
Analysis of Cross Media Practices in Pakistani Press*Durwesh Nusrat Naseem*Bahria University TV, derweshnusrat@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT

In this comparative study we have thoroughly investigated the cross-media practices in Pakistani press such as media pluralism, media diversity and media homogeneity, whether the audiences are given a variety of diverse opinions on these platforms. Specifically, this study has analyzed through content analysis of two media groups Nawa-i-Waqt and Jang which own both English and Urdu newspapers. They have a significant monopoly over the important news content which has a serious impact on the opinions of the audience on a variety of key issues which hold importance, that they are portrayed in a diverse manner or these media groups are only projecting their own narratives regarding key news issues which result in homogeneity. We have compared two months of data from 1st January 2022 to 28th February 2022 of Nawa-i-Waqt, The Nation and Jang & The News. Our comparison sample is of the front page of each of the newspaper which has helped us establish the homogeneity and plurality among cross media owned press. It has enabled us to determine the practices adopted by these cross-media groups.

Keywords: Press, Cross-Media, Media Groups, Urdu Newspaper, English Newspaper, Homogeneity, Pluralism, Diversity, Comparison, Media Practices, Analysis

1. INTRODUCTION**1.1. Cross Media Ownership**

In today's world, media plays a vital role in our society. It is considered a mirror of the evolving modern society; in fact, the media shape our mindset and how we live our lives. The best way to appreciate the media's role in our society would be to imagine what it would be like if, suddenly, the whole system never existed. How could we find out what

has happened in the Middle East? How could we avoid traffic jams during rush hour? How would we spend our evening? The mass media are a pervasive part of our lives.¹

The current debate on media ownership and control is informed by, and primarily focused on, the effects of globalization and neoliberalism on media scenarios worldwide. Almost everywhere, old patterns give way to new configurations at a phenomenal pace. National, state-owned, and public service media yield to commercial media characterized by increasing concentration of ownership and control through takeovers, mergers, and globalization.²

Large-scale public participation in the State's decision-making must be maintained if a democratic system is to prosper and thrive. There must be a vital media institution within the State capable of disseminating a variety of news and information from different perspectives to create a free market from which an individual can select the narratives that he or she feels most closely aligned with themselves. This will ensure that people can make informed decisions. To inform the populace of their rights and authority as separate members of the state body politic, the State's media must behave responsibly.

The media must be free, both from the influence of the government and from the preset intentions of individuals in positions of authority within media outlets, to guarantee that their goals of providing citizens with a range of information are satisfied. Suppose a small group of people controls a sizable number of media outlets. In that case, they can influence

¹ Joseph R. Dominick, *The Dynamics of Mass Communication: Media in the Digital Age* (Boston etc: McGraw-Hill Education, 2007).

² Pradip Thomas and Zaharom Nain, *Who Owns the Media: Global Trends and Local Resistances* (London: Zed Books, 2004).

public opinion and, in doing so, interfere with what could otherwise be the normal development of citizens' beliefs, which over time affects the direction the State takes.³

When a small number of organizations or groups of people dominate several media sources, their vested interests obstruct what should ideally be a "free flow" of information. Cross-media ownership is the term used to describe people and organizations who own and manage many media channels. Over the past several decades, this issue has received much attention, especially in the west. The public is left at the mercy of sources that only offer a predetermined narrative from which to get information when control is concentrated in the hands of a select few with their vested interests. However, it is crucial to realize that while a perfect scenario would give the public access to a diversity of information without preset bias, If the government is granted total or unchecked discretion to choose what a media outlet may or cannot air, it is a perilous path to travel down.

Consolidating press ownership threatens freedom of expression for various reasons, most notably the need to win over advertisers and employers. The latter can be industrial, governmental, financial, or even international, but they often have profit or propaganda as their primary goals. The proprietors of some publications may restrict articles and other content, and the tone of several publications belonging to the same group may be conformist. Such publications and the corporations that dominate them may have excessive political sway, which would undermine democracy and fuel political instability. Governmental retaliation may be used when a national or international corporation holds a

³ Ibid

monopoly, mainly if the regime has been the target of excessive political pressure. The concentration of press ownership and the resulting rise in conformism may amount to discrimination against minorities, especially regarding powerful ethnic groups who speak various languages.

1.2. Media Ownership in Pakistan

There is a mushrooming growth of print and electronic media in Pakistan, providing all sorts of social and psychological gratification to the audience. However, this proliferation of media is meaningless, mainly when there is an absence of access to information and rules and regulations controlling media freedom (S.A. Siraj, 2009). The lack of internal or external accountability for media organizations in Pakistan raises severe concerns about the location of checks and balances. The media should not only be free from restrictions imposed by the state or society but also from its corporate failings and prejudices. No free and democratic, a civilized society should support media control to impede freedom of expression. This is crucial for the public to get an accurate and responsible account of events. The media's obligation to uphold and fulfill the fundamental standards and obligations of journalism must never be compromised by freedom of expression.

In Pakistan, the cross-media ownership concentration, which measures the concentration across media sectors, indicates moderate risk. The eight top owners who reach almost 68% of the audience across Television, Radio, and Print Media, the numbers could be higher, too, as the studies conducted locally did not have all the audience data. This is where this Study will fill the gap. The top eight Media Groups in Pakistan are Jang, ARY, Express,

Governmental News Agencies, Nawa-i-Waqt Group, Dawn Group, Dunya Group, and Samaa Group. They all own various media platforms, and we can openly say they have a monopoly over the news content to which the masses are exposed.⁴

Pakistan has an extremely high concentration of news media in terms of ownership and audience share. In each of the four categories, over half of all viewers in the country watch, listen to, read, or visit the top four news websites, radio stations, newspapers, or television networks. A lack of choice and pluralism restricts Pakistani audiences if ownership variety reflects the diversity of information sources. The government (which still maintains control over state-owned television and radio but has given up ownership of all the numerous newspapers and magazines it owned between the late 1950s and the early 1990s); legacy media organizations; large private business groups that have recently established media outlets in addition to owning and operating many other businesses; media organizations founded by former journalists; and those owned and operated by individuals.

