming allows the viewers to examine the condition and determine how effective the mass media is by providing a frame of orientation for making a choice. Therefore, the media makes an impact on individuals to form a view or make a choice. Priming was closely scrutinized during the elections and in the selection of the best candidate. They base their decisions on media information, especially in government politics, where individuals lack awareness of politically aware problems, which influences their opinion-making on whom to designate. Lyengar, Peters, and Kinder called this theory the priming effect when they introduced it in 1982.

## 4. Results

### I) Content Analysis 4.1 Frequency of Stories

**Table 4.2.1 Frequency of Stories Covered by Daily Dawn**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Corona	147	12.5
	Inflation	59	5.0
	Unemployment	32	2.7
	Governance	282	24.0
	Corruption	89	7.6
	Total	609	51.9
Missing	System	565	48.1
Total		1174	100.0

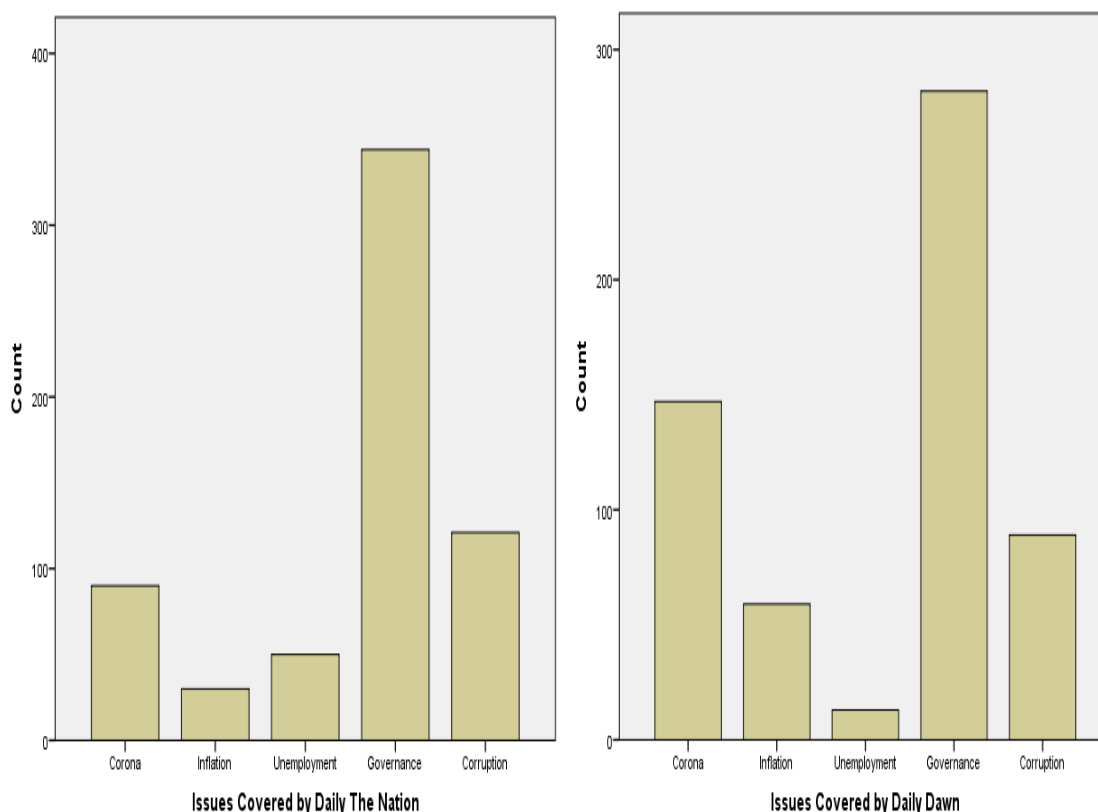
**Table 4.2 Frequency of Stories Covered by The Nation**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Corona	90	7.7
	Inflation	30	2.6

	Unemployment	50	4.3
	Governance	344	29.3
	Corruption	121	10.3
	Total	635	54.1
Missing	System	539	45.9
	Total	1174	100.0

Overall, Daily Dawn published 609 news stories during the research period of nine months whereas The Nation published 635 stories on five understudied national issues as shown in the above Tables.

