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Analysis of Bylines in Climate Change Reporting in Pakistani Newspapers

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Abstract

Each newspaper story contains a title, followed by the writers' or story developers' credentials. Technically, in print media, mentioning the name and credentials of the writer is called 'byline.' Most of the time, it is considered that the bylines of the newspaper content matter. Literature suggests that credentials present in the bylines determine the credibility of the content. Though, a few studies have researched and examined the bylines of news. The current study examined the types of bylines pertaining to climate change reporting in Pakistani newspapers. A longitudinal quantitative content analysis was conducted on three highly circulated newspapers, that is, Daily Dawn, Daily Jang, and Daily Kawish. The analysis employed a systematic random sampling technique to examine the five significant climate change events organized by the UNFCCC from the time period 1992-2016. The findings showed that most of the stories related to climate change were received through news agencies. However, it was observed at the time of data collection that Daily Dawn received an enormous amount of stories through International News Agency, such as AFP. The 'byline' comparison of climate change stories among Daily Dawn, Daily Jang, and Daily Kawish revealed a significant difference. It showed no distinguish weight between the 'byline' of climate change stories and events' reporting. Therefore, it was suggested that the future studies should explore other hard and soft news subjects to determine the byline variations.

Keywords: bylines, climate change, newspapers, Pakistani press

Introduction

In the newspapers' stories, the title is followed by the content and then comes the credentials of the story developer or writer. According to media's standard definition, the name and credentials of the writer are called

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'bylines.' The byline also contains a pictorial sign that establishes the association of the creators with the article or news story (Jackson & Holton, [2019](#)). A common question that often arises is whether the bylines of the newspaper content matter or not. However, practically, these bylines are included in the stories to specify the journalistic authority and credibility, to determine the expertise, and express confidence in writing and reporting. According to journalistic norms, the byline is placed under the title of an article, and before the text. It registers the role of authors in journalism.

Furthermore, Reich and Boudana ([2014](#)) considered this attribution to journalists in the form of bylines as significant progress in the field of journalism. Though, the literature on bylines suggests that most of the studies focused on the history of bylines (Barnhurst & Nerone, [2002](#); Burkhart & Sigelman, [1990](#); Schudson, [1981](#)), gender (Hannis & Strong, [2007](#); Strong & Hannis, [2008](#)) and their impact on journalism (Culbertson & Somerick, [1976](#); Reich, [2010](#); Reich & Boudana, [2014](#)). However, studies pertaining to the types of bylines are scarce. . Nevertheless, according to studies, climate change is one of the least reported subjects in the media. The newsrooms around the globe consider it as a soft tissue (Anderson, [2009](#); Boykoff, [2014](#); Hart & Feldman, [2014](#); Ungar, [2014](#)). That is why, it is significant to explore who is developing climate change stories.

Objectives

The current study examined the types of bylines of climate change content in the Pakistani newspapers. The objectives of the current study specify the above mentioned context as follows:

- i. Determine the types of bylines given in the climate change reporting in the Pakistani press.
- ii. Compare the types of bylines given in the climate change reporting in Daily Dawn, Daily Jang, and Daily Kawish.
- iii. Compare the types of bylines given in the stories published during five climate change-related significant events organized by the UNFCCC, that is, Earth Summit Rio de Janeiro (1992), Kyoto Protocol (1997), Global Ratification of Kyoto Protocol (2005), COP15 (2009), Copenhagen and COP21 (2015), Paris, France in the Pakistani press.

Research Questions

The objectives mentioned above are followed by three research questions stated below.

- i. What types of bylines are given in the climate reporting in the Pakistani press?
- ii. Is there any difference or similarity in the types of bylines given in the climate change reporting among Daily Dawn, Daily Jang, and Daily Kawish?
- iii. Is there is any difference or similarity in the types of bylines published during five climate change-related significant events organized by the UNFCCC, i.e., Earth Summit Rio de Janeiro (1992), Kyoto Protocol (1997), Global Ratification of Kyoto Protocol (2005), COP15 (2009), Copenhagen and COP21 (2015), Paris, France in the Pakistani press?