The nation's oldest and most significant media networks are held by venerable publishers/owners, including Dawn Media Group, Jang Group, and Nawa-i-Waqt Group, even though they are up against fierce competition from media with extraordinary ingenuity and corporate support. Both ARY Group and Express Media Group, which have already outperformed all other legacy media outlets in advertising income and audience

⁴ “Pakistan,” Media Ownership Monitor (Lime Flavour, Berlin), accessed March 4, 2022, <https://www.mom-gmr.org/en/countries/pakistan/>.

reach (excluding Jang Group), are controlled by companies with interests in various other areas of Pakistan's economy.⁵

Journalists-turned-publishers, the third sort of owner, are not, according to popular belief, the forerunners of an independent and transparent media revolution. Their ability to raise money from the general public, as in the case of daily *Khabrain*, or through banking and government channels, as in the case of daily *Pakistan* out of Lahore, has allowed them to flourish (though it is not included in our sample). These media organizations are, therefore, totally dependent on their owners' financial and political goals.

Individuals and/or organizations who proclaim a specific ideological perspective and utilize the last set of owners use their media platforms to communicate that vision to an audience that shares it. These include the Karachi-based daily *Jasarat* and the Karachi-based daily *Ummat*, both of which appeal to an extreme rightwing and Islamist audience. These ownership patterns negatively affect journalistic practices as their prime purpose and objective are to monopolize the news content according to their economic, political, or both agendas. Diverse ownership in the media industry is needed as a primary concern so that there are a variety of well-informed opinions among individuals and not a single narrative is injected into the masses. According to the Media Ownership Monitor, Pakistan's media business is highly concentrated in ownership and audience share. The country's media plurality and freedom of expression are at risk due to a professionally underdeveloped regulatory framework.

⁵ Ibid

1.3. Media Concentration

In the 1980s, when deregulation policies were implemented, and significant media giants like Silvio Berlusconi, Ted Turner, and Rupert Murdoch grew their media empires, media concentration became a concern for academics and the general public in the United States and some areas of Europe. Governments deregulated several industries in the 1980s and 1990s to boost the economy by handing over economic control to the private sector. The U.S. Congress passed the Telecommunications Act of 1996 to encourage competition in the media and telecommunications sectors. Many mergers, takeovers, and buyouts of media enterprises by more giant corporations and corporations with complementary business objectives have occurred.

Media monopolies, media oligopolies, media mergers, and cross-ownership are only a few examples of how media concentration occurs. Media oligopoly refers to a small number of companies' dominance of a particular media market. In contrast, media monopoly refers to the exclusive control or ownership of a majority of media outlets by a single person or entity in a community or country. Media mergers occur when one media firm purchases another, seizes control of that company's assets and uses those resources to grow its revenue, audience, and discursive influence. Media mergers are the most prevalent type of media concentration in many countries, including the United States and the United Kingdom. When a single individual or firm controls various media outlets, such as newspapers, cable T.V. stations, and broadcast T.V. stations, this practice is known as cross-ownership.

In scholarly discussion and debate, the effects of concentrated media ownership on media performance and society have taken center stage. The impact of media ownership is frequently complicated and hard to evaluate. According to mass communication expert Denis McQuail, the influence of media owners is influenced by their attempts to have a political influence on society, the degree to which their pursuit of commercial goals conflicts with the political or social role of the media and the amount of control they have over publishing and broadcasting decisions. The dynamics of the media market are heavily influenced by a small number of global media corporations that serve the interests of a minority elite and create much of the media material that is seen and heard globally. This is viewed as endangering freedom of speech since there is not much diversity of viewpoints published in prominent media outlets, there is not enough healthy competition, which inhibits innovation, and higher pricing for consumers.⁶

A political and economic perspective has also expressed concern about media concentration. In capitalist countries, distinctions in income, power, privilege, and class are seen to be reinforced in large part by the mass media. The framework of class disparities and unbalanced power relations from which the dominant class profits is reproduced when people who belong to the ruling class have disproportionate influence over the dissemination of information, knowledge, ideas, and images.

The growth of social media has created new options for individuals to organize, mobilize, and interact in democratic settings, along with the growing concentration of media

⁶ Denis McQuail, *Media Performance: Mass Communication and Public Interest* (London: Sage Publications, 1992).

ownership, which some claim is restricting the viewpoints that can be expressed through traditional media. However, given the digital gaps impacting individuals with lesser incomes and levels of education, as well as prohibitions on the Internet in some countries, there are still concerns about the degree of access to and involvement in these new forms.

1.4. Media Pluralism

The idea of "*media pluralism*" encompasses several ideas, such as "diverse ownership, variation in information sources, and range of materials available in the different Member states." Media pluralism now almost solely refers to the diversity of ownership in the eyes of critical thinkers and observers. It is anticipated that ownership concentration might lead to a distorted public dialogue where some points of view are ignored or misrepresented. Furthermore, because certain opinions are represented while others are ignored, the lobbying of potent interest groups, whether political, commercial, or other types, can result in the misuse of political power.⁷

Excessive media concentration might jeopardize media diversity and pluralism (the presence of a wide range of unique and independent viewpoints and various political beliefs and cultural representations in the media). Therefore, a pluralistic, competitive media system is necessary for media diversity. Although the terms pluralism and diversity are used synonymously in this chapter, it is essential to examine their meanings to understand

⁷ COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, "Media Pluralism in the Member States of the European Union," 2007.

why the absence of these characteristics in a highly concentrated media market can be of concern to the general public.

