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**Comparative analysis of framing of human trafficking in contemporary print  
media**

**8D03201-Journalism**

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

BA- Bachelor of Arts  
Br- Ethiopian birr  
CARs- Central Asian Republics  
CIS- Commonwealth of Independent States  
CTDC- The Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative  
FDRE- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia  
FPC- Federal Police Commission  
GBV- Gender- Based Violence  
HIV- Human Immunodeficiency Virus  
HT- Human Trafficking  
IDPs- Internally Displaced Persons  
IOM- International Organization for Migration  
KATCH- Kazakhstan Actions Against Trafficking in Children Trafficking  
MA- Master of Arts  
NGOs- Non-Governmental Organizations  
OC Index – Organized Crime Index  
OSCE- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
PTSD- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder  
Quant CA- Quantitative Content Analysis  
UAE- United Arab Emirates  
UN-United Nations  
UNDOC-United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime  
UNICEF-United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund  
UNTOC-United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime  
U.S.- United States

## INTRODUCTION

### **The Topicality of The Research**

Human trafficking has become an alarming global problem, including in Ethiopia and The Republic of Kazakhstan. Since it is one of the severe social problems, it turns out to offer high news value so that it gains the media's attention. The way the media cover and frame human trafficking can influence the publics' attitude, and shape their opinions. Since this study examines the framing of human trafficking in contemporary print media in Kazakhstan and Ethiopia, it would help to have a better understanding about how human trafficking is perceived, and how the media are influencing the responsible bodies, especially the governments in both countries to take actions and decisions to address the problem.

Human trafficking is a worldwide concern, and it has serious social, economic and human rights consequences. Hence, the current study can play a significant role for the development of policy by exploring how human trafficking is being framed in newspapers in Kazakhstan and Ethiopia. Moreover, this study can give insights into how policy responses, public awareness and political agenda may be influenced and shaped by media narratives. Also, the findings gained from the current study is significant for the media organizations and policy makers to develop and implement communication strategies and policies to tackle the problem.

Mass media plays a crucial role in the globalized world in informing, educating and entertaining people. It helps in influencing policy decision makers, prioritizing issues, framing issues, and setting policies [1,2]. Print media, particularly newspapers, can increase awareness of an issue, help it gain prominence, and set an agenda. For example, [3] state that the U.S newspapers played a crucial role on setting the political and cultural agenda regarding policing and systematic racism. Additionally, [4] note that local newspapers help to maintain an important news presence that can improve their legitimacy and connection to the community. Several studies demonstrate that media in general and newspapers in particular serve as a significant channel for facilitating the elite's influence on policy decision makers and the public opinion [5,6].

It is evident that media is an instrumental tool in shaping the opinion of the public and creating awareness on social issues such as trafficking. It has the power to influence and shape the responses to issues like human trafficking, since the perceptions of the public and the public discourse are influenced by how it is framed. Print media, particularly, newspapers have the power and capacity to influence policy decision makers, elites and advocacy groups.

Although human trafficking is still a pervasive and multifaceted problem that is affecting millions of people globally, the public awareness and perception of the issue still continue limited.

In print media, framing plays a crucial role in shaping the perception of the public and understanding of issues like human trafficking. The concept of framing in journalism has been explored and studied by communication scholars, and it has become one of the

most fertile areas in the field. [7-9] studies are one of the most well-known studies of framing theory in media. These studies affirm that media framing of a problem can profoundly influence how social issues are interpreted by the public, and how policy decision makers address to the problems.

Human trafficking is a worrying issue and has become a worldwide concern. Since it is a pervasive problem globally, the people's awareness on the issue can be raised through the media. Rosas- Moreno [10] point out that the awareness of the public concerning the victims of human trafficking can be influenced by local newspapers. Furthermore, media is pivotal in providing accurate information to the public on the reality of trafficking so as to enhance a better understanding of it and this could be gained by having a better knowledge of the problem in all its multifaceted nuances, and then portraying it in a way that the public will have better understanding of it, including providing the public information on what they rights are and giving them also with relevant information[11].

Media and communication scholars have analyzed and assessed framing of human trafficking. For instance, [12] assessed a content analysis of human trafficking articles from the American, British and Canadian Press. The findings of the study indicated that sex trafficking was conceptualized in the media and government officials and law enforcement personnel were the major sources of stories.

Houston et al. [13] study found that sex trafficking is more glamorized in the media coverage of human trafficking. Similarly, [14] scrutinized framing of human trafficking in Washington Post and the New York Times newspapers. The study found that the media frequently served to mirror and legitimize the official view of trafficking instead of being as a conduit for the expression of alternative views. Moreover, [15] studied a content analysis of human trafficking frames in documentaries, movies and television episodes. It was found out that human trafficking frames in movies, television episodes, and media in the United States overgeneralize human trafficking with rescue narrative. In addition, contemporary conducted studies [10] indicate that community media framing of human trafficking experience differences in gender and race.

Prior researches show that the Tigray war caused information blockade, serious communication breakdowns and organizational failures which impacted the works of the media and practices of communication strategies in Ethiopia [16]. Such volatile wartime situations may also have affected how social issues like human trafficking were framed in the Ethiopian newspapers. On the other hand, the Kazakhstan based newspapers which have comparatively stable media ecosystem may help understand variations in human trafficking representation, source selections and framing patterns.

Although body of human trafficking media coverage and framing studies have been growing overtime, there are still limited researches conducted on comparative analysis of English version newspapers in different countries and continents, especially in developing countries. This study explores a comparative analysis of framing of human trafficking in

two contemporary newspapers located in Kazakhstan and Ethiopia. Thus, the topic of the research is important and worthy to study.

**The Objectives of The Research:** is to analyze the framing of human trafficking through comparative analysis in contemporary print media.

The study is 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 of the stories
- To identify and categorize the types of frames used.
- To analyze the media functions of the newspapers while covering trafficking.

