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## Exploring Media Framing Typologies of Human Trafficking in Contemporary Print Media

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**Abstract.** The role of media particularly print media in representing and portraying issues has become unquestionable in the globalized world. This review article explores the utilization of media framing typologies in contemporary print media. It also provides insights and deeper understanding on how modern newspapers frame issues, influence and shape public opinion, and use media framing types in today's world. In addition to this, the review article discusses how media framing influences public perception by highlighting specific elements of a story regarding human trafficking. It particularly focuses on media framing typologies in contemporary print media Like the Astana Times, The Guardian, The Ethiopian Herald and Arab News. It finds out that prognostic frames were employed by the media to a larger extent to show that inclusive efforts and collaborations are necessary to combat human trafficking. Moreover, diagnostic frames were used to some extent to define the problems of human trafficking and to show the causes of occurrences. The newspapers employed motivational frames to construct the victims of human trafficking. Besides, attribution of responsibility frames was utilized highly comparing to a conflict, economic consequence and human-interest frames.

**Keywords:** Human Trafficking, Media Frames, Print Media, The Astana Times, The Ethiopian Herald, The Guardian, Arab News.

### Introduction

Many scholars and researchers indicate that the concept of framing is now more or less established and has been widely studied in the field of mass communication. It is known that media report issues in certain ways and framing of these issues could be the result of deliberate decision by media outlets. The way the media frames issues like human trafficking influences and shapes the public perception and understanding of the problem. Media can play pivotal

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roles in creating and raising awareness and mobilizing the support of the people to fight human trafficking. In this regard, the contemporary print media's portrayal of human trafficking is essential in shaping the awareness of the people and understanding the problem. By employing different framing types and techniques, the media can emphasize on certain aspects of human trafficking.

## **Methods and Materials of Research**

Although literatures on the concept of framing and media framing are available, they still lack with what framing theory does require. Thus, many scholars try to explore and use it based on their own understanding. One of the most common and used definition of framing is explored by (Entman, R. M. (1993). *Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm* [1]. He defined framing as "to select some aspects of reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or recommendation to solve a problem". Moreover, (Scheufele, D. A. (2000). *Agenda-Setting, Priming, and Framing Revisited: Another Look at Cognitive Effects of Political Communication*. In *Mass Communication and Society* [2] noted that framing involves choosing specific thematically related attributes to highlight in the media when discussing a particular issue. This emphasis on certain aspects makes them more prominent in the public's mind, thereby shaping public opinion on the issues.

## **Media Frame Types Employed in Today's Media**

1. Media and communication scholars agree that the wide array of storytelling choices employed by news media can be analyzed by identifying particular distinguishing characteristics. In addition, media and communication researchers categorize frames based on their intended purposes and subjects of study. For example, De Vreese (1999), as cited in (Lecheler, S., & de Vreese, C. H. (2018). *News Framing Effects*. Routledge), distinguishes frames into two main types. These are issue-specific frames, which are tailored to particular topics or news events, and generic frames, which are applicable across a broad spectrum of news topics. Furthermore [3]. *News Framing Effects*. Routledge) identifies two primary news frames when addressing issues: the episodic news frame, which centers on specific individuals or events, and the thematic news frame, which contextualizes issues and events within broader societal or governmental contexts.

Studies exploring media framing have applied the aforementioned types of frames. (Iyengar, S., & Kinder, D. R. (1987). *News that matters*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press) pointed out that prevalent generic frames include human interest, powerlessness, economic, moral values, and conflict frames. Meanwhile, (Neuman, W. R., Just, M. R., & Crigler, A. N. (1992). *Common knowledge: News and the construction of political meaning*. University of Chicago Press) in the "Be prepared for bad news: Framing Terrorism in Norwegian News Media," in their study employed framing theory to analyze articles. This study used generic frames such as responsibility, conflict, human interest, economic, and morality frames to scrutinize

articles gathered from Norwegian newspapers. The findings indicated that human interest and responsibility frames were the most frequently employed. On the other hand, morality frames were utilized the least.

On their research called "Media Framing of Refugees: Juxtaposing Ukrainian and African Refugees in the wake of Russia-Ukraine Conflict" used generic frames to analyze on how nine international television houses framed Ukraine and African refugees [4]. "Be prepared for bad news": Framing Terrorism in Norwegian News Media (Master's thesis). Thus, the result of the study shows that human interest and security frames were the dominant frames that had emerged in the media. On the other hand, news studies have been conducted to examine issue-specific frames. (Iberi, D., & Saddam, R. S. (2022). Media Framing of Refugees. In Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies [4]. Óbudai Egyetem) employed six issue-specific frames to analyze how the sharing economy is conceptualized in the U.S. news media discourse. The findings of the study reveal that the sharing economy is in its early stages and the ecosystem is not yet in healthy shape. In addition to this, earlier studies had also employed issue specific frames in their studies. (Leung, X. Y., Xue, L., & Wen, H. (2019). Framing the sharing economy: Toward a sustainable ecosystem. *Tourism Management*, 71) on their study "The militarism of local television: The routines framing of the Persian Gulf War" employed issue specific frames.