Media diversity is of crucial importance in most sovereign nations. The European Commission explains this as "*a crucial pillar in the right to information and freedom of speech*" by citing two generally accepted reasons'.⁸ We will concentrate on the connection between journalism practices and "the right to knowledge" since we know the importance of informed citizens for a healthy democracy. As stated in the second half of the sentence, pluralism is essential because, in contrast to homogenous news material, people can only be thought to have informed opinions when they have been exposed to a range of viewpoints on a given topic.

The lack of official persecution is only one aspect of true journalistic freedom. The media can uphold its democratic responsibility to present a range of various viewpoints to enlighten citizens only if media landscapes are varied and pluralistic and only if journalists have the most significant degree of independence⁹ proposed a comprehensive definition of media diversity, points towards the environment of broadcasting from a few decades ago and distinguishing four characteristics of diversity. For him, various forms and themes are required, meaning that all fields and topics – entertainment, information, education, and culture – must be considered. Second, a diversity or plurality of content should be added to this. It means that programs should cover the many points of view represented in a

⁸ Ibid

⁹ "Media Ownership Monitor: Pakistan a High-Risk Country in Terms of Media Pluralism," RSF, accessed March 4, 2022, <https://rsf.org/en/media-ownership-monitor-pakistan-high-risk-country-terms-media-pluralism>.

society thoroughly and truthfully. Finally, broadcasters should provide local, regional, national, and transnational material, according to Hoffmann-Riem.

To summarize, a program must guarantee that it provides problem, topic, person, and geographic variety. Finally, individual and group variety are required. Programs must consider the needs of all members of the community. The essential idea here is access, but representation is equally important. To be precise, it is also essential to differentiate between the types of diversity, i.e., internal and external, when assessing diversity and pluralism concerning media concentration and cross-media ownership.

The former relates to the structure of media, which is directly linked to access to information. It refers to the level of diversity among different media outlets in a particular industry, as measured by factors like politics, religion, socioeconomic structures, etc. There are several different and autonomous media channels in every given culture, each with a high degree of content uniformity, expressing a particular point of view and catering primarily to its own "*fans*."¹⁰ According to McQuail, the latter relates to media content and is linked to the concepts mentioned above of representation and reflection. It refers to a situation where one media organization expresses a broad spectrum of social, political, and cultural opinions, ideas, facts, and interests, intending to reach a vast and diverse audience.¹¹

1.5. Media Homogeneity

¹⁰ Denis McQuail, *Media Performance: Mass Communication and Public Interest* (London: Sage Publications, 1992).

¹¹ *Ibid*

In mass communication, Homogeneity is the similarity and uniformity of news content. It means it can be assumed that it is the precise opposite of media pluralism as well as media diversity. One of the primary roles of media is to give a variety of opinions to the public so that their horizon to perceive news is broadened rather than being fed with the same opinion in every news. Unfortunately, when there is a consolidation of media, which results in concentration in media groups owning a variety of news platforms, it automatically results in Media Homogeneity, which poorly affects a pivotal ethos of journalism which is the diversification of opinions in a variety of news stories which highlight the critical issues of any democratic society.

One of the core reasons for Media Homogeneity is cross-media ownership and the concentration of media conglomerates with their own internal and external agendas, such as advertisers and various state actors. When we can assume Homogeneous content will passively affect media independence at a whole new level. The dangerous aspect of media concentration is that it affects the democratic essence of our society as the media is not providing a spectrum of opinions; instead, it indirectly gives coverage to its own Media Agenda. In Pakistan, Media Conglomerates have many cross-media-owned platforms, e.g., The Express Group, GEO Group, Dawn Group, Samaa Group, and Dunya Group, among the leading electronic media platforms in Pakistan. These groups not only have their Television channels but their newspapers and various Digital Media platforms, some of these groups not only have one T.V. channel or newspapers but a variety of electronic media and print media platforms in different languages such as English and Urdu.

In Pakistan, we can assume by the alarming number of cross-media-owned platforms of electronic and print media that, by default, there will be Homogeneity in the coverage of the news content in the concentrated media, which is an understood bad practice globally. As social scientists, it is our job not just to assume but to investigate how cross-media-owned platforms function regarding news coverage through various means at our disposal. In a concentrated media environment, it is very safe and logical to assume at such an early stage that cross-media can be either pluralistic or homogenous. Pluralism refers to the difference in the news stories in the cross-media-owned platforms, while Homogeneity means the similarity in the news stories in the cross-media-owned press.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

2.1. Research Questions

The research questions of the Study are below:

1. To What Extent Pakistani Cross Media Press Practices Homogeneity or Plurality in Stories on their Coverage of Major National Issues?
2. What is the Plurality between the selected Publications in the Cross Media Press on Major National issues?
3. What are the thematic frames covered by the selected Cross Media Press?

2.2. Content Analysis

The relationship between particular words or topics may be easily measured or evaluated by a researcher utilizing the content analysis approach. Thus, content analysis may be defined as a scientific study of communication in the form of content. The different communication contents are thoroughly studied to determine their contexts and meanings.

According to "Bernard Berelson's publication of Content Analysis in Communication Research in 1952," it has been regarded as the most adaptable method for social scientists when the aim is to evaluate the true meanings of the communication message. Additionally, as noted by Holsti, sure political scientists and historians have been seen to apply content analysis. (1968). However, because qualitative research comprised most of what social scientists did, this group used it the most frequently. *"Academics from a wide range of disciplines, including social sciences, communications, psychology, political science, history, and language studies, frequently employ content analysis in social science and mass communication research. It has been used to study a variety of subjects, such as social change, cultural symbols, shifting theoretical trends across disciplines, authorship verification, shifting media content, and how social issues or problems, like atrocities against women or dowry harassment, are covered in the news, as well as ascertaining propaganda trends and election-related issues as they reflected in media coverage"*.