### **The Theoretical Significance of The Study**

The theoretical significance of the study can be defined by its substantial contribution to the further development of framing and media framing theories in media studies. By implementing the theory of framing to the analysis of the portrayal of human trafficking in The Astana Times and The Ethiopian Herald newspapers, this research broadens the knowledge and understanding of how social issues and problems like human trafficking are covered and framed in the media particularly in newspapers. In addition, this study also gives insights on empirical evidence of how the newspapers' framing of issues like human trafficking influences how human trafficking as an issue is interpreted.

### **The Practical Significance of The Study**

The practical results of the current study are helpful for the media organizations in Kazakhstan and Ethiopia, particularly the aforementioned newspapers 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 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 nuanced 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.

### **The Structure of The Thesis**

The dissertation is arranged in a rational and organized way. It comprises cover page, table of contents, list of abbreviations and acronyms, annotation, introduction, three main chapters, a summary with its conclusions and recommendations, references and appendices.

**Introduction:** It presents the topicality of the study, the objectives of the study, the theoretical and practical significance of the study and the overall structure of the dissertation.

*Chapter One:* This chapter discusses the conceptual and theoretical foundations of the research, including human trafficking literatures, media and human trafficking, and mainly the framing theory. In addition, this chapter also consists of one table in the human trafficking literature.

*Chapter Two:* This chapter is based on the research methodology and design and elaborates and explains in detail about the philosophical foundations of the study, research methodologies, designs, and procedures employed to conduct this study. In addition, it consists of instruments of data collection, sampling design and techniques, coding categories and process and analysis of frames.

*Chapter Three:* This chapter details and presents the findings, analysis and discussion. It presented the quantitative and qualitative findings and tried to relate with the conceptual and theoretical frameworks and tried to compare and contrast with the prior researches conducted on this and related topic. While doing this, it has presented the quantitative findings using fourteen figures. The findings of the qualitative data from one newspaper are presented in a thematic and explanatory way. Lastly, the dissertation ends with a comprehensive summary, conclusions and forwarded recommendations which are followed by references and appendices.

# 1 CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE STUDY

This chapter explores into the conceptual frameworks of human trafficking issues and theoretical foundations of framing and media framing theories. It also explores the relations between the current study and the existing body of scholarly literature on these topics.

## 1.1 Human Trafficking: Definition and Overview

Human trafficking has been defined and explored by many scholars and organizations with different meanings according to their purposes. The Palermo Protocol, Article 3(a) officially known as the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime offers a detailed definition of human trafficking. It defines human trafficking as:

...the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs [17].

According to Smirnoff et al. [18] and Yagci Sokat [19], human trafficking is also defined as the act of recruitment, movement, concealment, provision or acquisition of persons via threats, trickery, or force for the purpose of sexual slavery or labor.

Golob [20] states that the above Palermo Protocol has been serving as a foundation of human trafficking definition for more than twenty years. This protocol has been helpful in influencing the anti- trafficking efforts throughout the world by providing and guiding the identification and response to instances of human trafficking [21]. They also noted that this Protocol have shown certain imperfections especially in responding the experiences of certain victims such as the migrant fishermen of Indonesia.

The definition of human trafficking has become a discussion topic in different works of the academy [22]. It is recognized as a significant global public health issue and has health consequences that results from interconnected factors at individual, family, community and societal levels [23-25]. Additionally, [26] states that in Eurasia, the policies also consist of comprehensive definitions of human trafficking which deal with traffickers' sentence procedures and synthesize the main points of the consent versus coercion debate that was introduced by the Palermo Protocol. It also indicates the various racialized and genderized approaches to human trafficking policy that make ethnic minorities policies more susceptible.

Schmidt [27] claims a detailed analysis of the phenomenon of human trafficking as defined by legal standards indicating the challenges of consistently applying victim-

centered, human rights-based approaches due to state interests in combating crime and securing borders. Furthermore, [28] deliberates human trafficking in Europe within the context of international security focusing the significance of personal safety for victims. [29] emphasizes on the shortcomings in the legislative definitions of trafficking in persons under the Russian criminal law suggesting solutions to improve prosecution. [30] indicates the usage of data sharing and analytics in studying human trafficking perceiving the need for further investigation in noticing and detecting forced labor.

It is evident that human trafficking still remains a crucial issue in this century and there are still continuing challenges and arguments in defining and addressing the multifaceted crime. Although the Palermo Protocol is crucial, there are still challenges in realizing the principles outlined successfully as it is seen in Hong Kong where insufficiencies in regulatory framework have been identified including the lack of an international complaint definition of trafficking [31]. Đukić [32] notes that trafficking is a pervasive worldwide concern which is intensified especially in war areas since they can generate a permissive environment for violence and abuse. In spite of the fact that there are anti-human trafficking conventions, the problem continues to exist indicating the inadequate achievement in combating this form of exploitation [33].

## **1.2 Human Trafficking in the Global Arena**

Human trafficking is a global problem that has been reoccurring for decades. The State Department's annual Trafficking in Persons Report offers the most comprehensive global evaluation of human trafficking and the efforts by governments and stakeholders to address it in 188 countries [34].

Recknor et al. [24] note that human trafficking as a crime exists across the globe including in nations that are developed like Canada, however, it frequently goes overlooked. Human trafficking has become a great source of worry for many countries in the world as they are suffering a lot from it. Former President of the U.S. Barack Obama in his 2012 speech expressed his worry on human trafficking and he said, "It ought to concern every person, because it's a debasement of our common humanity" [35, p.7].

Many scholars on the field note that people are being trapped by this modern-day slavery. [24] also indicate that over 25 million people are affected by human trafficking and it has become a global public health issue. Furthermore, [36] corroborate that victims are affected by the severe biopsychosocial health problems due to human trafficking and this has affected their social health.

