



News Categories in Mainstream and Social Media: A Comparative Analysis of DailyDawn and Twitter

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This study aimed to explore the coverage of different news categories in daily Dawn and Twitter. For comparative content analysis of news coverage, the researcher drew upon two news categories: economic-political news, and socio-cultural news. The economic-political news category was further divided into three subcategories: national politics, international politics, and economics. The socio-cultural category was divided into five sub-categories: health, education, arts, sports, and environment. The 'priming' in agenda setting theory paved the way for the researcher to explore the dominant news categories. For daily Dawn, the headlines of news stories published in February were selected. For twitter, all top trends in the month of February between 11am to 8 pm daily were recorded; they were accessed via an online website. The data was divided into four weeks. The comparative analysis supported both hypotheses: the results indicated that mainstream media gives more coverage to economic-political affairs than social media; whereas, social media is better at highlighting socio-cultural issues than mainstream media.

1. Introduction

Media is among one of the main pillars on which the entire state depends; it has become a need of the society—gives them information which might otherwise be unknown to them (Ali, 2017). Not to mention, the role of media as an institution and as a source of information dissemination evolved with time; which in-turn altered the ways people interacted with media. (Zaman & Abbas, 2022; Lahlou et al., 2022; Zeib & Tahir, 2022; Rozario, 2013). With the diffusion of social network sites (SNS) such as Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace e.t.c, social media has been serving as an effective tool when it comes to communicating ideas among the members of the digital world (Naslund et al., 2020; Gil de Zúñiga, 2013).

The internet traffic has reached heights in the past few years; leading towards the further blossoming of social networks; people are more socially connected/aware these days than ever; furthermore, news—related to any aspect of life—can travel with the speed of light. Social networking websites speed up the news spread (Lobzhanidze, 2013). Likewise, social media as well as mainstream media outlets have contributed towards enhancing the political/social/cultural awareness of people; uplifting the individual participation of all viewers/readers in the modern society (Zaman & Abbas, 2022; Rajendran & Thesinghraj, 2014).

Even though twitter gave coverage to the politics affairs; however, the nature of coverage differed from mainstream media approach. The mainstream media reported the political news with facts—the contextualized reporting; whilst, the political news of Twitter was more towards personal attacks.

Although, the growing use of social media has undermined the viewership of mainstream media; nonetheless, the lack of regulations on social media put a question mark at the credibility of its news—suggests an answer as to why some people still prefer mainstream media (Zeib & Tahir, 2022). Mainstream media may not always be first to publish the news, but their agendas and discussions continue to shape conversations around major news stories (Soontjens et al., 2022; Newman, 2011). Mainstream media is under a microscope after the advent of social media(Lahlou et al., 2022; Soontjens et al., 2022). This in-depth analysis will bring forward the nature of journalism provided by both media and look for the degree of precedence of a few news categories.

In Pakistan, the media industry has gone through various ups and downs but there are several media outlets which are still breathing—aiming to give coverage to many social aspects/issues (Jamil, 2022; Awan, 2019). Dawn—in the print media—has the capacity to attract the majority of eyeballs; whereas, Twitter possesses the potential to encourage people to pay more attention to a certain aspect; nevertheless, it also tends to sideline some equally important social issues. Twitter has sparked conversations even on those issues which were earlier neglected at the hands of mainstream media; it has proved to be influential when it comes to public narrative building (Vraga et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2022). Twitter is a popular social networking and micro blogging site; it has emerged to be everyone's go-to app when it comes to sharing ideas, thoughts or useful information.

Hashtags are another important feature of this platform—users get to know about the daily updates (Conover, 2011). The Twitter *trends* contribute towards putting light on a lot of events that happen around the world—often overshadowed by the mainstream media (Khan et al., 2022). On the other hand, Dawn is Pakistan's most influential English language newspaper by virtue of its coverage, credibility and distribution networks. The newspaper has regional offices throughout the country—read by the majority of people (Ali, 2017). The newspaper's influence is founded on an unblemished track record of credible, solid and impartial reporting and the presence. It is one of papers whose advent in the founding years is still breathing to this day.