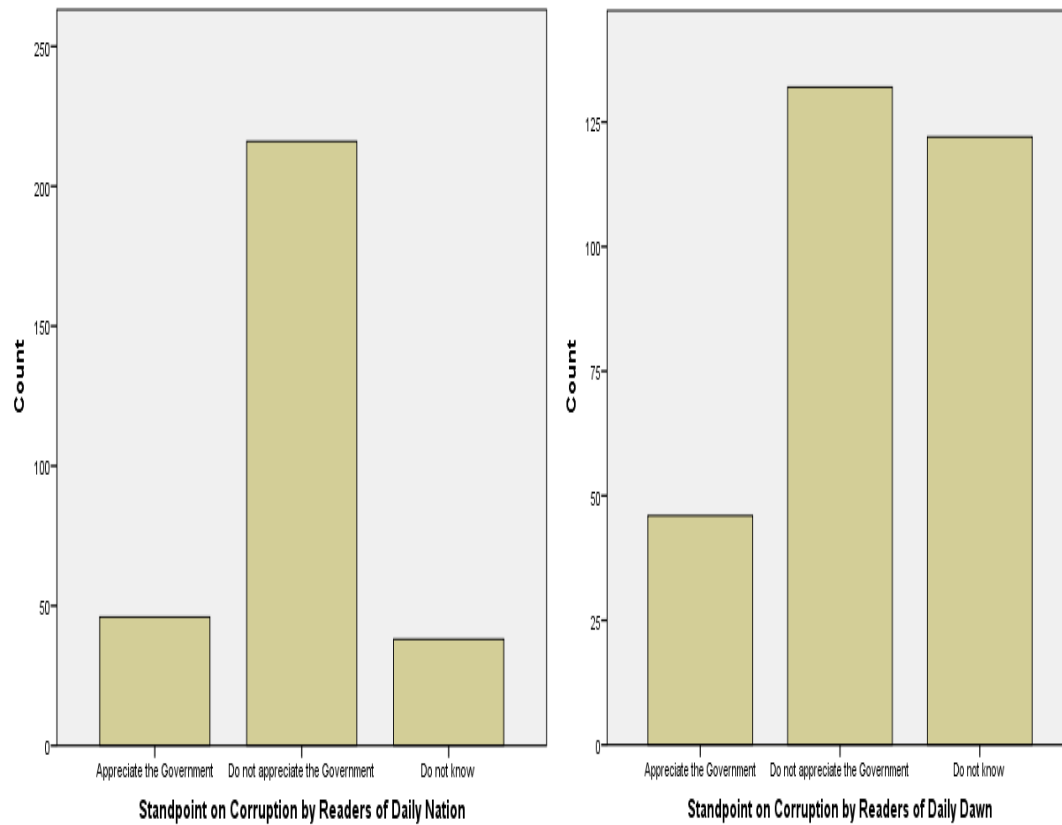
**Figures 1 & 2 Issues Covered by Daily Dawn and The Nation**



Above figures 1 and 2 shows that there is not a huge difference among the coverage patterns of the two newspapers in terms of the number of stories devoted to each issue, though, Governance got the highest coverage amongst all the issues in both the dailies.