Nevertheless, [37] claims that the extent of human trafficking vary widely and it ranges from 12.3 to 45.8 million victims worldwide. According to them, the measurement methodologies have to be improved. Đukić [32] and Laser- Maira et al. [38] describe that children are mostly susceptible to human trafficking being subjugated in several forms such as sexual and commercial exploitation as well as being used in armed conflicts as suicide bombers and human shields. The 2021 international statistical findings on modern-day servitude shows that about 50 million people are trapped in human trafficking. Among

these, 27.6 million, 4.8 million, and 9.3 million are in forced labor, sexual exploitation and imposed marriages respectively [39,40].

In addition to this, UNDOC's Trafficking in Persons Report offers a comprehensive knowledge on the current dynamics and developments of trafficking based on the importance of international awareness and collaboration in tackling the crime [41]. Beyond this, [42] explains that 65% of victims trafficked across different regions are more likely to be subjected to forced labour. In contrast, 55% of those trafficked within their region of origin are mainly subjected to sexual exploitation. Intraregional human trafficking commonly endures under a year in 43% of the incidents whereas 37% of the trafficked victims subjected beyond their regions experience exploitation for at least two years or more. CTDC also clearly reveals that female victims make 74% of all the documented cases, and it is three times more than the male victims. In addition, about 43% of the trafficked people are adults aged 18 to 29 with adults being documented more often than children who account for nearly 24% of the victim population.

In terms of regions of origin, Europe and Asia contribute 34% and 32% of the victims whereas the America and Africa continents collectively account for approximately 34%. The majority of victims come from Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia, North and Central America and West Africa representing about 82% of all registered cases. The other sub-regions within Asia and Africa shares the remaining victims. Furthermore, Africa is one of the continents impacted by human trafficking, especially the Sub-Saharan nations are a source and a destination simultaneously for human trafficking victims. Nigeria, Ghana and South Africa are the hubs for domestic and cross-border trafficking [43,44]. It's further indicated that trafficking in Africa includes forced labor, sexual exploitation and recruitment of children, and these victims are frequently trafficked to Middle East, Asia and Europe for sexual servitude and labor exploitation.

In a similar vein, Asia is also one of the regions which is affected by human trafficking. Khan et al. [45] point out that the prevalence of human trafficking is high and the most susceptible countries in terms of sex trafficking, forced labor and debt bondage trafficking are India, Pakistan, Myanmar, Burma, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Iraq, Syria, Uzbekistan, North Korea, Bhutan and Sri Lanka.

Current researches and reports indicate that sex trafficking is the most common form of human trafficking globally accounting for 50% of all case of trafficked individuals [46]. More specifically, [47] explains that trafficking of girls for the purpose of sexual exploitation is increasing at alarming rate in many parts of the world. Coupled with this, [48] describe that sex trafficking is more prevalent than labor trafficking as it is indicated in studies.

Besides this, women and girls are at higher risk of facing violence through trafficking primarily for the purpose of sexual exploitation [49]. More importantly, [40, 50] demonstrate that women and girls account for 71% of the victims trafficked, and 99% of those engaged in sex trafficking are females. Despite the inadequate reporting on men and boys' victims forced servitude, they also constitute a substantial proportion. Recently,

the outbreak of COVID-19 has worsened the vulnerability of trafficking victims especially in regions which have economic crisis and social safety nets. Poverty, unemployment and migration flows helped the traffickers to exploit the victims in these regions [43, 51].

Conversely, mapping trafficking patterns presents challenges due to data integrity issues, geographical uncertainties and the complexity of trafficking routes [52]. Dimas et al. [53] note that there still remain study gaps in collaborating with transnational trafficking operations though some operation studies and analytics have played roles to the efforts to combat trafficking.

It is generally understood that the global efforts, initiatives and collaborations play a significant role in tackling all forms of trafficking. By working together, governments, organizations, and agencies can address the root cause of trafficking, protect victims, and prosecute perpetrators to bring an end to this heinous crime. Globally, there are initiatives and cooperations to combat human trafficking. Many governments and organizations work together to combat human trafficking through prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership [54]. For example, The United States government has established an Interagency Task Force consisting of various agencies to coordinate efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

### **1.3 Causes of, and Factors Contributing to, Human Trafficking**

#### **1.3.1 Causes of Human Trafficking**

The causative factors of human trafficking are various and often differ from one country to another. Yet, there are universal causes that are present in nearly all countries in the world and are often broad in scope. Poverty, unemployment and lack of opportunities in rural areas drive individuals to seek work abroad often leading to exploitation [55,56]. Further to this, [55,45] suggest that political instability, weak policies, corruption are also factors of human trafficking. Gezie et al. [55] also worth noting that community attitudes valuing overseas employment and the willingness to perform low-status jobs abroad are also some of the social factors of human trafficking.

Human trafficking is widely regarded as a serious and complex problem which is caused by both push and pull factors. More importantly, poverty, unemployment, war, political instability, civil unrest, armed and societal conflict, and natural disasters are the push factors that contribute human trafficking [45,57,58]. Also, luring promises of better economic opportunities, social mobility and traffickers' exploitation, which are frequently facilitated by weak policies and corruption in the destination countries are the pull factors of human trafficking.

Prior studies have indicated the push and pull factors of human trafficking. For instance, [59] conducted a comparison of push and pull factors that affects migration in Poland and Romania. The findings revealed that better job opportunities and living standards are the most influential economic pull factors. Also, the study indicated that conflicts, corruption, poor governance are the most influential political push factors. Out of the two factors, the study showed that the pull factors have greater influence in migration in the aforementioned countries. Moreover, a study conducted by [60] found

that due to perceived job opportunities and cheap labour, South Africa is a destination country for human trafficking. On the other hand, the study indicated that the harsh economic environment is the main push factors of human trafficking in Zimbabwe. Worsnop [61] explains that human trafficking push factors such as outbreak of diseases can exacerbate erosion of legal systems, economic contraction and household disintegration. Similarly, [62] support that homelessness, economic instability are the push factors and the online exploitation and decreased identification opportunities are the pull factors that exacerbates human trafficking.