The most popular approach researchers employ to generate a qualitative expression of a particular occurrence is content analysis; this technique helps to generalize the data in the form of statistics, percentages, and sentences that appear to be more objective. Content analysis approaches seem to be the most practical when a researcher wishes to look into sensitive study topics. The studied data has different symbolic interpretations since the data used in such analyses are based on content. It may effectively capture qualitative content, though it is typically considered a quantitative instrument. The context-sensitivity of the technique will help categorize qualitative traits like the tone of news coverage as positive or negative.

Content analysis will be a valuable method to review the data and identify the common gaps in the text when the data has some missing information or has been incorrectly recorded. When used in experimental or survey-based research, the content analysis approach cannot produce valid results.¹² It is capable of handling vast volumes of data. Processing takes time, although computers have recently made it significantly more straightforward. It is a labor-intensive, low-cost strategy that does not demand much money.

Investigating the data Content analysis might start with a clear statement of the study's goals or research questions. The researcher states the study's goals and asks, "What do I want to learn from this communication content?" The researcher must thus choose an appropriate communication source and pose inquiries that can be answered by content analysis. By transforming "raw" occurrences into data that can be examined scientifically, the content analysis aims to create a corpus of knowledge. Choosing analysis units, establishing categories, selecting appropriate material to sample, and ensuring coding reliability are the four methodological challenges that a researcher dealing with a content analysis study must address in practice.¹³

In this study, we used quantitative content analysis; According to Bouma & Atkinson, quantitative research is '*Structural, logical, measured and wide*.'¹⁴ A quantitative

¹² Eric Woodrum, "'Mainstreaming' Content Analysis in Social Science: Methodological Advantages, Obstacles, and Solutions," *Social Science Research* 13, no. 1 (1984): pp. 1-19, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0049-089x\(84\)90001-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/0049-089x(84)90001-2).

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Gary D. Bouma and J. G B Atkinson, *A Handbook of Social Science Research* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

analysis method is based on numerical information and is typically associated with using statistics. As we have analyzed the coverage of Pakistan's cross-media owned Press, this research study is based on quantitative analysis techniques in a systematic manner.

2.3 Sample Size

For content analysis researcher has selected a whole population and census. Whole Populations is also known as Total Population, in which the researcher selects an entire population of interest as they have a particular set of similar characteristics. We have selected this Sampling Technique as our sample newspapers are analyzed thoroughly on consecutive dates. Therefore, the content in this regard has been evaluated from the four English & Urdu newspapers owned by the cross-media press groups, i.e., Jang & Nawa-i-Waqt, from January 1, 2022, to 28th February.

Press	Newspapers	Entries	Date
Jang Group	The News	530	1 st January 2022
	Jang		
Nawa-i-Waqt Group	The Nation	570	to 28 th February 2022
	Nawa-i-Waqt		
Total	1100		

Table 1 Sample size

In **table 1** above, the sample size is displayed. Jang group's two newspapers, Jang & The News, had 530 Entries, while Nawa-i-Waqt's two newspapers Nawa-i-Waqt & Jang, had 570 entries. The two press groups combined had a total of 1100 mentioned entries; in this regard, the topics, thematic frames, and the placement of the news stories compared the homogeneity and plurality of all the variables. For this purpose, the codes were assigned to the given variables for describing the quantitative data in meaningful form based on which the analysis on the SPSS has been conducted for generating the results, which is upcoming in the following chapters. The information on these variables is presented in the given table below.

Table 2 Coding Sheet

Variables	Definition	Codes
Newspapers	The News	1
	Jang	2
	The News & Jang	3
	The Nation	4
	Nawa-i-Waqt	5
	The Nation & Nawa-i-Waqt	6
Homogenous	Homogeneity	1

or Plural	Plurality	2
Major National Issues	Politics	1
	Terrorism	2
	Economy	3
	Protest	4
	Military	5
	Development	6
	Health	7
	International News	8
	Pakistan – India	9
	Judiciary	10
Thematic frames	Pro Government	1
	Anti-Government	2
	Neutral	3
Placement	Upper fold	1
	Lower Fold	2

2.3. Variables

Newspapers, topics, thematic frames, and placement are the variables in this study which are as follows:

2.3.1. Newspapers

The four newspapers Jang, The News, Nawa-i-Waqt & The Nation, have been taken as a sample for analyzing and evaluating cross-media practices of the Pakistani Press. The Front Pages were selected only of all the four newspapers as they have the essential news in the form of leads, sub leads, and various important news stories.

2.3.1.1. Jang Group

A subsidiary of the Dubai-based Independent Media Corporation is the Pakistani media giant Jang Media Group, better known as Geo Group. Its main office is in Pakistan's Printing House in Karachi. The Daily Jang, a daily published in Urdu, is part of this organization, which publishes the most newspapers in Pakistan. The Geo TV Network, Mag Weekly, the News International, etc. The founder, chairman, and editor of the Jang Group of Newspapers was Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman (1927-1992). The current leader of the Karachi-based business house is Mir Shakil-ur-Rahman. He also holds the position of Editor-in-Chief and serves as the CEO of the Jang Group of Newspapers. The Newspapers owned by Jang Group are The Daily Jang, The News International & Various others. This

group was chosen as it is the leading of the oldest and leading Press in Pakistan, having a large readership.¹⁵

2.3.1.2 Nawa-i-Waqt Group

Majid Nizami Trust now owns the Pakistani daily newspaper Nawa-i-Waqt. On March 23, 1940, it was launched under the direction of Hameed Nizami. Hameed Nizami founded this publication. Before his passing in 2014, his younger brother Majid Nizami served as the organization's chief editor and publisher. After his passing, the Nawa-i-Waqt Group of Publications passed to the Majid Nizami Trust, which Majid Nizami established during his lifetime. Rameeza Arif was chosen by the Trustees of the Majid Nizami Trust in 2016 to serve as the Managing Director of the Nawa-i-Waqt Group of Publications and as the Senior Vice President of the All-Pakistan Newspapers Society. Nawa-i-Waqt Group has numerous newspapers, namely Nawa-i-Waqt, which is in Urdu, and The Nation, which is in English. This group was selected as a sample because it is one of the oldest newspapers in Pakistan and the most prominent.¹⁶

2.4. Major National Issues

The Jang Group and Nawa-i-Waqt group has published news stories based on these significant national issues in their newspapers. So, analyzing the similarities and

¹⁵ "Latest News, Breaking News Pakistan, Entertainment, Sports, Urdu News, English News," Daily jang, accessed March 2, 2022, <https://jang.com.pk/>.