Literature Review

According to Schudson (1981), over the time , bylines have characterized the position and worth of the media persons and their jobs (Jackson & Holton, 2019). Reich and Boudana (2014) regard the practice of credit attribution to the journalists through bylines as a significant progress in the field of journalism (Frankel, 2000). The widespread use of bylines started during the United States Civil War in the nineteenth century. The purpose behind the byline idea was to control the prevalent issue of misinformation and rumors. Most of the reporters did not reveal their identity, though the press sought to establish credibility. The absence of bylines in media content could instill confidence among readers in media organizations.

In the twentieth century, partiality and anonymity in media reporting paved the path to professionalism in the field (Schudson, 1981). It also revealed that the process of lining prolonged through the 20th century at a far slower pace than shown in previous research. At that time, the media persons asserted that their bylines increased the credibility of their writings. The acceptance from both the journalists as well as media organizations increased the importance of bylines in the media content (Reich, 2010). The bylines condition news, twist it to humanistic aspects, open ways for journalists to the stardom (Barnhurst & Nerone, 2002; Sigal, 1973), change the power relations inside the news industry, and move media houses from a position behind the people who gather and write (Reich, 2010; Seymour-

Ure, [1996](#)). Campbell ([2013](#)) argued that bylines elevated journalists to a level where they could negotiate reasonable salaries. It also increased the importance of journalists in the eyes of the public.

Furthermore, Schudson ([1981](#)) elaborated that the bylines' concept evolved during the twentieth century. Nevertheless, Reich ([2010](#)) conducted a study based on 12,000 sampled news stories of New York Times (NYT) (main cases study) and The Times (additional case study). The study concluded that the propagation of bylines took place considerably later and slower than thought before, principally during the second half of the 20th century. During the earlier period, they were considered as 'signed articles.' However, media organizations were giving less importance to the inclusion of bylines in the media content. Apart from that, bylines have become immensely popular these days. The readers eagerly wait to read the stories by their favourite journalists. In online journalism, the journalists are rated according to their readership figures on the news websites.

Moreover, the studies have examined newsrooms' historical development (Barnhurst & Nerone, [2002](#); Culbertson & Somerick, [1976](#); Nerone & Barnhurst, [2003](#); Schudson, [1981](#)), the evolution of the use of bylines (Reich, [2010](#)), reliance on news websites (Maier, [2010](#)), and the gender of bylines (Hannis & Strong, [2007](#); Mitchelstein et al., [2020](#); Strong & Hannis, [2008](#)). Studies suggest that stronger measures should be taken to make readers aware of bylines (Ketterer et al., [2020](#)). Nonetheless, studies pertaining to readers' perceptions should also be conducted. (Somaini, [2018](#)). Some scholars are working on the credibility and emergence of social media and online journalism as well (Goyanes et al., [2018](#)). Additionally, robotic journalism or digital journalists' bylines are in limelight (Klaß & Wellbrock, [2019](#); Montal & Reich, [2017](#), [2018](#)).

A recent study, conducted on the framing of Prime Minister of New Zealand Jacinda Ardern, revealed that most of the byline news stories were from news agencies (Khuhro et al., [2021](#)). Thus, this study analyzed the diversity of bylines. Generally, the researches conducted on bylines in Pakistani media were not found in the literature. Specifically, climate change that is considered an issue of global concern is underreported in the media worldwide (Anderson, [2009](#); Boykoff, [2014](#); Hart & Feldman, [2014](#); Ungar, [2014](#)). Moreover, no existing study has examined the type of bylines used in media content of climate change. Therefore, the current

study examined the types of bylines of climate change content in Pakistani newspapers.

Materials and Method

The current study employed a longitudinal quantitative content analysis approach for data collection from three highly circulated newspapers of Pakistani press. Each of these newspapers were published in a different language, that is, Daily Dawn (English), Daily Jang (Urdu), and Daily Kawish (Sindhi). The researchers telephoned the section heads of these newspapers and confirmed the circulation figures. The newspapers were selected according to their circulation and representation in the mainstream and local media in Pakistan. The Daily Dawn is one of the oldest English newspapers. Similarly, Daily Jung holds similar credentials in Urdu language newspapers. Lastly, the Daily Kawish was selected to represent Sindhi media which is the third largest media platform in the country. At least, fifty newspapers are published regularly and more than 5 satellite television news channels are running as well. In the context of the current study, the circulation of Daily Dawn is 80,000 (plus), Daily Jung 0.8 million copies, and Daily Kawish 100,000 plus, respectively.