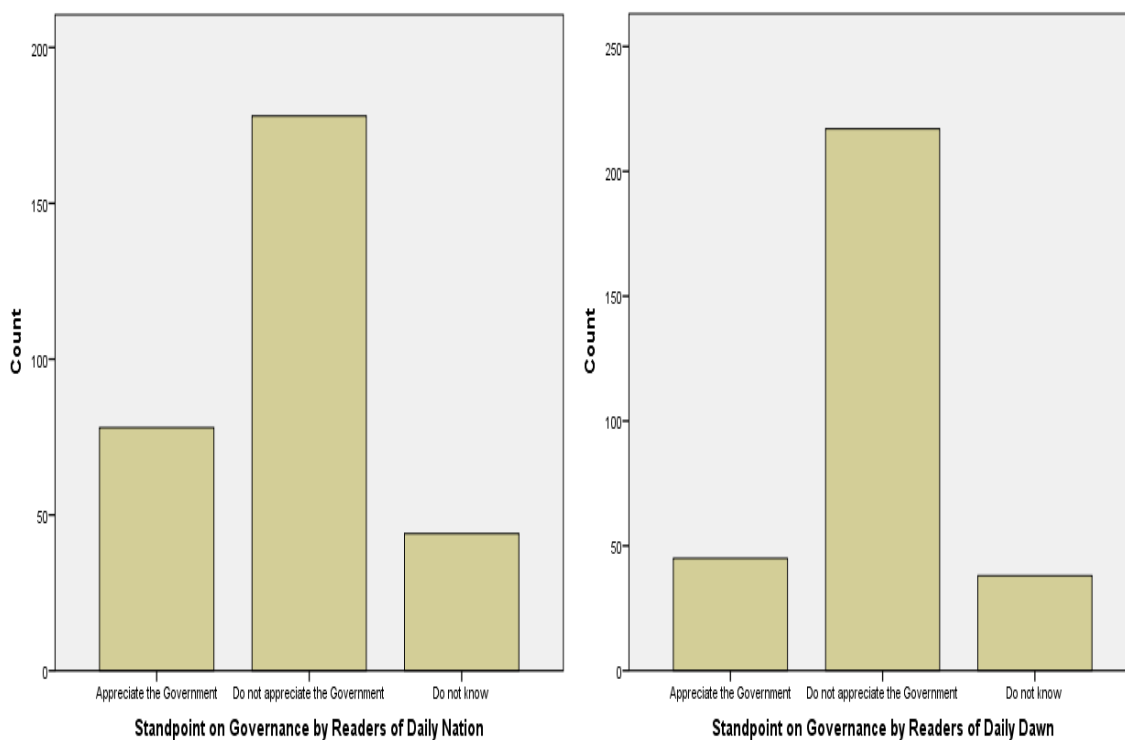
**The standpoint of Readers of the Nation and the Daily Dawn**

**Figures 3 & 4 Standpoint on Corruption**



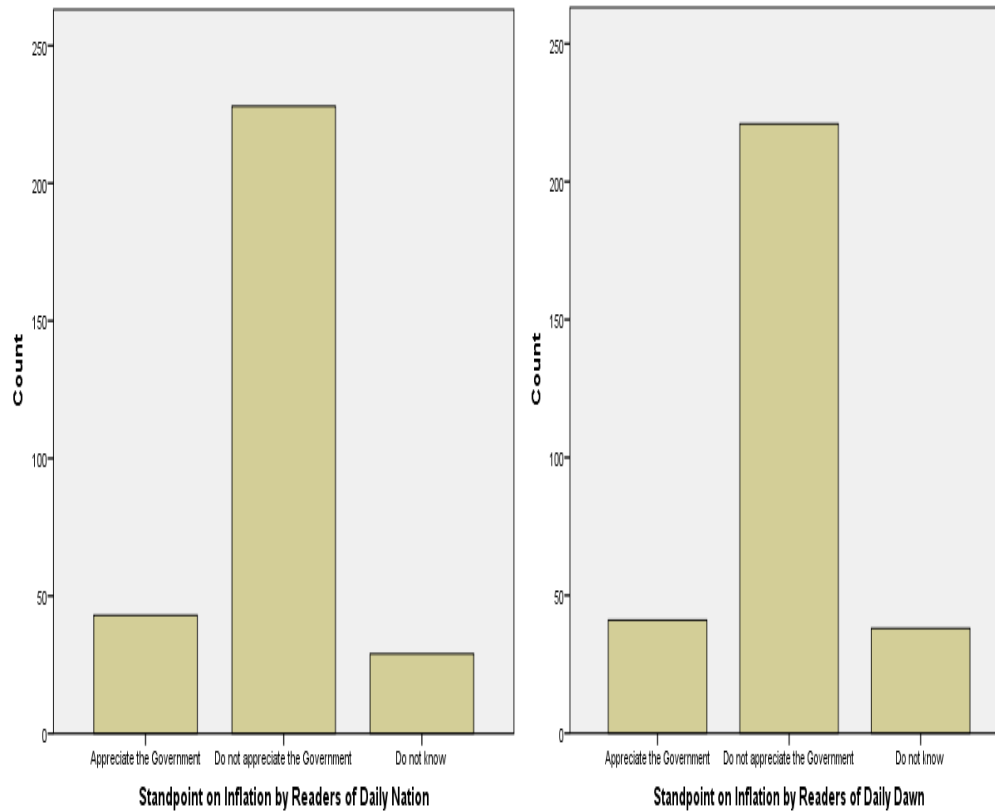
The above graph shows that the readers of both the newspapers have almost similar standpoints as they do not appreciate the performance of the government on the issue of corruption.

