

## **A Content Analysis of Political Advertisements in Print Media during General Elections-2018 in Pakistan**

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### **Abstract**

*This research study is a content analysis of the print media political advertisements of the leading Urdu newspapers of Pakistan. These advertisements were published one month before the General Elections 2018 by three leading political parties of Pakistan i.e. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP). The advertisements have been analysed using the content analysis technique. The three most popular Urdu dailies of Pakistan i.e. Daily Express, Daily Nawa-i-Waqt and Daily Jang were selected for the content analysis. It was observed that the three political parties used various advertising themes, appeals, and tactics of attacking opponents in print media political advertisements to gain the support of the voters during the elections. It has been observed that the Pakistan People's Party published more advertisements as compared to PML-N and PTI. It was also found that PPP and PTI used the content of their past performance and hope appeals in their advertisements. However, PML-N used fear and hope appeals, past performance, the sanctity of the vote, and some other mixed themes. PTI published very few advertisements in the print media and used the opponent attack, past performance, health, education, corruption, and hope appeal in its advertisements.*

**Keywords:** *Content analysis, Print Media, Political Advertisements, Political Parties, General Election-2018*

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### **1. Introduction**

Elections are an important component for the continuity of any democratic system around the globe. Political communication and democracy are intertwined and are regarded as the fundamentals for the promotion and consolidation of the democratic system in any democratic country of the world. Political advertising includes advertising or marketing communications about a political party, representative or candidate, advertising about political issues or issues of public interest, and advertising about government policies. According to Blumler and Gurevitch (1995), political communication is a three-pronged relationship between the political leaders, the mass media, and the electorates and each one of them plays its role in message production,

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reception, and interpretation. Political advertisements have been a popular form of political communication between the political leaders and the voters. Political parties make optimum use of mass media to convey their manifestos and agendas to the voters. The pioneers of political communication studies Lippmann (1922) and Lazarsfeld (1944) left an indelible mark in the field of political communication.

Mann, Gupta, and Sharma (2011) explore the impact of political advertisements in print media during elections in India, highlighting how political parties utilize these advertisements to shape public perception and influence voter behaviour. The authors emphasize that print media remains a significant platform for political communication, despite the growing prominence of digital media. They analyze various strategies employed by political parties, such as the use of emotional appeals and targeted messaging, which are designed to resonate with specific voter demographics. The findings suggest that effective political advertising can significantly enhance a party's visibility and electoral success, underscoring the critical role of traditional media in contemporary political campaigns. Political print advertisements in Ukraine often employ a variety of multimodal elements to persuade voters. These include visual imagery, such as patriotic symbols or negative portrayals of opponents, as well as persuasive language and emotional appeals. By combining these elements, advertisers seek to create a powerful and memorable message that resonates with the target audience (Batrynychuk, et al., 2022).

Political advertising is a prominent feature of political communication. Political leaders/parties use political advertisements in pre- and post-election times through various channels of communication like print and electronic media, banners, online advertising etc. (Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999). Election season is the peak time when political parties make their utmost efforts to woo the voters by communicating their messages through advertisements in the media (Norris, Curtice, Sanders, Scammell, & Semetko, 1999). Political advertisement becomes a giant business when the political parties, their supporters and politicians start trading on it. (Jacobs & Shapiro, 2000). Media is an important component of modern democracy, without which elections are incomplete. The knowledge of the masses about the procedure of casting their vote and the freedom of voting led to a fair and free election. This is also a process of participation of voters in debates and they are informed about candidates, electoral procedures, policies, and parties. (Norris, 2004). At this point, political advertising plays its role in mobilizing, informing, and influencing the electorate. In modern political systems advertising and politics can hardly be divorced leading to the idea of political mobilization and socialization through effective political advertising (Folorunso, 2016) campaigns that may incorporate all types of media including Newspapers, Television, radio, posters, magazines, billboards and most recently added SMS and internet (Ezegwu, Etukudo, & Akpan, 2015).

