

Edition # 18 Since Year 2015

GALLUP & GILANI PAKISTAN
NEWSPAPER CONTENT ANALYSIS REPORT

May 2019

A monthly series from Gallup & Gilani Pakistan Media Research Wing looking at nearly 3000 Newspaper columns and editorials



3rd July 2019



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Content Analysis of Newspaper Articles Published During May 2019

In the 12 English and Urdu newspapers analyzed for May 2019 covering nearly 3000 opinion pieces, political and social issues dominated the space; however, much less coverage was given to Economic issues, particularly in Urdu newspapers. (GALLUP & GILANI PAKISTAN)

Islamabad, July 3, 2018

Introduction

According to a Monthly Newspaper Content Analysis Research Study conducted by Gallup & Gilani Pakistan under Bilal I Gilani, Executive Director of Gallup & Gilani Pakistan, the main issues under discussion during May 2019 in the mainstream media belonged to the following three categories: Politics, Social and Economy. International issues received relatively less space in the newspapers, whereas topics related to climate change/the environment, the media, and consumer/commercial news received scant attention in the 12 newspapers.

An analysis of the content of 12 national newspapers consisting of a total of 2,966 opinion articles/columns written by various columnists was conducted for May 2019. This is part of Gallup & Gilani Pakistan Media Research Division's new initiative to empirically understand opinion leaders' views on national issues.

This is the 18th edition of this study. The rest of the editions (dating back to 2015) can be accessed at the following link: <http://gallup.com.pk/polls/newspaper-analysis/>.

Which newspapers have been analyzed?

Out of the 12 newspapers, 5 were **Urdu** newspapers, namely Daily Pakistan, Daily Express, Daily Jang, Daily Khabrain and Nawa-i-waqt, and 7 were **English** newspapers, namely The Express Tribune, Daily Times, Dawn, Pakistan Today, The Pakistan Observer, The Nation, and The News.

Main Topics under discussion: Political, social and economic news took priority while discussions related to climate change and the environment, and the media received scant attention.

The topics discussed in these opinion articles/columns were categorized into 9 broad themes: 'Political', 'Social', 'Economy', 'Media', 'International (General)', 'International (Country-wise)', and Climate Change/Environment. Although 11 categories were outlined, only 8 of them (excluding 'Electoral Politics', 'Consumer/Commercial', 'Demographics' and 'Special Projects') were given space in the papers.

32% of the articles were devoted to politics in Pakistan, followed by social issues at 29%. After these two topics, economic issues occupied a large chunk of the newspaper space at 14%, followed by international news: while 12% of the articles in this category focused on general international issues, 10% were about specific countries. News related to the media and climate change made up only 2% and 1% of the total share, respectively.

Discussed within 'Politics':

Debates within this category pertained to the newly elected government's performance, PTI's overall popularity among the general public, the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement, recent political events led by PPP and PML-N, the cabinet reshuffle and general political discussions over the merits and demerits of a democratic system of governance. New reforms in the education sector were also discussed at great length.

Discussed within 'Social':

Topics in this category were related to the rising crime rate in the country (especially with regards to rapes, forced marriages and child trafficking), workers' welfare and labour laws, the holy month of Ramadan, increasing drug prices and the recent HIV epidemic in Sindh, debates over the formalization of Madrassas and the urgent need to improve educational institutions and curriculum, etc. Transgender and women's rights were also given some space in this section. On the other hand, articles published towards the end of May focused primarily on the ongoing Cricket World Cup 2019.

Discussed within 'Economy':