A study by [63] analyzed the relationship between police corruption and trafficking activity. The findings suggested that police corruption in origin countries facilitates human trafficking even after controlling other push factors such as revenue, female unemployment rates and freedom of going overseas. Moreover, the cultural practices such as female genital mutilation, son preference and gender inequality such as not participating in decision making, not inheriting land and animals are the pushing factors to human trafficking of girls and women in Northern Tanzania [64]. A study by [65] revealed that human trafficking in Ethiopia is driven by both push factors and pull factors. While poverty, political instability, economic problems and gender discrimination are the push factors, demand for cheap labor is the pull factor for trafficking. The findings of a study conducted by [66] revealed that push and pull factors such as cheap labor, inadequate regulation and the vulnerability of work force contributed to labor trafficking in Marijuana production.

Overall, it can be deduced from the above literature that there are push factors that intensifies the susceptibility of victims from the origin country, and there are also circumstances that make the victims want to leave their country. Thus, understanding these factors are crucial in implementing effective strategies, initiatives and interventions to combat human trafficking.

#### **1.4 The Extent of Human Trafficking in Kazakhstan**

In many Asian countries, human trafficking is a widespread issue and problem. It is caused by different factors such as poverty, natural and man-made disasters and poor governance, which is aggravated by corruption. Human trafficking imposes profound social, physical, and psychological harm on its victims exposing them to violence severe health problems, and long-term mental complications [45].

Central Asia is one of the regions which is affected by human trafficking. Sexual exploitation was the most commonly detected form of human trafficking in Central Asia in 2022. Women and girls accounted for 61% of the trafficked victims and 59% of the trafficking cases were for sexual exploitation. Most of the victims detected in the region were trafficked internally. Countries in the region have also reported a significant proportion of victims trafficked for forced labor [46]. Further, [67] provides evidence that the complex nature of trafficking in Central Asia is complicated by its connections to corruption and terrorism.

In Kazakhstan, there is a substantial shortage of research focusing on vulnerable children and their susceptibility to human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Consequently, the extent and features of sexual servitude and child trafficking still remain less recognized and understood in the country, which obscure the true nature of trafficking [68]. Gulnaz Kelekeyeva, a project leader at Kazakhstan Actions Against Trafficking in Children Trafficking (KATCH) at Winrock International once explained that there is a lack of wide-ranging national research on socially susceptible children and their vulnerability to victimization and trafficking. She further stated that the 2012 UNICEF study was the only available study on children's susceptibility to trafficking domestically and cross-borders as well as sexual servitude in the nation [69].

The Organized Crime Index [70] states that Kazakhstan is one the countries in Central Asia that is affected by human trafficking. The Organized Crime Index (OCA) further demonstrates that Kazakhstan is a country where people are trafficked both inside and outside the country. It also states that the Republic of Kazakhstan is a country where people are trafficked to and from, both because of local and worldwide demand.

A further critical point is that, victims in Kazakhstan are trafficked to Russia, Bahrain, and Turkey. Women and girls are regularly lured to the country with promises of fraudulent jobs. Once they get there, they are involved in sex trafficking, labor trafficking, and domestic exploitation. Beyond this, mercenary groups in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria are forcing Kazakh men to forced labor. Victims sometimes commit crimes, and youngsters are frequently forced to beg. Furthermore, bride kidnappings in Kazakhstan are also connected to human trafficking. After Russia stopped letting up to a million Uzbek migrants back in, several tried to move to Kazakhstan, where they are more likely to be trafficked. Trafficking networks work closely with brothels and they use debt bondage and stringent law enforcement regulations to put victims in bad situations. State actors including corrupt police officers, organized crime groups and recruiters are also engaged in this crime. Kazakhstan is a transit country for irregular migrants to Russia and a destination for migrants from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and others. Human trafficking still happens even though these countries have a visa free travel agreements because the migrants don't have valid passports. Kazakhstan is also a destination for the South Asian migrants traveling to Central Asia and Europe by land. The country also serves as a driver of trafficking migrants to the US and Europe. In the country, a very a smaller number of limited force and criminal protection operations have occurred [70].

Over the past five years, human traffickers have exploited both local and foreign victims within Kazakhstan as well as Kazakhstani victims abroad. Within the country, the economic appeal of Astana, Almaty's financial hub and the oil rich cities of Aktau and Atyrau draws many rural citizens seeking better opportunities. Traffickers often deceive job seekers with false employment offers, leading to exploitation in sex trafficking such as in massage parlors and forced labor across various sectors including agriculture, construction, domestic work other industries. Some children are forced into begging and both children and adults may be coerced into criminal activities. Those most vulnerable

to trafficking include rural residents, undocumented migrants, individuals without identity papers, the unemployed, homeless populations and persons with disabilities [71].

According to Khamzin et al. [72], Kazakhstan is a key origin, transit and destination point for human trafficking with migration flows from neighboring countries to the vulnerability of migrants. According to the Kazakh Ministry of Internal Affairs report, 19 cases of new born are trafficked in 2023 and this led to charges against over 15 individuals [73]. Furthermore, the 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report by the U.S. Department of State indicates the rise of forced labor in Central Asia, particularly in the Republic of Kazakhstan where debt-based exploitation of migrant workers is increasing. By mid-2020, nearly 8 million international migrants from Central Asian countries were recorded globally, with over 60% residing in Russia. A 2021 survey supported by the Solidarity Center, involving hundreds of Kyrgyz female migrant workers across 19 Russian cities, revealed harsh working conditions including incidents of sexual violence [72].