After emerging new strategies and ideas for marketing politicians and their parties to the common people are led by the relationship between advertising and politics. Richard M. Nixon (former US president) said "Political advertising is to politics what bumper stickers are to philosophy" (Christ, Thorson, & Caywood, 1994). (Okigbo, 1992), is also of the view that the ability to effectively use communication by the political campaign managers resulted in a loss or win in an election. While (Okoro, 2010, p. 15) opposes the idea that "politicians rise to power because they can talk persuasively to voters and political elites". Compared to Western countries, eastern countries like India and Pakistan are still lagging in democracy. Eastern people prefer personality more than institutions. That is why we have a dynastic politics culture in Pakistan. To preserve their family politics, they must enter into the minds of the people that they are the only choices for public office. Therefore, they spend more and more money on advertising.

Though Pakistan's electoral history is marred with many controversies and criticism, but still political parties actively participated in the electoral processes despite having reservations. Pakistan's first general election was held in 1970. Political parties relied mainly on traditional modes of reaching the people like holding rallies, corner meetings and public gatherings. The use of print or electronic media by political parties to disseminate their message to the voters during that period was not a common practice. In comparison, in the 10<sup>th</sup> general elections which were held in Pakistan in July 2018, political parties used advanced political marketing techniques (Azad, 2018). Normally political parties spend more in the last phase but the most harmful to the nation is the second one where the political parties use public funds and resources as they have full access to. In recent times the Supreme Court of Pakistan summoned different media house owners to share details of ads on their respective channels. Similarly, government officials were also summoned to court. Upon questioning it is revealed that billions of amounts from public treasure were spent on political advertisements that were just to accuse opponents not on their achievements.

According to Pakistan law, a national assembly candidate can spend up to a maximum limit of Rs 1.5 million while a provincial assembly candidate can spend up to a maximum of Rs 1 million. What is seen in Pakistan is that politicians exceed this limit by millions. The negative effect of this advertisement is that they would need to recover this money when they come to a public office which means "corruption". Another downside of this political advertisement is that it is also a type of political bribe while giving money to the media under the head of advertising expenditures and this bribe bars the people connected with media to highlight the facts which can be aggressive for other parties concerned. The founding leader of Pakistan People's Party Zulfikar Ali Bhutto greatly advertised his party's social agenda during the 1970s general elections and hypnotized the masses with his populist slogan of "Roti, Kapra or Makan" through various channels of mass communication. (Daud, 2018) in his article "Advertising in Politics" writes that politics is about what is the needs of the people and what they want. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, during the 1970 election campaign, promised about Roti, Kapra and Makan. Similarly, in the 2008 US presidential election, Barrack Obama promised for change and in the 1988 election George H. W. Bush promised "Read my lips, No new taxes". A successful political campaign not only tries to generate an image of a politician as a problem solver, and they can do anything as a leader but also covertly or overtly influence the decision-making.

Generally, there are three phases of political campaign in Pakistan. The nature of advertisements changes in these three phases.

- During government tenure politicians sometimes engage with the public mostly in the inaugural session of some projects.
- During government tenure politicians show off their achievements.
- At the start of new election days when politicians think it's time to bring down the opponent by accusing them.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Political advertisements in the mainstream print media have been one of the prominent features of their political canvassing. This study is conducted to find out the nature and pattern of political advertisements by the major political parties during the general elections 2018. This study would explore the nature of differences in the political rhetoric of the leading political parties PML N, PPP and PTI and find out what type of strategies these parties have applied in their election advertisements in the mainstream print media to gain the support of the voters. What types of appeals and slogans are used in political advertisements to woo the voters?

### 3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the current study are as under:

1. To find out the frequency of political advertisements used by the political parties in print media in general elections 2018.
2. To analyze the content of political advertisements (themes, appeals and attacks) in the print media by the leading political parties of Pakistan (PML N, PPP, PTI) in the general elections 2018.

### 4. Significance of the Study

The primary way that political commercials affect people's behavior is through their substance. This study is important because it sheds light on the political advertisements used by Pakistan's top three political parties in the 2018 general elections, enabling the public to better understand the types of political messaging that these parties use to win over voters.

### 5. Research Questions

**RQ 1:** Whether and to what extent political advertisements were used by the leading political parties during political campaigns in the general elections of 2018?

