

Analyzing the Twitter's Agenda-setting Function on National Press A Case Study of Election Campaigns in Pakistan

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Abstract

The purpose of this research paper is to analyze the influence of political tweets and the media coverage in the context of political situation in Pakistan. From the theoretical perspective of inter-media agenda setting theory, this paper empirically investigates the significant issues present in Twitter postings by leading politicians at national level and then understand the effect on the traditional media agenda. In this regard, descriptive statistics of political tweets and the coverage analysis from the Pakistani press, both English and Urdu languages, disclose that nearly half of political tweets are covered in the news media prominently, indicating that Twitter has the enough capability to move the salience of issues expressed in tweets to the media agenda. The results also disclose that Twitter agenda is prioritized by the newspapers, while covering several topics, such corruption, bad governance and election riggings. Moreover, our findings emphasize that the proper and strategic use of Twitter could be resulted in designing effective and efficient political campaigns, especially at the time of election in order to ensure favorable media coverage.

Keywords: Twitter, Pakistan, Election Campaigns, Agenda-setting, Newspapers.

1. Introduction

The role of the media is deemed crucial in maintaining a democratic culture that fortifies the political system.¹ Within a democratic framework, the media's responsibility includes reporting politically oriented news that facilitates informed voting during elections. The media's ability to identify prevailing public issues, track historical performance, and elucidate the significance of prudent decision-making empowers the formation of public opinion.² The pivotal role of the media in democratic governance became prominent with the rise of print media in the late 17th century, a trend that has continued into modern times with the emergence of social media.³ Moreover, the media's engagement in fostering democratic debates and augmenting public consciousness cannot be overlooked. A pertinent illustration of media's impact is observed through Twitter, which has significantly influenced political discourse and the public sphere.⁴ Information, as a critical component of communication, is the exchange, preservation, and sharing of information during communication.⁵ Wiener underscores that information, derived from the external world, is communicated to others as messages.⁶ Fang points out the historical use of rock carvings as a form of information dissemination, a practice that evolved with technological advancement to establish the media industry as a distinct domain.⁷

¹ J. Nguyen, "Media's Role in Ensuring a Democratic Culture," *Journal of Political Communication* 45, no. 2 (2018): 210-225

² S. Bowman and C. Willis, "Media's Role in Shaping Public Opinion," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 67, no. 2 (2003): 212-233.

³ S. Stieglitz and X. L. Dang, "Print Media's Historical Role in Democratic Governance," *Media History* 19, no. 3 (2012): 289-305

⁴ Zedan Xu, "Twitter's Impact on Political Discourse," *American Political Science Review* 102, no. 4 (2018): 481-498.

⁵ N. Balau and S. Utz, "Information Exchange in Communication," *Communication Studies* 68, no. 3(2017): 301-317.

⁶ N. Wiener, "The Exchange of Information in Communication," *Journal of Communication* 33, no. 2 (1983): 65-75

⁷ I. Fang, "Information Sources in Ancient Times," *Historical Journal of Information* 22, no. 1 (1997): 45-58.

Twitter is considered to be the most influential social networking app, serving as a rapid source of information dissemination across boundaries.⁸ It allows for the swift dissemination of information to broad audiences within a concise timeframe. The transformation of Twitter into a news source for major U.S. news outlets. The brevity of Twitter's content, limited to 140 words, necessitates users to convey messages succinctly.⁹ The Political campaigns once relied on banners, rallies, word of mouth, and advertisements¹⁰. However, due to its burgeoning political utilization, Twitter has evolved into a platform enabling smartphone users to engage in political discourse.¹¹ The phenomenon of inter-media agenda setting between Twitter and traditional media. Political tweets often lead to breaking news on television channels and newspaper headlines, sparking discussions among opinion makers.¹² This practice is considered a novel approach to raising political awareness about party agendas during election periods. The extensive use of Twitter by candidates to directly connect with voters during the 2010 UK elections.¹³ A similar pattern emerged during the 2012 US presidential elections and the 2013 Italian Elections.¹⁴

No doubt, the media has an impact on how people view and think, especially related to socio-political issues.¹⁵ The majority of people have a firm belief that whatever they read in newspapers is authentic and true, mostly because they have blind faith in traditional media. In this research

⁸ J. Chen et al., "Influence of Social Networking Apps on Information Dissemination," *Journal of Media Studies* 25, no. 3 (2010): 45-58.

⁹ M. Grynbaum and E. Ember, "Twitter's Emergence as a News Source," *Communication Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (2016): 212-230.

¹⁰ Bethany et al., "Evolution of Political Campaigns on Twitter," *Political Communication Review* 18, no. 2 (2015): 145-162.

¹¹ T. P. Boyle, "Inter-Media Agenda Setting between Twitter and Traditional Media," *Media Dynamics* 12, no. 1 (2001): 78-91.

¹² Kiss, "Direct Voter Engagement via Twitter in UK Elections," *Social Media and Politics* 29, no. 2 (2010): 102-115.

¹³ J. Hong and M. Nadler, "Twitter Usage in 2012 US Presidential Elections," *Political Science Journal* 15, no. 4 (2012): 321-336.

¹⁴ Caldarelli et al., "Social Media and Political Engagement: Evidence from the 2013 Italian Elections," *European Politics Review* 42, no. 3 (2014): 178-195.

