



Comparative Study of First Page Priorities of Dawn and The News: From the Perspective of Market Driven Journalism

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Abstract

This paper is a critical analysis of first page priorities of two leading English newspapers of Pakistan, Dawn and The News, in wake of market driven journalism. This study reveals number of interesting shifts in news values and reporting trends. Privatization of economy and liberalization of electronic media has urged print media to depart from traditional news values. This study applies the strong and weak market orientations theories of Randal Beam to explore the recent trends in news reporting. We find out that first page reporting in newspapers publish large photos in stories and advertisement covered big portion of front page space. Results of the study show that both newspapers follow pursuit of market driven journalism over traditional news reporting.

Key Words: *Market Driven Journalism, Strong Market Orientation, Weak Market Orientation, News Values, Print Media, News Reporting*



Introduction

Pakistan has a blooming media landscape, which in spite of government's indirect pressure and direct bans, media in Pakistan largely enjoys independence. The media in Pakistan have been liberalized in 2002, this freedom paved the way through private media boom. In the excessive competitive environment that tailed commercial and corporate interests became dominant and classical journalism was replaced with sensationalism. With this media growth many new media groups joined the media landscape of Pakistan.

Pakistan was a minority and a victim in pre-independence times, Pakistan has also seen genocide like violence in partition days and from the independence, the country has faced defeat in three wars, all these factors make Pakistan to run in a self-defense mode for Pakistani identity. Pakistan's army has been one of the caretaker and defender of this Pakistani identity, which sees India as a threat to this national identity. This self-defense mode develops the discourse to defend national religion and national language as the part of national identity (Sigal & Rehmat, 2006). Islam has a huge impact in Pakistan as a major pillar of Pakistani identity which led to create an alliance between guardians of religion, the civil bureaucracy, the religious frontrunners and the intelligence agencies. The nexus of these national custodians has a grave influence on media as they tried to mold and control media to defend the national identity with their interests. Religious leaders have cramped freedom of expression through propagating blasphemy laws in the country, the intelligence agencies have influenced the media and establishment has been used to control media through licensing, with administration of media laws and through placement of public funds for advertisement in media (International Media Support, 2009).

In historical perspective, media outlets in Pakistan were established in broader nationalistic dynamics, where most renowned politically independent Pakistan movement



figures were also very close the ownership structure or in some cases they were also part of the national newspapers. In the context of independent movement, non-aligned media concept was completely omitted. The nationalist concept in media was continued after the independence; however, it was gradually leaned towards the Islamic ideology as well. In present times media groups have mainly business and corporate interests. Some owners of these groups use them as a protective cover for their other business interests. Owners of these media houses are not necessarily 'mediapeople' themselves. For example, Mr. Lakhani owns the Century Publications, which publishes an English daily Express Tribune and the Urdu Daily Express. He is also the owner of an American based fast-food chain, McDonalds, in Pakistan (Sigal & Rehmat, 2006).

These business interests and market competition in general has brought changes in newspapers publications. Newspapers over the time under market competition has increased their number of pages and also began to publish special supplements under different categories, such as gender based pages i.e. women's page and subject based pages, which include Finance, Education, Health, Employment, Matrimonial, Youth pages, Classifieds, etc. These changes in print media were taken to boost the readership and also to cater the expanding advertising requirements. Electronic media has been a factor as well for print media to revamp the newspapers, which become the 24/7 news source for general public and has given print media a tough competition. Newspapers have to reestablish the priorities of reporting to compete with television. Market driven economy has forced newspapers to redraw inverted pyramid structure and give more attention to consumerism(Sigal & Rehmat, 2006).

ArkaitzZubiaga(2013) discussed that front pages of today's newspapers lack to represent major interests of the masses. Newspapers select front page news content through editorial conferences to grab the attention of large amount of potential readers but these



stories differ from daily popularity of news for masses in social media. According to Zubiaga, circulation of daily newspapers is declining while social media users wants changes in front page stories so these newspapers can grab more people attention to become potential readers. He suggests that news editors should consider less hard news i.e. societal news, political and economic news, to accommodate soft content on front pages like science, music and fashion news.

Literature Review

Randal Beam (1998) defines market driven journalism as a news media firm which identifies its potential market, selects its group of costumers, identifies these costumers needs and wants and develop a strategy to meet those wants and needs as efficiently as possible. He describes a market oriented business in which costumer is king and successful business model develop products to make costumers happy. A market oriented business assumes that long run success can be achieved only by focusing on customer needs and wants.