Recent researches on the extent and magnitude of human trafficking in the country demonstrate that owing the fact that Kazakhstan open borders with CIS (Common wealth of independent states countries and significant migration patterns create an environment conducive to human trafficking [72]. Moreover, [74] indicated that there is also a forced labor in the country while migrant workers from neighboring Central Asian countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are at increased risk of sexual exploitation.

#### **1.4.1 The Causative Factors of Human Trafficking in Kazakhstan**

As mentioned above, Kazakhstan like other countries in Asia is also affected by human trafficking. There are several causes and driving factors for the problem in the continent and, particularly in Kazakhstan. The main causes and driving factors of human trafficking are economic, social and political factors. Khan et al. [45] state that the causes of human trafficking in Asian countries are poverty, unemployment, natural and humanmade disasters and poor policies and corruption. Most importantly, [75] noted that trafficking takes place in CARs due to economic problems, unfair development between the five republics and the weak progress in creating effective and transparent organizational frameworks.

Prior studies on the central Asian countries indicate that economic susceptibility, unemployment, and cheap labor demand are affecting especially women and migrant workers [76]. These situations are especially relevant to Kazakhstan where socio-economic differences create environments that traffickers may exploit. According to the United States Department of State [77], human trafficking in Kazakhstan is caused by many structural and soi-economic factors. According to the report, these are economic hardship, labor migration, social marginalization, unemployment and irregular migration. Overall, the above literatures underscore that there are multiple economic and social factors that cause human trafficking nationally.

#### **1.4.2 Kazakhstan Policies, Initiatives and Legislative Frameworks to Combat Human Trafficking**

As discussed above, Kazakhstan is among the nations in Central Asia which is impacted by domestic and cross-border trafficking. It is important to know that the contemporary law enforcement and legislative framework practices in the country mainly focuses on fighting illegal immigration rather than effectively consolidating preventive measure such as identifying illegal practices concerning human trafficking and securing the trafficking victims social welfare. However, victims of trafficking are left in a situation of continued susceptibility and social exclusion by this frequent approach [78].

As a country, Kazakhstan enacted a particular crime for trafficking and simultaneously adopted a national action plan to combat the problem in 2006. Article 128 of the criminal code of the country dealt with the recruitment of persons for forced exploitation and particular forms of human trafficking were legally perused. In addition, Article 133 is related to child trafficking [79]. The UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children was ratified by the country on July 31, 2008. Article 128 of the Criminal Code criminalized trafficking in persons [80]. Moreover, [81] note that Kazakhstan has improved the legislative frameworks in tackling trafficking including through the Law NO.110-VIII “On Combating Human Trafficking” (2024). However, the anti-trafficking efforts and initiatives are obstacle by weak law enforcement capacities, corruption and identification of victims.

The above literature demonstrates that though the country has made improvements in formulating policies, initiatives and legal frameworks, there are still challenges that hinder from combating human trafficking. Thus, sustained efforts are needed so that the government and other stakeholders can combat the problem effectively.

#### **1.5 Human Trafficking in Ethiopia**

In Ethiopia, human trafficking continues to be a major issue, and several studies demonstrate the magnitude and patterns of trafficking within the nation. Ethiopia is a supply nation for women migrants who work in the Middle East as domestic workers. Hence, this adds to the numbers for the whole world [82].

Furthermore, IOM recorded 230 victims of trafficking from 2004 to 2022. 71% of victims were registered between 2007 and 2011. There are 46% males and 54% females among the victims. Additionally, 66% of the people who were hurt are adults, and 34% are kids. The majority of female victims are less than 23 years of age, 68% of them are below 18 years old. The majority of male victims (65%) are 30 years old or older. Most of the people that are being victimized in Ethiopia are Sudanese (50%) or Ethiopian (47%). Forced labor which accounts for 62% is the dominant form of exploitation for recognized victims of trafficking in the country. Sexual servitude comes next and accounts for 22%.

For Known victims of trafficking in Ethiopia, the predominant form of exploitation is forced labor (62%), succeeded by trafficking for sexual exploitation (22%). Forced marriage, conscription, organ trafficking, enslavement, and other similar practices make up another 32%. The highest percentage of victims are taken advantage of one to two years (47%). The predominant type of work where people are taken advantage of is domestic labor (91%), succeeded by work in the hospitality work. Unfulfilled promises (75%), constraints on the financial resources, movement, health care, and basic needs (67%), psychological, physical, and sexual victimization (58%), and excessive periods of work (50%) are the key methods that people are controlled. 63% of victims are targeted for recruitment by other people, 29% by family members, and 7% by friends [83].

According to the 2024 United States Trafficking in Persons Report, Ethiopia is among the countries in Eastern Africa, which is affected highly by domestic and cross-border trafficking. For a period of five years and above, national and international victims have been subjugated by traffickers within the country and abroad. Traffickers exploit women and girls in domestic servitude and sex trafficking while men and boys are subjected to forced labor in conventional weaving, construction, agriculture, coerced street begging, and public vending [84].

Human trafficking in the country happens domestically and across borders from child and adult labor to sexual exploitation. Reports also indicate documented organ trafficking and connected human rights violations including marriages of children, use of child soldiers and abusive intercountry adoption practices [65]. On the other hand, a study conducted by [85] on the trends of human trafficking in Metema Wereda of the Amhara region found that there has been a slight decline in the magnitude of human trafficking lately.

### **1.5.1 Causative Factors of Trafficking**

In Ethiopia, there are root causes and various factors that push people to be trafficked inside the country and overseas. Various studies indicate that the socio-economic factors that contribute paramount to human trafficking in the country are poverty and unemployment. [86,87] note that poverty, economic decline, absence of better job opportunities, lower earnings and hollow promises of brokers have led the women into human trafficking. In addition, [54,84] study note that women and children are easily exploited and susceptible due to economic challenges. For this reason, the absence of job opportunities pushes several to find work overseas frequently through illegal routes and this amplifies the risk of trafficking [82,88].