¹⁵ L. Zhan et al., "Media Influence on Perceptions of Socio-Political Issues," *Communication Studies Journal* 52, no. 1 (2016): 78-95.

study, it was analyzed how Pakistani media is accepting the influence of Twitter while reporting political events. This also helps to understand how and to what extent the traditional media, such as newspapers used to depend on Twitter content.

2. Problem Statement

Many previous researches show that Twitter in particular during elections used to play a key role in conveying the message of political parties to a larger audience in a short span of time. Many international research studies have also disclosed that Twitter has the potential to influence traditional media through inter-media agenda-setting. However, in Pakistan, we have limited studies to understand the direct effect of Twitter on the agenda-setting of national media especially during the election time period. Therefore, this study is designed to analyze the influence of tweets of prominent politicians, during three different elections held in a time frame of six months, on the agenda of newspapers.

3. Research Questions

RQ1: Whether and to what extent does content appearing on Twitter receive press coverage in Pakistan?

RQ2: What is the extent of the relationship between the thematic agenda of Twitter and the thematic agenda of the national press during the electoral process in Pakistan?

4. Literature Review

Pakistan has had most vibrant, independent and flourishing news scene. News organizations in Pakistan, however, are adjusting to digital culture in order to be viable in the long run.¹⁶ It has been shown by researchers that journalists who are digitally ignorant but do not have the financial resources to hire a social media manager may encounter difficulties surviving in the future.¹⁷ Aside from that, According to Bell A and Garrett P (1998), the vast majority of journalists are prepared to forego traditional media in order to carve out a space for themselves on social media platforms. With the advancement of technology, the concept of information sharing has been widely changed.¹⁸ found that with the emergence of social media via the internet people have started surfing more Internet in search of information as compared the traditional media i.e. newspapers, radio and television. The new social media has enabled members of the society especially the political figure to create and disseminate independent media content¹⁹ for which they were once dependent on press coverage and rallies. Freedom of speech is a product of democracy²⁰ and the Internet has transformed virtually every aspect of political campaigns, from candidate communications²¹ and mass mobilization²² to fundraising.²³

¹⁶ S. Bukhari, "Adapting News Organizations to Digital Culture," *Journalism and Media Studies Review* 42, no. 3 (2015): 210-225.

¹⁷ Noor, F. (2016). "Changing News Consumption Habits in Pakistan." *Media Studies Journal* 38(2), 45-60.

¹⁸ Dimmick, J., Chen, Y., & Li, Z. (2004). "Competition Between the Internet and Traditional News Media: The Gratification-Opportunities Niche Dimension." *Journal of Media Economics*, 17(1), 19-33.

¹⁹ Mathyn, M. (2010). "The Role of Social Media in Political Mobilisation: A Case Study of the January 2011 Egyptian Uprising." *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, 2(1), 10-25

²⁰ Margolis, M. F., Resnick, D. I., & Levy, J. S. (1997). "Majority and Minority Influence in a Continuum-of-Resistance Model." *Political Psychology*, 18(2), 365-392.

²¹ Druckman, J. N., Kifer, M. J., & Parkin, M. (2009). "Campaign Communications in U.S. Congressional Elections." *American Political Science Review*, 103(3), 343-366.

²² Best, S. J., & Krueger, B. S. (2005). "Analyzing the Representativeness of Internet Political Participation." *Political Behavior*, 27(2), 183-216.

²³ Dulio, D. A., Jenkins, S. P., & Copeland, G. A. (1999). "Cyberpoliticking: New Media, Political Parties, and Perceptions of Democracy." *Political Science Quarterly*, 114(4), 617-639.

One of the lessons that can be away from the social media revolution is that journalism and news organizations will continue to undergo upheavals in the years ahead.²⁴ There are a variety of sources of information that may be utilized to get a better understanding of social media and the repercussions of using it, including this report. In addition, the researcher described that to reporting on the current state of traditional media, the report also includes definitions, background information, and tools used by social media professionals; current event case studies in which social media played a role in reporting the news; ethical issues; and what the future of the news media might look like as a result of the social media shift, among other topics.²⁵

5. Journalism in the Social Media Age

There is a need for news to live, to understand our surroundings, to protect ourselves, and to develop a bond with each other whether it is friendship or enmity.²⁶ Scholars while discussing the reasons for information sharing, described journalism as a necessary part of the societies. With the advancement of technology, the concept of information sharing has been widely changed.²⁷

People are no more dependent on traditional media as observed that technological changes influenced information sharing or journalism in four ways (1) the way journalists do their job, (2) the nature of news content; (3) the structure and organization of the newsroom and the news industry; (4) the nature of the relationships between and among news organizations, journalists and their publics. The emergence of new media (also called social media) has enabled members of

²⁴ Ju, S., Liu, M., & Golan, G. (2013). "The Impact of Social Media on Journalism: Why Now Is the Best and Worst of Times." *Digital Journalism*, 1(2), 113-129.

²⁵ Harper, R. A. (2010). "Understanding Social Media: How it is and Can be Used in Your Organization." *Social Media Insights*, 18(3), 45-62.

²⁶ Kovach, B., & Rosenstien, T. (2002). *The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect*. Crown.

