CHARLES UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Social Sciences
Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism

MA THESIS REVIEW

NOTE: Only the grey fields should be filled out!

Review type: Review by opponent

Thesis author: Ebad Ahmed

Thesis title: The Analysis of Media Coverage of Afghan Taliban Takeover of Kabul in Pakistani Urdu Newspaper Jang

Reviewer: Sadia Zamir, ICSJ, Charles University

1. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND THESIS (mark one box for each row)

		Conforms to approved research proposal	Changes are well explained and appropriate	Changes are explained but are inappropriate	Changes are not explained and are inappropriate	Does not conform to approved research proposal
1.1	Research objective(s)	Yes				
1.2	Methodology				Yes	
1.3	Thesis structure	Yes				

COMMENTARY (description of the relationship between the research proposal and the thesis. If there are problems, please be specific):

Overall, the distinction between the research proposal and the thesis is minimal. The difference lies in the research design: the proposal suggests a qualitative study, while the thesis adopts a mixed-method approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative content analysis. This shift in methodology has not been thoroughly utilized.

2. EVALUATION OF THE THESIS CONTENT
Use letters A – B – C – D – E – F (A=best, F= failed)

		Grade
2.1	Quality and appropriateness of the theoretical framework	E
2.2	Ability to critically evaluate and apply the literature	B
2.3	Quality and soundness of the empirical research	D
2.4	Ability to select the appropriate methods and to use them correctly	E
2.5	Quality of the conclusion	B
2.6	Thesis originality and its contribution to academic knowledge production	A

COMMENTARY (description of thesis content and the main problems):

This study is significant as it enhances understanding of regional politics, power of media, and power on media through the analysis of a major Pakistani newspaper's coverage of the Afghan Taliban takeover of Kabul. By examining this coverage, the study identifies biases and editorial slants, providing insights into how such events are portrayed and the factors behind them. It offers a historical perspective on media responses and facilitates comparative analysis with other geopolitical events. The findings are valuable for policymakers, media practitioners, and scholars, informing the development of more balanced and informed media practices.

Overall, the study adheres to an academic format; however, there are two primary issues with the thesis that require attention.

The main issue is that it lacks a theoretical framework. While there is a reference to Media Conformity Theory, the proponents of the theory and the basic tenets of the theory have not been discussed in detail. Similarly, although the interviews are claimed to be analyzed within the framework of the Hierarchy of Influence model, the model itself has not been explained.

Secondly, in the methodology section, the process by which content analysis was conducted is not fully explained, particularly regarding the specific manual or framework used to achieve the results. The study claims that it follows a mixed method approach whereas it predominantly shows only qualitative method.

3. EVALUATION OF THE THESIS FORM
Use letters A – B – C – D – E – F (A=best, F= failed)

		Grade
3.1	Quality of the structure	C
3.2	Quality of the argumentation	B
3.3	Appropriate use of academic terminology	B
3.4	Quality, quantity and appropriateness of the citations (both in the theory part and in the empirical part)	C
3.5	Conformity to quotation standards (*)	C
3.6	Use of an academic writing style, and correct use of language (both grammar and spelling)	B
3.6	Quality of the textual lay-outing and appendices	B

(*) in case the text contains quotations without references, the grade is F; in case the text contains plagiarised parts, do not recommend the thesis for defence and suggest disciplinary action against the author instead.

COMMENTARY (description of thesis form and the main problems):

• While the research adheres to the recommended thesis structure, certain sections, such as the contextual parts, have been given more length than others, like the analysis section.
• The language used is generally appropriate for academic writing, with correct use of grammar, spelling, and academic terminology.
• The writing style is formal and adheres to the conventions expected in scholarly work, contributing to the clarity and professionalism of the research.
• The quality of the argumentation is sound, with arguments presented, but they need to be grounded purely in the analysis rather than influenced by the researcher's background and prior knowledge.
• Although citation standards have been mostly followed, it is important to ensure that all references are properly included in the bibliography.

4. OVERAL EVALUATION (provide a summarizing list of the thesis's strengths and weaknesses):

Strengths:

1. This research seems crucial for understanding the broader media landscape in Pakistan, where press freedom has been under scrutiny, and where state influence over media is often debated.

2. By examining *Jang*'s editorials, the research also offers insights into how media in Pakistan potentially navigates the fine line between journalistic independence and state influence in a highly sensitive geopolitical environment.

3. The study has included a comprehensive literature review that effectively contextualizes the research, establishes a strong foundation, and justifies the need for the study.

4. The section on the historical relationship is well-executed, providing a thorough overview of the context that is valuable for readers who may not be familiar with it.

Weaknesses:

1. In the introduction and methodology section, the study claims to use both quantitative and qualitative content analysis methods. However, the study appears to be primarily qualitative in nature. Besides, no coding manual has been referenced. It is unclear how the researcher arrived at certain themes, as the process has not been adequately explained. The analysis appears to be superficial and lacks depth. Additionally, there are instances of repetition.

2. While content analysis is stated as the primary method of analysis, considerable emphasis has been placed on the interviews and their discussion. To ensure that the text remains concise, it is advisable to minimize the inclusion of lengthy excerpts from the interviews, as these take up significant space. Since the full interview texts are already provided in the appendix, this will help maintain focus and brevity in the main text.

3. The historical background and position of the newspaper are important components of the text and have been detailed thoroughly. However, the summary section merely repeats this information, making it redundant. Therefore, the inclusion of this summary may be unnecessary.

4. Some errors have been found in the in-text citations, and it should be ensured that all references are included in the bibliography. Additionally, the bibliography should consistently follow a single referencing style.

5. QUESTIONS OR TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED DURING THE THESIS DEFENSE:

5.1	Explanation of the Theoretical Framework employed and its relevance to the study
5.2	Elaboration on the content analysis methods used and their suitability for the study
5.3	The impact of the newspaper's coverage on public perception and discourse in Pakistan
5.4	In what ways does this thesis reveal the nature of Pakistan's semi-authoritarian security state, and how does it generalize the influence of the military on Pakistani politics?
5.5	Recommendations for enhancing media coverage of similar geopolitical events in the future

6. ANTIPLAGIARISM CHECK

The reviewer is familiar with the thesis' score in plagiarism analysis in SIS.

If the score is above 5%, please evaluate and indicate problems:

6.1	

7. SUGGESTED GRADE OF THE THESIS AS A WHOLE (choose one or two)

A   Excellent (excellent performance)
B   Excellent (excellent performance)
C   Very Good (above the average standard but with some errors)
D   Very Good (above the average standard but with some errors)
E   Good (generally sound work with a number of notable errors)
F   Fail (unsatisfactory performance)

If the mark is an "F", please provide your reasons for not recommending the thesis for defence:

D

Date: 04.09.2024   Signature: ………………………………..

A finalised review should be printed, signed and submitted in two copies to the secretary of the Department of Media Studies. The electronic version of the review should be converted into a PDF and uploaded to SIS, or sent to the Department of Media Studies secretary who will upload it to SIS on the reviewer's behalf.

Do not upload PDFs with a scanned signature, the review uploaded to SIS must be without signature.