Richard Gross (2005) explains that in a newspaper environment market driven journalism can be viewed from journalism and economics perspectives. He claims that most recent literature in market driven or market oriented journalism has been viewed from economic perspective. In Gross views past decade has seen overwhelmed financial growth which consolidated media as industry. Last decade has become more challenging for daily newspapers and many newspapers in last decade have adopted more strong market orientation (Beam, 2003).

Market driven journalism as a term is generally associated with McManus for his book titled 'Market Driven Journalism: Let the Citizen Beware?' McManus (1994) wrote in his book that newspapers are adopting rating system for news reports similar to local television, by doing so they have diminished the newspapers classical role of professional



journalism. In his view newspapers consider issues and events news worthy on ratings instead of professional journalistic role. McManus states that managers told journalists to let people decide which news reports are highly valued and which are more news worthy in market place. Citing the new media trend, Randal Beam explains that news reports are determined on understanding of what their customers—both, reader and advertisers - needs and wants are from a newspaper and they have concentrated to find ways to fulfil those needs and wants. Beam further states that newspaper managers have reinforced editors and reporters to pay more attention to readers perceived wants and needs rather than relying solely on classical expert judgment to decide what should be published in newspaper. He argues that these new methods have brought changes in news-making process in newsrooms(Beam, 1998).

Market Driven Journalism and News Quality

Zaller (1999)describes that quality of news has decline over the years, sensational journalism has taken over serious news reporting and entertainment to information ratio has risen since 1950s. He argues that decline of quality in news reporting is due to four main reasons: i) personal dispositions or values of journalists; ii) large and profit capitalizing corporations have taken over of several journalistic firms; iii) market competition and iv) change in political, cultural and institutional dynamics.

McManus (1994) describes that market driven journalism might marks in ways for four social effects: the consumers of these newspapers are more likely to acquire less from the news, consumers or readers may be misled from market driven newspapers, news content published in newspapers may become deceitful and readers may become dispirited about politics and democracy.

Stepp (1991)writes that newspapers have changed content over time and now these organizations are publishing more topics like shopping, parenting and hobbies. He argues



that newspapers are willing to publish these subjects on front page even at the expense of political and government informational news stories, which diminished newspapers role of classical journalism.

Bogart (1982) believes that to counter visual elements and entertainment segments of television, many editors are convinced to publish more and bigger photographs in newspapers and they appear to be inclined towards more 'features' and 'personality journalism'. Nash argues that business and readers competition is compelling news managers towards trivial news content. Nash (1998) explains that news surveys and focus groups studies have convinced editors to publish more news items on personality profiles, soft features and how to advise on expense of social issues, economic subjects and major political content.

Thussu (2007) writes that media ratings and advertising between emerging news organizations have created huge competition which impelled media houses to provide news content in entertaining formats. In his view news networks have adapted entertainment methods to retain loyal viewers or attracting new customers in this fierce competitive environment. Thussu argues that in the process of competition, news organizations have developed new formats in form of reality TV, for news, current affairs and factual entertainment genres. These new formats have blurred the lines between news, entertainment and documentary.

Influence of Advertisement on News Content

Cohen (2002) explains that in a market driven economy news organizations are motivated to generate maximum profit and this profit motivation within a news organization pressurize editors to tolerate advertisers participation in editorial decisions in a newsroom. She argues that market competition has increased advertising placement for companies in forms of television and internet which creates fear among news firm for



losing advertisers in future deals. In her views this increased pressure for profits has resulted media firms to design content with profitability and public interest in mind. Cohen states that advertising factor influence news content decisions. Advertisers can negotiate a more favorable commercial environment in a newspaper where they seek to place advertisement. This process of advantageous placement of an advertisement may influence the topic, tone and pace of news content.

Anderson (1995) believes that advertisers avoid placing their product in a manner which associates with controversial news stories in a newspaper. He also states that advertisers attempt to produced favorable news editorials for products but they like to camouflage these ‘advertorials’ in news reports to capitalize on the public trust in journalistic reliability. McManus(1994)argues that these advertising pressures influence how newsrooms accomplished news reports. He further argues that in market driven journalism, market plays a vital role how journalist pick and discover newsworthy events, select some of these events for coverage and publish information into a news report. Journalistic newsgathering practice and training mold reporters to purposefully watch out organization’s interests.