**Figures 5 & 6 Standpoint on Governance**



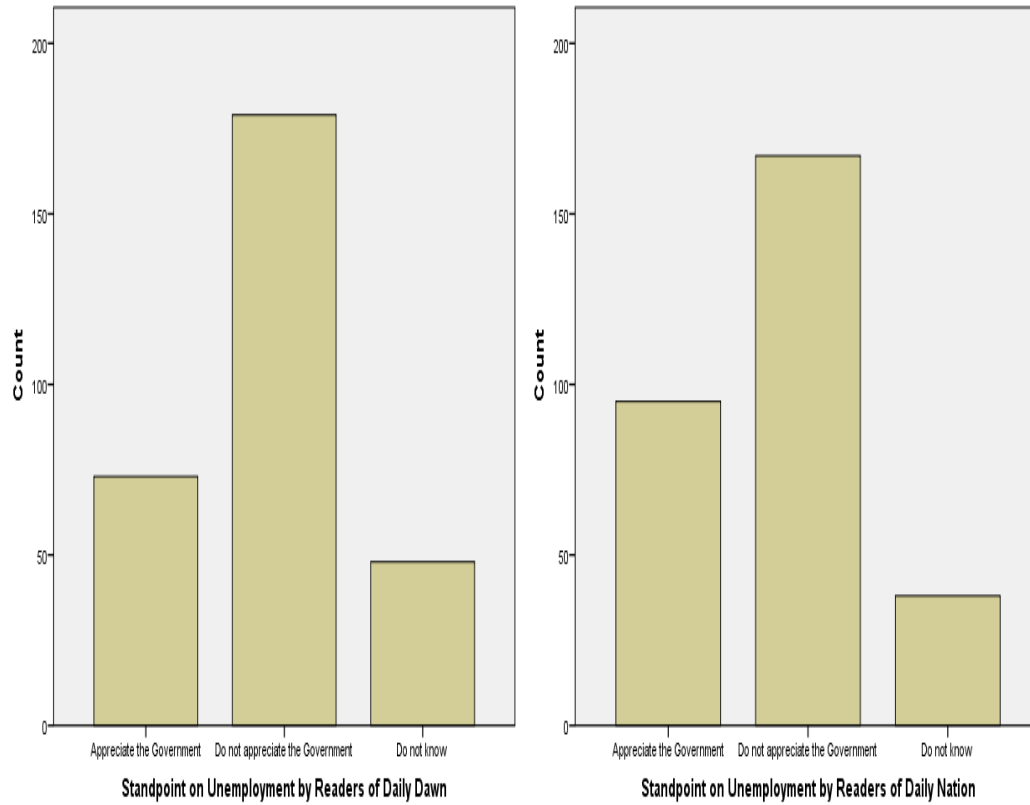
Figures 9 & 10 above indicate that almost 50% of the readers of both the newspapers went for the option ‘do not know’ while almost 30% opted ‘Appreciate the Government’. Only about 20% said they do know whether they should appreciate the government or not.

