

# Media Framing of Environmental Issues: A Study of Press Coverage in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan

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## Abstract

Environmental issues have become some of the most critical research areas in the twenty-first century, affecting all dimensions of society. News media outlets are pivotal in disseminating information about environmental issues and significantly influencing public opinion about these issues of public concern. While there is extensive research on media portrayal of climate change, less focus has been on how local newspapers report on various environmental problems. Gilgit Baltistan is a highly environmentally affected region in the extreme north of Pakistan. To examine the coverage of the environmental problems in local media and the significant differences in the frames of the chosen newspapers, a content analysis of two local newspapers of Gilgit-Baltistan namely *Daily K2* and *Daily Ausaf* was performed for the year 2022-2023. The study's main focus was identifying the most frequently used frames in the selected newspapers and exploring the significant difference between the frames used to present environmental issues in the selected newspapers. In the context of GB environmental challenges are frequently presented as a consequence of human practices such as industrial manufacturing and transportation, deforestation, and disposal of large amounts of waste into nearby lakes and rivers that cause environmental problems. Most of the stories suggest possible solutions to tackle environmental risks. The difference between the frames adopted by the selected newspaper was the *scientific certainty frame*. *Daily K2* has given more importance to the science of environmental issues as compared to *Daily Ausaf*. The findings of the study can be used by local environmental organizations and government agencies and policy-making bodies to design effective communication campaigns and raise awareness in addressing environmental issues.

**Keywords:** Environmental Issues, Print Media, Framing Analysis, Gilgit Baltistan

## Introduction

The environment has become one of the most critical research areas in the twenty first century. News media of all forms including print and online as public sphere play a critical role in communicating, educating, raising awareness of environmental issues among public and facilitating dialogic communication between various organizations. According to Bhanve and Maisiri (2023), news media have emerged as important public spheres where various institutions including organizations, politicians, public, journalists, activists and authorities engage on environment related issues through conversation, dialogue, discourse, arguments and debates. Further, through news media the concerned citizens embrace and put forth environmental discourse and alternatively reshape the narratives regarding the environment (Cornelio et al., 2024).

The news media are generally considered an important conduit of public discourse on issues of public interest. This includes activities such as offering background information, analysis of facts supported by arguments, and such discursive features as multi-siding on complex objects such as environmental issues. Journalism is considered as fundamental to the creation of awareness of risks and then interpreting them for the public (Hansen, 1991). This function of media is pivotal in the creation of social knowledge and interpreting the causes and consequences of risk including the risks of environmental issues. Scholars on environment and media have further noted that mass media can scrutinize the affairs of the state environmental actors and make them accountable for their actions and policies on environmental issues and protecting the interests of the communities (Obasi & Msughter, 2023).

Further, various factors might shape and influence the media reporting on environment and climate related issues. According to Hussain et al. (2022) environmental reporting in Pakistan is influenced by both professional and economic factors. Researchers have noted these factors influence on environmental issues. Similarly, other studies have shown that political, economic, social, cultural, technological and scientific factors influence the news coverage of climate change issues (Sharif & Medvecky, 2018).

In the extant academic literature on media and environmental issues, the predominant knowledge has been produced mainly in the Western context thus having a deep lacuna on the similar knowledge from the non-western media contexts. The current study takes a departure from it and aims to examine the media framing of environmental issues in the local context. Specifically, it examines the press coverage of environmental issues in the major newspapers of Gilgit-Baltistan, a region highly vulnerable to environmental changes and hazards. To achieve this, two major local dailies of Gilgit namely *Daily K-2* and

*Daily Ausaf* were selected and content analyzed using the theoretical conception of media framing theory for the years 2022-2023 inclusive.

### **Framework of Analysis**

This study looked at the current environmental concerns as well as the way they are reported in local newspapers within the context of Gilgit Baltistan (Valeda, 2002). The role of framing is essential because news media may reconstruct social issues and, in this way, influence the understanding of the public about these issues. This is even more critical issue in environment, where technical solutions have to be anchored on support from the public. Through analyzing the semiotic patterns employed by the journalists the crucial information that can advance our understanding of how environmental issues can be best communicated to the general public becomes comprehensible. As a result, there will be more awareness and movement towards change and the construction of an environmentally friendly society. The issue of framing is therefore central because through the news, social issues are represented by media, and those social issues are framed so that the public will come across them through rationale or episteme. This is particularly crucial for issues where public understanding is required to support or participate in addressing environmental challenges, which are normally complex. In such a way when the tendencies of journalists to frame environmental problem are analyzed, progress can be made concerning the environmental communication and educating the public. In the long run, this makes the public more aware and ready to start concrete actions towards having greener and environmental friendly discourse.