Notably, there are also political and government issues that contribute to human trafficking in the country. Political volatility, lack of trust in government services, inefficient immigration policies, corruption, and conflict are among the factors that lead to human trafficking [55,65]. Besides the above economic and political factors, there are also social and cultural factors that contribute to human trafficking in the country. Community attitudes, modern lifestyle interest, peer pressure or the influence of role models, longing for a better education, misleading or exaggerated information about

destination areas provided by traffickers or individuals who have previously migrated, ill-treatment at home, harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, domestic sexual harassment, forced marriage and excessive household workloads are the major push and pull factors to trafficking [55,89].

### **1.5.2 Internal Trafficking in Ethiopia**

Even though there are some efforts by the government to combat human trafficking, internal trafficking is still a significant problem in the country. Various reports and researches show that children and girls are trafficked internally from rural to urban areas for domestic labour and sexual abuse. Several studies also show that internal trafficking is prevalent in the country where victims encounter different exploitation [90-93].

It is also worth noting that women and girls are subjected in the country to domestic slavery by traffickers whereas men and boys are exploited to labour trafficking [94]. In Addis Ababa, particularly, girls are subjected to domestic labour and are exposed to long working hours. Also, most of the girls who are involved in domestic child work come from very poor families and they are migrants [95]. UN experts report indicates that women and girls are becoming vulnerable to abduction and sexual exploitation in the Tigray, Afar and Amhara regions as they flee the conflict in the northern part of the country. In addition, certain risks of human trafficking emerge particularly sexual exploitation and sexual slavery [16, 96].

Reports of International Organizations in February 2022 show that more than 4.5 million people have been displaced internally because of the war and drought. These internally displaced Persons (IDPs) are exposed to trafficking due to lack of economic opportunities and lack of justice [97]. Meanwhile, organ smuggling together with grave abuses of human rights including marriages of children, use of children recruitment for military and abusive practices, have also been reported [65].

### **1.5.3 External Trafficking**

An existing studies and reports suggest that Ethiopia is the main source country for external trafficking. Women in the country are trafficked for household work where they experience sexual abuse and exploitation in the Middle East and Gulf States. The illegal recruiters facilitate the illegal border crossing routes, and it has exacerbated the risk of trafficking [82,88].

Current statistics demonstrate that young Ethiopian women and men are trafficked to the other African countries and Middle East. The US State Department report indicates that Ethiopians are exploited for sexual and labour abuse by traffickers in many regions, including other African countries, the Middle East, Europe and Asia. The main destination of economic migrants which accounts for 80-90% of labor migration, is Saudi Arabia. Ethiopian women in the Middle East are mostly susceptible to domestic slavery. Ethiopian girls are also exploited in domestic servitude and sex trafficking in Djibouti and Sudan whereas Ethiopian boys are forced into labor, including begging, domestic work and

shopkeeping in Djibouti [98]. According to [99] that 50.89% of the migrants that returned home have been trafficked.

#### **1.5.4 Consequences of Human Trafficking in Ethiopia**

The consequences for an individual are extremely severe when he/she falls prey by traffickers. In Ethiopia, human trafficking has brought economic, health and social consequences. It leads to severe consequences such as economic uncertainty, violations of human rights for the victims.

human trafficking survivors face various difficulties in reintegration and rehabilitation and more aggravated by a shortage of access to necessary health care, constitutional and social services [65]. Similarly, it has brought huge economic, social and health impacts such as serious mental disorder, difficulties in accessing necessary services and increased susceptibility because of migration and poverty. The findings further reveal that these factors greatly impact to ensure the necessary support for the victims of human trafficking [90]. Victims of human trafficking in the country encounter several risks such as abuse, unsafe work environments, sexual assault, murder, social alienation and mental and physical harm [100-102].

A growing body of studies suggest that trafficking has exerted its economic influence on individuals' livings and the country's broader economy in general. Due to various exploitations, victims of human trafficking often face a crucial loss of income and they are susceptible to forced labor and also denied their wages [65,103]. Human trafficking not only affects individual livelihoods, it also affects the victims' families who rely on remittances from their children, and they are often left without financial support [87].

Furthermore, [55,104] studies reveal that trafficking has brought a long-term economic consequence for victims such as decreasing the earning capacity due to physical and mental health problems and lack of access to basic education and employment opportunities. For this reason, it would be difficult for the victims to reintegrate into the economy and improve their socio-economic status [105]. Above all, human trafficking can also affect and disrupt the local economies of the country in general. [55,106] point to that the labor market is disrupted by trafficking, as victims are frequently forced into industries that weaken impartial labor practices.

Existing studies also demonstrate that the impacts of human trafficking on health are serious and extensive. Ethiopian migrants are experiencing different health problems and they are exposed to various illnesses and injuries such as backpain, weight loss and gynecological problems [55,104]. Likewise, the victims suffer from mental health problems and frequently experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety because of the trauma they endure [107,108].

Human trafficking has also brought a profound social effect in the country. Victims frequently encounter stigma upon returning to their country and communities. [108] state that victims face difficulties in reintegrating into the community as stigma led them to social isolation. Additionally, [87,109] note that this further exacerbates the psychological

and emotional trauma that victims endure. Another study on the socio-economic effects of human trafficking among young women returnees from West Asia in West Shewa revealed that trafficking resulted in marital dissolution, emotional turmoil, and financial ruin due to poor economic choices and debts owed to traffickers. Also, the findings conclude that young women are exposed to psychological and physical threats at workplaces and after returning to their country [110]. Most crucially, the social effects of human trafficking are also seen in displacement and migration. [111] identify that several survivors of trafficking are forced to displace internally or across borders and this has led to losing community relationships and cultural identity.