The systematic random sampling technique was used to choose each substitute day of newspapers publications. A modus operandi was adopted to select the newspapers one month before and one month later after the climate change events, such as Earth Summit Rio de Janeiro (1992), Kyoto Protocol (1997), Global Ratification of Kyoto Protocol (2005), COP15 (2009), Copenhagen and COP21 (2015), Paris, France. However, the coding sheet was designed and two coders manually collected the data. Before the data collection, researchers with the help of Cohen Kappa trained coders in the area, frequency, inter-coder reliability, and other descriptive analysis. The inter-reliability, regarding the measurement variables towards bylines, existed in the coding sheet with both coders achieving score between 80 to 100.

Analysis and Results

In this longitudinal quantitative analysis, 324 bylined climate change stories' content analysis was conducted. These stories were published in three highly circulated daily newspapers, that is,, Dawn (English), Jang (Urdu), and Kawish (Sindhi) during the five significant climate change events, such as Earth Summit Rio de Janeiro (1992), Kyoto Protocol (1997),

Global Ratification of Kyoto Protocol (2005), COP15 (2009), Copenhagen and COP21 (2015), Paris, France. The content analysis encompassed various types including news stories, editorials, columns, articles, features, letters to the editors, and interviews published during the study period.

In the context of first research objective ‘To determine the types of bylines given in the climate reporting in the Pakistani press following findings were revealed:

The findings are presented in Table.1, findings of the RO(i) and RQ(i) given.

Table 1

Frequency of Bylines’ Climate Coverage in Pakistani Newspapers

Bylines	Frequency	Percent
Correspondent	63	19.4
Reporter	75	23.1
News Desk/Monitoring Desk	30	9.3
Editor	17	5.2
News Agency	87	26.9
Press Release	1	.3
Internet or Social Networking Sites	2	.6
Citizen/Letter to the Editor	18	5.6
Author/Writer/Columnist	31	9.6
Total	324	100.0

Table 1 provides an overview of the sources of 324 analyzed climate change stories. From the total 324 stories. 87 (19.4 %) stories were taken from news agencies, 75 (23.1 %) stories through reporters, 63 (19.4 %) through special environment correspondents, and 31 (9.6 %) from assigned authors, writers or columnists. Additionally 30 (9.3 %) stories were generated from news desk or monitoring desk, 18 (5.6 %) stories were received through citizens, that is, letter to the editors, 17 (5.2 %) through editors, that is, editorials written by editorial board of the newspapers, 02 (.6 %) from the Internet or social networking sites, and only one (.3 %) story was received through press release. The findings revealed that most of the stories related to climate change were received through news agencies.

During the data collection, it was observed that dailies had received an enormous amount of stories through International News Agency AFP.

Likewise, research question two addresses the difference or similarity pertaining to the types of bylines given in the climate change reporting among Daily Dawn, Daily Jang, and Daily Kawish. Table 2 shows difference in percentages in types of bylines regarding climate change reporting.

Table 2

Comparison in Percentages – Different Types of Bylines in Climate Coverage in Pakistani Newspapers

Byline	Name of Newspaper			Total	χ^2	<i>p</i>
	Dawn	Jang	Kawish			
Correspondent	39 (21.5 %)	16 (23.5 %)	8 (10.7 %)	63 (19.4 %)		
Reporter	24 (13.3 %)	24 (35.3 %)	27 (36.0 %)	75 (23.1 %)		
News Desk/Monitoring Desk	10 (5.5 %)	6 (8.8 %)	14 (18.7 %)	30 (9.3 %)		
Editor	9 (5.0 %)	1 (1.5 %)	7 (9.3 %)	17 (5.2 %)		
News Agency	67 (37.0 %)	13 (19.1 %)	7 (9.3 %)	87 (26.9 %)	60.15	.000
Press Release	1 (0.6 %)	0 (0.0 %)	0 (0.0 %)	1 (0.3 %)		
Internet or Social Networking Sites	1 (0.6 %)	1 (1.5 %)	0 (0.0 %)	2 (0.6 %)		
Citizen	14 (7.7 %)	0 (0.0 %)	4 (5.3 %)	18 (5.6 %)		
Author/Writer/Columnist	16 (8.8 %)	7 (10.3 %)	8 (10.7 %)	31 (9.6 %)		
Total	181 (100 %)	68 (100 %)	75 (100 %)	324 (100 %)		