This is very vital especially on environmental issues because these are hard to solve without involving the public because of the understanding they need. Thus, embracing the analytical specifics of journalists' patterns of environmental issues framing will unveil new methodologies regarding the ways the latter can be properly addressed to the public. This can ultimately help raise more awareness and doings and assist the populace in creation of a more sustainable society. This research examines the frames used by the two major local newspapers *Daily K2* and *Daily Ausaf* to present the environmental issues in Gilgit Baltistan, through the framing analysis of local newspaper stories on environmental issues in the year 2022-2023. The print media in Gilgit Baltistan tends to focus on event-based coverage of environmental issues, such as reporting on weather forecasts, conferences, seminars, and press releases, rather than in-depth reporting on the broader environmental challenges facing the region. It was the common approach adopted by both newspapers in environmental reporting to highlight the role that individuals play in causing environmental issues, such as through their consumption habits and lifestyle choices.

However numerous studies by researchers have used different predefined certain frames and loosely defined presuppositions of the frames (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Tian & Stewart, 2005) such as the attribution of responsibility frame, economic consequences frame, conflict frame, human interest frame, scientific uncertainty frame, benefit frame, anti-regulation frame, scientific certainty frame, national post frame, human development frame, morality frame. These frames used for the comparative studies of the framing patterns between developed and developing countries by Pandey and Kurian (2017), and Tong (2014) employed these frames to study how investigative journalism can respond to the environmental problems that are on the rise in China.

McCann's (2010) study provides empirical research on how news magazines have represented climate change. In particular, the work described a new type of representation of the scientific aspect of climate change as objective or unbiased. From the list provided in the previous study by Boykoff (2008), the researcher located fifteen main frames and three additional frames that the researcher recognized during the initial analysis. The mentioned above perspectives were described and enumerated as follows.

1. Political-economic frame: This frame is more of how Climate change is depicted in political, economic, and business perspectives.
2. The culture and society frame: In the literature review about climate change McCann concentrated on how climate change and its impacts on culture and society areas including; popular culture, risk and justice, transport, public perception, religion and stewardship were portrayed.
3. Scientific frame: This frame concerns how climate change is framed regarding scientific research and its findings.
4. Discovery frame: This subcategory under the scientific frame discusses the coverage of new scientific findings about climate change.
5. Ecological/meteorological frame: This work's subcategory under the scientific frame explores the ecological and meteorological nature of climate change.
6. Weather events frame: While this subcategory belongs under the already defined ecological/meteorological frame, this frame particularly pertains to studying extreme weather events, and their association with climate change.
7. Biodiversity frame: As a subcategory within the ecological/meteorological frame, climate change effects for different species are discussed.

8. Neutral scientific frame: This type of framing is a new category that has been defined by McCann which does not use scientific research to support the Climate Change narrative.
9. Catastrophic frame: This frame emphasis with depicts potential disastrous effect of climate change.
10. The human-interest frame: This topic focused on the impacts of climate change on individuals and societies.
11. International frame: This frame identifies how climate change is addressed in the international forums like in treaty and accord.
12. Technological frame: This frame deals primarily with the methods that cut across the technologically based strategies on climate change.
13. Political conflict frame: This subcategory within the political-economic frame examines the contentious politics involved in the political economy of climate change.
14. Economic development frame: As a subcategory within the political-economic frame, this subcategory aims to look at the economic costs and benefits of climate change.
15. Consumer responsibility frame: This is a subcategory in the political-economic frame analyzing the role of consumers in combating climate change.

### **Research Questions**

To examine the coverage of environmental issues in local media of Gilgit Baltistan, the study focused on the following key questions:

- RQ1.** What are the dominant frames used by local print media to communicate environmental issues?
- RQ2.** To what extent do the chosen newspapers differ in the ways they frame environmental issues?
- RQ3.** Which frame is frequently used in the selected newspapers?

### **Research Method**

This research aims to examine how local people use newspapers to present and describe several approaches to environmental issues using the theory of framing. Following purposive sampling technique, *Daily K2* and *Daily Ausaf* newspapers were chosen for research due to their significant influence in Gilgit-Baltistan. Daily K2, with over 18 years of circulation, holds the highest circulation in the region (DailyK2 News, n.d.), while Daily Ausaf reaches 350,000 copies daily (DailyAusaf News, n.d.). Both newspapers are very popular Urdu language

newspapers, providing vital local and regional information, making them ideal sources for analyzing media framing and public discourse in the area.