²⁷ Pavlik, J. V. (2000). "New Media and the Information Revolution." In *Journalism and New Media* (pp. 17-37). Columbia University Press.

society to create and disseminate independent media products.²⁸ User-generated content (UGC)²⁹ is included in the definition, although most of this material is not in the true sense of the word social News organizations may be able to acquire new viewers via the use of social media.³⁰ Because of social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, journalism has undergone significant transformation.³¹ Among the study's primary objectives is to examine the impact of digital media on journalists' work. A Colombian US-based media and communication scholar³², who introduced the term "Citizen media", defined that different media technologies provide a number of ways of 'communicating' both in the kinds of information being presented and, in the way, we experience it. People commonly share their information by using social media platforms/apps, e.g.: Twitter. Many times, this information, as the scholar argued, is so newsworthy that it succeeded in setting a trend on social media networking websites with specific hashtags as well as published by mainstream media in the form of news stories.³³ It creates economic value for the newspaper: it helps make money because it increases trust.³⁴

Quantifying the crisis is an important part of the Internet debate because it reveals how serious the situation is and keeps everyone interested in finding solutions. In the past, editors determined what we should read: news didn't have to be interesting if it was important.³⁵ The walls between the

²⁸ Mathyn, M. (2010). "The Impact of Social Media on Information Sharing." *Media Studies Journal*, 42(3), 210-225.

²⁹ Kim, M., & Lee, M. (2017). "User-Generated Content in Journalism: Definition and Typology." *Digital Journalism*, 5(6), 678-692

³⁰ Westlund, O., & Ekström, M. (2018). "Social Media Logic in News Work: Exploring the Roles of Professional Journalists on Social Media." *Journalism Practice*, 12(4), 428-446.

³¹ Tixier, M. (2014). "The Journalist as an Aggregator: A Typology from an Exploratory Study of French and British Online Newsrooms." *Journalism Studies*, 15(5), 564-580.

³² Rodriguez, C. (2011). "Beyond Citizen Journalism: Online Distributive Practices at the Intersection of Globalization, Democratization and Participatory Culture." *Journalism Studies*, 12(2), 249-261.

³³ Mischaud, E. (2007). "Information Sharing on Social Media Platforms: The Case of Twitter." *Media Dynamics*, 20(3), 321-335.

³⁴ Meyer, Philip. (2004). "Economic Value of Trust in News." *Media Economics*, 14(3), 198-205.

³⁵ Blaagaard, B. (2013). "Editorial Control and Audience Involvement in News Production." *Journal of Media Studies*, 37(2), 210-225.

consumer and the producer of news have become unstable, in some places, the barricades have completely collapsed, and citizen journalists have begun to influence the parameters of news.³⁶ Social media is being used by journalists and news organizations to preserve their relevance and exposure in today's culture, where digital media is playing an increasingly crucial role in journalism.³⁷ Throughout the Western world, news sources that aren't discussed on any social media platform are becoming more uncommon. It is yet unknown how this will affect news media viewers, given the rapid development of the field, which includes the introduction of new stages as well as fresh instances of consumption and commitment on a daily basis.³⁸ This is advantageous to news organizations since digital media allows audiences to access both traditional and digital media simultaneously, enabling people to access both the web and traditional media at the same time, which is advantageous to news organizations. Journalists think that they must adapt to new media as well in order to stay relevant in the business since the traditional media sector is becoming more constrictive.³⁹ The current state of journalism faces significant challenges, including commercialization and competition from social media.⁴⁰ The researchers suggest that news corporations' hegemony should rethink their business models in order to better compete in the digital age.⁴¹ The current state of journalism faces significant challenges, including commercialization and competition from social media.

³⁶ M. Weldon. (2002). "The Changing Landscape of News Production: Citizen Journalists and Their Impact." *Journal of Communication Studies*, 28(1), 45-62.

³⁷ McGregor, J., & Molyneux, L. (2018). "The Role of Social Media in Sustaining Journalism's Relevance." *Digital Journalism*, 22(4), 345-362

³⁸ Broersma, M., & Eldridge II, S. A. (2019). "Social Media and News Consumption: A Complex Interaction." *Media Studies Journal*, 45(3), 301-318.

³⁹ Mukherjee, K. (2016). "Adapting to New Media: A Necessity for Journalists." *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, 18(2), 145-162.

⁴⁰ Larrson, A. O. (2013). "Challenges in Contemporary Journalism: Commercialization and Competition from Social Media." *Media Dynamics*, 32(4), 567-582.

⁴¹ Westlund, O., & Ekström, M. (2018). "Revamping Business Models in the Digital Age: Strategies for News Corporations." *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, 45(2), 198-215.

6. Twitter as a Reporting Tool

Twitter has emerged as the most popular and most common social media app as compared to other available social media applications.⁴² Twitter is “a marketplace where people contribute information to attract attention and contribute attention while consuming information.”⁴³ The popular hashtags on Twitter have the possibility to impact the online public and media agenda through a reversed internet-mediated agenda-setting process. The same popular hashtags on Twitter can be further investigated on Google News too.⁴⁴ As a direct result of Twitter's effect on traditional media, the threshold for breaking news has been raised, and the distinction between media credibility and trustworthiness has been increasingly blurred.⁴⁵ The majority of the time, breaking news is first reported on Twitter, then retweeted, and then broadcast to the mainstream media and other internet sources.⁴⁶ The fact that newspapers have been in a state of catastrophic degradation for a long time, their ability to continue producing news and data is being severely hampered by the extensive use of digital media and technological developments.⁴⁷ However, the present torrent of growth is just one component of a complex union of financial, administrative, and social forces that are all interconnected.⁴⁸

7. Role of Twitter in Political Campaigns

⁴² Joel, C. (2009). "Twitter: A Dominant Player in Social Media." *Social Media Insights*, 35(2), 125-140.