**RQ 2:** What types of advertising themes, appeals and attacks were used by the leading political parties (PML-N, PPP, PTI) during their political campaign for the general election 2018?

### 6. Literature Review

Print media advertisements play a vital role in determining public opinion and impelling voter behaviour. These advertisements serve as a primary channel for political leaders to communicate their messages, policies, and campaign themes to a targeted audience. By highlighting candidates' strengths and opponents' weaknesses, print media advertisements can effectively impact voters' perceptions. The effectiveness of these political advertisements often depends on their design, content, and placement, which are strategically crafted to resonate with specific demographics (Saleem, Hanan, & Tariq, 2015). Research indicates that well-designed political print advertisements can increase voter interest and engagement, making them an essential component of successful political campaigns (Ezegwu, Etukudo, & Akpan, 2015).

Anwar and Hussain (2024) investigate the relationship between political advertising in print media and its influence on young voters during the 2018 General Election in Pakistan. Their research highlights how print media served as a critical platform for political parties to engage with the youth, who are often perceived as a pivotal voting demographic. The authors argue that targeted messaging and the strategic use of visuals in advertisements significantly shaped young voters' perceptions and voting intentions. By analyzing various advertisements, the study reveals that themes of hope, change, and empowerment resonated strongly with this demographic, illustrating the importance of effective communication strategies in mobilizing younger audiences in the electoral process.

Chang, C. (2001) The study found that emotional appeals in print political advertisements can significantly influence voters' candidate evaluations. Positive emotions, such as hope and pride, can enhance a candidate's image, while negative emotions, such as fear and anger, can damage it. However, the effectiveness of emotional appeals depends on the specific emotions evoked and the target audience." The advancement of print media in the digital age has transformed the creation and dissemination of political advertisements. The media is often seen as a tool of a political movement aimed at gaining the support and opposition of influential political elites. While traditional media (newspapers and magazines) remain significant, the integration of social media platforms has expanded their reach and value (Anuar, 2014). Political leaders and candidates now employ a hybrid model of political advertising, combining print and digital tactics to maximize

their campaign effectiveness and reach younger voters, who are primarily consumers of digital news media. This approach enables a more inclusive communication strategy, as emphasized by Norris et al. (1999), who highlight the importance of diverse media landscapes in political advertising. Consequently, print media continues to be a fundamental component of political communication, evolving alongside technological advancements to meet the demands of modern election campaigns. A political movement's use of the media to garner the backing or opposition of powerful political leaders is common (Raza et al., 2022). The 76 years of Pakistan's history is an unfortunate story of a power struggle between the civilian political leadership and military dictators. This power struggle between the two main power stakeholders is continuing till today. Military dictators intervened and overthrew elected governments several times accusing them of corruption, bad governance, and economic stagnation. After Pakistan came into being in 1947, this tug-of-war between civilians and the dictatorial rule is continuing. In Pakistan's dismal electoral history, the 1970s elections are regarded as the first democratic elections which were held in a free and fair manner. However, these elections created a political crisis in the country as the two leading political leaders Sheikh Mujeeb and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto failed to reach an agreement to form the government at the center. After rigging allegations in the 1977 elections, the political crisis provided an opportunity for late General Zia-ul-Haq to roll back Bhutto's government. General Zia promised to hold elections in 90 days, but it never materialized. Late Benazir Bhutto held the reins of power after a landslide victory in the 1988 elections after a long period of exile during General Zia ul Haq's dictatorship.

Elections held in October 1990 brought Nawaz Sharif into power, but he had to resign in 1993 under an army-brokered deal as a power struggle erupted between President Ishaq Khan and PM Nawaz Sharif. Benazir Bhutto again came to power when elections were held in 1993. However, her government was dismissed in 1996 on charges of corruption. Nawaz Sharif returned to power in the 1997 elections but again his government was toppled by military dictator General Musharraf in October 1999. Musharraf held a referendum in 2002 to become President of Pakistan. The elections held in 2008 and 2013 allowed for the first time two elected governments to complete their five-year constitutional term. The unfortunate characteristic of elections in Pakistan is that no election was devoid of post-election rigging allegations, hence losing parties refrained from accepting the poll results. PTI staged 136 days long fruitless dharna protesting the rigging in the 2013 elections.