**Figures 7 & 8 Standpoint on Inflation**



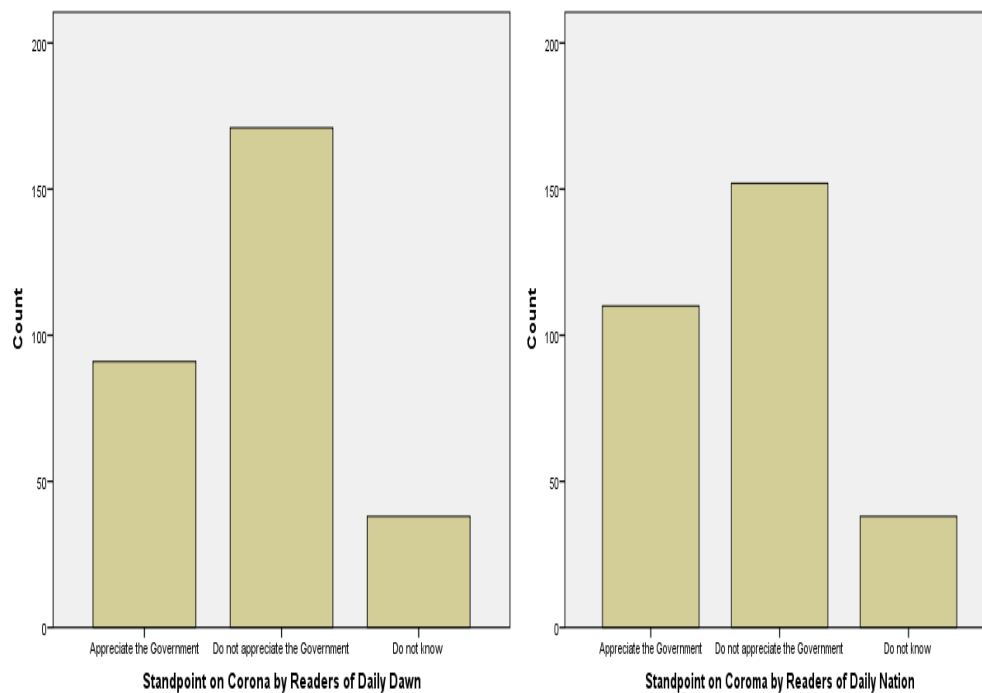
The above graphs show that majority of the readers of both the newspapers do not appreciate the government on the issue of inflation.

**Figures 9 & 10 Standpoint on Unemployment**



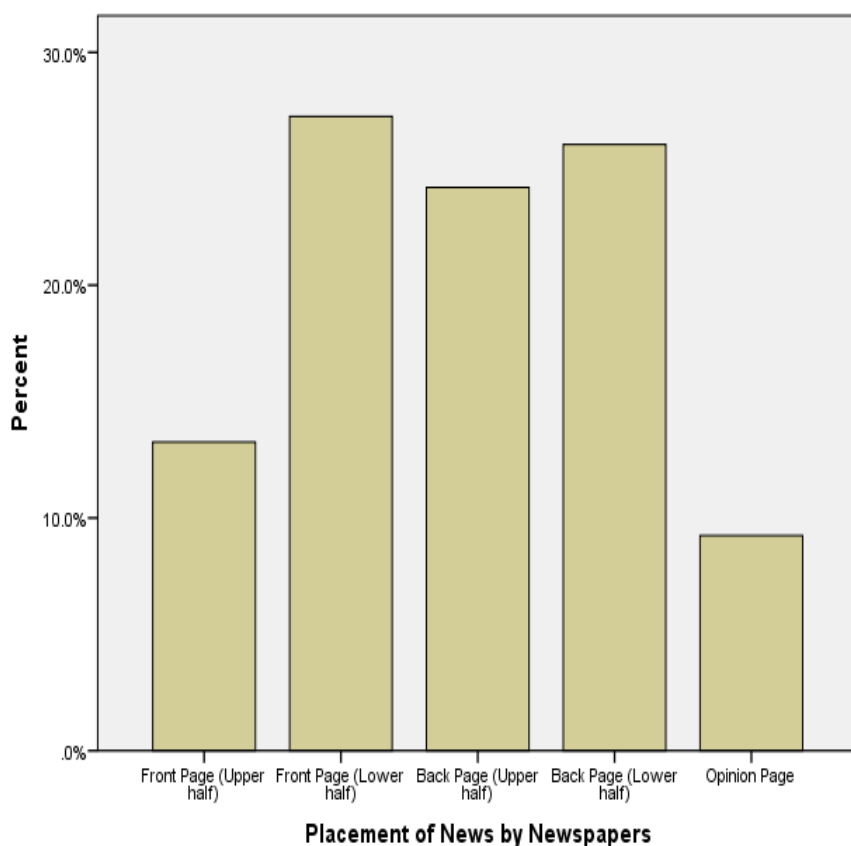
As obvious from the above graph, the majority of the readers of the Daily Dawn and The Nation do not increase in value the government on the matter of unemployment.