This research is mainly focused on comparative analysis of the news categories in mainstream news media outlet i.e. Daily Dawn and the trending coverage of Twitter. It ponders upon the priorities of these media platforms while working in the public domain; likewise, their immediate influence in setting public discourses; what form of media is better at reporting and creating awareness concerning important events and sensitive issues. This study tends to be significant in future as it attempts to analyze which media puts forth a true sight of journalism in our society—inclusion of objectivity in news to enhance the public's awareness in the sphere of social dilemmas.

2. Literature Review

When it comes to social media, there are a number of apps that have taken over the interests of multiple users—Twitter is one of them (Zaman & Abbas, 2022). Since its launch in 2006, Twitter has turned from a niche service to a mass phenomenon (Khan et al., 2021). Its success is spreading globally; Twitter is now available in 33 different languages, and has significantly increased its support for languages that use non-Latin character sets (Poulopoulos & Wallace, 2022; Weller, 2014).

The deliverance of news on twitter increased its importance and has helped grow it into the app that we know off today (Vraga et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2022). Information is always released initially on all social media networks—Twitter—nonetheless, despite the immediate trend making ability, the factor of authenticity must not be neglected (Hernandez-Mendoza et al., 2022; Ferrel & Campos-Castillo, 2022; Newman, 2011). It can swiftly acquire, analyze, and disseminate knowledge, but it might never be capable of distinguishing between fact and fiction (Lahlou et al., 2022; Castillo, 2011).

Since the idea of democracy has been infused into the world, it has been the ideal standard of ruling in major states (Bucy & Evans, 2022).

And like other countries, Pakistan too has to build and follow the four major pillars of democracy; one of those pillars is the media (Hansen, 2018; Safdar at al., 2018). People have had access to media in many facets of their everyday life; the media has evolved into many forms and has offered a lot to its users but the most important aspect of media is forming public opinion (Chen at al., 2022; Alia, 2022; Ferrel & Campos-Castillo, 2022). However, if misused, the influence of the media may bring about undesirable social tendencies (Zeib & Tahir, 2022; Awan, 2019).

People turn to the mainstream media to get authentic information (Raza et al., 2022; Price et al., 2022; Gripenhoftner & Sundström, 2022). Zhao et al., 2011 in their study did the empirical comparison of Twitter and New York Times news articles. The research resulted in the anticipated answers: entity-oriented subjects with little attention in conventional news sources may be found on Twitter. Additionally, despite their generally weak attention in foreign media, Twitter consumers aggressively promote information about significant global occurrences (Zhao et al., 2011). Likewise, another research compared twitter trends with Google trends and CNN headlines (Kwak et al., 2010).

Mainstream media and social media embrace different approaches when it comes to the dissemination of news. (Mare, 2013) in his coverage analysis of South African social protests concluded that the social media appears to be more focused in breaking news about any conflict situation; whilst, the mainstream media prioritizes broadcasting the verified news along with its context—which makes it a slower medium. Furthermore, the news propagation through social media involves more people to actively interpret as well as participate in the social discourses (Muhammad & Ferraris, 2021).

Previous studies did not compare the news categories of mainstream and social media side by side; however, the platform of Twitter for posting breaking news has been given extensive time and research. Supporters claim that when it comes to breaking news, Twitter's quickness is driving out established media (Poulopoulos & Wallace, 2022).

Many studies seemed to inspect the news coverages—comparative analysis of different mainstream and social media to indicate which platform is better for breaking news; however, not much has been done in terms of comparing data, questioning, and analyzing the coverage patterns of either platform. This research will hopefully aid in assessing which platform is contributing towards covering the variety of news categories.

5.0. Theoretical Framework & Hypotheses

The 'priming' factor in agenda-setting theory puts forth that the power to decide 'what' to show to the public lies in the hands of the media; likewise, they emphasize more on some news stories while mitigating other equally important stories. News priming determines how information should have an impact on the weight given to personal or national perceptions in national political evaluations (Iyenger & Kindel, 1987). Priming of content presented on media related to a certain topic has a great impact on the decision making standard that he/she uses to make his perception about that event (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

This study used the lens of priming to get the insights of which news categories: health, politics, sports, and socio-culture e.t.c. was prioritized in the selected medium: Dawn and Twitter. The priming factor paves the way for the public to deem a certain news category — which is getting more coverage in Dawn/Twitter — to hold more importance than others; therefore, that news category ends up being the talk of the town and other equally important aspects of society are under-represented. In the context of this study, this theory puts forward that

if dawn is shedding light on socio-cultural issues; their readers will also talk about only those social issues in their daily lives — hence, considering them to hold more value.