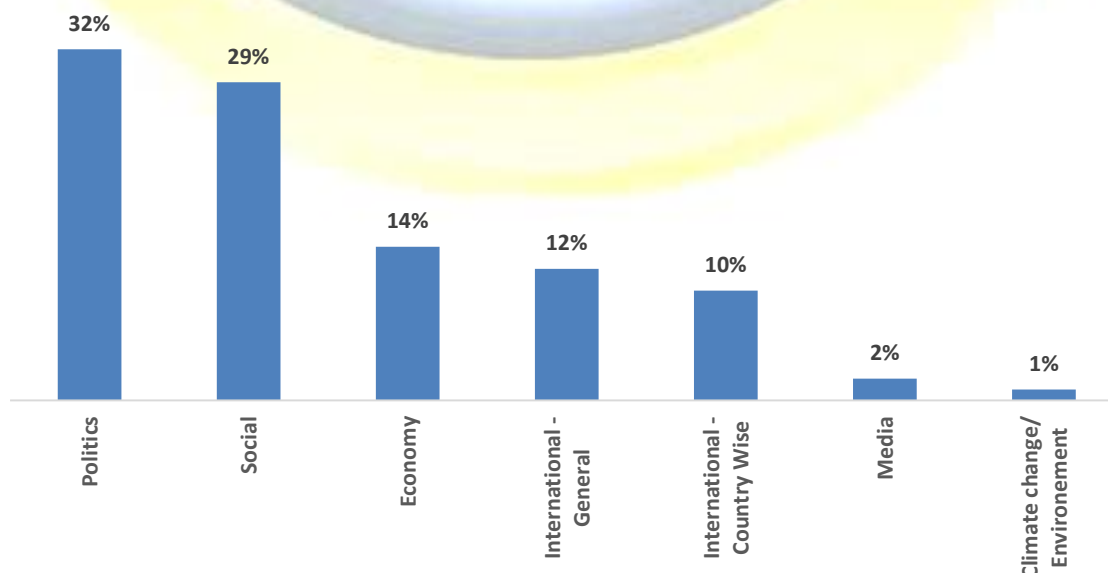
With regards to this category, the government's recent loan agreement with IMF received the most coverage. Debates on this topic revolved around the public's fear of the potential repercussions of an IMF bailout and whether it is the best option for the country right now or not. Other topics that were largely discussed included the recent price hikes/inflation, new economic reforms proposed by the PTI government including the tax schemes and issues related to CPEC. Pakistan's dismal economic future was also discussed a lot in this section.

Discussed within 'International (General & Country-wise)':

In this category, recent terrorist attacks including the incidents that took place in Balochistan, rising tensions in the Gulf, the looming threat of war between the US and Iran as well as the sanctions imposed by the former on the latter, and Trump's China Strategy were discussed. Pakistan's foreign relations with India following PM Narendra Modi's reelection, its stance on the US-Iran conflict and PM Imran Khan's diplomatic visits also received significant coverage in this section. In the International (Country-wise) category, debates over re-elected PM Narendra Modi's performance in office, the Israel-Palestine war and peace talks with Afghanistan took a lion's share of the total space.

Discussed within 'Media' and 'Climate Change/Environment':

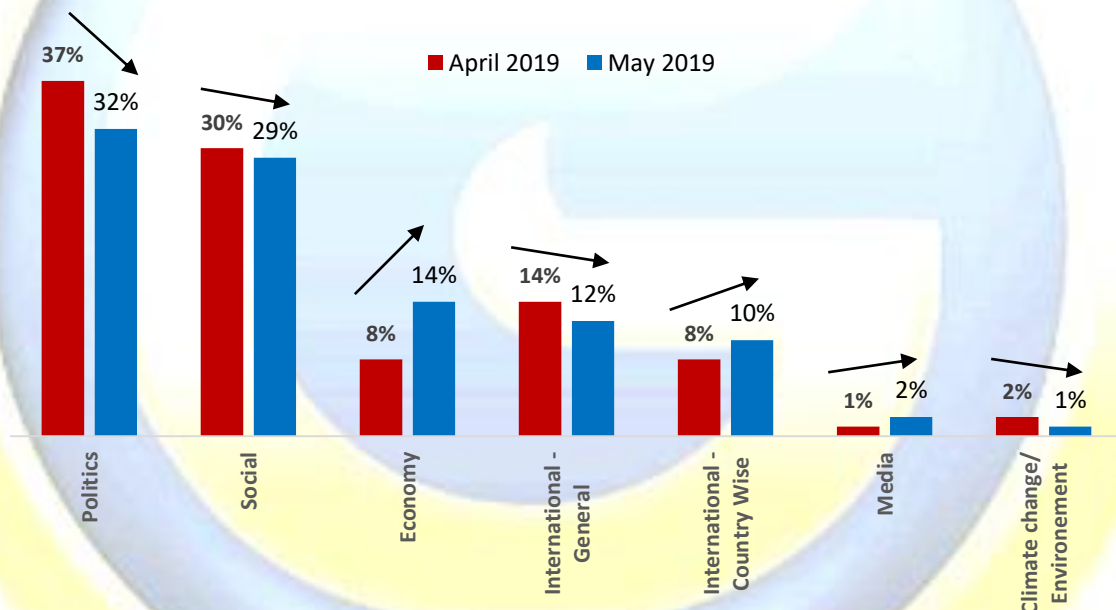
In the 'Media' category, press freedom and the dangers of social media were primarily discussed. Finally, topics such as the increasing incidence of rain in dry seasons and the sharp decline in certain wildlife species were covered in the 'Climate Change/Environment' category.