It can be deduced from the above points that media and communication scholars have primarily identified two types of frames: generic and issue-specific frames. These frames have been widely employed by researchers and are considered valuable analytical tools. However, each type has its drawbacks. Issue-specific frames can be challenging to compare and generalize across different contexts. While generic frames are useful for identifying recurring patterns in media coverage, they may not always provide comprehensive answers to all research questions.

Identified several types of media frames: conflict, human interest, economic consequences, morality, and attribution of social responsibility. In their researches, they found out that the attribution of responsibility frames was the most commonly used, followed by the conflict, economic consequence, human interest, and morality frames respectively. Current researchers have utilized these frames to analyze how media cover various issues (Reese, S. D., & Buckalew, B. (1995). The militarism of local television: The routine framing of the Persian Gulf war. In *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* [5].

Explained the conflict frame in journalism as focusing on portraying stories through the lens of differing interpretations, in line with the media's tendency to view politics as a series of contests with winners and losers (Iyengar, S., & Kinder, D. R. (1987). *News that matters*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press). Their research showed frequent use of this frame by U.S. news media. Building on this, Reese, S. D., & Buckalew, B. (1995). The militarism of local television: The routine framing of the Persian Gulf war. In *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* [6]. Informa UK Limited). (Reese, S. D., & Buckalew, B. (1995). The militarism of local television: The routine framing of the Persian Gulf war. In *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* [7]. Informa UK Limited) expanded the concept, emphasizing its portrayal of tensions among individuals, groups, institutions, or nations. They found that conflict frame to be the second most prevalent framing device, particularly prominent in reputable newspapers. (Semetko, H. A., & Valkenburg, P. M. V. (2000). Framing European politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News. In

Journal of Communication [8]. Oxford University Press (OUP)) noted that conflicts can arise from discord, diverging opinions, incongruent perspectives, and public confrontations among stakeholders, as depicted in the media. Studies show that conflict frames are widely employed across media systems, countries, and news formats. For instance, (Putnam, L. L., & Shoemaker, M. (2007). Changes in conflict framing in the news coverage of an environmental conflict. *J. Disp. Resol.*) found that the conflict frame to dominate coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict, focusing on disagreements among police officers, government officials, and community members regarding the causes and extent of the regional problem.

### **Media Framing Types in Contemporary Print Media Coverage of Human Trafficking**

Contemporary print media's coverage of human trafficking uses various framing types that significantly influences and shapes the perception of the public. The types of frames that are being employed by the media influences narratives in different ways. [9] emphasized that inaccurate framing of human trafficking in popular media can lead policymakers and legislators to adopt less effective anti-trafficking measures, often focusing predominantly on criminal justice system solutions. (Austin, R., & Farrell, A. (2017). *Human Trafficking and the Media in the United States*. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice*. Oxford University Press) noted that under the umbrella of theoretical framing are three core categories: diagnostic, motivational, and prognostic frames. Various researchers on media framing of human trafficking found that these types of frames are employed by media. Diagnostic frames define and identify the problems. Moreover, prognostic frames propose solutions to the problem based on the diagnostic frame. Motivational frames encourage collective actions to the problem by instilling a sense of urgency or moral outrage (Austin, R., & Farrell, A. (2017). *Human Trafficking and the Media in the United States*. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice*. Oxford University Press).

From the above points, it can be inferred that various media mainly use the above-mentioned frames when covering human trafficking. Diagnostic frames are used to indicate the causes of human trafficking and explain how certain entities identify and describe the reasons behind its occurrence. Furthermore, prognostic frames suggest and propose solutions to combat human trafficking. motivational frames are also employed by media to create an idealized victim, aiming to evoke emotional and cognitive response from audience to motivate them.

This review article used certain editions to analyze the media frame types that were employed by contemporary print media such as *The Astana Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Ethiopian Herald* and *Arab News* when they portrayed human trafficking issues. The above-mentioned types of frames would help to analyze how human trafficking was portrayed and how it was addressed by the media critically. Thus, the above frame types and other frames had been employed in the human trafficking stories.