Whereas, if Twitter tends to give precedence to sports-related news, the other health or political concerns have the potential to be overlooked by Twitter users.

On the basis of literature review following is the hypotheses of the current study.

H1: Dawn gives more coverage to econo-political affairs than Twitter***H2: Twitter gives more coverage to socio-cultural issues than Twitter.***

3. Research Methodology

The researcher did quantitative content analysis to dig out the patterns of news categories on both mainstream media and social media.

3.1 Data Collection

This study selected two mediums to analyze the difference of news coverage i.e. twitter and daily dawn. The timeline for this study was the whole month of February, 2022. For daily Dawn, the headlines of news stories published in February were selected — which represent the content of the whole news story — to determine the dominant news category. However, the business, international and sports section of the daily dawn were not included; furthermore, this study was solely dedicated to the news categories reporting the national issues. Likewise, top ten trending issues of Twitter were analyzed — to get insight of the popular public discourses — to inspect the dominant news categories on Twitter. Since most people use Twitter during 11am to 8pm; hence, the issues trending during this time period were studied.

In order to compare the news coverage; the researcher drew upon six newscategories— representing the main national issues: politics. national, international, socio-cultural, environment, health/ education, and sports. Any news which has information regarding political decisions of the country is considered a political news. National news: which contains news about any famous personality or any event or issue that concerns the entire nation. This category also includes provincial news and news regarding any official organization of the country. International category which contains news about the international world or any international topic which may concern the country. Any news regarding economic decisions taken for the country will be considered economic news — it includes news of taxes, inflation and effects of economic change in the society, budgets etc. Social and cultural: any news, report, article or trend which concerns the common people and the society in general; It also includes crime and any other issue that directly affects the society. And any news regarding arts, entertainment industry and history will be considered cultural news. Climate: any news which addresses the climate and environment of the country. Health and Education: news regarding wellness, diseases, and health infrastructure. Likewise, any news regarding education, studies, and educational institutions will be included in the education category. For sports category, any news related to sports coverage — players, sports matches, and conferences

All the news stories that belonged to these categories were selected based on their operational definition; furthermore, they were documented in an excel sheet.

For twitter, all the trends for the month of February between the hours of 11am to 8 pm daily were recorded; they were accessed via an online website. The data was divided into four

weeks. Each trend was sorted out in above mentioned categories and recorded in an Excel sheet.

4. Findings and Analysis

The collected data was descriptively analyzed on SPSS.

Table No 4: Coverage of Econo-Political Issues in Daily Dawn & Twitter

	Political-economic issues			Total
	National Politics	International Politics	Economy	
Source Dawn	142	114	26	282
Twitter	28	48	5	81
Total	170	162	31	363

The table no. 01 shows the coverage of econo-political issues in both daily Dawn and Twitter in four weeks of February. In the econo-political category, news related to national politics, international politics, and economy were gathered from daily Dawn and Twitter. Dawn published 282 news stories that highlighted the econo-political issues; 142 news stories were on politics — making it the most covered econo-political issue — 114 news stories on international politics and 26 news stories addressed the issues related to economy. On the other hand, 81 trending hashtags on Twitter highlighted the econo-political issue. Out of them 28 trends were related to national politics, 48 were related to international politics and only 5 were related to economy — making it the least covered political-economic issue on Twitter.

The first sub-category — national politics — got the highest coverage in daily Dawn; the national political issues covered in this month were mostly focused on political rivalry between the three famous political parties of Pakistan i.e. PML- N, PPP and PTI. Furthermore, political reforms and future agendas of the country were devoted less space. National politics covered political happenings in provincial news; however, they gave less coverage to provincial development and public awareness. 142 news stories of Dawn were based on international politics. Despite the economic crisis faced by Pakistan, only 31 news stories of Dawn & Twitter highlighted the economic dilemma of Pakistan.