In comparison with the previous month:

Political topics dominated newspaper space in the previous month, just like this month; however, it received more coverage in the previous month. Social issues were given second priority and the same amount of coverage in both months. News related to the economy received far less attention in April than in May. The international news categories, both general and country-wise, were almost at an equal footing in both months, as was news related to the media and climate change/the environment.

These disparities may be explained by the importance and urgency ascribed to certain events in public debate at certain points in time; for example, in April the cabinet reshuffle by Prime Minister Imran Khan was a major topic of discussion within the 'Politics' category, and in May, the IMF loan agreement occupied a large chunk of space within the 'Economy' category. Similarly, international country-wise news received more attention in May due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's re-election and the media received more due to World Press Freedom Day which was celebrated on May 3rd, 2019. On the other hand, climate change received more coverage in April due to unpredicted rains that month.

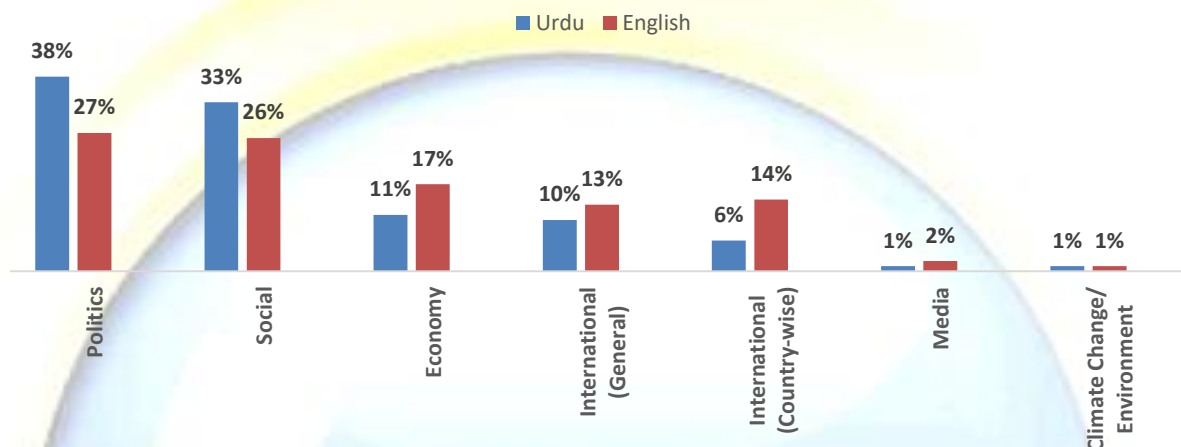


Source: Newspaper Content Analysis by Gallup & Gilani Pakistan Media Research Consultancy
(www.gallup.com.pk, www.gilanifoundation.com)

Urdu vs. English: Political and social topics received the most coverage in both Urdu and English newspapers, but more so in the former, whereas news related to the economy and the world was given comparatively more attention in English newspapers.

Out of a total of 1,421 articles/columns written in Urdu newspapers in May 2019, the majority were on topics falling under the banner of 'Politics' at 38%, followed by 'Social' issues at 33%. The next topic which led public debate during this month was 'Economy' at 11%, which was followed closely by International (general) news at 10%. 'International (country-wise)' held a share of 6%, whereas both 'Climate Change/Environment' and 'Media' occupied only 1% of the total share.