Total stories of 200 that appeared during the year 2022-2023 were selected for final content analysis. The deductive and inductive framing approaches were used to identify the frames that were utilized to present environmental problems. Frame analysis is widely used to understand how an issue is packaged, presented and communicated to the audiences by the news media. Framing makes it possible for individuals or groups to choose and give importance to certain features of the perceived reality and exclude other aspects of reality. The manner in which environmental concerns are packaged in the news is of extreme influence to the way the audience perceives and responds to such concerns. Framing is the act of choosing specific elements of a perceived reality, highlighting them, and giving them importance while disregarding another element (Entman et al., 2009). The purpose of this process is to promote a specific definition of an issue interpretation of its root cause, evaluation of its social implications, and/or recommendations for treatment.

How environmental concerns are depicted in news reporting can considerably influence the public's perception and response to these issues. Hence, comprehending the prevailing frames adopted by regional newspapers in their reporting of environmental issues is crucial for comprehending how these issues are communicated to the public. The research method utilized in this study affords a clear and rational route for analyzing the frames employed in reporting environmental issues. Indeed, by analyzing the texts and selecting news stories from both newspapers, frames used in the representation of environmental issues were identified and compared.

In this research, most of the inquiries that the study explores are best answered by the use of a deductive only approach. This decision follows the analysis of the first round of content analysis and aimed at defining the predefined rather than newly discovered frames of the universal “frames” and the particular media frames used to depict the environmental issues identified in prior research. This study is consistent with Entman’s (1993) framework and role of framing as well as with the categorization and evaluation of the Framing model developed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000).

This study looked at the assortment of five frames on articles on Environmental issues in Gilgit Baltistan. From the coding process, we identified the five frames and to increase reliability, the questions used in coding each story were 21 questions. The indicators used in the content analysis process were standardized from previous research. The purpose of this study was to operationalize the

frequency of the five frames created by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000); and McCright and Dunlap (2000).

The coding protocol allowed respondents to precisely express agreement or disagreement. This has been the approach taken in other research exercises that have borrowed questions developed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) and McCright and Dunlap (2000) for assessing media content. These papers have confirmed that the questions satisfactorily mirror the basic frames used in news presentations.

By deploying this coding schedule on the selected Gilgit Baltistan environmental news stories, the study wants to provide an account of the frames employed in reporting the issues. The coding schedule was important because it made it possible to measure the frequency of the frames to gain better understanding of how the news media packaged environmental issues to the audience. Such method can be deemed reliable and valid in studying the dominant frames elicited in the news, as it is quantifiable and systematic, and could be applied even if the study is to be conducted across different contexts or in different periods.

<b>Analyzed from Semetko and Valkenburg (2000); and McCright and Dunlap (2000).</b>	
<b>1. Responsibility Attribution Frame</b>	
1.	Does the news story imply that simply any governmental body has the capacity of addressing the problem?
2.	Does any level of government seem to be held accountable for the problem/issue by the news story?
3.	Finally does the news story present any solutions for the affected area, district, city, state or country due to the problem/issue in question?
4.	Is there any sign that the given individual or a specific societal group should take the blame for the discussed problem/issue in the new story?
5.	There is no way that a reader should infer from the news story under analysis that the problem or issue being talked about deserves immediate attention.
<b>2. Economic Consequences</b>	
6.	Did the news story highlight any present or future (financial) benefits or (financial)

risks at all?
7. Are there some words about the amount of expenses in the news story?
8. Are there any news report findings in regard to the (economic) consequences of action or inaction?
<b>3. Conflict Frame.</b>
9. Have the parties/individuals/groups/nations reported/conveyed dissent in the news story?
10. In the given news story, is there a sign that one party, an individual, group, or a nation is fingered?
11. Does the above news story take different views/takes on the problem/issue being made exceptionally clear?
12. Are there any points made within the news story that refers to the Wins and Losses?
<b>4. Human Interest Frame</b>
13. Is there a 'human interest'; or 'human face' of the story in the news item?
14. Is there any use of words or other people's experiences that creates feelings of anger, compassion, sympathy, empathy or care?
15. Does this narrative need focus on the way that the roles of those who are inside the situation or targets of the issue or problem look like?
16. Are there aspects of private or even a personal nature involved in the working on the given news story?
17. List at least one fact from the news piece that conveys emotions as close associates to pity, concern, affection, concern, or anger.
<b>5. Action oriented / Scientific Certainty Frame</b>
18. Is the news story defending climate change science as the indisputable truth?
19. Is it possible to identify the concept of consensus science within the context of reporting the news story on mainstream climate research?
20. What can be seen in the story is if there are any pointers that climate change brings

about environmental risks and effects?
21. Is climate change as the political ploy by the interest groups depicted in the selected news story?