**Figures 11 & 12 Standpoint on Corona**



Most of the readers of both the dailies have similar standpoints on the issues of corona as they do not appreciate the performance of the government. While few readers appreciate the government.

**Figure 13 Placement of News Issues in Daily Dawn and the Nation**



The figure above indicates that these issues have been covered on every page, however, front and back pages have been remained prominent for these research issues.

**II- RANK ORDER CORRELATIONS**

**Table 4.3 Media Agenda and Public Agenda on Five National Issues**

Issues	Public Agenda	Media Agenda	Correlation
Corona	19.7%	24.11%	.64
Corruption	20.3%	14.69%	.54
Unemployment	20.0%	5.0%	.34
Governance	20.0%	46.5%	.45
Inflation	20.0%	9.7%	.37
TOTAL	100%	100%	

**Table 4.4 Correlations on Corona Issues of The Nation**

	Coverage of Corona by The Nation	Correlation Coefficient	Coverage by The Nation	Priority by Readers
Spearman's rho	Coverage of Corona by The Nation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.617**
		Si Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000



	N	90	90
Priority Given by Readers of The Nation to Corona	Correlation Coefficient	.617**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	90	300

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A moderate correlation of .61 is perceived on the issue of corona amongst coverage given by The Nation and the priority given by the readers.

**Table 4.5 Correlations on Corona Issues of Dawn**

		Coverage of Corruption	Rank order by Readers
Spearman's rho	Coverage of Corruption by Daily Dawn	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.682**
		N	.000
		89	89
	Rank order Given by Readers of Dawn	Correlation Coefficient	.682**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
		N	.
		89	300

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A moderate correlation .68 is observed on the issue of corona between coverage given by Daily Dawn and the priority given by the readers.

**Table 4.6 Correlations on Inflation Issue of The Nation**

		Coverage of The Nation	Priority Given by Readers
Coverage of Inflation by The Nation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.555**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
	N	30	30
Priority Given by Readers of The Nation to Inflation	Correlation Coefficient	.555**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
	N	30	300

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is a moderate correlation of .55 is observed on the issue of inflation between media agenda and public agenda in The Nation as evident from the table above.

**Table 4.7 Correlations on Inflation Issue of Dawn**

			Coverage of Inflation	Rank order by Readers
Spearman's rho	Coverage of Inflation by Daily Dawn	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.208
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.113
		N	59	59
	Rank order Given by Readers of Dawn	Correlation Coefficient	.208	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.113	.
		N	59	300

There is a weak correlation of .20 is observed on the issue of inflation between coverage of inflation by Daily Dawn and priority given by the readers of the following newspaper.

**Table 4.8 Correlations on Unemployment of The Nation**

			Coverage of Unemployment	Priority Given by Readers
Spearman's rho	Coverage of Unemployment by The Nation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.172
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.233
		N	50	50
	Priority Given by Readers of The Nation to Unemployment	Correlation Coefficient	.172	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.233	.
		N	50	300

There is a weak correlation .17 observed between the coverage of unemployment and rank order given by the reader of The Nation.

**Table 4.9 Correlations on Unemployment of Dawn**

			Coverage of Unemployment by Daily Dawn	Rank order Given by Readers of Dawn
Spearman 's rho	Coverage of Unemployment by Daily Dawn	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.524**
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.	.002
		N	32	32
	Rank order Given by Readers of Dawn	Correlation Coefficient	.524**	1.000
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.002	.
		N	32	300

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is a moderate correlation of .52 is observed on the issue of unemployment between coverage by Daily Dawn and the rank order given by readers.