Table No 2: Coverage of socio-cultural issues in daily Dawn & Twitter

	Socio-cultural issues					Total
	Health	Education	Environment	Arts	Sports	
Dawn	77	11	27	196	8	319
Twitter	5	2	12	93	394	506
Total	82	13	39	289	402	825

The table no. 02 shows the coverage of socio-cultural issues in daily Dawn and Twitter. In the socio-cultural category, the issues related to health, education, environment, arts and sports were analyzed and data was gathered from daily Dawn and Twitter. Dawn published 319 news stories on socio-cultural issues; out of which 77 news stories discussed health issues, 11 news articles were about education concerns, 27 news stories shed light on the environment issues, 196 news were on arts — making it the most covered socio-cultural issue — and 8 news were on sports. On the other hand, 506 trending hashtags on Twitter revolved around socio-cultural issues. Out of them 5 hashtags were related to health, 2 were related to education, 12 were related to environment, 93 were related to arts and 394 hashtags were related to sports. Twitter is more concerned about sports and arts; whereas, education and health are the most neglected socio-cultural issues on Twitter.

Sports was the most popular trend on Twitter. Majority of the discussions on twitter revolved around the cricket matches; most of the hashtags were either applauding or criticizing the performances of the team players. Due to PSL in February, the sports category was the highest discussed news category; however, it had suppressed other important issues which deserved the public attention even more. Apart from sports, the news related to arts was the second most discussed sub-news category on Twitter which was mainly focused on the release of new coke studio songs; users applauded the nouvelle musical turn taken by coke studio. This trend under-represented the other critical issues in society which require awareness, societal crimes, and development issues. In daily Dawn, the coronavirus updates were dominant in the Health category; however, the awareness for other diseases was sidelined. Thus, the categories of health, education, environment were the least discussed sub-news categories on Dawn and Twitter.

Table no 3 represents the weekly comparative analysis of Daily Dawn and Twitter. It is notable that Daily Dawn covered a variety of news categories in the entire month of February.

However, the number kept fluctuating for every category. Daily Dawn prioritized the

political news category over other categories; the rivalry of political parties — Nawaz’s residence in England and the dethroning of the in-power political party PTI — got highest coverage. Nevertheless, the political reforms as well as the future agendas of political parties were played down in Dawn coverage. Not to mention, it is essential to give the reader an all-round review of political happenings of the state. Contrary to this, twitter did not highlight the political category — even the ones which were discussed were majorly about the public's undying support for the then prime minister Imran Khan. The political news on Twitter was person-specific — name calling the political candidates. Whereas, the political news on daily dawn seemed to be more event-specific — shedding light on the overall context of the event. Dawn was keen towards reporting socio-cultural updates; nevertheless, twitter was an imminent site where the musical renaissance of Pakistan was discussed and applauded. Apart from these two categories, the rest were not given much importance.

In the health news category, both need to realize that covering the coronavirus issues is not sufficient; other health concerns also deserve to get coverage. The education category got the least importance in both Dawn and Twitter. Although the educational infrastructure of Pakistan is going through a major functional crisis; however, they go unreported. Media should raise its voice for students’ rights, unemployment, and many other issues.

Table No 3: Comparative Analysis of Dawn and Twitter

	Political-economic issues				Socio-cultural issues					
	National Politics	International Politics	Economy	Total	Health	Education	Environment	Arts	Sports	Total
Dawn	142	114	26	282	77	11	27	196	8	319
Twitter	28	48	5	81	5	2	12	93	394	506
Total	170	162	31	363	82	13	39	289	402	825

The economic crisis were at their peak in February; nonetheless, they were under-represented in both daily dawn and twitter. Twitter — a space for common people — did not converse about economical happenings. Sports were discussed most on twitter and least at dawn. The imminent coverage of socio-culture affairs on Twitter represents that twitter is more of the space where people discuss their personal interest but when it comes to reading about more serious state affairs, one must turn towards mainstream media.