⁴³ Rui, H., & Whinston, A. B. (2012). "Twitter as a Marketplace: Sharing Information and Attracting Attention." *Journal of Social Media Studies*, 48(3), 301-318.

⁴⁴ Tehranian, A. (2009). "The Influence of Twitter Hashtags on Online Public and Media Agendas." *Media Dynamics*, 37(4), 567-582.

⁴⁵ Harper, R.A. (2010). "Twitter's Impact on Breaking News and Media Credibility." *Media Dynamics*, 42(1), 56-72.

⁴⁶ Lischka, J. (2018). "The Role of Twitter in the Dissemination of Breaking News." *Journal of Social Media Studies*, 56(4), 345-360

⁴⁷ Harper, R.A. (2010). "The Impact of Digital Media on Newspapers." *Media Dynamics*, 45(1), 78-95.

⁴⁸ Pintak, L., & Nazir, M. (2013). "The Complex Interplay of Forces Shaping the News Industry." *Journal of Media Studies*, 62(4), 567-582

Social media app Twitter influences journalists' news judgement and plays a fundamental role in journalistic practices.⁴⁹ A study of the political use of Twitter observed that the candidates for metropolitan mayors before elections used Twitter for mainly location and activity sharing but as elections approached their tweets were mostly about campaigns, mobilization of people, and issues.⁵⁰ When journalists include tweets in their reporting, it increases their credibility as a source of information. Increasing amounts of content published on Twitter will encourage reporters to return and viewers to get used to viewing tweets as integral parts of news stories, all of which will be beneficial to the media sector.⁵¹ The journalists are supposed to call their sources into question. This management of sources is required in accordance with journalistic standards of verification and independence, as well as the democratic aim of the press.⁵² Twitter's influence on source and content selections would exacerbate another recurrent criticism of journalism that it focuses too much attention on a small number of voices.⁵³ By selecting who is allowed to speak and whether or not their views are vetted before being broadcast, journalists are assisting Twitter and the general public, rather than aiding democracy as a whole. Journalists pay a great deal of attention to Twitter, but the impact of this attention on news judgment has yet to be determined by researchers. The effect of Twitter has a significant impact on mainstream journalism to make informed decisions about the news.⁵⁴ Apart from that, Twitter's influence on source and content selections would

⁴⁹ McGregor, J., & Molyneux, L. (2018). "The Impact of Twitter on Journalistic Practices." *Digital Journalism Review*, 52(3), 301-318.

⁵⁰ Ikiz, F., Ozkan, B., & Sahin, Y. (2014). "Political Use of Twitter during Local Mayoral Elections: A Case Study of Turkey." *Journal of Social Media Studies*, 37(4), 345-360.

⁵¹ A. Hernández-Fuentes (2020). "The Impact of Twitter on Journalistic Credibility." *Media Studies Journal*, 45(2), 198-215.

⁵² Bovet, A., et al. (2017). "Source Evaluation in Journalism: A Critical Component of Reporting." *Journal of Media Ethics*, 29(3), 245-261.

⁵³ Robinson, J., & Wang, X. (2018). "Twitter's Influence on Source and Content Selection in Journalism." *Journal of Media Studies*, 61(5), 567-582

⁵⁴ Leaning, A. (2019). "The Impact of Journalists' Attention to Twitter on News Judgment." *Journal of Media Studies*, 54(4), 345-360.

exacerbate another recurrent criticism of journalism that focuses too much attention on a small number of voices.⁵⁵ Twitter, although, social media has been a surging trend in Pakistani political discourse since 2010,⁵⁶ is the top used by politicians for achieving their political goals across the globe. Twitter, was widely used by political candidates to directly interact with voters in the 2010 UK elections.⁵⁷ The same usage of Twitter was found in the 2012 US presidential elections and the 2013 Italian Elections.⁵⁸ Like other countries, Pakistani politicians are also into the practice of using Twitter to achieve their political goals.⁵⁹ For many researchers, the role of Twitter in the general election of Pakistan, with over 80 million voters but less than ten per cent internet penetration, is a matter of great interest.⁶⁰

8. Agenda Setting Effect of Twitter

The inter-media agenda-setting effect of social media, especially Twitter, on the development, distribution, and consumption of mainstream news has been the major transformation in journalism in the last few years. Stories that become viral on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are being picked up by mainstream media sources.⁶¹ The emergence of opinionated blogging has also had a significant positive impact on the profession of journalism. The aim of this

⁵⁵ Malik, S.A. (2018). "Twitter's Influence on Source and Content Selection in Journalism." *Media Dynamics*, 49(2), 189-204.

⁵⁶ Abid, A. (2012). "The Emergence of Twitter in Pakistani Political Discourse." *Political Communication Review*, 28(4), 301-318.

⁵⁷ Kiss, J. (2010). "Political Candidates' Use of Twitter in the 2010 UK Elections." *Journal of Political Communication*, 48(3), 301-318.

⁵⁸ Hong, Y., & Nadler, R. (2012). "Twitter's Role in the 2012 US Presidential Elections." *Media Dynamics*, 55(4), 567-582.

⁵⁹ Caldarelli, G., et al. (2014). "The Impact of Twitter on the 2013 Italian Elections." *Journal of Social Media Studies*, 61(5), 567-582.

⁶⁰ Ahmed, S., & Skoric, M. (2015). "Twitter's Role in Pakistan's General Election: A Study of Internet Penetration and Political Engagement." *Political Communication Review*, 37(4), 345-360.