**Table 4.10 Correlations on Governance Issue of The Nation**

			Coverage of Governanc e	Priority Given by Readers
Spearman' s rho	Coverage of Governance by The Nation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.423**
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.	.000
		N	344	300
	Priority Given by Readers of The Nation to Governance	Correlation Coefficient	.423**	1.000
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.
		N	300	300

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A moderate correlation .42 is observed on the issue of governance between coverage given by The Nation and the priority given by the readers.

**Table 4.11 Correlations on Governance of Dawn**

			Coverage of Governance	Rank order by readers
Spearman's rho	Coverage of Governance by Daily Dawn	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.490**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	282	214
	Rank order Given by Readers of Dawn	Correlation Coefficient	.490**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	214	232

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A moderate correlation of .49 is observed on the issue of governance between coverage given by DailyDawn and the priority given by the readers.

**Table 4.12 Correlations on Corruption Issue of The Nation**

			Coverage of Corruption by Daily the Nation	Priority Given by Readers of Daily Nation to Corruption
Spearman's rho	Coverage of Corruption by The Nation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.417**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	121	121
	Priority Given by Readers of The Nation to Corruption	Correlation Coefficient	.417**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	121	300

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is a moderate correlation of .41 observed on the issue of corruption between media agenda and public agenda in TheNation as evident from the table above.

**Table 4.13 Correlations on Corruption Issue of Dawn**

			Coverage of Corruption	Rank order by readers
Spearman's rho	Coverage of Corruption by	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.682**

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Daily Dawn	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	89
Rank order Given by Readers of Dawn	Correlation Coefficient	.682**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	89
		300

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is a significant correlation .68 observed on the issue of corruption between coverage given by Daily Dawn and the rank order given by the readers.

**Table 4.14 Rank Order Correlations Between Public Agenda and Media Agenda**

Issues	Newspaper	Correlation	Status
Corona	The Nation	.61	Moderate
	Daily Dawn	.68	Moderate
Inflation	The Nation	.55	Moderate
	Daily Dawn	.20	Weak
Unemployment	The Nation	.17	Weak
	Daily Dawn	.52	Moderate
Governance	The Nation	.42	Moderate
	Daily Dawn	.49	Moderate
Corruption	The Nation	.41	Moderate
	Daily Dawn	.68	Moderate

## 5. Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

### 5.1 Frequency of News Stories

There were two samples for content analysis from two important dailies Daily Dawn and The Nation. Throughout this period Daily Dawn published 609 news stories on all the five nationwide issues of the study. These stories covered in front, back, and inner pages in these dailies were the sampled data. Instead, The Nation published 635 news stories about five state issues in the specified period. Tables 1 and 2 indicates the total stories published in these

Newspaper. Both the newspapers covered three issues placing the same salience on three issues, Corona, Governance, and Inflation in their top three agenda items. Both the newspapers gave fourth position and fifth positions to the corruption and unemployment issues respectively. Like this, the agenda of the media of Daily Dawn is not distinctive from the media agenda of The Nation to the extent that the number of stories and frames are apprehensive.

## 5.2 Placement of News Issues

Figure 17 above indicates that the issues have been covered on every page of the newspapers including front, back and inner pages, however, front and back pages have been remained prominent for these research issues. The graph shows that the newspapers have given salience to these issues in terms of placement. Since all these issues were obtrusive in nature, and the people face them personally, therefore, they sometimes, do not need orientation. They do know from their day-to-day experiences. If the media cover and give salience to such issues these issues get inflamed and remain as most important issues in minds of the people.

## 5.3 Results of Correlations

The main objective of this study was to analyze the correlation between the public and media agenda. The scholar investigated the media agenda through the frequency of stories on research issues for a period over nine months, while a survey was led to hit the readers' agenda. The public agenda was analyzed through rank orders (most important issue to least important issue) of the five issues through a close-ended survey. There were strong, modest, and weak positive correlations brought about on the issues amid media agenda and public agenda presented in a preceding chapter. Nevertheless, borders and stance have been used to support the key objectives of agenda-setting.