It can be deduced from the above literature that human trafficking has socio-economic and health implications on the victims and the country in general. It has been indicated in the literature that the economic influence of trafficking on victims and Ethiopia as a country is significant which causes economic unpredictability, income decline and long-run economic effects. Besides, its health implications are also serious as survivors encounter physical and mental health problems and sexual violence in a long-term consequence. Moreover, stigma, separation of family, displacement and migration are also among the social effects of human trafficking in the country that further affect the victims. Overall, the literature suggest that a comprehensive policy and approach is crucial and required to respond the problem.

#### **1.5.5 The Ethiopian Policies, Initiatives and Legislative Frameworks to Combat Human Trafficking**

As previously discussed in the sections above, Ethiopia is among the countries in in Africa that is greatly impacted by human trafficking. Article 18(2) of the FDRE constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia declares that “No one shall be held in slavery or servitude. Trafficking in human beings for whatever purpose is prohibited” [112]. Ethiopia has also adopted the protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons especially Women and Children and the Protocol Against the smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air published by the United Nations [113]. Correspondingly, [93] explains that Ethiopia is a signatory to several international conventions aimed at tackling human trafficking including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000), which Ethiopia adopted in 2012. A further point is that Ethiopia has also involved and working with international organizations like UNDOC and IOM.

Nationally, the Ethiopian government is exerting significant efforts, initiatives and preventing measures to mitigate human trafficking. As a country, Ethiopia had achieved substantial progress in combating and responding human trafficking through legislative, policies and initiative frameworks. The UN Trafficking Protocol was accessed by the government of Ethiopia in 2012 and this indicated as crucial step with regard to international cooperation. Proclamation No.909/2015, a proclamation to provide for the prevention and suppression of trafficking in person and smuggling of migrants, and Proclamation No.923/2016, the Ethiopian Overseas Employment are the proclamations

that has been implemented and enacted by the Ethiopian government so far to combat human trafficking and to regulate overseas employment. The incorporation of these regulations indicates a positive approach to combating the internal and external trafficking problems [93]. Furthermore, these proclamations and laws correspond with global standards especially with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its Palermo Protocol [39,93].

The US State Department acknowledges that the Ethiopian government is still trying to combat human trafficking by using law enforcement methods. The report also indicates that Proclamation 1178/2020, which was changed by Corrigendum 11/23, which went into effect in December 2020, made sex trafficking and labor trafficking illegal. The legislation in Ethiopia explains that people who are trafficking adults for work or sex can be subject to seven to fifteen years of imprisonment and be charged 20,000 to 100,000 Ethiopian birr (Br) (\$360 to \$1785). Additionally, people who traffic children for sex can go to prison for ten to twenty years and pay a fine of 30,000 to 100,000 Br (\$535 to \$1785). The Federal Police Commission (FPC) is in charge of looking into and prosecuting human trafficking crimes in Ethiopia. The government is, nevertheless, criticized for not keeping a single system for collecting data on human trafficking crimes [84].

The following table 1 provides an overview of how people were convicted, prosecuted, and investigated for human trafficking in the country between 2022 and 2023.

Table 1: Human Trafficking Convictions and Prosecutions in Ethiopia [84]

| No | Type        | 2022                         | 2023                                                                                               |
|----|-------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Inquiries   | 498 cases                    | Labor trafficking-21<br>Unspecified-707<br>Total-728<br>69- ongoing from previous periods          |
| 2  | Trial       | 608 individuals in 497 cases | Sex trafficking-2<br>Labor trafficking-15<br>Unspecified-633<br>Total-650 individuals in 531 cases |
| 3  | Convictions | 225 traffickers              | Labor trafficking-41<br>Unspecified-202<br>Total-243 traffickers                                   |
| 4  | Sentencing  | No data provided             | Imprisonment and Fines- 1-16 years                                                                 |

Beck et al. [65] note that the Ethiopian government has established and implemented different programs to respond to human trafficking. Among these are campaigns related to awareness creation and educating the people about the risk of human trafficking and the significance of legal migration. Further to this, Ethiopian ‘safe migration’ policies intend to regulate private employment agencies by recruiting, registration and punishing undocumented private employment agencies. Nevertheless, due to the challenges in the registration process and the perceived benefits of operating

informally, these policies have had inadequate efficiency in preventing trafficking. Consequently, informal facilitators continue to work out of the legal context [88].

Moreover, [55] observe that though the policies and regulations to combat human trafficking have been established by the government, these measures are believed inadequate due to a lack of concern, collaboration and unsuccessful policies of immigration. Also, some provisions for special inquiry techniques are included with the migrant smuggling and anti-human trafficking proclamations by the FDRE criminal justice policy. Yet, there is lack of comprehensiveness in terms of legal frameworks. Passing a comprehensive law that clearly outlines the special investigation techniques appropriate to human trafficking and drug trafficking in Ethiopia is needed to be passed by the House of People's Representatives [114].

Taken together, the above literature underscore that Ethiopia is one of the countries which have made improvements in establishing and implementing policy and legal frameworks to combat human trafficking. The worldwide agreements and bodies have influenced the legal frameworks, initiatives and programs. However, various studies indicate that there are still challenges and gaps related to the law enforcement internally and cross-border. Hence, responding to these gaps need continual dedication and stronger partnership with domestic and global actors to combat human trafficking in the country. Generally, enforcing the legal frameworks and schemes are crucial so that the awareness of the public could be raised to mitigate and combat human trafficking.