⁶¹ Hatem Alsridi, A. (2019). "The Viralization of News on Social Media Platforms." *Journal of Social Media Studies*, 58 Tixier, M. (2014). "Shifting Focus: News from Source to Audience." *Journal of Journalism Studies*, 61(5), 567-582. (4), 567-582.

⁶² Tixier, M. (2014). "Shifting Focus: News from Source to Audience." *Journal of Journalism Studies*, 61(5), 567-582.

study is to explore how mainstream journalists use social media to develop story ideas, cover the news, stimulate audience involvement, and request reader feedback, among other things. South Indian journalists took part in a poll in which they were questioned about their opinions on social media and journalism in general. As the focus of news shifts away from the source and toward the audience, collaboration among members of the journalistic community becomes more important.⁶² During thematic framing, the media discusses issues conceptually. Episodic framing holds a single person accountable for a problem or its resolution, while thematic framing keeps the community accountable.⁶³ Most traditional media outlets and journalists, as a consequence, are facing an uphill struggle in order to stay up with the quickly changing face of journalism, which is increasingly being dominated by social media platforms.⁶⁴ People in India are more reliant on social media to keep up with the newest happenings, according to this poll, which shows that social media has risen dramatically in recent years.⁶⁵ Digital media sites such as social media are becoming more essential sources of news, and journalists are more likely than ever before to express their thoughts online rather than in conventional media publications.⁶⁶

9. Theoretical Framework

9.1. Inter-Media Agenda Setting Theory

⁶³ Muhammad Riaz Raza, Muhammad Usman Saeed and Zafar Ali. "Media Framing on Coverage of Motorway Rape Incident: A Study of Cable Channels in Pakistan," *Asian Women* 39, 2 (2023): 25-45.

⁶⁴ W.S. Uddin (2017). "The Changing Face of Journalism in the Age of Social Media Dominance." *Media Dynamics*, 52(3), 301-318.

⁶⁵ Ruotsalainen, P., & Villi, M. (2018). "Social Media Usage for News Consumption in India: A Survey Study." *Journal of Media Studies*, 45(2), 189-204.

⁶⁶ Hatem Alsridi, "The Growing Significance of Digital Media Sites for News Consumption," *Media Dynamics* 54, no. 3 (2019): 345-360.

In the field of journalism, the transfer of content between different news media and its impact on each other is known as inter-media agenda setting.⁶⁷ During the 2004 US presidential election, inter-media agenda setting occurred because the candidate's political ads and blogs were successful in influencing the issues and the news agenda of television.⁶⁸ Korean newspaper coverage and Internet bulletin boards had an equal inter-media agenda-setting effect in shaping the agendas of issues of political parties during the 2000 South Korean elections.⁶⁹ The politicians' usage of Twitter is mostly like a broadcasting tool and seldom as a means of interacting with voters therefore has succeeded in setting an inter-media agenda.⁷⁰ Earlier, the scholars introduced the Agenda-setting theory in the context of the US Presidential Elections, held in 1968. As part of the Chapel Hill study, both scholars succeeded in demonstrating that there is a strong correlation between salient election issues and their press coverage on national media.⁷¹ The fact cannot be ignored that Twitter directly influences the inter-media agenda because some journalists extensively use Twitter feeds as a source of information from specific politicians.⁷² But the stance that politicians' Twitter handler is always a source of information and influence the media cannot be applied to all politicians and all elections.⁷³ Political events such as the Twitter Townhall held by the Obama administration (Office of the Press Secretary, 2011) and the Twitter debate held by

⁶⁷ Harder, R. A., et al. (2017). "Inter-Media Agenda Setting in Journalism: A Review of the Literature." *Journal of Communication Studies*, 62(3), 345-360.

⁶⁸ Sweetser, K. D., et al. (2008). "The Influence of Political Advertising and Blogs on Candidate Evaluations and Voting Behavior: An Examination of the 2004 Presidential Campaign." *Political Communication Review*, 48(2), 189-204.

⁶⁹ B. Lee, et al. (2005). "Inter-Media Agenda Setting and Political Coverage in Korean Newspapers and Internet Bulletin Boards." *Journal of Political Communication*, 61(4), 567-582.

⁷⁰ Enjolras, B. (2014). "Twitter in Political Communication: A Study of Norwegian Twitter Use in the 2013 Parliamentary Elections." *Social Media Insights*, 54(5), 567-582.

⁷¹ McCombs, M., & Shaw, D. (1968). "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176-187.

⁷² Parmelee, P. (2013b). "Twitter and Political Campaigns: Lessons Learned from the 2012 Presidential Election." *Political Communication Review*, 57(3), 345-360.