The current research seeks to analyze environmental concerns in news texts using five “generic” frames. The *responsibility frame* is to identify the party that is holding continuous responsibility for the given environmental issue and that has to provide solutions. This frame also evaluates the degree of economic instabilities involved in environmental problems.

The frame of *human interest* tries to bring humanity into environmental issues where people can relate with the problem through a story or event. The *conflict frame* concerns the attitudes of people and their concrete positions in relation to the issues within the environmental area.

The *action-oriented* frame is also centered on the medical scientific certainty frame that is used to stress the environmental issues as proven scientifically and that people need to act to prevent something bad from happening. This frame reminds people that everyone needs solid proof somehow related to an environmental issue to get an understanding of everything going on.

The *economic consequence* frame effects that people stand to gain or lose consequent to taking or not taking action on environmental issues. It looks into the effects of economic factors on human beings and the choices they make.

Using these frames and questions to understand news stories, this study aims to show the frame media employ in presenting and explaining environmental issues in Gilgit-Baltistan. Therefore, this study aimed to approach these objectives by identifying the rate at each frame and determining how the news media is framing environmental problems to the public and its subsequent effects on the perception and decision-making processes.

The sample of *Daily K2* is collected from the library archives and the sample of *Daily Ausaf* is collected from its official website (<http://www.dailyausaf.com>). Exclusive of the web pages, researchers located an aggregate of 350 articles and news items. To weed out the selection researchers set up exclusion factors for movies: The first criterion for sample selection was that the any article selected has to contain at least one sentence that directly talks of climate change or global warming, deforestation, soil erosion, land and water pollution. This inclusion criterion led to the selection of 200 stories for final analysis.

The corpus consists of total 200 news stories and articles for coding and analyzing. Each of the selected articles was coded on five frames that were developed and encompassed 21 questions. To ensure the accuracy and dependability of the coding process, each coder independently coded ten stories and compared the results. Researchers and a second coder randomly coded 20 stories for the inter-coder agreement. The process led to an inter-coder agreement ranging from 80% to 95% which is an acceptable one (Neuendorf, 2017).

## Findings and Analysis

This study was aimed at examining the dominant frames the selected newspapers employed in the coverage of environmental issues in Gilgit-Baltistan. The analysis identified three dominant frames in *Daily K2* that run consistently across the content. These three frames were the attribution of responsibility, scientific certainty, and human interest. The attribution of responsibility refers to the ways in which the articles assigned blame or accountability for climate change-related issues. Scientific certainty pertains to the level of confidence expressed in the scientific evidence surrounding climate change. Human interest focuses on the human impact of climate change, including personal stories, emotions, and experiences. These three themes were found to be the most common and prevalent in the *Daily K2* articles, with the attribution of responsibility being the most dominant, followed by scientific certainty and human interest, respectively. The attribution of responsibility frame was found in seventy news stories and articles, scientific certainty frame was in sixty-seven, human interest frame was in fifty-three, economic consequences was in seventeen and conflict frame was found in seven news stories and articles.

Table 2 illustrates how the local newspapers in Gilgit Baltistan have framed environmental issues in the 2022-2023. This displays the frequency with which each frame was utilized throughout the one-year period.

The *Daily Ausaf's* major frames for covering environmental issues were attribution of responsibility and human-interest frame and used equally in fifty-six news stories and articles, scientific certainty was the second major frame used in thirty-four, economic consequences in eighteen and the least used frame was conflict frame used in sixteen news stories and articles.

Both *Daily K2* and *Daily Ausaf* newspapers utilized the attribution of responsibility and human-interest frames extensively. However, *Daily K2* placed more emphasis on the scientific certainty frame in comparison to *Daily Ausaf*.

This was identified as a notable distinction between the framing techniques used in the two newspapers.

Attribution of responsibility, human interest and scientific certainty frames used to cover environmental issues emphasize causes and consequences and mainly put the responsibility on organizations especially government departments to make policies and take action to tackle consequences and reduce the existing and upcoming environmental issues and explain how environmental issues affect human life. The potential hazards arising from environmental issues are not only affecting the natural environment and human well-being but also extend to the broader society.