Beam (2002) noticed that print media in USA is losing advertising revenue over the time since electronic media emerged as news source. He believes that this situation caused news editors to rely more on market driven journalism. Murthy and Ramakrishna explain that Indian media’s share of advertising has been steady since early 1990s but in recent past India has just few of market research agency which are now increased to 20 by year 2004, most of these research agencies are owned by multi-national corporations. They argued that print media is facing a down fall in recent years in terms of advertising in the hands of television. They believe that to counter this decline newspapers have adopted market driven journalistic approach (Murthy & Ramakrishna, 2010).



McNair(2003) explains that in 20th century elite class had the control over infrastructure and flow of information. Journalists relied on government officials for their news and leaders in a society were focused to maintain political and social order by controlling flow of information, purpose of news publication was to reinforce their objectives and values. McNair describes the 20th century as the era of technological innovation. New discoveries have increased the reach, capacity and the speed of information flow in the world. In his views control paradigm has shifted from elite sphere towards the public domain. News editor has less power as gatekeeper over the flow of information and people have more and new options for the consumption of information with less censor. New communication and information technologies have allowed more people to produce information for the consumption for masses in the form of web logs and news websites. Schudson (1989)describes that in this new competitive media environment, political economy model have shifted towards the consumers and advertisement is in focus of elite newspapers. New technologies have broadened choices for consumers in free market economy and gatekeepers' subjectivity have tilted more towards consumers demands then elite's requirements. Past decade as free market have emerged, media corporations have interlocked with other private corporations and control of media organizations have handed over to few corporations. News is produced for several dozen corporations which have profit to make for survival. So naturally industry is dependent on advertisers for making profit and to capitalize on advertisement.

Research Questions

Following questions have been devised based on the literature reviewed:

RQ:1 Does Strong market orientation of market driven journalism effects content and layout of Dawn?



RQ:2 Does Strong market orientation of market driven journalism effects content and layout of The News?

RQ:3 Does Market driven journalism effects content and layout of The News more than Dawn?

Theoretical Framework

Beam (1998) have conducted several researchers on market driven journalism and explained that there are two levels of market driven journalism in print media; weak market orientation and strong market orientation. He argues that strong market oriented newspaper devotes lesser page space for content of public service and public sphere or public affairs then weak market oriented newspaper. Murthy and Ramakrishna (2010)discussed that in Randal Beam's observation market driven journalism will discourage significant news information about public affairs in news media. Defining market oriented newspapers, they argued that useful public affairs information is rarely defined precisely in market driven journalism. Hoynes (2006)describe public sphere as information about current affairs, government affairs, public matters and civic affairs. In their views strongly market oriented newspapers less emphasized about public service reporting. It creates a vacuum in society for lack of necessary information to govern itself. According to Randal Beam (2003), strong market oriented newspapers dedicate more resources and efforts to the page appearance and try to create readers friendly environment in a publication for readers to consume information. Nash (1998) argues that news editors in market driven environment spend more time on newspaper design, catchy headlines, page layout, pictures and graphics then focusing on news content.

This research finds out trends of front page priorities of Pakistani newspapers on grounds of strong market orientation and weak market orientation in a market driven journalism. This study examines news content and amount of soft and hard news ratio on front page



to determine assumptions of Randal Beam's strong market orientation of newspaper in market driven journalism. Furthermore, page layout, headlines, amount of advertisement, pictures and photos are analyzed to understand exposure of Pakistani print media towards market driven journalism. The key concepts and variables are operationalized in methodology to conduct this research.

Research Methodology

To determine market driven journalism in Pakistani print media, hypotheses are analyzed using quantitative research method. Two mainstream Pakistani English newspapers are selected for the study, which have vast daily circulation in Pakistan and even abroad. Front page of a newspaper is most important and it showcase overall trend of a newspaper. Editors pay more attention to content and select news stories carefully for front pages of newspapers to attract as many potential readers as possible (Zubiaga, 2013). For this purpose, researcher analyses front pages of selected newspapers.

Content analysis is used to measure actual content of the media and internal features of this content. This tool is applied to determine the expression of certain ideas, phrases, themes, characters, words or sentences within the content. Recorded information of the content is studied methodically in content analysis (Walizer & Wiener, 1978). In this method communication variables are measured objectively, systematically and quantitatively (Kerlinger, 1979).