4.1 Discussion

After an in depth analysis of each media it is clear how each category behaves in either media platform. Politics, which is an ongoing issue, was most popular in Daily Dawn. The element which is worth criticizing is the nature of political news being disseminated in newspapers. It has

become a norm to assign the first page to a rivalry issue — to get more eyeballs — which will only increase the sales of the paper rather than adding upon to the intellect and knowledge of the reader. The only political issues mentioned in daily dawn were surrounding the rivalry between the three famous political parties of Pakistan. This practice can be seen in numerous issues of dawn, where Khan's regret over sending Nawaz to England regarding his health issues made the front page; however, the important news about introducing a new reform was found somewhere hidden inside the paper. This priming attitude was detected numerous times which forced the researcher to question the nature of political news: does the parameter of politics revolve around what the leaders are saying about one another? Or is it about their position and their work in the state? This forces the researcher to question the kind of news being fed to them.

Notwithstanding, Twitter had a different approach towards disseminating political news; the rate of political trends was extremely low in the entire month of February. People were more concerned to indulge themselves in discussing sports, rather than debating about the toxic counterattacks of the leaders. Instead of conversing and educating the public about the ongoing issues they are concerned with trivial matters.

The topics of national category were more discussed in mainstream media than social media. Daily Dawn seemed to report important political happenings in every province and also did their best in informing the public about important happenings of organizations—the role of political leaders in governing the state. It is essential to keep the public up-to-date about the ill-performance of the provincial government; it is also equally important to report the positive things done by the government. The issues under the national category were again least discussed on the twitter space. Only a handful of provincial issues made it to the top trends; however, the rest of the national issues did not.

Daily Dawn being a Pakistani newspaper only reported international events that concerned either the state or the Muslims in general. The international category must include important world changing events—irrespective of location and religion. In the month of February only those international issues made it to the national newspaper that mainly concerned India. Feeding the public with news —that gets more TRP—might do wonders for an organisation's sales; not to mention, it blocks their mind from thinking anything else other than hindu-muslim rivalry. The Russia-Ukraine war did end up gracing one front page of February but only because of its impact on the world. International category also bagged a few trends on twitter but that too solely because of the Russia-Ukraine war.

One category which was very popular in Dawn and second most popular on twitter was the socio-cultural category. Dawn reported social issues which concerned street crimes, gender abuse, and assault. Their reporting gave the space for constructing the narrative to create awareness of violent issues that keep on happening every other day.

In the category of cultural news, daily Dawn only covered the news concerning the entertainment industry; the life updates of celebrities—the death of Lata Mangeshkar. Daily Dawn also documented art and heritage. Contrarily, the majority of the trends under this

category were about coke studio and Ali Sethi's tracks—under-representing the talent of common people.

The inclination of daily dawn and twitter towards this category showed what mainstream media perceived to be a socio-cultural issue and what the public considers a socio-cultural topic worthy for conversation.

Health/Education—the equally important issue—was featured less times in both daily dawn and twitter. They only addressed the coronavirus updates; whilst, other health concerns were not highlighted. Climate change is an issue which is globally escalating but the amount of coverage and discussion dedicated to this sensitive category was also disappointing. With animals being extinct, climate disasters at the worst, sea life being polluted, and health issues being birthed by dangerous environmental changes, this category should be given the coverage that it actually deserves. Dawn did cover a few climatic changes news in the country; twitter remained silent about this.

Economics is yet another category which deserves media attention. Daily Dawn and Twitter tended to cover the rising economical crisis in Pakistan. The one category which was very popular on twitter and mundane at dawn was the category of sports. Since most of the thrilling sports events happened in February—international teams visited Pakistan—Twitter trends mainly accommodated the sports news category. The above comparative analysis approved the second hypothesis; daily dawn is better at highlighting political affairs than twitter as twitter seemed to be more inclined in other issues which kept on being like that and twitter was what has been said.