In its edition on March 5, 2024, titled "Death, abuse and torture: traffickers hold fleeing Rohingya to ransom for up to £3,000 a time," employed mainly motivational frames. In this story, the Rohingya human trafficking victims were framed as ideal victims (Snow, D. A., & Benford, R. D. (2005). *Clarifying the relationship between framing and ideology. Frames of protest: Social movements and the framing perspective*, 205, 209). The newspaper tried to evoke the emotions of the audience by constructing victims who are suffered from the problem. This is similar with

(The Guardian. (2024, March 5). Death, abuse, and torture: Traffickers hold fleeing Rohingya to ransom for up to \$3,000 a time. Retrieved from) findings that the media can create a victim in order to promote sympathy and the public could take a collective action.

In addition to the above frame, it also used (Reese, S. D., & Buckalew, B. (1995). The militarism of local television: The routine framing of the Persian Gulf war. In *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* [10]. Informa UK Limited) conflict frames to show the disagreements and tensions among traffickers, victims, and law enforcement. Moreover, it also employed economic frame to show the impact of human trafficking on victims. Furthermore, it employed human interest frame to grab the emotions of readers by establishing victims who were suffered from the problem.

The Astana Times, which is a popular media in The Republic of Kazakhstan covered human trafficking issues in different times. For instance, an article published in the opinion column of the newspaper on July 30, 2023, titled "Combating Human Trafficking: Global Responsibility," employed prognostic frames (Christie, N. (1986). The ideal victim. In E. Fattah (Ed.), *From crime policy to victim policy: Reorienting the justice system*. Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan). The article mainly focused on solutions to the problems of human trafficking. It dictated that The Republic of Kazakhstan is committed to combat human trafficking and strengthening human rights. It also stressed a consistent law enforcement is significant. This is similar with (The Astana Times. (2023, July). Combating human trafficking: A global responsibility) findings stating that law enforcement and crime control solutions are the leading solution on combating human trafficking. Besides this, the article used attribution of responsibility frame to show that global effort is needed to combat human trafficking and respect human rights.

The Ethiopian Herald, which is an English language and a government owned newspaper in Ethiopia portrayed human trafficking stories in different columns. This newspaper employed diagnostic and prognostic frames in its May 7, 2024 featured edition titled "MoWSA raising awareness against human trafficking" (Gulati, G. J. (2011). News frames and story triggers in the media's coverage of human trafficking. *Human Rights Review*, 12, 363-379)[11]. This article utilized diagnostic frames to identify human trafficking as a social problem. Moreover, the article tried to articulate social movements by raising and creating awareness regarding the human trafficking problems. This article stated some families, religious leaders and others are engaged in human trafficking due to lack of awareness. Prognostic frames are mainly used in this article by proposing solutions to the human trafficking problems. The article underscored that raising awareness campaigns are essential to curb and combat human trafficking. It mainly focused on the importance of campaigns for victims of human trafficking as a social movement to curb the problem. Furthermore, it also used Semetko and Valkenburg's attribution of responsibility frame to indicate that inclusive awareness raising and campaigns are necessary to combat human trafficking.

Arab News, which is a prominent and widely circulated newspaper in the Middle East and based in Saudi Arabia, covered a story on human trafficking on July 31, 2023, which is titled "Combating Human Trafficking: A Collective Responsibility" (The Ethiopian Herald. (n.d.)). This article employed a prognostic frame by defining the problem and suggesting solutions on human trafficking. It stressed that an international response is required for an international problem. Similar to studies conducted on human trafficking, this article also indicated that the legal initiatives that are being taken by the Kingdom to combat human trafficking. And, it gave more emphasis to a greater international cooperation to curb the problem. Meanwhile, the article

also utilized a responsibility frame to emphasize that addressing human trafficking requires collective actions. Responsibility frame was used to express that governments, civil society and individuals need for collaborative efforts and collective actions to mitigate and combat human trafficking in order to safeguard the lives of people. Noted that media use responsibility frame commonly to present an issue for its cause or resolution to either the government, a group or an individual Reese, S. D., & Buckalew, B. (1995) (The militarism of local television: The routine framing of the Persian Gulf war. In *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* [12].

It can be concluded from the above analysis that contemporary print media outlets like The Astana Times, The Guardian, The Ethiopian Herald, and Arab News used different types of frames when covering human trafficking. Diagnostic frames were used by the media to define the problem and to indicate the causes for human trafficking. In addition, prognostic frames were utilized to propose solutions for human trafficking mainly the need for law enforcements, crime control solutions, government and other stakeholders' interventions. Besides this, motivational frames were employed by the media to characterize ideal victims of human trafficking. From the aforementioned articles of contemporary print media, it can be understood that prognostic frames were used to a higher extent. In addition to the above three main frames, the media also utilized attribution of responsibility frames to a highly extent. Besides this, conflict, economic and human-interest frames were used to some extent.