All variables are coded in coding sheet to convert data in numerical form. Content analysis is performed on front pages of selected newspapers to determine market driven journalism effects on news reporting in Pakistani print media. For this research, we have selected two newspapers, Dawn and The News, for one-year time period from January 1st, 2015 to December 31st, 2015. To gather samples from population, researchers used Systematic Random Sampling which was developed and recommended sampling



procedure by Stempel(1952). For this method to work, researchers have ordered whole population and then selected six months systematically. Researchers in this study picked every fifth newspaper from these months to narrow down research and perform in-depth analysis on front page of each newspaper.

Categorization of Newspaper Content

Researcher categorizes content of first pages of under study newspapers and layout, in order to analyze and understand market driven journalism and Pakistani print media and to test the hypothesis. Coding sheet is developed with help of these categories to convert data into numeric. To analyze layout of newspapers, researcher measure length of all items in front pages including i) news, ii) photos, iii) advertisement and iv) curtain raiser. All items, appear in front pages of newspaper, are categories as News without Photo, News with Photo, Photo only, Advertisement and Curtain Raiser/Highlighter. Researcher further categories news stories in their types which includes Political, Investigative, Terrorism, Crime, Sports, Entertainment, Science, Economy, Health and Others.

Results and Findings

First both newspapers are analyzed separately to determine market driven journalism in both dailies. Then both papers are compared through graphs and tables to have a clear picture in front of us about market driven journalism and its effects on both newspapers reporting priorities.



Dawn

Type of Items

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
News Without Photo	168	58.1	58.1	58.1
News with Photo	33	11.4	11.4	69.6
Photo Only	12	4.2	4.2	73.7
Advertisement	29	10.0	10.0	83.7
Curtain Raiser	47	16.3	16.3	100.0
Total	289	100.0	100.0	

Table 1

While analyzing market driven journalism in Dawn, Type of Items in front page are categorized in five categories. Table 1 shows us that News without Photos are published more frequently with frequency of 168 where N=289. Curtain Raiser are second most published item with frequency of 47 while News with Photos take third place in front page of Dawn which is published 33 times. Advertisements are at fourth place with frequency of 29. Photos only are published 12 times. It is clear that Dawn has published more news without photos but it also shows that Dawn has published more photos only in front page of the newspaper. Front page of a newspaper is most important space in a daily which editors fill with large photos without following news story. These photos usually covered more front page space than news reports.



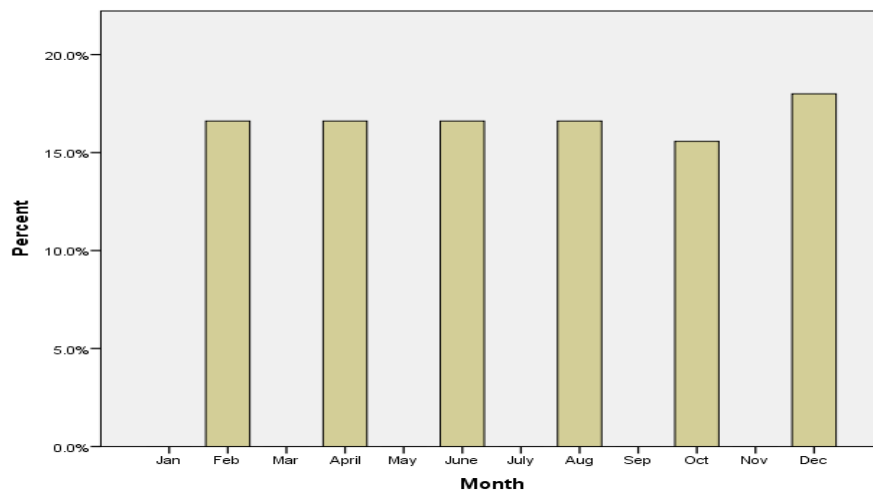
Category of Item

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Political	90	31.1	34.6	34.6
Investigative	2	.7	.8	35.4
Terrorism	71	24.6	27.3	62.7
Crime	20	6.9	7.7	70.4
Sports	3	1.0	1.2	71.5
Entertainment	11	3.8	4.2	75.8
Economy	17	5.9	6.5	82.3
Health	5	1.7	1.9	84.2
Others	41	14.2	15.8	100.0
Total	260	90.0	100.0	
Advertisements	29	10.0		
Total	289	100.0		

Table 2

It is clear from Table 2 that Dawn published more political news on front page which has 90 frequency where N=260. Second place is for terrorism news with frequency of 71. Crime news are at third place which are published 20 times on front pages while news about economy are at fourth with frequency of 17. Entertainment is at fifth while Health related news are sixth place. Sports news are at seventh place and Investigative news stories are published 2 times which are at ninth place. Randal Beam (2003) has argued that in strong market orientation of driven journalism, editors tend to choose soft news stories more often. Results of Dawn shows that editors in this daily have published crime and entertainment news more often. Current raisers are also covered reasonable space of front page to grab readers attention. Economy and health related stories, too, find space in front pages to tackle readers interest. Crime news also shares big percentage of front page which often include pictures of criminals with news stories. Pictures of criminals without any difference from political figures portrays criminal as hero like status for readers.