¹⁶ "نوائے وقت گروپ," Nawaiwaqt, accessed March 4, 2022, <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/about-us>.

differences of these significant national issues, this variable has been designed and coded in the coding sheet table 2. The issues, therefore, are as follows:

- Politics
- Terrorism
- Economy
- Protest
- Military
- Development
- Health
- International News
- Pakistan – India
- Judiciary

2.6. Homogenous or Plural

The homogeneity and plurality of the cross-media owned Press, as this data will show us the practices adopted by the selected Press. Homegeneity would be a bad practice, showing us the Media Homogeneity. At the same time, plurality would be a good practice as it would show us Media Pluralism & Diversity in the content.

2.7. Thematic Frame

Thematic frame focuses on news stories that are Pro-Government, Anti – Government, or Neutral. This indicator was to determine how a news story of a significant national issue is

framed. It provides the researcher a different idea of which cross-media press group is leaning towards which side of the political atmosphere.

2.8. Placement

The placement of news stories on the front page is critical, as the position of a specific news increases or decreases its newsworthiness tenfold. Two folds of any newspaper are upper and lower fold. The same research is designed in the same manner.

2.9 Ethical Considerations

The study's ethical concerns are an essential component that aids the author in avoiding any academic or ethical wrongdoing. The researcher made sure that the information gathered from the sources was used in the underlying study under the name of the chosen source. For this reason, the researcher ensured that the data was only utilized for scholarly purposes. In order to make sure that the information would only be used for research purposes, the researcher also addressed a letter to the publication that considered the erroneous use of information.

The researcher considered objectivity by choosing methods and approaches based on their applicability and reliability rather than intuition or personal preferences. By using all data in its original format without altering it to shape the direction of results, the researcher upheld the integrity of their work. To give credit to the original writers of the information and prevent concerns with academic misconduct and plagiarism, all information from secondary sources has been appropriately cited, along with a thorough bibliography. In

order to prevent typing and human mistakes, researchers carefully review the data and general information.

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This section deals with the data analysis and results collected for the content analysis to investigate the underpinned study's research questions, objectives, and hypotheses. For this purpose, the quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software to generate inferences on the research theme. Therefore, four newspapers, i.e., the The News, Jang & The Nation, Nawa-i-Waqt, have been selected where the framing of news was assessed for determining the cross-media owned practices in the Pakistani press where data has been extracted over two months.

3.1. Results

It is pertinent to mention here that one of the significant objectives of the study was to ascertain the framing of news stories print media of Pakistan. For this reason, four newspapers and two months were considered for this paper, which is further elaborated in the underlying tables, and the percentage of frequencies found in the parenthesis within the below-mentioned Tables:

Table 3: Characteristics of the Study Sample

Sr.		Frequency	Percent	Chi – Square Test
	The News	112	10.2	

1	Newspapers	Jang	228	20.7	163.04, P=.001
		The News & Jang	191	17.4	
		The Nation	119	10.8	
		Nawa-i-Waqt	312	28.4	
		The Nation & Nawa-i-Waqt	138	12.5	
		Total	1100	100.0	
2	Major National Issues	Politics	503	45.7	1650.78, P=.000
		Terrorism	47	4.3	
		Economy	117	10.6	
		Protest	23	2.1	
		Military	53	4.8	
		Development	39	3.5	
		Health	42	3.8	
		International News	116	10.5	
		Pakistan- India	60	5.5	
Judiciary	100	9.1			

		Total	1100	100.0	
3	Placement	Upper Fold	713	64.8	96.61, P=.001
		Lower Fold	387	35.2	
		Total	1100	100.0	
4	Thematic Frames	Pro-Government	399	36.3	4.44, P=.109
		Anti-Government	356	32.4	
		Neutral	345	31.4	
		Total	1100	100.0	

The above **Table 3** shows the overall characteristics and detailed information of the selected sample of the research study. All the mentioned characteristics of the sample were presented in the form of figures so that they may be easily understood for a clear picture for the masses so that this study can be beneficial for the masses and future researchers and policymakers. According to the first point of **Table 3**, there are 1100 entries from the four cross-media owned Press, i.e., The News, Jang & The Nation, and Nawa-i-Waqt. Overall, Nawa-i-Waqt & The Nation have the most plurality in the published stories, which means there is more pluralism and diversity and less homogeneity in the Nawa-i-Waqt press group. In contrast, The News & Jang have more homogeneous stories, meaning there is more homogeneity and lesser pluralism. The Probability of the first point is .001, which means it is significant; hence it supports and validates our hypothesis.

The second point of **Table 3** shows us the overall frequency of news stories on the Major National Issues of the cross-media-owned Press. In all the major national issues, politics, economy, international news & judiciary were given the most Coverage as news stories related to these issues were published more. The probability of the second point is .000 which means it is significant; hence it supports and validates our hypothesis. The third point of **Table 3** shows us the placement of the news stories in the upper and lower fold of the front page of the four selected newspapers, as the evident majority of news stories are in the upper fold. The reason for this difference is that majority of newspapers had advertisements in the lower fold. The probability of the third point is .001 which means it is significant. The fourth point of **Table 3** shows us the frequency of the thematic frames. It shows us that the news stories published in the selected Press were more pro-government than anti-government. The difference between anti-government and neutral news stories was minimum. The probability of the second point is .100 which means it is not significant; hence it does not support and invalidates our hypothesis.