The leading political party of PML N, which is accusing the establishment of not giving all political parties an equal playing field due to the party's alleged victimization by the judiciary and NAB following the Panama Papers verdict, held the 2018 election under the same allegations of pre-poll rigging. There are moral and governmental policy ramifications to the growing use of misleading political advertising (Shekar Misra, Jan 2015). A variety of tactics are used by political candidates, one of which is the use of comparative advertising to convey unfavourable facts about an opponent to potential voters through negative attack advertising (Bruce Pinkleton, May 2013). Inherent to American democratic norms are political campaigns. To win an election, candidates for public office must advertise to a large audience (Jill Donovan March 2012). The three-stage marketing model assumes that political parties can determine what the public wants by employing techniques like focus group feedback and advanced polling methodology. The idea is that to win elections, parties and politicians should pay attention to (targeted) public opinion and give the people what they want (Savigny, 2010, p.1052).

Matthew P. Motta and Erika Franklin Fowler in *The Content and Effects of Political Advertising in US Campaigns* stated that negative political advertising is a prominent feature of contemporary

political campaigns in the United States. “Political Advertisements Through Print Media in India analyzed that politically aware people are less likely to be influenced by political advertisements. He also concluded that people trust more print media than electronic media in terms of political advertisements. Aron O’Cass in research studies “Political Advertising Believability and Information Source Value during Elections” (2002) indicated that voters believed positive as much as negative advertisement campaigns run by the political parties. The study also found that non-paid media were valued more as a source of information by voters than political advertising.

Christian Schaffer (2004) revealed that political advertisements were prominent in newspapers for six months, characterized by a dominance of full-page ads, primarily inside-page placements, featuring aspirational images. The analysis indicated that the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) had a significant presence, with ads largely being favourable and employing rational appeals before transitioning to testimonial appeals. Additionally, it was found that Punch, followed closely by Guardian, had the highest number of advertisements, while PDP and the All-Progressives Congress (APC) dominated the political landscape, exhibiting a low presence of adversarial content. In a separate study, Salman Yousuf (2015) investigated how political parties in Pakistan effectively utilized advertising appeals during the 2013 general elections to influence public voting behaviour. This study analyzed the exaggerated promises made by leading political parties during the election campaign to understand the marketing techniques they employed.

The study revealed that there is a significant association between advertising exposure and advertising impact on voter behaviour. Contrary to previous findings, the study concluded that “vote and support” and “advertising liking” are strongly correlated, likely due to voter loyalty to their respective political parties. Despite the significant amount of money spent on political advertising, there is still debate about its effectiveness in persuading voters. Our study provides evidence that political advertising can influence voters’ evaluations of candidates and their choices at the ballot box. However, the impact of advertising varies depending on the characteristics of the viewer, such as their political party affiliation and existing attitudes towards the candidates (Franz, M. M., & Ridout, T. N. 2007). Nabeel Ahmad and Shysta Waqar (2014) observed differences in how political parties were represented in newspaper advertisements, but all parties employed various advertising strategies to attract voters. The study by Tedesco and Dunn (2018), titled “Political Advertising in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Elections: Ad Hominem Ad Nauseam,” analyzed the messaging strategies employed by Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton in their television advertisements. The research revealed that the negative nature of the election campaign significantly influenced both the tone and focus of the ads. Specifically, the study highlighted how the candidates utilized negative advertising to undermine their opponents while attempting to bolster their images, reflecting a broader trend in political communication where attack ads have become prevalent (Kaid & Davidson, 2011). Such advertising strategies can shape voter perceptions and contribute to the overall narrative of the campaign (Lemert, 2016). Furthermore, research indicates that negative political advertising can lead to voter fatigue, which may impact voter turnout and engagement (Geer, 2006).