In classical journalism news about public sphere are published more which is true in Dawn as well (Beam, 2002). 31% stories are political and 24 percent space is covered with news about ongoing war on terror. But 10 % of news items are for advertisement in front pages of dawn. Although advertisement is 10 percent in Dawn but these are large ads to cover more space of page.



Graph 1

Dawn gave even space to news items in each month which is clear in above graph with 18% in December while in February, April and June Dawn published 16.6 percent news items. In October 15.6 % news items got published on front pages of Dawn.

Analysis of front pages of Dawn indicate that layout of newspaper is harmonies with almost same amount of news item in each month. Dawn layout shows that it uses photo on top of the paper while large ad fills bottom space of front page. Larger headlines are also a norm of market driven journalism (Beam, 2003). Layout of Dawn makes it clear that newspaper includes large one-tire or two-tire headlines to cover space in front pages. Even when news stories have been published with photos on front pages, photos in these stories have covered large space.



The News

	Type of Item			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
News without Photo	216	61.0	61.0	61.0
News with Photo	26	7.3	7.3	68.4
Photo Only	13	3.7	3.7	72.0
Advertisement	60	16.9	16.9	89.0
Curtain Raiser	39	11.0	11.0	100.0
Total	354	100.0	100.0	

Table 3

While analyzing market driven journalism in The News, Type of Items on front page are categorized in five categories. Table 3 shows that News without Photos were published more frequently on front pages of The News with frequency of 216 where N=354. Advertisements were second most published item in The News with the frequency of 60 while Curtain Raisers took third place on first page of The News which were published 39 times. News with Photos were at fourth place with frequency of 26 while Photos Only were published 13 times on front page of The News. Analyzing the results and findings of The News, in light of Randal Beam views, it is argued that front pages of The News are leaning towards market driven journalism. The News published 61 percent stories without photos but it has filled space with 16.9 percent advertisement and 11 percent with curtain raisers. Like Dawn editors of The News has published large photos without news story to cover sacred front page space. Photos are important ingredient of color pages but newspapers are giving them more space than necessary.