3.3. Research Questions:

1. To What Extent Pakistani Cross Media Press Practices Homogeneity or Plurality in Stories on Their Coverage of Major National Issues?

Table 4: Overall homogeneity and plurality in the coverage of Major National Issues

		Jang	The News	Jang & The News	The Nation	Nawa-i-Waqt	The Nation & Nawa-i-Waqt	Total
Major National Issues	Politics	43 (3.9)	138 (12.5)	87 (7.9)	40 (3.6)	137(12.5)	58 (5.3)	503 (45.7)
	Terrorism	12 (1.1)	4 (0.4)	11 (1.0)	1 (0.1)	12 (1.1)	7 (0.6)	47 (4.3)
	Economy	15 (1.4)	19 (1.7)	22 (2.0)	21 (1.9)	29 (2.6)	11 (1.0)	117 (10.6)
	Protest	1 (0.1)	2 (0.2)	3 (0.3)	1 (0.1)	10 (0.9)	6 (0.5)	23 (2.1)
	Military	4 (0.4)	14 (1.3)	8 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	7 (0.6)	20 (1.8)	53 (4.8)
	Development	1 (0.1)	16 (1.5)	5 (0.5)	5 (0.5)	9 (0.8)	3 (0.3)	39 (3.5)
	Health	8 (0.7)	5 (0.5)	4 (0.4)	1 (0.1)	18 (1.6)	6 (0.5)	42 (3.8)
	International News	11 (1.0)	12 (1.1)	18 (1.6)	36 (3.3)	26 (2.4)	13 (1.2)	116 (10.5)
	Pak - Ind	2 (0.2)	5 (0.5)	7 (0.6)	4 (0.4)	37 (3.4)	5 (0.5)	60 (5.5)

	Judiciary	15 (1.4)	13 (1.2)	26 (2.4)	10 (0.9)	27 (2.5)	9 (0.8)	100 (9.1)
Total		112 (10.2)	228 (20.7)	191 (17.4)	119 (10.8)	312 (28.4)	138 (12.5)	1100 (100)

The **Table 4** shows overall homogeneity and plurality in the coverage of major national issues; it is evident from the Table that both the cross-media owned press groups (Jang, The News) & (Nawa-i-Waqt, The Nation) have more plurality than homogeneity in their coverage of the major national issues. This Table also shows that major national issues such as politics, economy International News & judiciary are getting more coverage while major national issues like protest, development & health are getting the least coverage. This data also clearly indicates that Pakistani press has more pluralism and less homogeneity.

2. What is the plurality between the selected Publications in the Cross-Media Press on Major National Issues?

Table 5: Plurality in Coverage in the Selected Publications

Plurality		Homogeneity in both	Chi = Square Test
Jang	The News	191 (17.4)	
228 (20.7)	112 (10.2)		
340			
Nawa-i-Waqt	The Nation		

119 (10.8)	312 (28.4)	138 (12.5)	1100.00, P=.000
431			
Total	771 (70.9)	329 (29.9)	

Table 5 shows plurality and homogeneity in the selected publications on major national issues. As evident from the Table, there is more plurality than homogeneity in the cross media owned press. It means that coverage in cross media owned Pakistani press is less homogenous and more pluralistic on major national issues. It also provides clear evidence that the Nawa-i-Waqt Group is more diverse than the Jang group. Regarding individual newspapers, The Nation has the most plurality in their stories compared to the rest of the other four. The Table also shows the overall homogeneity and plurality in both the cross-media owned press; after analysis, we can say there is 70.9 % plurality in the news content while 29.9 % homogeneity in the news content of the Pakistani cross media owned press. The probability of table 5 is .000 which shows it is significant.

Table 6: Coverage of Homogeneity and Plurality in the significant Major National issues

		Comparison			Chi Square
		Homogeneity	Plurality	Total news	
	Politics	145 (13.2)	358 (32.5)	503 (45.7)	

Major National Issues	Terrorism	18 (1.6)	29(2.6)	47 (4.3)	
	Economy	33 (3)	84 (7.6)	117 (10.6)	
	Protest	9 (0.8)	14 (1.3)	23 (2.1)	
	Military	28 (2.5)	25 (2.3)	53 (4.8)	
	Development	8(0.7)	31(2.8)	39(3.5)	23.22,
	Health	10 (0.9)	32 (2.9)	42 (3.8)	P=.006
	International News	31 (2.8)	85 (7.7)	116 (10.5)	
	Pakistan - India	12 (1.1)	48 (4.4)	60 (5.5)	
	Judiciary	35 (3.2)	65 (5.9)	100 (9.1)	
	Total	329 (29.9)	771 (70.1)	1100 (100)	

Table 6 shows the homogeneity and plurality between major national issues of all selected cross media owned press combined. It is evident from the Table that politics has the highest number of homogeneity and plurality this major national issue has the most coverage in the publication of news stories. Almost (except military) all topics in the study are different than similar. This data shows that the Pakistani Press is more diverse and less homogenous in the Coverage of major national issues. The Probability of **Table 6** is .006, which shows it is not significant as it is more than .005.

3. What thematic frames are covered by the selected Cross Media Press?

Table 7: Overall Coverage of homogeneity and plurality in the thematic frames

		Comparison		Total	Chi - Square
		homogeneity	plurality		
Thematic Frame	Pro Government	124 (11.3)	275 (25)	399 (36.3)	.514, P= .773
	Anti- Government	108 (9.8)	248 (22.5)	356 (32.4)	
	Neutral	99 (9.0)	246 (22.4)	345 (31.4)	
Total		331 (30.1)	769 (69.9)	1100 (100)	

The above **Table 7** shows the overall coverage of homogeneity and plurality in the thematic frames, which include pro-Government, anti-Government & neutral news stories of the cross-media-owned Press of the Nawa-i-Waqt Group & Jang Group. More coverage is given to news stories that are pro-government in nature but keep in mind that these publications are more plural than homogenous. It means that in the publications of the Pakistani press, there is more pluralism of news and less homogeneity of news. However, more Coverage is given to pro-government news stories than anti-government or neutral news stories. The probability of **Table 7** is .773, which shows it is not significant as it is more than .005.