The in-depth analysis of every single category in daily dawn and twitter, the first hypothesis was rejected: twitter is not better at highlighting social issues than dawn. Daily Dawn raised voice for social concerns; contrarily, twitter did not address them—as majority trends were regarding an individual's personal interests. The above comparative analysis approved the second hypothesis i.e. Daily Dawn is better at highlighting political affairs and social media i.e. twitter. The number of political topics covered—not focusing on the nature of political topics—Dawn grabbed the highest number of reports and articles dedicated to politics. Whereas twitter did not give much space to political affairs; the only trends regarding politics were related to a famous political personality

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the coverage of different news categories in Daily Dawn and Twitter. Daily Dawn has created a blueprint of print journalism in Pakistan. Likewise, Twitter is not solely a place for penning down random thoughts and posting pictures; it also serves as a social hub for serious conversations concerning significant issues. Mainstream media informs the public about the happenings of the state as well as the world; but, social media provides every common individual a space to discuss their own concerns.

This study examined the news content being fed to the general public at the hands of both Twitter and Dawn. The comparative analysis painted an entirely new picture — demonstrating

their respective priorities while covering national issues. In order to compare the news coverage; the researcher drew upon two news categories: econo-political news, and socio-cultural news. The econo-political news category was further divided into three subcategories: National politics, international politics, and economics. The socio-cultural category was divided into five sub-categories: health, education, arts, sports, and environment. For daily Dawn, the headlines of news stories published in February were selected — to determine the dominant news category. For twitter, all the trends for the month of February between the hours of 11am to 8 pm daily were recorded; they were accessed via an online website. The data was divided into four weeks. Each trend was sorted out in above mentioned categories and recorded in an Excel sheet.

The comparative descriptive analysis approved both hypothesis statements: the results indicated that daily Dawn gives more coverage to econo-political affairs than Twitter; likewise, Twitter gives more space to socio-cultural issues than daily Dawn. National politics was the most discussed concern, whereas, economics was the least-discussed news category on daily Dawn. Likewise, twitter gave more coverage to international politics than national politics and economics. The political news on Twitter was person specific — name calling the political candidate; whereas, the political news on daily dawn seemed to be more event-specific — shedding light on the overall context of that particular event. The news on twitter uses slang/abusive words and is considered to be less authentic than the news published in mainstream media. The issues related to socio-cultural aspects of society were more highlighted on Twitter than Dawn. The sports category got the highest coverage, whereas, health and education got the least coverage on Twitter. On the other hand, daily Dawn devoted more space to arts and health; nonetheless, sports got the least coverage there.

The health category did not get the coverage — in both mediums — that it actually deserved; however, Dawn put light on Health concerns way more than Twitter. The sports-related information was being disseminated on Twitter at a far greater frequency than daily Dawn. Twitter did not give coverage to the environment category; whilst, daily Dawn contributed a lot of space to shed light on the environmental issues. Not to mention, it was still not up to the mark — as it was still way lesser than the politics category. The international category was more popular in mainstream media than social media.

It is often argued that social media might replace mainstream media — because of the freedom as well as plurality of opinion that it offers. Nevertheless, the results of this study evidently show a disagreement with this statement as both are needed for the betterment of society. The results of daily dawn clearly show that it covers diverse issues and gives its space to the majority of news categories that exist out there. It cannot be denied that at times one issue may be given more preference over others; nevertheless, if we look at the broader picture, the mainstream media seems to take the lead when it comes to reporting diverse events and issues.

Twitter has always been applauded for giving a space to the public to initiate conversation regarding any topic — for raising awareness regarding certain issues which may be dusted under the rug by mainstream media.

However, the Twitter trends in February, 2022, paved the way for the researcher to think of it as solely a space for everyone's personal comments regarding any issue — which may not benefit the public in general. Daily Dawn, comparatively, did a better job at raising awareness regarding social issues.

This study serves food for thought for those who believe that mainstream media journalism is dead; the future of journalism is social media. The space and freedom that social media provides makes it an ideal candidate for independent journalism but this luxury is bittersweet. This amount of independence is easily exploited; since it does not operate under any rules and regulations, it cannot be expected to take the place of print and electronic journalism. Public cares more about diverse and objective reporting which is fed to them by newspapers with reliable resources rather than social media with numerous fake resources and with no way to authenticate them.

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