According to Donald Green, negative political advertisements that disparage the opposition are more memorable and effective than favourable ones. Political advertising, according to Lynda Lee Kaid, is the common practice in which a source—typically a political candidate or party—purchases the chance to expose recipients to political messages via mass media to influence their political attitudes, beliefs, or behaviours (Kaid 1981, p-250). According to Laswell (1948), the conventional study of communication asks, “Who says what to whom in what channel with what effect?”

Political campaigns and advertising have a rich history in the United States, with political parties spending significant amounts of money on advertisements in both print and electronic media. President Trump utilized the campaign slogan "Make America Great Again," while one of Hillary Clinton's slogans was "Love Trumps Hate." Former President Barack Obama effectively promoted his memorable political slogans during his election campaigns, such as "Yes We Can," "Change We Can Believe In," and "The Country I Love." Obama's use of traditional media emphasized a positive message centred around "Hope," which resonated with many voters (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Karpowitz & Mendelberg, 2014).

## **7. Theoretical Framework**

### **7.1. Political Communication Theory**

Political communication is a subfield of communication and political science that focuses on how information spreads and influences politics, policymakers, the news media, and citizens. Political advertising represents a significant form of political communication between political leaders and voters. Political parties often employ exaggerated slogans in their advertisements to shape voters' attitudes and behaviours (Davis, A., 2013).

### **7.2. Persuasion Theory**

Persuasion Theory is a mass communication theory that focuses on messages designed to change the attitudes of receivers. From this perspective, persuasive messages can activate attitude changes that subsequently modify the behaviours of consumers, voters, and individuals in general. Political parties frequently employ exaggerated slogans in their advertisements to persuade voters and influence their political attitudes and behaviours (Perloff, R. M., 2017).

## **8. Methodology**

This study contains a content analysis of political advertisements for the 2018 General Elections. The researchers used content analysis to determine the patterns of persuasion in a replicable and systematic manner in print media. Three methods are applied for content analyses which are conventional, summative, and directed content analysis. Through these methods, we can analyse the data differently (Shannon & Hsieh, 2005). This study examined the patterns of political advertisements of three major political parties i.e. PTI, PML-N and PPP published in the leading Urdu newspapers of Pakistan one month before the general elections in 2018. The population of this study was all Urdu newspapers of Pakistan where all political parties publicized political advertisements to win the public/voters to vote for them in general elections 2018. Three leading Urdu Newspapers were selected for this study Daily Nawa-e-Waqt, Daily Jang and Daily Express. These three newspapers represent three different popular publication groups of Pakistan. The advertisements publicized by three leading political parties PML-N, PPP and PTI were selected for content analysis. The unit of analysis and unit for the coding was the paid "advertisements" published in the three national Urdu newspapers of Pakistan "Daily Nawa-e-Waqt", "Daily Jang" and "Daily Express" by the PML-N, PPP and PTI during their election campaign for general elections 2018.

## **9. Results**

Table 1 depicts the total number of ads published in Daily Nawa-e-Waqt, Daily Jang, and Daily Express, which amounted to 44. Out of these 44 advertisements, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) dominated the print media campaign with 68% (30 advertisements). The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) followed in second place with 23% (10 advertisements), while the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was less active in print media for the election campaign, publishing only 9% (4 advertisements) during the General Elections 2018, from June 24, 2018, to July 24, 2018.

### **Newspaper advertisements of Political parties in Pakistan**

**Table 1: Political Parties Advertisements in Print Media in General Elections 2018**

Political Parties	Nawa-i-Waqt	Jang	Express	Total
PPP	8	10	12	<b>30 (68%)</b>
PML N	3	5	2	<b>10 (23%)</b>
PTI	1	2	1	<b>4 (9%)</b>
<b>Grand Total =44 (100%)</b>				

From Table 2, we can see that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) primarily focused on securing half-page spaces in Nawa-i-Waqt, Jang, and Express, totalling 24 advertisements. They published 4 ads in Jang and 2 ads in Express as full-page advertisements. In contrast, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) emphasized full-page ads, with 2 ads in Nawa-i-Waqt, 4 in Jang, and 2 in Express. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) did not utilize full-page advertisements in any of the three newspapers. Instead, they limited themselves to 1 half-page advertisement each in Nawa-i-Waqt and Express, and 2 ads in Jang during the election campaigns for the General Elections 2018.