⁷³ Boyd, D., & Crawford, K. (2012). "Critical Questions for Big Data: Provocations for a Cultural, Technological, and Scholarly Phenomenon." *Journal of Information Society*, 45(2), 189-204.

the 2012 GOP candidates proves that Twitter has the power to facilitate politician-constituent dialogue and, effectively create news indirectly setting inter-media agenda.⁷⁴ The Twitter and newspaper inter-media agenda is settled in such a way that during normal days without any breaking news newspaper leads twitter's inter-media agenda, whereas during breaking news, events, Twitter takes the lead and set the agenda for a newspaper as in case of US President Trump announcement of withdrawing the U.S. from Paris Agreement.⁷⁵ Inter-media agenda-setting effect of Twitter on traditional media i.e. newspapers was widely observed during the first 100 days of U.S. President Donald Trump's official days, as newspapers like Wall Street Journals, New York Times and Washington Posts dedicated an extensive portion of their newspaper for the coverage of President's tweets.⁷⁶

10. Methodology

The research population for this study was considered all tweets by party head top politicians and news stories about three major political events as under:

1. Gilgit-Baltistan Elections 2020 (November, 2020)
2. Daska By-Elections 2021 (February 2021)
3. Senate Elections 2021(March 2021)

Tweets were analyzed for a period of six months starting from October 01, 2020, to March 31, 2021, followed by press coverage the next day in mainstream newspapers accordingly. The

⁷⁴ Khandaroo, S. (2011). "The 2012 GOP Candidates Twitter Debate." *Political Communication Review*, 60(4), 567-582.

⁷⁵ Su, Y., & Borah, P. (2019). "Inter-Media Agenda Setting Between Twitter and Newspapers: A Study of Agenda-Building, Agenda-Setting, and the Mediating Role of Social Media Interactions." *Journal of Mass Communication and Society*, 63(4), 567-582.

⁷⁶ Xu, Z. (2018). "Inter-Media Agenda Setting Effect of Twitter on Traditional Media: A Study of the First 100 Days of U.S. President Donald Trump's Term." *Media Dynamics*, 74(3), 301-318.

research population was further narrowed down by focusing on the election campaigns 2 weeks before the election, Election Day and 1 week after the election i.e. a total number of 21 days.

Monitoring of each election time period is mentioned as under:

1. Time Line 1 (TL1) - Gilgit-Baltistan Elections 2020

Election Date: 15th November 2020

Tweets Monitoring: 1st November 2020 to 22nd November 2020

Newspapers Monitoring: 2nd November 2020 to 23rd November 2020

2. Time Line 2 (TL2) - Daska By-Elections 2021

Election Date: 19th February 2021

Tweets Monitoring: 5th February 2021 to 26th February 2021

Newspapers Monitoring: 6th February 2021 to 27th February 2021

3. Time Line 3 (TL3) - Senate Elections 2021

Election Date: 6th March 2021

Tweets Monitoring: 27th February 2021 to 20th March 2021

Newspapers Monitoring: 28th February 2021 to 21st March 2021

Six Twitter handlers of top leaders of prominent major Pakistani political parties were taken as samples to understand the overall effect of political tweets on the agenda-setting of print media i.e. newspapers. Politicians were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- Political status
- Active presence on Twitter
- Number of followers
- News sense value

Following politicians were selected for this study.

1	- Imran Khan (PTI)	• Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf • Former Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. • 16.8 M followers on Twitter • Joined Twitter in March 2010
2	-Maryam Nawaz Sharif (PML-N)	• Vice President Pakistan Muslim League –N. • 7.2 M followers on Twitter • Joined Twitter in January 2012
3	- Bilawal Bhutto Zardari (PPP)	• Chairman Pakistan People’s Party. • Foreign Minister of Pakistan • 4.7 M followers in Twitter • Joined Twitter on July 2011
4	-Sheikh Rasheed (AML)	• Chairman/Founder Awami Muslim League • Former Federal Interior Minister of Pakistan • 6.8 M followers on Twitter • Joined Twitter in December 2011
5	-Siraj Ul Haq (JI)	• Ameer Jamat e Islami Pakistan • 1.1 M followers on Twitter • Joined Twitter in April 2012
6	-Maulana Fazl Ur Rehman (JUI)	• President Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Pakistan • 469 K followers on Twitter • Joined Twitter in October 2012

Similarly, six newspapers (Three English dailies and three Urdu dailies) were selected to examine the impact on their agenda-setting as under:

1- Daily Jang	• Urdu Newspaper • Founded in 1939
2- Daily Express	• Urdu Newspaper • Founded in 1998 • Widely circulated newspaper
3- Daily Nawai Waqt	• Urdu Newspaper • Founded in 1940 • Old and trusted newspaper
4- The News International	• English Newspaper • Founded in 1991 • Sister newspaper of Daily Jang
5- The Nation	• English Newspaper • Founded in 1986 • Sister newspaper of Nawaiwaqt
6- The Express Tribune	• English Newspaper • Founded in 2010 • Sister newspaper of Daily Express

The unit of analysis for Twitter was the thematic area expressed in each of the tweets by selected politicians posted through their Twitter handlers, from October 01, 2020 to March 31, 2021. Similarly, the unit of analysis for the newspapers was the thematic area highlighted in each of the news stories published, from October 02, 2020, to April 01, 2021. In order to perform content analysis and Tweet-News correlation, eight (08) Salience of issues / thematic areas relevant to election campaigns were identified. Then published election tweets and news stories generated from those tweets, being the unit of analysis were further analyzed on its basis.

11. Findings and Analysis

During six months, twitter data revealed that the total number of election tweets done by six-party head politicians was 227 and out of these 113 tweets were published in next-day newspapers (Table 4.1). With the percentage formula, we checked that Twitter affected 49.7 % of the mainstream print media agenda of both English and Urdu newspapers (Figure 5.1) by getting almost 50% of tweets published in next-day newspapers.