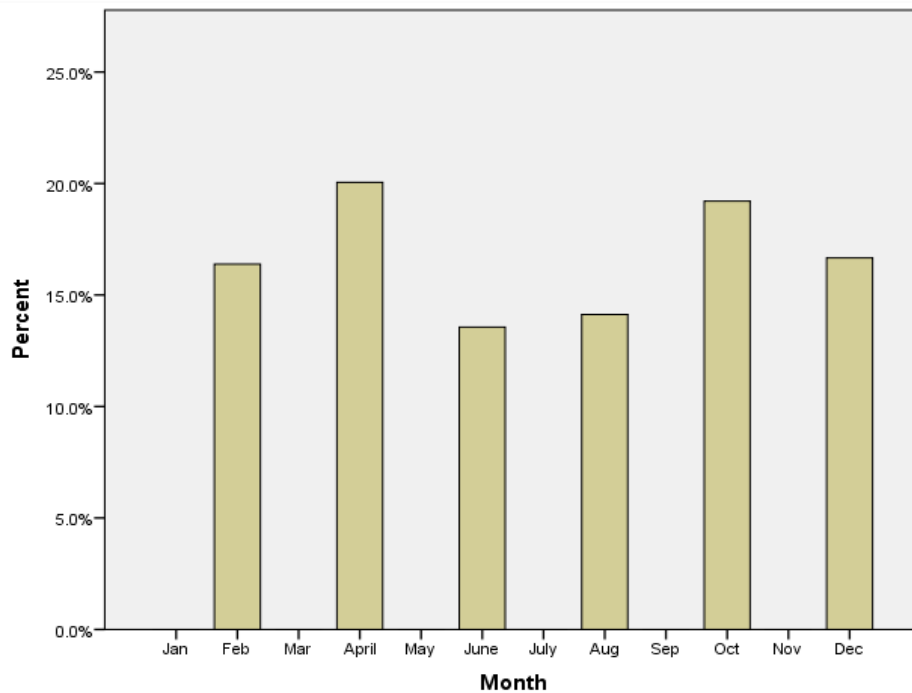


Category of Item

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Political	119	33.6	40.9	40.9
Investigative	15	4.2	5.2	46.0
Terrorism	79	22.3	27.1	73.2
Crime	20	5.6	6.9	80.1
Sports	4	1.1	1.4	81.4
Economy	12	3.4	4.1	85.6
Health	2	.6	.7	86.3
Others	40	11.3	13.7	100.0
Total	291	82.2	100.0	
Advertisement	63	17.8		
Total	354	100.0		

Table 4

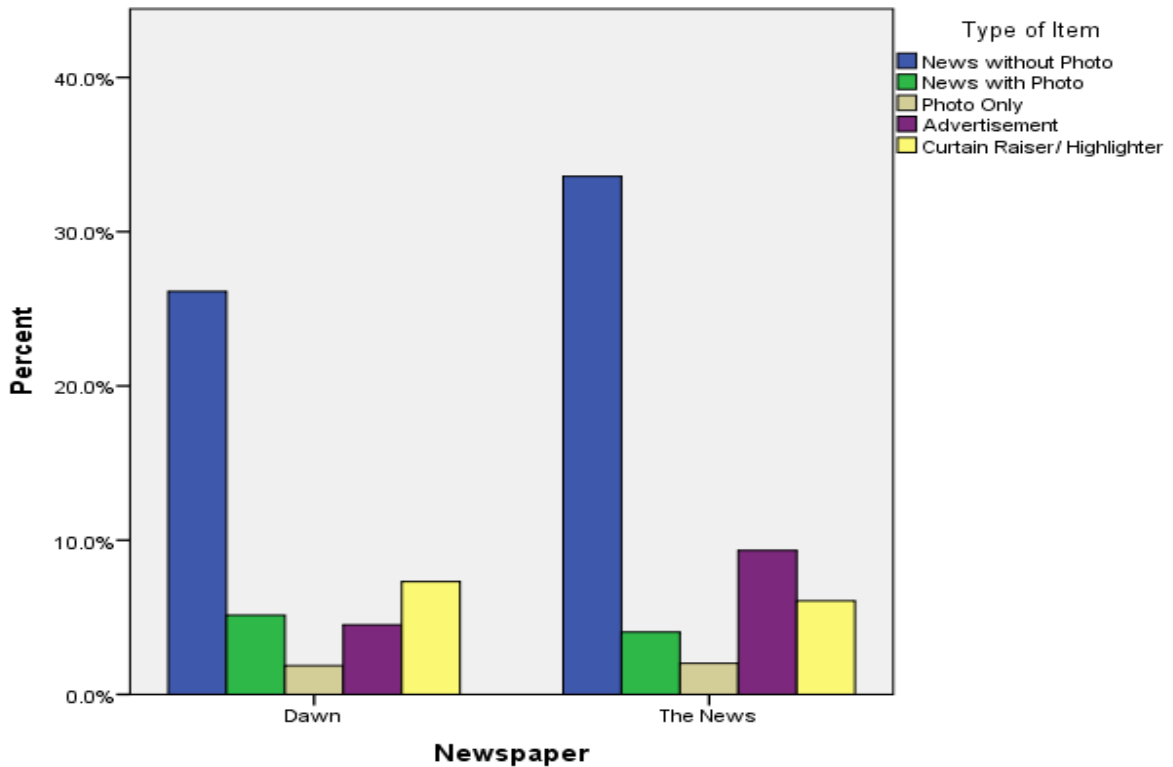
Table 4 shows that The News first page has published more political news which has the frequency of 119 where N=291. Second place was for terrorism related news with frequency of 79. Crime news were at third place which were published 20 times on front pages while investigative news were at fourth with frequency of 15. Economy news items were at fifth with frequency of 12 while sports related news were at sixth place which has frequency of 4 on front pages of The News. Results indicate that editors of The News covered front pages with extra content as well as has given large amount of space to economy related news stories and health news. Sports news are constant feature of front pages as well. Political news and news related to war on terrorism clearly hits high on charts but large portion is dedicated for advertisement. In fact, measurements show that space for ads is higher than news stories in newspaper.



