

ANNOTATION

Of the doctoral dissertation submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the educational program “8D03201 Journalism”

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Comparative Analysis of Framing of Human Trafficking in Contemporary Print Media

General description of the work. Human trafficking has become a very pressing problem globally. Ethiopia and Kazakhstan are also one of those countries that are affected by this transnational crime. The issue demands the awareness of the public, policy responses, and organizational responsibility. Thus, mass media intervention is significant in addressing global issues like human trafficking because media portrayal of an issue may influence the understanding of the public, policy makers, and advocacy groups. Newspapers, especially play a prominent role in influencing the understanding of the public by giving salience, choosing the trafficking cases to be portrayed, and the solutions to be focused. It is also well known that newspapers play a critical role in molding the perception of the public and shaping the policy responses by covering and framing human trafficking. Hence, the way the newspapers frame human trafficking can affect how policy makers, elites, advocacy groups, and other key stakeholders understand the issue.

Relevance of the research topic. This study is relevant due to the fact that human trafficking has become a worldwide problem and attracts the attention of media, as it is a multifaceted social, economic, political issue. In this case, media can play prominent roles in shaping the perceptions of the public and influencing the discourse by covering and framing the issue. Prior media coverage and framing research focused on global and western media. Yet, there is a lack of comparative research assessing how media in different continents and countries portray human trafficking and related issues, especially in Ethiopia and Kazakhstan. As a result, this research contributes to the media, communication and journalism studies as well as the anti-trafficking discourses by filling the gap on providing a systematic comparative analysis of media framing in contemporary newspapers in different contexts.

Purpose of the dissertation. This study examined how The Astana Times, Kazakhstan based media, and The Ethiopian Herald (Ethiopian Herald), a government owned media in Ethiopia, framed human trafficking stories within a within the scope of 60 months (September 2020-September 2025).

The study was conducted to achieve the following specific objectives:

- To examine the story types and types of trafficking prominently covered
- To identify and analyze the themes and sources employed in the newspapers' coverage of human trafficking
- To identify and categorize the types of frames used while covering human trafficking
- To analyze the media functions of the newspapers while covering trafficking

Theoretical and methodological basis of the study. The study is grounded by framing and media framing theory to examine the newspapers' human trafficking coverage. Concurrently, the study included various conceptual frameworks from the literatures of human trafficking such as the perspectives of human trafficking in global arena, the extent of human trafficking, and the policies, initiatives and legislative frameworks to combat human trafficking in Kazakhstan and Ethiopia. In addition, it also included literatures on media and human trafficking.

This study employed both quantitative content analysis and qualitative in-depth interviews. Quantitative content analysis is mainly used to examine the human trafficking stories published in the newspapers in the period of the study. Human trafficking stories from both newspapers were coded to assess the story types, thematic distribution, types of trafficking, source of stories, frame types and practices, media functions. Furthermore, qualitative in-depth interviews were held with reporters and editors of The Ethiopian Herald newspaper. The reporters and editors of The Astana Times newspaper were not included in the interview due to involuntary participation.

The findings of the quantitative content analysis were used to compare and contrast between the two newspapers whereas the finding that was obtained from the in-depth interviews from The Ethiopian Herald was used to provide explanations and contextual insights about the editorial routines of the newspaper regarding the coverage and framing of human trafficking stories.

The object of the research. It included all news, features, editorials, commentaries and interviews of human trafficking stories from the two newspapers within the period of the study. In -depth interviews were held with six reporters and two editors of The Ethiopian Herald newspaper, who had written and edited most of the analyzed stories.

The subject of the study. Is comparative analysis of framing of human trafficking in contemporary print media, particularly The Astana Times and The Ethiopian Herald newspapers.

Novelty of the study: This dissertation provides a new empirical insight on how contemporary newspapers in two countries and contexts construct and frame human trafficking. By analyzing media framing of human trafficking, particularly The Astana Times and The Ethiopian Herald newspapers, the study novelty lies on distinguishing the newspapers' similarities and differences in their framing patterns which would help to have a better understanding how public perceptions and public discourses are shaped and influenced by various media in different social, economic and political contexts.

Main provisions for defense: The main provisions of the study are based on the following key findings.

- The level of covering human trafficking is limited in both newspapers comparing with the extent and magnitude of the problem in Ethiopia and Kazakhstan.