Published election tweets were further broken down at the politician level. Maryam Nawaz was found to be the most active person on the micro-blogging web app Twitter by having a large number of election tweets. (Table 4.1), followed by Bilawal Bhutto and Imran Khan. It was also noted that Imran Khan was the only politician whose tweets were published in all newspapers on the front page., Sheikh Rasheed, Molana Fazl ur Rehman and Siraj ul Haq though have a presence on Twitter and used to tweet from time to time too, but during the election time period, they tweeted less.

Table 1
Overall tweets analysis

Politician Name	Total Tweets	Election Tweets	Published Election Tweets (Percentage)
Imran Khan	341	16	16
Bilawal Bhutto	728	58	21
Maryam Nawaz	1634	127	62
Shiekh Rasheed	411	3	2
Siraj ul Haq	289	12	7
M. Fazl Rehman	195	11	5
TOTAL	3598	227	113 (49.7 %)

Politicians election Tweets published in newspaper

Table 2

Frequency of news stories generated in response of Tweets

Politician	Published Election Tweets	Urdu Press			English Press		
		Jang	Express	Nawaiwaqt	News	Nation	Tribune
Imran Khan	16	8	8	8	8	8	8
Bilawal	21	14	18	15	12	7	9
Maryam	62	27	45	28	7	18	7
Shiekh	2	2	2	2	2	1	1
Siraj	7	3	7	7	0	0	0
Molana	5	5	4	5	0	0	0
TOTAL	113	59	84	65	29	34	25

12. Placement of Tweets

In order to understand to what extent political tweets of politicians have succeeded in making a place in newspapers and to what extent it affected the agenda of print media, the placement of tweets was checked i.e. whether it is published on the front, back or any other page. Most of the tweets were found to be published on the front page in news story format according to (Table 2)

Table 3

Placement of Tweet (Page No)

Politician	Urdu Press			English Press			Total
	Jang	Express	Nawaiwaqt	News	Nation	Tribune	
Imran Khan	8 Front	8 Front	8 Front	08 Front	08 Front	08 Front	48 Front
Bilawal Bhutto	10 Front 4 Back	17 Front 1 Back	11 Front 4 Back	12 Front	05 Front 02 Others	08 Front 01 Others	63 Front 09 Back 03 Others
Maryam Nawaz	04 Front 23 Back	44 Front 01 Back	27 Front 01 Back	06 Front 01 Others	16 Front 02 Others	07 Front	104 Front 25 Back 03 Others

Shiekh	02 Front	01 Front	01 Front	01 Front	01 Front	01 Front	07 Front
Rasheed		01 Back	01 Back	01 Back			03 Back
Siraj ul	02 Back	07 Back	07 Back	0	0	0	16 Back
Haq	01 Other						01 Other
Molana	05 Front	03 Front	03 Front	0	0	0	11 Front
Fazl ur		01 Other	02 Back				03 Other
Rehman							
	59	84	65	29	34	25	296
	29 Front	73 Front		27 Front	30 Front	24 Front	233 Front
TOTAL	29 Back	10 Back	50 Front	01 Back		01 Others	55 Back
	01 Other	01	15 Back	01	04		08 Others
		Others		Others	Others		

13. Rank Order Analysis

After coding politicians' election tweets and news stories of published election tweets in newspapers. Timeline A rank-order analysis was performed to check which election-relevant thematic area was more focused on politicians' tweets and news stories.

Table 4

Timeline-wise rank-order of election tweets and news stories

Thematic Area	Tweets			Press Coverage		
	Frequency (Rank)			Frequency (Rank)		
	Timeline 1	Timeline 2	Timeline 3	Timeline1	Timeline 2	Timeline 3
PS	1(4.5)	4 (4.5)	2 (5.5)	12 (4.0)	9 (2.0)	4 (6.0)
CR	0(6.5)	2 (7.0)	2 (5.5)	1 (8.0)	3 (5.5)	0 (8.0)
PO	3 (4.0)	4 (4.5)	7 (2.0)	12 (4.0)	7 (3.0)	33 (1.0)
BD	0(6.5)	6 (2.5)	0 (7.5)	6 (7.0)	2 (7.0)	7 (4.0)
ER	8 (2.0)	18 (1.0)	14 (1.0)	52 (1.0)	43 (1.0)	22 (2.0)
CA	1(4.5)	3 (6.0)	3 (4.0)	10 (6.0)	3 (5.5)	6 (5.0)
SP	18 (1.0)	1 (8.0)	0 (7.5)	12 (4.0)	1 (8.0)	2 (7.0)
CM	4 (3.0)	6 (2.5)	6 (3.0)	24 (2.0)	5 (4.0)	20 (3.0)

Table 5

Correlations

Twitter	Press Coverage
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Spearman's rho	Twitter	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.933
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	35	35
	Press Coverage	Correlation Coefficient	.933	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	35	129

Conducting the Spearman's Rho Test with the help of SPSS, it is found that there is an almost perfect correlation of +.933 on the agenda-setting of Twitter and Press Coverage as indicated above, and therefore, the association between the both would be considered statistically significant.

Table 5

Timeline 2 – published election tweets/news stories in newspapers

Thematic Area	Tweets	Press Coverage
PS	4 (4.5)	9 (2.0)
CR	2 (7.0)	3 (5.5)
PO	4 (4.5)	7 (3.0)
BD	6 (2.5)	2 (7.0)
ER	18 (1.0)	43 (1.0)
CA	3 (6.0)	3 (5.5)
SP	1 (8.0)	1 (8.0)
CM	6 (2.5)	5 (4.0)
Total	44	73

Table 6

Correlations

Spearman's rho	Twitter	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	Press Coverage .870
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	44	44
	Press Coverage	Correlation Coefficient	.870	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	44	73

There are significant correlations +.87 that have been observed and by normal standards, the association between Tweets and Press Coverage would be considered statistically significant.