All the issues were obtrusive issues which directly experience by the public like corruption, governance, inflation, unemployment, and corona. According to the theoretical assumptions, people do not need much orientation on the issues which are obtrusive in nature. The spearman rank-order correlation was ranged from +.17 to +.68 in five issues. Daily Dawn and The Nation on the issue of unemployment got +.52 and +.17 having 32 and 50 stories respectively. It looks few reverses but strong correlations have been found in both the newspapers on unemployment. Daily Dawn covered the issue only 32 times in the whole period of the study and get +.52, on the other hand, Daily Nation covered the issue 50 times in a study period and got a very low correlation of +.17. However, both these can be considered as strong reverse correlations. There are the same results found on the issue of inflation; The Daily Nation covered the issue of inflation only 30 times and got +.56, on the other hand, Daily Dawn covered the same issue 59 times and its correlation was +.21 which show reverse but strong correlations

## 5.4 Conclusion

Five issues have been observed in the light of agenda-setting, and priming theories to measure the media public relations. Five research questions were presented to know this relationship. RQ1; Does media agenda influence public agenda on the issue of the corona, is answered, thus there is an influence. RQ2; Does media agenda influence public agenda about the issue of corruption? Yes, this is accepted, hence, there is an association between media and public agenda. RQ3; Does the media agenda influence on public agenda on the issue of unemployment? There is an influence and has an effect. RQ4; Does media agenda influence readers' agenda about the issue of Governance is accepted, therefore, a moderate correlation is observed and has an effect. RQ5; Does media agenda influence public agenda about the issue of inflation? Yes, this question is answered in yes, so, there is a strong reverse correlation thus there is an effect. The results of the study on five national issues demonstrate meaningful effects, strong moderate, low, and even strong reverse correlations between the public and media agenda on five issues.

The issue of Governance stayed uppermost in a ranking of the salience of the newspapers. Though, there was a major difference in coverage of both the newspapers. Walgrave and Aelst (2006) cited McCombs and Weaver, 1973; Weaver, 1977) that "the more people require

orientation on an issue, the more they will rely on media and be affected by media coverage." Another most covered issue by both the newspapers was Corona. The salience of the news issue has been transmitted effectively to the public and the wide coverage has enlarged in the salience on the part of readers due to the obtrusiveness of the issue. Another significant result of the study was that both these newspapers had the same agenda on some issues. The issue of corruption has also appeared as a prominent issue. Since corruption has been breached in every section of the society from individual to institutional level, each member of the society may face the issue.

The placement of news stories has a huge similarity with the ranking given to the issues by the readers. The more an issue offered in opening slots, the more reminded that in a ranking order by the readers. Both the dailies covered three issues with the same salience by tapping three issues, corona, governance, and corruption in their top three slots of media agenda. Nevertheless, the media agenda of both the newspaper was slightly different in two issues; unemployment and inflation as they gave different slots in their newspapers. Both dailies gave fourth and fifth positions to the issue of unemployment and inflation respectively.

### 5.5 Recommendations

There must be more balanced coverage of these prominent issues. More comparable coverage should be given to such complex issues.

The regulatory part of the media should be drawn in an actual spirit. The rhetoric of corruption, offenses, and bad governance of the administration lead to hopelessness and the issue becomes unresponsive for the community. The newspapers should keep a good balance uncovering such type of news in an unbiased way. A slight inattentiveness can trigger a social breakdown particularly on the issues relating to spiritual, minorities, ethnic, and cultural groups.

The media should not increase the issues out of proportion. All the top three issues were covered out of proportion (exaggerate or less). The newspapers must cover the complex issues with huge care such as the event of a bomb blast, terrorist attack, and resultantly likely fatalities. The media must not make more hype and exaggeration in such conspicuous and delicate cases and they ought to wait until the loss of lives or property is confirmed. Overstating figures about dead and injured could create some thoughtful dilemmas and humiliation amongst the public.

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