In response to research objective two, Table 2 presents the comparison of bylines in the Daily Dawn, Daily Jang, and Daily Kawish. However, a comparison of the results among newspapers shows that out of 181 climate change related stories, Daily Dawn received 67 (37 %) stories through news agencies, 39 (21.5%) stories through special correspondents, and 24 (13.3 %) stories through reporters,. It received 16 (8.8 %) stories through assigned authors/writers/columnists, 14 (7.7 %) stories through citizens, 10 (5.5 %) through news or monitoring desk, 09 (5 %) through editors and one each (0.6 %) through press release or social networking sites. However, the findings showed that Daily Dawn received majority of climate change

stories through news agencies, that is, 37 % including correspondents 21.5 % and reporters 13.3 %.

Furthermore, the climate news' segregation and comparison, based on Table 2, illustrated that out of the total 68 climate change stories, Daily Jang received 24 (35.3 %) stories through reporters, 16 (23.5 %) through special correspondents, and 13 (19.1 %) stories through news agencies. Moreover, it received 07 (10.3 %) stories through assigned author/writer/columnist, 06 (8.8 %) stories through news desk or monitoring desk, 01 (1.5 %) story through editor and Internet or social networking sites. No story was received through press release and citizens. However, findings revealed that Daily Jang received most stories through reporters (35.3 %), special correspondents (23.5%), and news agencies (19.1%) and author/writer/columnist (10.3%).

Similarly, out of 75 climate change stories found in Daily Kawish, 27 (36 %) stories were received through reporters, 14 (18.7 %) stories through news or monitoring desk, and 8 (10.7 %) stories were received through special correspondent and assigned authors/writers/columnists. Daily Kawish received 07 (9.3 %) climate change stories through both, editors and news agencies and 04 (5.3 %) stories through citizens (letter to the editor). However, no stories were received through press release and the Internet or social networking sites by the newspapers. The results showed that Daily Kawish received majority of climate change stories through reporters (36%), news or monitoring desk (18.7%), and correspondents and authors/writers/columnists.

The above analysis revealed that newspapers usually source their stories through news agencies, correspondents, reporters, and authors/writers/columnists. However, the frequency of the bylines of climate change stories in Daily Dawn showed that all stories had different percentages.

To compare the overall bylines of climate change stories among Daily Dawn, Daily Jang, and Daily Kawish, a Chi-Square test was conducted. The findings in Table 2 indicate a significant difference among Daily Dawn, Daily Jang, and Daily ($\chi^2 = 60.151, p = 0.00$), or $\chi^2(16) = 60.151, p \leq .005$. However, the findings also showed a significant difference between the bylines of climate change stories among Daily Dawn, Daily Jang, and Daily Kawish.

In response to the research objective regarding the comparison of bylines given in the stories published during five significant climate change-related, events organized by the UNFCC, i.e., Earth Summit Rio de Janeiro (1992), Kyoto Protocol (1997), Global Ratification of Kyoto Protocol (2005), COP15 (2009), Copenhagen and COP21 (2015), Paris, France in the Pakistani press following findings were revealed.”

Table 3

Event-Based Comparison of Byline of Climate Change Stories in Pakistani Newspapers.

Byline	Events					Total	χ^2	p
	Earth Summit Rio de Janeiro	Kyoto Protocol	Kyoto Protocol Ratification	COP15 Copenhagen	COP21 Paris			
Correspondent	12 (15.2 %)	5 (19.2 %)	13 (20 %)	6 (14 %)	27 (24.3 %)	63 (19.4 %)	48.496	.031
Reporter	11 (13.9 %)	4 (15.4 %)	19 (29.2 %)	8 (18.6 %)	33 (29.7 %)	75 (23.1 %)		
News/Monitoring Desk	6 (7.6 %)	3 (11.5 %)	7 (10.8 %)	8 (18.6 %)	6 (5.4 %)	30 (9.3 %)		
Editor	5 (6.3 %)	3 (11.5 %)	2 (3.1 %)	3 (7.0 %)	4 (3.6 %)	17 (5.2 %)		
News Agency	24 (30.4 %)	8 (30.8 %)	15 (23.1 %)	13 (30.2 %)	27 (24.3 %)	87 (26.9 %)		
Press Release	1 (1.3 %)	0 (0.0 %)	0 (0.0 %)	0 (0.0 %)	0 (0.0 %)	1 (0.3 %)		
Internet or Social/Networking Sites	0 (0.0 %)	0 (0.0 %)	0 (0.0 %)	0 (0.0 %)	2 (1.8 %)	2 (0.6 %)		
Citizen	3 (3.8 %)	0 (0.0 %)	6 (9.2 %)	2 (4.7 %)	7 (6.3 %)	18 (5.6 %)		
Author/Writer/Columnist	17 (21.5 %)	3 (11.5 %)	3 (4.6 %)	3 (7.0 %)	5 (4.5 %)	31 (9.6 %)		
Total	79 (100 %)	26 (100 %)	65 (100 %)	43 (100 %)	111 (100 %)	324 (100 %)		