- The newspapers provided greater emphasis to solution and international dimension themes while underreported the causes and extent of the problem.
- Government officials and international organizations were the most favored sources in both newspapers where as victims and traffickers were employed as primary sources rarely.
- Educative, solution and attribution of responsibility frames were the most prevalent frames in both newspapers, however, conflict and diagnostic frames were used to a limited extent.
- The newspapers provided greater coverage to praising anti-trafficking efforts of policy and legal framing than assigning blames.
- The editorial routines and factors influence the way human trafficking stories were covered in The Ethiopian Herald newspaper.

The theoretical and practical significance of the study. The theoretical significance of the study can be defined by its definite contribution to the further development of framing and media framing theories in media research. By implementing the theory of framing to the analysis of the portrayal of human trafficking in the contemporary newspapers, this research broadens the knowledge and understanding of how social issues and problems like human trafficking are covered and framed in media, particularly in various social, economic and political environments.

The practical significance of the study. The practical results of the current study are helpful for the media organizations in Kazakhstan and Ethiopia to enhance their reporting and policy responses on human trafficking and related issues. In addition, the findings of this study will be used as evidence and as an important source for policymakers, elites, advocacy groups, and key stakeholders by providing them how human trafficking issues are constructed in the media. Thus, this would help them to develop and implement comprehensive legislative frameworks and initiatives to combat human trafficking. Moreover, the results of the current study are crucial for designing communication strategies that is more comprehensive one so that the government and other stakeholders in Kazakhstan and Ethiopia could address the complexity of the multifaceted problem. The practical results of the current study could also be used in compiling and designing courses on framing and media framing for BA and MA students in both countries.

The Contribution of the doctoral student

Under the guidance of the domestic and scientific consultants, the doctoral student successfully performed the following tasks.

- Establishing the purpose and objectives of the dissertation work.
- Reviewing scientific, conceptual, theoretical and methodological materials.
- Presetting, discussing and analyzing the findings of the study, and formulating summary, conclusion and recommendations.
- Collaborating with domestic and international colleagues on writing and publishing articles, and organizing and attending conferences.

Approbation of the research. This study is conducted in accordance with the principles and ethics of scientific research. The theoretical, conceptual and methodological foundations were presented in different scientific conferences and published in various journals. Furthermore, the research findings were published in local and international journals, and conference proceedings.

Articles in Scopus Database

1 **Kiflu G. K., Tekare H. K.,** Exploring Public Relations and Strategic Communication in Health Services During the War in Tigray // *Strategic Public Relations in Emerging Economies*. Cham: Springer, 2025. (Palgrave Studies of Marketing in Emerging Economies). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-85344-9_7

2 **Kiflu G. K., Tekare H. K.** The Impact of Foreign Channels on Local Ethiopian Audiences: A Case Study of Kana Television in Ethiopia // *Zhongguo Kuangye Daxue Xuebao*. – 2024. – Vol. 29, No. 4. – P. 393–406. – URL: <https://zkdx.ch/journal/zkdx/article/view/143>

Articles in journals recommended by the Committee

3 **Tekare H. K.** Human Trafficking in Media Coverage: Perspectives from Kazakhstan and Ethiopia // *Bulletin of L. N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. Journalism Series*. -2025. -Vol. 150, No. 1. -P. 57–65.

4 **Tekare H. K., Niyazgulova A., Kiflu G. K.** Exploring Media Framing Typologies of Human Trafficking in Contemporary Print Media // *Bulletin of L. N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. Journalism Series*. -2024. -Vol. 149, No. 4. -P. 96–104.

5 **Tekare H. K., Getahun M. B., Kiflu G. K.** Exploring Media Coverage of Environmental Protection in Eastern Ethiopia // *Herald of Journalism*. -2024. -Vol. 73, No. 3. -P. 4–15.

Conferences and proceedings

6 **Tekare H. K.,** Exploring Media–NGO Collaboration in Communicating Human Trafficking Issues: The Case of Kazakhstan in the Turkic World // *Proceedings of the V International Turkic World Communication and Art Symposium*. Almaty, Kazakhstan, 5-8 November 2025. P. 65-70, ISBN 978-605-72741-7-5

7 **Tekare H. K., Tulpar J.,** The Role of Media in Promoting the Tourism Sector in Kazakhstan // *Proceedings of the IV International Turkic World Communication and Art Symposium*. Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 5-9 November 2024. P. 365-369, ISBN 978-605-72741-5-1

Volume and structure of the dissertation. The dissertation comprises list of abbreviations and acronyms, an introduction, three main chapters, a summary with its conclusion and recommendation, references and appendices. It is presented on 117 pages, consisting of one table, 14 figures, 299 bibliographical references and four appendices.