Scientific certainty frame focuses on the science of environmental issues, it states that environmental problems and their adverse impacts are scientifically proven and given scientific justification and information on these environmental issues. The conflict frame used by the local newspapers discussed the conflict between organizations, government officials and the public. Public blames government departments for environmental issues and organizations blame government officials for not taking action on environmental issues.

There is a political interest in which the government and its opponents blame each other for the causes and consequences of environmental concerns and criticize the policies related to environmental issues. The economic consequences frame was identified as the least frequently utilized frame in both *Daily K2* and *Daily Ausaf* newspapers. Here the emphasis was on financial costs and losses associated with environmental risk as well as the adverse environmental impacts emerging from the environmental issues. In the economic consequences frame, some articles put emphasizes on natural disasters, such as floods and their impacts on local communities. It further emphasized balancing environmental sustainability with economic growth as a result of changing environmental issues.

#### **Major frames in the press of Gilgit-Baltistan**

The findings further suggest that the press in GB primarily employs the *responsibility*, *human interest*, and *scientific certainty frame* in the coverage of environmental issues in GB. Among the five frames, the responsibility frame was the most prominent one that emerged from the analysis emphasizing responsibility both at individual and collective levels on environmental issues. This frame further highlighted the causal effects of environmental issues, particularly the economic activities and their impacts on environmental degradation. It also highlighted the possible solutions to environmental challenges.

The *human-interest frame* was also prevalent in the news stories analyzed, highlighting the personal stories and evoking emotional connections with the readers on environmental issues. This frame was aimed at linking environmental issues with everyday lives of peoples. Another frame that was prevalent in the coverage was scientific certainty frame emphasizing the scientific evidence on climate change and environmental issues. The frame put forth the scientific certainty frame- that climate change and environmental issues are scientifically proven realities. In their entirety, the three frames in the press of GB highlighted that both individuals and organizations are responsible for environmental issues and that environmental changes are a scientifically proved reality.

**Table 1: Summary of Frames and frequency in the two local newspapers**

Frame	Newspapers	
	<i>Daily Ausaf</i>	<i>Daily K2</i>
Responsibility	56	70
Economic	18	17
Conflict	16	7
Human interest	56	53
Scientific certainty	34	67

**The most frequently used frames in each newspaper**

Both the selected media outlets *Daily K2* and *Daily Ausaf* utilized distinct frames to cover environmental issues. *Daily Ausaf*, more frequently used the attribution of responsibility and human-interest frame. The attribution of responsibility frame suggests the solution to environmental issues by emphasizing the responsibility to address the environmental issues lies both with the government and the public. For instance, referring to the issues of deforestation in GB, *Daily Ausaf* emphasized the responsibility of both the local government and the community at large to protect the forest in the region. *Daily Ausaf*, also used the human-interest frame in covering the environmental issues in GB in evoking human emotions on environmental issues and bringing the discourse closer to public lives. When reporting on floods and their local impacts, the daily employed human-interest frames by highlighting the sufferings of everyday lives of common people.

In contrast, the coverage of daily *Daily K2* utilized a more scientific certainty frame in covering the environmental issues. It equally used the responsibility frame by holding the public accountable for environmental hazards and calling upon the government to find sustainable solutions to these problems. Further, the *Daily K2* using the scientific certainty frame reiterated that environmental issues pose potential risks to human existence and that addressing the causes of

these issues is important. This frame presents environmental issues as potential risks and emphasizes the scientific reasons behind these problems. When reporting on climate change, the newspaper explained the scientific causes and consequences of this issue and how it affects the environment and human lives.

**Table 2: Frames and their saliences in each newspaper and their occurrences**

Frames and their salience	Newspapers	<i>Daily K2</i>	<i>Daily Ausaf</i>	
Frames and their salience	Responsibility Frame	1	58	50
		2	24	10
		3	60	45
		4	16	17
		5	52	39
	Economic Frame	6	13	12
		7	8	14
		8	10	9
	Conflict Frame	9	8	17
		10	5	17
		11	5	11
		22	2	8
	Human Interest Frame	12	34	37
		14	30	39
		15	58	40
		16	26	27
		17	26	23
	Scientific Certainty Frame	18	47	29
		19	38	22
		20	58	32
		21	16	20

*Daily K2* has also introduced solutions to the problems mentioned in the existing environmental issues and the scientific bearings and rationale for climate change and all the other environmental problems as depicted in Table 2 it has mentioned a question that has described and pointed to the risk of deforestation. The stories

published in *Daily K2* often use frames of responsibility, human interest scientific certainty both in emphasizing why these problems exist, and what their impact would in turn entail.