Graph 2

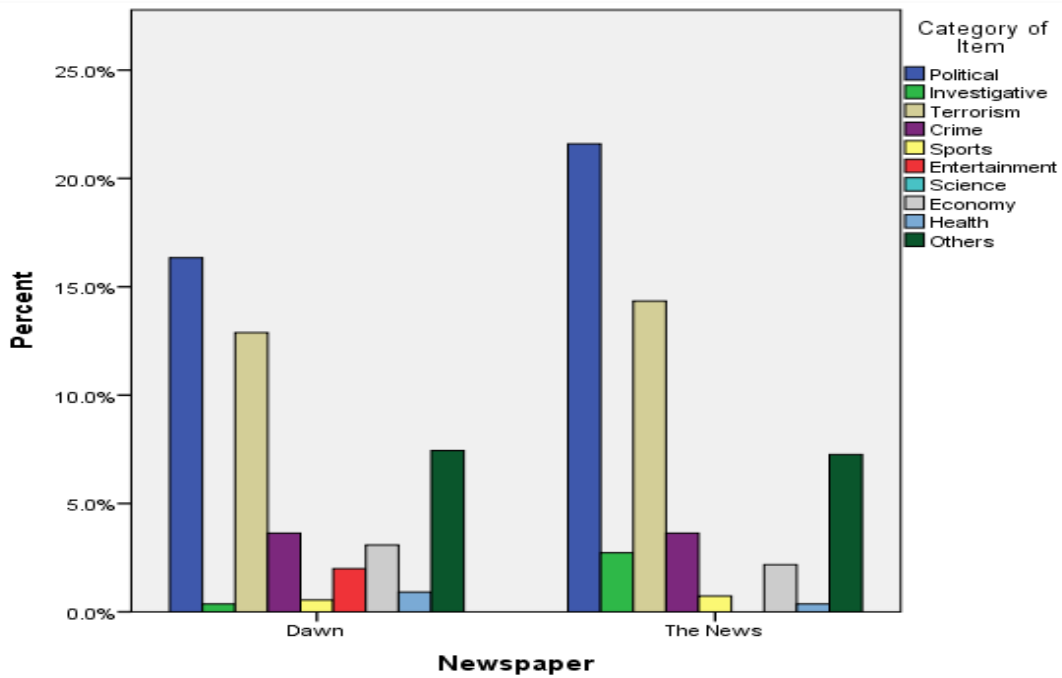
Above graph indicates uneven news item distribution on front pages of The News in each month with maximum percentage of 20.1 in April and minimum percentage of 13.6 in June. It is clear from analysis that mostly bottom half of newspaper is covered with ads while top part of page also carries a large picture. Bigger font size in headlines also fill large amount of space to make lesser room for news stories on front page. The News layout of front page does not have equal amount of space of items in each paper which is clear from results. Editors cover most page with ads first then include news stories in remaining portion of its page. It also published ads on top of pages under its banner. Newspaper published on December 31st 2015 has full front page ad which clearly indicates newspapers' policy about advertisement. Most important page of newspaper is covered with only ad without any news story in whole of its front page. Readers who buy a newspaper for news would find full page ad in front page of paper. This shows that market driven journalism effects layout and content of the news seriously.