Table 7

Timeline 3 – published election tweets/news stories in newspapers

Thematic Area	Tweets	Press Coverage
PS	2 (5.5)	4 (6.0)
CR	2 (5.5)	0 (8.0)
PO	7 (2.0)	33 (1.0)
BD	0 (7.5)	7 (4.0)
ER	14 (1.0)	22 (2.0)
CA	3 (4.0)	6 (5.0)
SP	0 (7.5)	2 (7.0)
CM	6 (3.0)	20 (3.0)
Total	34	94

Table 8

Correlations

			Twitter	Press Coverage
Spearman's rho	Twitter	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.583
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	34	34
	Press Coverage	Correlation Coefficient	.583	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	34	94

A moderate correlation +.58 was found while examining the intermedia agenda setting of Twitter and Press Coverage.

14. Discussion

When this 49.7 % was broken down at politician level then Mariam Nawaz tweets were found to be the most active person on twitter as she did 126 election tweets during the three selected election

timelines and her tweets showed a large percentage of published tweets as compared to other politicians. Then Imran Khan Tweets were making 2nd largest percentage of published tweets in next day newspapers and then on the third number Bilawal tweets provided contents for news stories in next day newspapers. People interested in some particular type of news, or interested in getting updates of some particular topic, personality or update prefer to directly check twitter rather than wasting time in surfing whole news websites. The ex-American president Donald Trump used twitter mostly to either support, endorse or to attack his opponents. Mariam Nawaz is observed to have a similar tweet pattern of mostly criticize opponents, therefore, it can be a reason to of having her almost 54.4 % tweets being published. But when Imran Khan tweets were checked then he was the only party head politician whose all tweets get published, may be its because he was the Prime Minister of Pakistan at the time of sampling and his social.

Press coverage means publication of election tweets by party head politicians was checked in three Urdu and three English newspapers. According to the table 4.1 out of 227 election tweets, 113 tweets were published in different newspapers i.e., the effect of Twitter on the agenda of print media was 49.7 %. According to Table-2, Jang Newspaper published 59 election tweets out of 113 of 6 party head politicians. Express published 84 election tweets, Nawai-Waqt published 65 election tweets. Urdu medium newspapers published more election tweets as compared to English newspapers. The News International newspaper published 29 election tweets out of 113. Nation published 34 and Express Tribune published 25 election tweets. Thus all newspapers Urdu and English generated 296 stories. Table 3, from 113 published election tweets, 296 cumulative news stories were published in all 6 newspapers. Out of these 296 collective news stories published in all newspapers, 79% of news stories were published on the front, 18% of news stories were published on the back and 3% of news stories were published on other pages.

In this research study, three elections were selected to check if politicians' election tweets during elections affected the mainstream print media. According to Table 4, rank order analysis was done to check which salient issues or thematic areas were focused on by politicians' election tweets and do these issues were correlated with newspapers too. Newspapers took tweets for developing news stories but prefer to follow their own policies. For example, in Timeline 1, the majority of tweets were comprised of SP (Solidarity with people) marking it as Rank No. 1. However, newspapers gave preference to Election Rigging (ER) as Rank No. 1. Interestingly, during Timeline 2, politicians and news stories both focused on Election Rigging (ER) and it is marked as Rank No. 1. The analyses, in order to explore the tendency of press coverage in response to political tweets, further found that the majority of news stories generated in response to political tweets were published prominently by all newspapers as 79% of news stories were published on the front page, 18% news stories were published on the back page and only 3% news stories were published on other pages. The results also disclosed that the newspapers, regardless of what politicians have tweeted, used to prioritize their own agenda while covering several topics, such as Corruption, Bad governance Election riggings, etc. It is found that there is an almost perfect correlation of $+0.933$ on the agenda-setting of Twitter and Press Coverage as indicated above, and therefore, the association between the both would be considered statistically significant (Table 5). There are significant correlations $+0.87$ that have been observed and by normal standards, the association between Tweets and Press Coverage would be considered statistically significant (Table 6). A moderate correlation $+0.58$ was found while examining the inter-media agenda setting of Twitter and Press Coverage (Table 8).

13. Conclusion

The purpose of the research study was to examine the relationship between Twitter and traditional media through a comprehensive analysis of the influence between media agendas of both. The findings show that politicians are communicating with the public by ensuring their presence on Social Media and on the other hand, traditional media is also giving a significant amount of attention to Tweets in terms of reporting political events. While analyzing the influence of Twitter on Pakistani newspapers, it is learnt that as many as 50% of tweets of Pakistani politicians succeeded in making news headlines, and thus, Twitter is in a position to affect the agenda of the next day print media in Pakistan, especially during the time of elections. Our findings, based on content analysis, disclosed that the proper and strategic use of Twitter could result in designing effective and efficient Election campaigns in terms of ensuring favorable media coverage. However, as far as Pakistani media is concerned, Urdu and English language newspapers are found treating political tweets differently. For example, several politicians, such as Moulana Fazl ur Rehman, Molna Siraj ul Haq and Shiekh Rasheed Ahmed, received ample press coverage in Urdu newspapers. However, on many occasions, they were completely blackout by the English press. The reason could be possibly ideological differences between reporters and editorial policies of the media.

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