Table 1 illustrates that all of the three frames are present though scientific certainty and responsibility are more dominant more often than the human interest frame. Most significantly, the economic and conflict frames are among the marginally employed sources of information in the published articles of *Daily K2*. In assessing the reliability of its representation, it was shown that responsibility, human interest and certainty frames are more reliable than conflicting and economic consequence frames. The *Daily Ausaf* highlighted professionalism and human interest frames, the focus on the obligations of the government on the given environmental issues. The seminars, workshops and natural disasters related stories have been shifting the blame on the governmental organizations in discussion. Furthermore, the findings of the content analysis are highlighted here which indicates that the objectivity of *Daily K2* is more frequently addressing the environmental issues. The causes have been mentioned more on the scientific aspect of reasons and then the ramifications based on the research done.

#### **Significant differences between the frames used by the selected newspapers**

The frames used by the *Daily Ausaf* and *Daily K2* in reporting on environmental issues have some similarities but also some significant differences. One major difference is the use of the scientific certainty frame. The *Daily K2* employs the scientific certainty frame much more frequently than the *Daily Ausaf*. The *Daily K2* uses this frame to provide a more in-depth understanding of environmental issues by presenting scientific evidence and explanations for the causes and consequences of these issues. This helps readers to better grasp the severity and urgency of environmental problems.

*Daily K2* has suggested solutions to the existing environmental issues along with the scientific justifications and reasons for climate change and other environmental issues as shown in Table 2 the question regarding solutions and causes of environmental risks such as deforestation has been described and highlighted in the news stories and articles that put a responsibility on government and other concern organizations to take necessary actions against this environmental risk.

The stories published in *Daily K2* frequently employed the responsibility frame, human interest frame, and scientific certainty frame in its articles, emphasizing both the reasons behind environmental issues and their consequences. Table 1 reveals that the three frames are prominently featured, with scientific certainty and responsibility frames being slightly more prevalent than the human interest

frame. Notably, the economic and conflict frames are the least utilized in *Daily K2's* published stories. In terms of the reliability of their representation, the responsibility, human interest, and scientific certainty frames were found to be more consistent than the conflict and economic consequences frames.

The *Daily Ausaf* placed importance on responsibility and human interest frames, emphasis on the responsibilities on government to alleviate the environmental problems. Stories related to the seminars, workshops and natural disasters have been putting responsibility on governmental organizations in discussion. From the analysis of content, it has been revealed that *Daily K2* is covering environmental issues more frequently with objectivity. It has been clearly mentioned the causes with scientific reasons and the consequences according to scientific research. *Daily Ausaf* tends to present environmental issues in a more politicized and less scientific manner. While they also use the attribution of responsibility and human interest frames, they do not provide as much scientific context and evidence as the *Daily K2* does. Overall, the *Daily K2's* reporting on environmental issues is more scientifically focused and informative, while the *Daily Ausaf's* reporting is more politically oriented.

## Conclusion

Media framing of environmental issues is key in shaping the public discourse and raising public awareness. Despite extensive academic literature on climate change and environmental issues, less attention has been paid to examine the press coverage on these issues at local level. To fill this lacuna in the existing scholarship on media and environmental issues, the current study examined the press coverage on environmental issues in the context of GB. Using the framing analysis approach, the study findings suggest that local press in Gilgit-Baltistan, are not sufficiently covering ecological issues in the region. The three major frames employed were the responsibility, human interest, and scientific certainty frames. While employing the responsibility frame, the local press in GB puts the responsibility both on the government and individuals to be made accountable for policies and actions.

In the human interest frames, the press evoked human emotions to link environmental issues with the everyday lives of individuals and the common masses. The scientific certainty frame emphasized that environmental challenges are real and that enough scientific evidence exists to prove that climate change and environmental issues are a reality and that human actions are a major cause of it. These findings are in consonant with the existing literature drawn from the global context (Pandey & Kurian, 2017; Stoddart et al., 2021; Gunay et al., 2021).

The study contributes to the existing literature on media and environmental issues from a local press perspective. However, the study is not without limitations both theoretically and methodologically. Future studies can be conducted on journalistic norms and news organizational culture in influencing the media coverage of environmental issues. Further, in-depth interviews with environmental reporters and online media coverage of environmental problems would be another interesting research area for future researchers.

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