Comparison of Dawn and The News



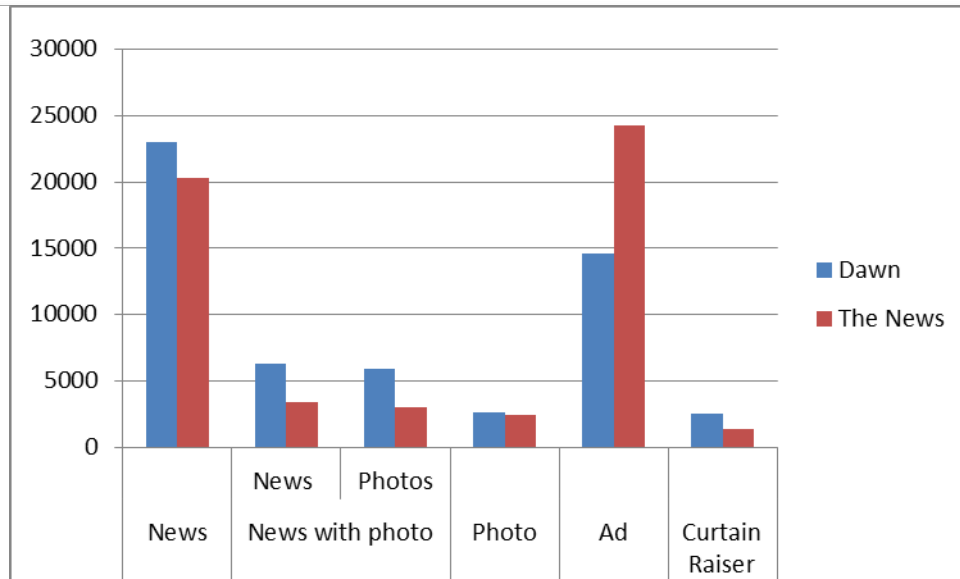
Graph 3

It is clear from above comparison of type of items both newspaper have published over the last year that main focus of both said paper is towards news with no photos but The News published more News without Photos than Dawn. Advertisements also hits high on graph on both media organizations newspapers but The News is clearly ahead on number of ads it has published. Photos have become integral part of page layout even sometimes these photos have been published without relevant news story. Both these papers have given extra space to photos only.



Graph 4

Above graph indicate that The News gives more coverage to political news than Dawn while both newspapers published equal amount of Terrorism and crime related news stories. Dawn gives more space for Health related news than The News. For Entertainment Dawn publish 4.2 percent news in front pages while The News first pages have none related to Entertainment. The News published more Investigative news stories in front pages than Dawn while Sports related news items get almost equal amount of coverage in both newspapers.



Graph 5

When we look at amount of space both these newspapers have given to news item in term of measurement, it draws completely different story and show us a clear picture of editorial preference of studies organization. This graph shows that The News gave more space to Advertisement to any other item in front pages while Dawn gave more space to News without Photos. News without Photos are at second place in term of measurement in The News while Ads take second place in front pages of Dawn. Both newspapers gave News with Photo almost equal amount of space and photo to news ratio is almost equal as well. Both newspapers gave same amount of space to Photo Only while dawn gave more space to Curtain Raisers than The News.

Analysis of both newspapers indicates that market driven journalism effected content and layout of these dailies. The News leads the charts for amount of space it has given to advertisement on its first page. Ads are the most printed item on front page for The News. Dawn is also not for behind but it still has given more space to news items in general.



Conclusion

Media in Pakistan has seen a boom in past decade with liberalization in laws and more private media outlets have been developed since 2002. Most of this media development is in electronic media which has seen stiff competition between media houses, this sense of competition is further evident in news media. This excessive competition paved the way through commercial interest in private media. Print media have been struggling to compete on two fronts simultaneously; with electronic media and with each other. Before liberalization of media there was only one state run television in country which had posed no threat to fairly independent print media publications but now newspapers have to adopt new methods to daze off television news media.

This study revealed that print media has adopted market driven journalism to overcome this competition. In market driven journalism a newspaper organization identifies its potential market for business, selects its readers, identifies these readers' wants and needs and then develops strategies to meet those expectations as effectively as possible. In classical journalism, news items are in focus; editors pick or drop a new item for print solely on editorial judgment of news story. But in market driven journalism editors pay more attention towards customers' needs and wants just like any other form of business (Beam, 2003). Researchers have argued that in classical terms of journalism media has an obligation to inform masses about public sphere matters for society to function properly but in market driven journalism media lags behind in public service reporting (Croteau & Hoynes, 2006). In market driven journalism, advertisement plays a vital role as well. News organizations, in a market driven environment, are motivated to generate maximum profit and this profit enthusiasm within a news organization pressurizes editors to tolerate advertisers' participation in editorial decisions (Cohen, 2002).



Researcher has found out in this study that Dawn is inclined towards market driven journalism. Editorial policy of Dawn adopting strong market orientation but it is still in transition phase of market driven journalism. Dawn has published more political and news related to terrorism but advertisement has also in abundance in front pages of newspapers. Bottom half of page is dedicated for advertisement while large photos without related news stories are also features in Dawn. Styles of curtain raisers and large two-tire headlines in Dawn indicate its policy towards market driven journalism.

Analysis of The News in this study shows that it has adopted strong market orientation of market driven journalism as indicated by Randal Beam in his research of American newspapers(Beam, 2003). Front pages of The News are devoted for advertisement even more then news items. Political news and news of ongoing war on terror are main features of The News but advertisement becomes a priority for editors. The News even has published a full page advertisement on its front pages which is a litmus test for the newspaper policy towards market driven journalism.



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