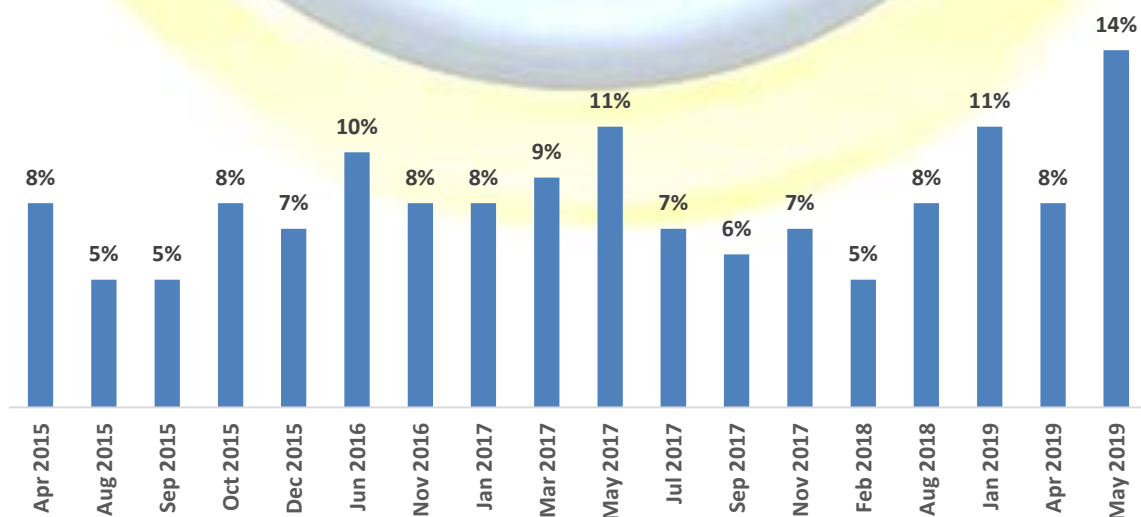
Out of a total of **1,545** articles/columns written in English during this month, **27%** focused on political news. Like in the Urdu newspapers, social issues were a close second with **26%** of the articles/columns devoted to them. Economic news also received a significant amount of attention and made up **17%** of the total share. This was followed by International (country-wise) and International (general) news at **14%** and **13%**, respectively. Articles related to the media got **2%** coverage whereas discussions around climate change/environment took up only **1%** of newspaper space.



Source: Newspaper Content Analysis by Gallup & Gilani Pakistan Media Research Consultancy
www.gallup.com.pk, www.gilanifoundation.com

The Rise and Fall of Discussions on Economic Issues in Op-Eds:

The amount of attention given to economic news fluctuates a lot based on economic events taking place at the time. For example, this category garners the most attention in the months of May and June when the government presents a new budget, and public concerns with it are highlighted by the media. Economic news also takes up more of the total share when a major new investment is made by the government or a policy reform is proposed, such as the Orange Line project, CPEC and the loan agreement with IMF in recent times. Overall, public interest in the economy has been growing as harsh repercussions of economic recession in the country have begun to take their toll on its citizens. With a new government in office, rising inflation and unemployment, and an ongoing power crisis, Pakistanis are becoming more vocal about their economic struggles.



Want to Access our Newspaper Op-Ed Headings and Columnist Names List?

We are now providing access to our database comprising of titles of all the newspaper articles analyzed, as well as names of columnists who wrote them, for all columns published from the time Gallup Pakistan initiated this activity. If you wish to gain access to this database, kindly write to Ms. Mahnum Khan at mahnum@gallup.com.pk.

The rationale behind this Content Analysis

Bilal Ijaz Gilani, Executive Director and Chief Editor of this series, explains, ‘The aim of this new series of content analysis of mainstream media (newspapers as well as talk shows) is to understand how public disclosure and agenda-setting happens. Among other issues, once significant monthly data collection happens, we hope to establish a monthly ‘trend’ analysis and see how sensitive Urdu and English newspaper opinion articles/ columns are to changing current issues. It is also hoped that this analysis sheds some light on understanding who sets the agenda and who follows, i.e. whether TV talk shows set the themes for newspaper opinion articles/ columns or vice versa.

Another theme that we hope to explore is to understand who are the opinion leaders/ shapers when it comes to the media. Is there a significant difference in the background of English and Urdu opinion article/ column writers? How does the profile of TV talk show guests vary from newspaper opinion article/ column writers? The overall theme of the research is to empirically understand the Pakistani Media which has undeniably witnessed exponential growth in its numbers, its audience and also improved its legitimacy (and therefore its soft power) in the public sphere.’

We hope that these two studies (newspaper as well as talk shows) and their analysis would help shape a healthy and constructive debate among media practitioners on how the media industry can improve its quality and outreach in the future.

The study was released by Gilani Foundation and carried out by Gallup & Gilani Pakistan, the Pakistani affiliate of Gallup International. The duration of the analysis is May 2019. This data was obtained after reviewing 2,966 articles, spread over 12 newspapers (as mentioned in the third paragraph of this press release).

About Gilani Research Foundation

Gilani Research Foundation is a not for profit public service project to provide social science research to students, academia, policymakers, and concerned citizens in Pakistan and across the globe.

Gilani Research Foundation is headed by Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani who pioneered the field of opinion polling in Pakistan and established Gallup Pakistan in 1980. Currently Dr. Gilani, who holds a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and has taught at leading universities in Pakistan and abroad, is Chairman of Gallup & Gilani Pakistan.

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For more survey data on social and other issues see website www.gallup.com.pk

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