Table 3 compares bylines in climate change reporting during significant events. The findings revealed that out of total 79 stories published during Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the majority of climate change stories were found with bylines, that is, news agencies 24 (30.4 %), author/writer/columnist 17 (21.5 %), correspondent 12 (15.2 %), and reporter at 11 (13.9 %). Bylines, such as news/monitoring desk, editor, press release, citizens, and Internet received less than 10% or no story during the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro 1992.

Furthermore, the findings showed that out of total 26 climate change stories published during Kyoto Protocol in 1997-8, the majority of stories were received through news agencies 8 (30.8 %), correspondent 5 (19.2 %),

reporters 4 (15.4 %), and news/monitoring desk, editor and author/writer/columnist 3 (11.5 %). However, no stories were received through bylines, such as the Internet or social networking sites, press release, and citizens during Kyoto Protocol Ratification 2005.

In addition to that, findings revealed that out of 43 climate change stories published during COP15 2009-10 in the three newspapers, 13 (30.2 %) were received through news agencies, and 8 (18.6 %) stories were received through reporters and news/monitoring desk each. However, the number with less than ten bylines was editor, citizen, and author/writer/column. Though, the number of bylines with press release and Internet or social networking was 0% during the COP15 Copenhagen 2009-10.

Lastly, the results showed that out of 111 climate change stories published during COP21 2015-16 in three newspapers, 33 (29.7 %) stories were received through reporters and 27 (24.3 %) were received through correspondent and news agencies each. However, stories with bylines, such as news/monitoring desk, editors, citizens, Internet or social networking, and author/writer/columnists were less than 10%. Though, 0% stories were found in press release byline during COP21 Paris 2015-16.

As compared to the findings given in Table 3, there was a significant difference between the bylines of the story and events ($\chi^2 = 48.496$, $p = 0.31$) or $\chi^2(32) = 48.496$, $p \leq .05$. Thus, the findings confirmed a significant difference between the bylines of climate change stories and events.

Discussion and Conclusion

The current study examined the types of bylines of climate change content in the Pakistani press. In this context, the results about RO(i) and RQ(i) showed that bylines in the analysis were included, such as news agencies, reporters, special environment correspondents, assigned authors, writers or columnists, news desk or monitoring desk, citizens, editors, Internet or social networking sites and press release. The frequency analysis revealed that 26.9% of climate stories were received from news agencies, 23.1% from reporters, and 19.4% were received from special environment correspondents as bylines. The findings revealed that most of the stories related to climate change were received through news agencies. During data collection, it was observed that Daily Dawn received an enormous amount of stories through International News Agency AFP. The findings agreed

with the results of Davies (2011) that the United Kingdom (UK) press heavily relies on a copy of the news agencies. Johnston and Forde (2009, 2011) and Scholten and Ruigrok (2009) also found similar evidence in Australian press and Netherlands. Apart from that, in the context of RO(ii) and RQ(ii), the findings of the comparison of bylines of climate change stories among Daily Dawn, Daily Jang, and Daily Kawish Chi-Square test results illustrated ($\chi^2=60.151, p=0.00$) or $\chi^2(16)=60.151 p\leq .05$. However, the findings showed a significant difference between the bylines of climate change stories among Daily Dawn, Daily Jang, and Daily Kawish.

According to the findings of comparison of bylines in climate change stories and events, Chi-Square test result discovered that ($\chi^2 =48.496, p=0.31$) or $\chi^2(32) =48.496 p\leq .05$. However, the findings showed that there was no significant difference between the bylines of climate change stories and events.

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