## **Conclusion**

The review article investigates framing theory with much concern on the different types of media frames that are being employed in the contemporary print media. It highlights that media framing of an issue is important in order to make social problems like human trafficking more salient. Media framing of human trafficking can shape the opinion and perceptions of the public on combating the problem. Media framing typologies explains that the focus on specific aspects of issues like human trafficking by showing their salience and importance. The article dictates that different media frame types are being employed in print media. Particularly, this review article emphasized prognostic, diagnostic and motivational media frames were used by the contemporary print media like The Astana Times, The Guardian, The Ethiopian Herald and Arab News. From the above-mentioned frames, prognostic frames were used to a larger extent to propose a solution to human trafficking problems. Furthermore, the article finds out that attribution of responsibility, conflict, economic consequences, human interest frames were also employed by the media. Out of these frames, attribution of responsibility frames was highly used by the media to indicate that government interventions and stakeholders' collaboration and efforts are necessary to combat and mitigate human trafficking. Lastly, the article concludes that media framing types are vital conceptual frameworks in framing social issues like human trafficking and in framing research in general.

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### **Қазіргі баспасөздегі адам саудасы фреймингінің типологиясын зерттеу**

**Андатпа.** Жаһандану заманында БАҚ-тың, әсіресе, баспа БАҚ-тың мәселелерді ұсынып, хабарлаудағы рөлі даусыз бола бастады. Бұл мақала заманауи баспа БАҚ-та медиа фрейминг типологияларын пайдалануды қарастырады. Ол сондай-ақ қазіргі заманғы газеттер мәселелерді қалай ұсынатыны, қоғамдық пікірге қалай әсер ететіні және қалыптастыратыны және заманауи әлемдегі медиа фрейм түрлерін қалай қолданатыны туралы түсінік пен тереңірек түсінуге мүмкіндік береді. Сонымен қатар, мақалада адам саудасы оқиғасының нақты элементтерін көрсету арқылы БАҚ-тың қоғамдық қабылдауға қалай әсер ететіні қарастырылады. The Astana Times, The Guardian, Ethiopian Herald және Arab News сияқты заманауи баспа басылымдарындағы медиа фрейминг типологияларына ерекше назар аударылады. Мақалада БАҚ адам саудасымен күресу үшін жан-жақты күш-жігер мен ынтымақтастық қажет екенін көрсету үшін болжамды кадрларды көбірек қолданатыны көрсетілген. Сонымен қатар, диагностикалық фреймдер адам саудасының проблемаларын анықтау және оның пайда болу себептерін көрсету үшін белгілі бір дәрежеде пайдаланылды. Газеттер адам саудасының құрбанының бейнесін жасау үшін мотивациялық кадрларды пайдаланды. Бұған қоса, жауапкершілікті атрибуциялау шеңберлері қақтығыстарға, экономикалық салдарға және адам мүдделеріне қарағанда көбірек қолданылды. Мақалада әртүрлі медиа фреймдерді пайдалану адам саудасымен күресуге және оның салдарын жеңілдетуге көмектесетіні атап өтілген.

**Түйін сөздер:** адам саудасы, БАҚ материалдары, баспа БАҚ, The Astana Times, The Ethiopian Herald, The Guardian, Arab News.

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### **Исследование типологий фрейминга торговли людьми в современных печатных СМИ**

**Аннотация.** Роль СМИ, особенно печатных, в представлении и освещении проблем стала неоспоримой в глобализированном мире. В данной обзорной статье рассматривается использование типологий медиафрейминга в современных печатных СМИ. Она также дает представление и более глубокое понимание того, как современные газеты представляют проблемы, влияют на общественное мнение и формируют его, а также используют типы медиафрейминга в современном мире. Кроме того, в обзорной статье рассматривается, как



медиафрейминг влияет на общественное восприятие, выделяя конкретные элементы истории о торговле людьми. Особое внимание уделяется типологии медиафрейминга в современных печатных СМИ, таких как AstanaTimes, TheGuardian, EthiopianHerald и ArabNews. Выяснилось, что СМИ в большей степени использовали прогностические фреймы, чтобы показать, что для борьбы с торговлей людьми необходимы всесторонние усилия и сотрудничество. Кроме того, в определенной степени использовались диагностические фреймы, чтобы определить проблемы торговли людьми и показать причины ее возникновения. Газеты использовали мотивационные фреймы для создания образа жертвы торговли людьми. Кроме того, фреймы атрибуции ответственности были использованы в большей степени, чем фреймы конфликта, экономических последствий и человеческих интересов.

**Ключевые слова:** торговля людьми, медиафреймы, печатные СМИ, The Astana Times, The Ethiopian Herald, The Guardian, Arab News.

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