**Table 2: Sizes of Print Media Political Advertisements in General Elections 2018**

Political Parties	Nawa-i-Waqt		Jang		Express	
	Full Pg.	Half Pg.	Full Pg.	Half Pg.	Full Pg.	Half Pg.
PPP	0	8	2	8	4	8
PML N	2	1	4	1	2	0
PTI	0	1	0	2	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>

**Note:** Full Pg. = Full Page, Half Pg. = Half Page

Table 3 illustrates the placement of advertisements published by three mainstream political parties in the three leading Urdu newspapers during the General Elections 2018. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) published 23 ads on the back pages of the selected newspapers, along with one front-page advertisement and 6 ads on other pages. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) placed 1 ad on the front page of Nawa-i-Waqt and 7 ads on the back pages of all three newspapers. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) focused exclusively on the back pages of all three publications. Overall, the placement of ads indicates that the PPP had a higher volume of advertisements in the newspapers compared to the other two parties.

**Table 3: Placement of Political Advertisements in Newspapers in General Elections 2018**

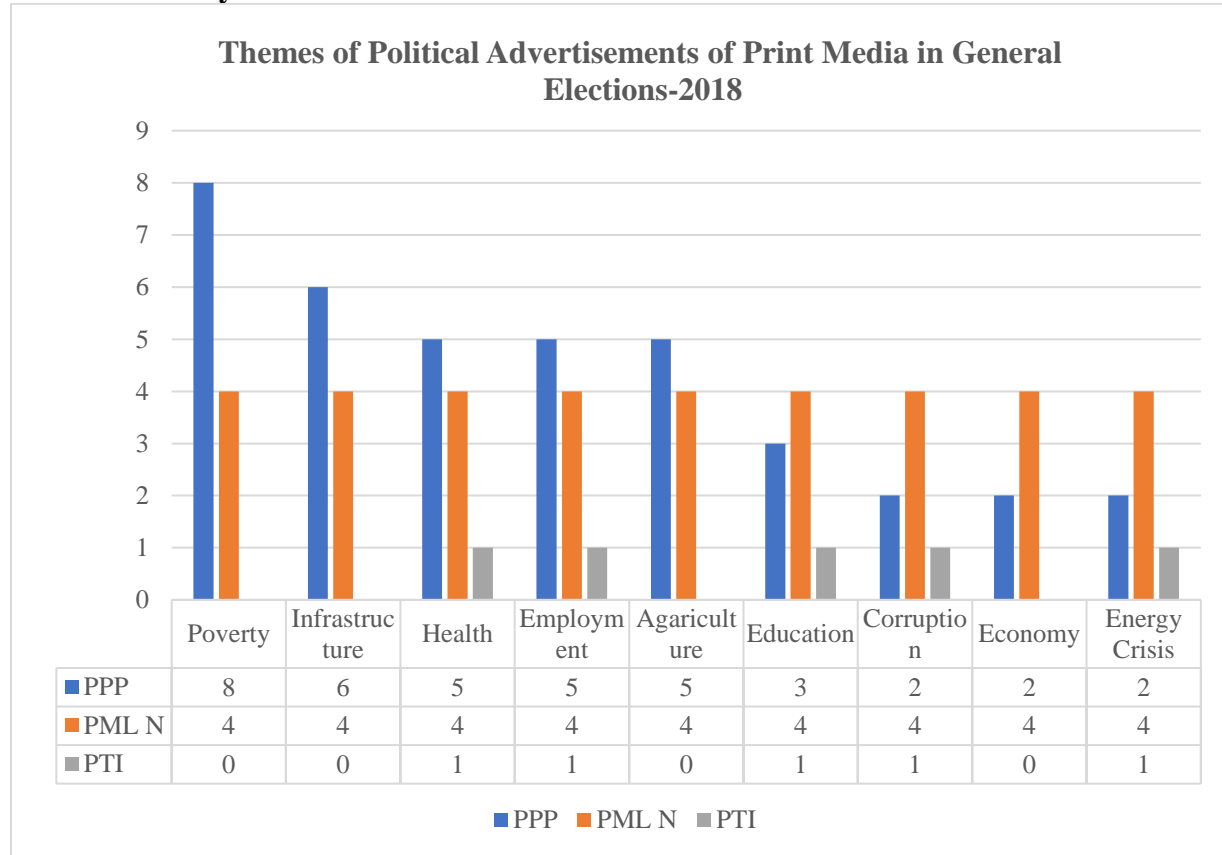
Political Parties	Nawa-i-Waqt			Jang			Express		
	F. Pg.	B. Pg.	O. Pg.	F. Pg.	B. Pg.	O. Pg.	F. Pg.	B. Pg.	O. Pg.
PPP	0	8	0	1	7	2	0	8	4
PML N	1	2	0	0	3	2	0	2	0