Table 8: Coverage Homogeneity and Plurality in the themes in the selected newspapers

		Pro Government	Anti- Government	Neutral	All	Chi Square Test
Newspapers	The News	26 (2.4)	41 (3.7)	45 (4.1)	112 (10.2)	35.550, P=.000
	Jang	107 (9.7)	74 (6.7)	47 (4.3)	228 (20.7)	
	The News & Jang	71 (6.5)	71 (6.5)	49 (4.5)	191 (17.4)	
	The Nation	41 (13.7)	34 (3.1)	44 (4)	119 (10.8)	
	Nawa-i-Waqt	101 (9.2)	101 (9.2)	110 (10)	312 (28.4)	
	The Nation & Nawa-i-Waqt	53 (4.8)	35 (3.2)	50 (4.5)	138 (12.5)	
Total		399 (36.3)	356 (32.4)	345 (31.4)	1100 (100)	

The above **Table 8** shows us the coverage of homogeneity and plurality in the thematic frames in all the selected newspapers of the Nawa-i-Waqt Group & Jang Group. It is fully evident in the data that there is more plurality than homogeneity in the coverage of stories in their respective thematic frames. In the same way, more coverage is given by the Jang group to pro-government news stories compared to the Nawa-i-Waqt group, and the Jang Group gives more coverage to anti-government news stories compared to the Nawa-i-Waqt group. It indicates that the Pakistani press is more pluralistic and less homogeneous. The probability of **Table 8** is .000 which shows it is significant.

3.4. Research Hypothesis

1. There is a likelihood that Pakistan Cross Media Press would be more homogeneous than pluralistic in its Coverage of Major National Issues.

This research hypothesis is not approved and invalidated, that Pakistan Cross Media Press would be more homogeneous than pluralistic in their Coverage of Major National Issues. As seen in **Table 6**, the data analysis showed that in the cross-media press, nine major national issues have more plurality than homogeneity in their publications, except news stories about the military. hence Pakistani cross media press is more diverse, pluralistic, and less homogeneous.

2. There is a Likelihood That Jang Group Would Publish More Homogenous Publications on Major National Issues Than That Nawa-i-Waqt Group.

This research hypothesis is approved and validated that the Jang Group would publish more homogenous publications on major national issues than that of Nawa-i-Waqt Group. As seen in **Table 5**, the data analysis shows that The Jang Group published 191 similar news stories in their publications than that of Nawa-i-Waqt Group, which were 138, which means Nawa-i-Waqt is more diverse and pluralistic, and The Jang Group is more homogeneous.

3. There is a Likelihood that Political, Judicial & Economic issues will be covered with Greater Homogeneity Than Other Issues in The Cross-Media Owned Press.

This research hypothesis is approved and validated that political, judicial & economic issues will be covered with greater homogeneity than other issues in the cross media owned press. As seen in **Tables 4 & 6**, data analysis shows that major national issues such as politics, judiciary and the economy had more homogenous stories in the publications compared to the rest of the major national issues in the cross-media owned press. We can confirm that there is more homogeneity and less pluralism in the cross-media-owned press on political, judicial and economic issues.

4. There is a likelihood that Anti Government news stories will be covered more than Pro-Government News stories.

This research hypothesis is not approved and invalidated, that anti government news will be covered more than pro-government news. As seen in **Tables 7 & 8**, data analysis shows us that pro-government news stories published are 399 while anti-government news stories published are 356 in the cross-media owned press. We can confirm that there is

homogeneity in the publications of pro-government news stories, while in anti-government news, there is pluralism and less homogeneity.

4. Discussion

In underdeveloped nations and transitional cultures, such as Pakistan, the populace must be exposed to various viewpoints. Regardless of its political, religious, or other opinions. According to academics, one of the critical issues with media ownership concentration is the potential for individual views to be heard, the better for democracy and the more extensive political system excessive regulation of the media.

In the 75 years of its existence, Pakistan has gone through three decades of mixed political systems, three decades of dictatorship, and a decade of developing but precarious democracy. There has not been a reliable, skilled, or trained journalistic community for a while. The development and expansion of the media industry in this region have faced several difficulties due to the nation's lack of a solid media-business model. The conventional economic model of the media is built on the volume of government-funded subsidies for the media industry. Furthermore, the media systems' journalistic independence, impartiality, and transparency have been curtailed by unstable and weak political systems and the intrusions of a dominant elite media ownership.¹⁷ (Raza, M. R., Saeed, M. U., & Ali, Z, 2022).

¹⁷ Muhammad Riaz Raza, Muhammad Usman Saeed, and Zafar Ali, "Media Concentration and Journalistic Independence in Pakistan Audience and Journalists' Perspectives," *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies* (Bastas, January 3, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.30935/ojcm/11462>.

Democracy is under threat if media owners can promote a particular political perspective and are permitted to dominate the offering of media. Another crucial component of a developing society is pluralism. Pluralism is generally associated with diversity in the media, several different independent voices, and different political opinions and representations of culture within media. It is clear that citizens require diversity and plenty of media sources and material.

In this study, it is concluded that Pakistani press content-wise is practicing pluralism as there is a diversity of opinions for the audience and readership to which they are being exposed. The relevant stakeholders and significant national issues are getting their due coverage, which is very good for democracy and is the true essence of journalism. After the advent of electronic media and now the new digital media, we can say that print media or press is not what it was in its golden age in the 20th century and before, most print media press organizations do not possess the workforce and the human resource as well as the monetary resources as before, regardless of all the hardships of press it is still accurate and legitimate in its practices.