<b>PTI</b>	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>

**Note:** F. Pg. = Front Page, B. Pg. = Back Page, O. Pg. = Others Page

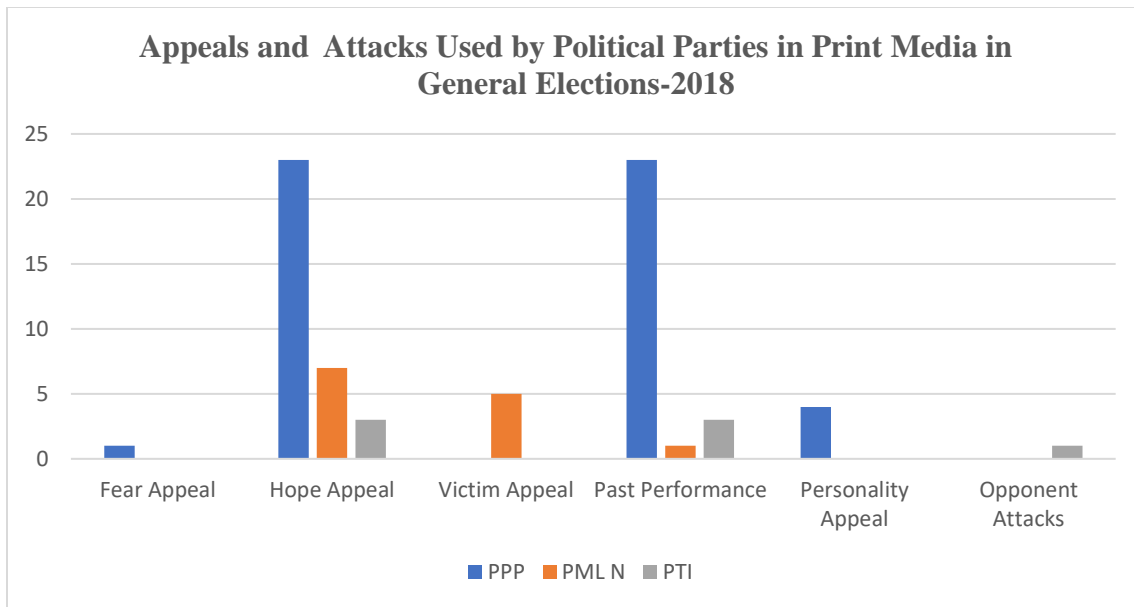
**Themes Used by Political Parties in General Election-2018**



*Figure 01*

The chart above illustrates the themes employed by political parties in their print media advertisements during the General Elections 2018. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) primarily focused on the theme of poverty eradication, which appeared in 8 ads. Additionally, the themes of housing, health, and agriculture were used 5 times each, while education was mentioned 3 times. The themes of corruption, the economy, and the energy crisis were each featured 2 times to persuade voters. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) adopted a more balanced approach, with each theme appearing 4 times as depicted in the figure. In contrast, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) only utilized the themes of health, employment, education, corruption, and the energy crisis once in their advertisements in Urdu newspapers during the General Elections 2018.