In the previous sections, after thorough data analysis, we have learned that the Pakistani cross-media-owned press is almost 71 % diverse and 29 % homogeneous in its publications. Many researchers believe the presence of media homogeneity is due to the Jang & Nawa-i-Waqt groups being concentrated in their ownership; this percentage could be significantly lowered further if Pakistan Electronic Media Regulation Authority (PEMRA) had a robust system to monitor media concentration in Pakistan. However, it would have been only possible when the regulatory body was established in 2002. Now it

seems nearly impossible as there are numerous cross-media groups in Pakistan. The only course of action can be to stop any further concentration of the media market for freedom of the press so that internal and external factors do not control them.

Media pluralism and diversity is the essence of the entire media landscape when it comes to shaping the opinion of the masses as a whole. On the other hand, Media Homogeneity in the concentrated media does the exact opposite i.e., suppressing the diversity of opinions. This research has significantly proven us that the cross-media press in Pakistani press is more diverse and less homogenous as mentioned before. The importance of this research study is that it explains how the media ownership who run these organizations have ultimate control and power over important news content, how the agenda setting function of the media conglomerates effect the mindset and thinking process of the society which eventually effect the electoral results, thus bringing in new governments, hence bringing in structural changes in the society. This research sheds light on how media ownership & its agenda setting function are in conjunction with Media Pluralism and Media Homogeneity.

One of the most sacred responsibilities of media is the education and counseling of society and the masses. When there are just a few sources of information, media organizations may establish hegemony over the information the public receives. They are the ones who determine whose point of view should be propagated throughout society, moreover, whose voice needs to shorten., "*Media organizations are political and economic entities. They can and are expected to influence public opinion, government policy, and citizen voting behavior. At the same time, media organizations*" continued existence in a capitalist system

such as ours depends upon their ability to maximize revenue and minimize costs." Cross-media ownership aids large media conglomerates in reducing their lowering the cost of manufacturing, making it possible for them to print more newspapers.

A free press is essential for a democracy to prosper. It helps people acquire knowledge that could be challenging to attain otherwise. Free media also commonly serves as a diligent watchdog for the citizens of any nation. It is generally known that there is a connection between ideology and mass media and that these two can influence public opinion. In order to further the self-interest of a society's "specialized elite," various media outlets encourage "false awareness" among their audience members. The media is acknowledged as the fourth pillar of the state in Pakistan, behind the legislature, executive branch, and judicial system. Furthermore, Pakistan's constitution, which serves as a legislative foundation for Pakistani media and forbids anything incompatible with morality, Islam, or the security of Pakistan, fiercely protects the right to freedom of information. The political and social climate of Pakistan is now undergoing significant changes.

In Pakistan, the media serves as the fourth pillar of the state and has the power to reduce hostilities and intolerance in all spheres of society. The Pakistani media authorities have a social duty to play a positive role in promoting social harmony and stability in the nation. It is therefore anticipated that Pakistan's media authorities would try to advance toleration, harmony, peace, and stability by self-regulating their own media networks. The news media is essential to Pakistani society's fast-paced culture. The usage of news media for various objectives has increased since the beginning of the information revolution.

Despite this, it has been recognized as a significant factor in the evolution of opinions. The existence of news media significantly influences the general public's perception of the world in society. Through the media, people are exposed to current events on a local, national, and international level, enabling them to voice their thoughts. The media is undoubtedly a weapon of war in today's globe. It is because winning a war in today's society entails convincing the populace just as much as destroying the enemy on the battlefield. A plan that supports the advantages of peace journalism, demoralizes the war media, and focuses on converting conflicts into peaceful resolutions was also recommended.

5. Conclusion

It was hypothesized that there would be greater homogeneity in the cross-media press in Pakistan but interestingly, this research study has found out that the homogeneity is less as compared to plurality in the publication of stories in the cross-media press. nevertheless, Jang Group's publications are more homogenous as compared to the publications of the Nawa-i-Waqt Group. Most of the homogeneity when it came to the major national issues in both the cross-media press, were found in the issues pertaining to politics, judiciary, economy, international news & military respectively.

The conclusion can be made that the cross-media press in Pakistan is more pluralistic & less homogenous when it comes to their publications of Major National Issues.

6. Recommendations for Future Research

Research should be goal-oriented, and it needs to be built so that one cannot fully anticipate its entire outcome; whether it will be beneficial or not, it will, in turn, also answer problems that have yet to be addressed. It should be carried out in a manner that the limitations of

the study should not adversely affect the findings. Media ownership is not an issue in the Pakistani mainstream media; its existence is global, whether conventional or new media. The researcher must try to expand and broaden their intellectual horizon and focus not just on print media only. The future research could also be of qualitative nature when it comes to media concentration.

Media concentration should be accessed in South Asia, i.e., India, Pakistan, Sri – Lankan, and Bangladesh. It can only be done so if we thoroughly review the literature which has been published regarding media ownership and its impacts on media pluralism. Future reach can be carried out in the South Asian region; whether there is media plurality and media diversity or content homogeneity, this is when our focus of research is the traditional media only. As we know that digital media has been a game changer and brought a paradigm shift in the world of media, the focus of the audiences has changed tenfold; there are a handful of people who read newspapers or watch television channels, now the attention of the audience has shifted towards the new media.

When our topic of discussion is digital media platforms, we have to emphasize, e.g., how Facebook changed into Meta then into Metaverse, how Meta now owns Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, WhatsApp, and other platforms of significant renown, their total users are in billions. Media has the power to shape opinions, and when it comes to changing the mindset of the masses, the most critical aspect is shaping the political opinion because, in a democratic society, it affects the electoral, which changes and brings governments into power, hence changing the society for generations to come.

Future research must be significant in that it should educate the masses on how huge media conglomerates, whether they own traditional media or new media platforms, and how their bias affects and molds the thought process and opinions of the masses. This ‘manufacturing of consent by the media owners should be exposed by researchers so that the masses are aware of how their media consumption affects them.

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