**Appeals and Attacks used by Political Parties in General Elections-2018**



*Figure 02*

The figure above illustrates that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) predominantly employed hope (23) and past performance (23) appeals in its campaign. Additionally, they used personality appeals in 4 advertisements and included a fear appeal once. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) focused on hope appeals (7) to build trust with the public, utilizing victim appeals 5 times and referencing past performance once to gain voter confidence. In contrast, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) placed limited emphasis on appeals in their newspaper advertisements, relying on hope (3) and past performance (3) appeals. Notably, PTI employed an opponent attack tactic in one ad, whereas neither PPP nor PML-N utilized this strategy in their print media campaigns during the General Elections.

## 10. Discussion

Political campaigns serve as a vital form of political communication, capturing public attention during election periods worldwide. Print media political advertisements are a significant segment of this communication, utilized by politicians to engage voters effectively (Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999). This study conducted a content analysis of political advertisements published in three Urdu newspapers during the General Elections of 2018, selected from three major media groups. The research examines the content of advertisements from three leading political parties: the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). The study aimed to analyze the tactics and strategies employed by these parties in their newspaper advertisements, focusing on the themes, appeals, and attacks utilized during their election campaigns.

Overall results indicate that the PPP had the highest representation, with 30 advertisements: 12 in Daily Express, 10 in Daily Jang, and 8 in Daily Nawa-i-Waqt. Most of these advertisements were half-page ads (24 out of 30), with only 6 published as full-page ads. Additionally, 23 ads were placed on the back pages, 1 on the front page, and 6 appeared on other pages during the election campaign. The PPP primarily focused on themes such as poverty, housing, infrastructure, health, agriculture, and employment in their print media ads. They also addressed issues like education, corruption, the energy crisis, and the economy to attract voters. The PPP heavily utilized hope appeals and past performance narratives, alongside personality appeals in 4 ads (Kaid, 1981). The PML-N secured second place with 10 advertisements, concentrating more on full-page ads: 2 in

Nawa-i-Waqt, 4 in Jang, and 2 in Express. They published 1 ad on the front page of Nawa-i-Waqt and 7 ads on the back pages across all three newspapers. The PML-N addressed various themes, including poverty, housing, education, agriculture, economy, energy crises, employment, and health, with each theme appearing in at least 4 ads during the election campaign. The party primarily used hope appeals (7) to build public trust and employed victim appeals (5) due to their ruling status, as well as one instance of past performance appeal to enhance voter confidence (Yousaf, 2016).

In contrast, the PTI was less active in print media, focusing instead on electronic and social media to engage the youth. They published only 4 advertisements during the General Elections of 2018 and did not prioritize full-page ads in any of the three newspapers. Their strategy consisted of 1 half-page ad each in Nawa-i-Waqt and Express, and 2 ads in Jang, with a focus on the back pages. The themes addressed by PTI included health, employment, education, corruption, and the energy crisis, with each appearing only once in the Urdu newspapers. PTI's appeal strategies included hope (3) and a strong emphasis on their performance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) during their campaign period from June 24 to July 24, 2018 (Saleem et al., 2015).

### **11. Conclusion**

The result of this study shows us that different political parties had different presentations in their advertisement shown in newspapers to catch the attention of voters in the election campaign of 2018. PPP focused mainly on print media advertisements and emphasized front and back pages and other page advertisements in all three Urdu newspapers. They publicized various types of themes and appeals in the print media political advertisements. PML-N focused a little bit on newspaper advertisement, but their front-page ads are less than PPP. Their ads were on the back page of all three newspapers mostly. They focused on the various themes equally and used hope and past performance appeals in print media campaigns to get the voters' attention. PTI had only a few advertisements in all three newspapers because of their voter count they emphasized electronic and social media to attract their public/voters. They focused on a few themes and used hope, and performance appeals due to the KPK government in the election campaign of 2018. In whole print media advertisements, only one Opponent attack was used by PTI. Thus, all the political parties publicized different types of ads in all three Urdu newspapers and used different strategies and tactics to get the attention of the public/voters.

### **12. Limitation and Recommendations**

This study did not cover the campaigns of all media, rather, it only includes the content analysis of the print media political advertisements of general elections-2018. This research focused on the leading three Urdu newspaper advertisements of famous media groups in Pakistan. Nowadays, the internet, social media and electronic media are the main sources of political information/political advertisements in the globe, these sources of political communication should be considered for future research.

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