## **1.6 The Comparative Context of Human Trafficking in Kazakhstan and Ethiopia**

Human trafficking is a major concern in Kazakhstan and Ethiopia. Yet, the trafficking patterns differ in terms of extent and magnitude, causative factors, consequences, types of trafficking, policies and initiatives to combat the problem. Several literature and prior studies indicate that Ethiopia is one of the highly affected countries in Africa, and it is a significant source state for domestic and cross border trafficking. Poverty, lack of job opportunities, war, political volatility, ineffective government services, corruption, community attitudes and sexual abuse are among the driving factors of trafficking in the country [55,65,86,87,102]. Kazakhstan is also among the affected nations in Central Asia, and it is a destination and transit country. According to [77,115] report Kazakhstan is a destination and transit country for human trafficking victims that are smuggled to Turkey, UAE, Russia, the republic of Korea and other countries in the Middle East.

In spite of the fact that Ethiopia is a main source and Kazakhstan is primarily a destination and to a lesser extent a transit and source country for human trafficking, there are also similarities in terms of the causative factors such as economic hardships, labor migration and traffickers' recruitment mechanisms and the exploitation of women, men and potential migrants. In terms of types of trafficking, external trafficking is the most prevalent one in both countries. Kazakhstan acts as a destination country for workers from Central Asian countries such as Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and it is also a source for

moving to Russia, the Middle East and Europe [116]. In Ethiopia, internal trafficking is also arguably more prevalent in the country, however, the impact of the external one is high and severe, and enforcement efforts also focus on the external trafficking [117]. Other similarities between the two countries are, both countries are ranked by the U.S. State Department in its Trafficking in Persons Report, at the Tier 2 level, which means the countries do not completely comply with the standards for the eradication of human trafficking but their government have made significant efforts to combat the problem [77,117].

On the other hand, they also have differences in terms of extent and magnitude of trafficking. Ethiopia's human trafficking extent is larger in magnitude which affects various population especially men and women internally and externally. On the contrary, the extent of human trafficking in Kazakhstan is in a smaller scale comparing with Ethiopia, but it is still significant in number. Eventually, the similarities and differences regarding trafficking in both nations indicate the importance of examining how the newspapers covered and framed human trafficking within social, economic and political contexts.

### **1.7 Media and Human Trafficking**

It is widely recognized that media are the main source of information for the public to understand and interpret different social issues like human trafficking. Prior studies have demonstrated various approaches and perspectives regarding media and human trafficking.

A qualitative study conducted by [13] reveal that the media advocacy's role in responding the misunderstandings of human trafficking and the advocates' approaches to combat trafficking in the media. Advocates also note that media frequently cover a part of the story and make easier to understand the victims' stories and human trafficking issue. A study by [118] found that digital platforms such as social media have been used by traffickers to facilitate their works. Nevertheless, this study overlooked other forms of trafficking as it focused on labour and organ trafficking in developing countries only. Furthermore, [119] study on the use and abuse of social media in human trafficking highlight on how human trafficking activities are facilitated by online platforms. [120] explore the connection between media literacy and the understanding of the contents of human trafficking in digital media. Further, [121] points out that human trafficking media texts employ specific cognitive warning signs and image schema that helps as signals in combating human trafficking information campaigns. Also, [122] state that the Indonesian government used social media to fight human trafficking. The study also underscores the actions need to be taken at international level and the significance of collaboration to fighting human trafficking. In their study, [123] demonstrate that the perceptions of the public can be shaped mainly by digital media. The findings reveal that there are factors such as misinformation and sensationalism that can twist understanding about the realities of trafficking and weaken the actual advocacy efforts to address human trafficking.

Cabrera-Rodríguez and Antolínez- Merchán [124] study on the coverage of human trafficking in the digital media in Spain from January 2019 to December 2020 found that there is shortage of information and resources regarding human trafficking. Similarly, the findings of this study demonstrate that the press narratives are dominated by sexual exploitation. In terms of films and human trafficking, [125] assessed how *Lilja 4*, which is a fictional media, was used as an indication and a learning tool in combating human trafficking campaigns. Ultimately, [126] suggests that media coverage of human trafficking can be improved through constructive and solutions journalism.

Print media plays a significant role in creating and raising awareness, informing the public and molding views about human trafficking and related issues. Multiple empirical studies have demonstrated print media's cruciality in fostering the awareness of society and fighting human trafficking. Further, the studies have shown that print media influences and shapes human trafficking narratives and societal attitudes towards survivors and criminals. For example, [127] notes that print media plays a prominent role in influencing the discourse of the public regarding human trafficking. Likewise, [128] describe that the public agenda of human trafficking was established by legacy news outlets such as major newspapers and broadcast television networks.

Furthermore, several studies have been conducted on print media coverage of human trafficking. The studies indicate that the extent of media coverage of the issues differs in different countries and over time. Bozorova and Wimmer [129] research indicates that political orientations of newspapers influenced the media coverage of human trafficking during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, [130] study also found that human trafficking was given little attention with lowest coverage and little prominence accorded to such stories in the Nigerian newspapers. On the other hand, in the United States, print media portrayal of human trafficking has increased since 2000 especially after the establishment of global anti-trafficking treaties [14,131].

Additionally, A study conducted by [131] on English Language newspapers in the USA, India and Thailand indicate that the portrayal of the media on the issue focused mainly on crime and policy changes of trafficking rather than promoting the victims' voices and human rights issues. This study is limited only to the English version newspapers and framed human trafficking narrowly. Johnston et al. [132] conducted a study on U.S. print and broadcast media coverage of sex trafficking from 2008 to 2012, and the findings demonstrate that sex trafficking has become a public and political agenda in the media. The study also indicate that sex trafficking was mainly covered as episodic and emphasized on criminal activity and policy while the victim's voices were ignored. Correspondingly, human trafficking has become a topical issue in the UK national newspapers. Nevertheless, the coverage frequently focuses on certain kinds of trafficking particularly sex trafficking while ignoring other forms of trafficking like forced labor [133]. Researches conducted by [134] also found that the narrative of Super Bowl sex trafficking was disseminated in the US print media starting from 2010 to 2016.

In addition, A 2012-2013 content analysis study on the New York Times and the Washington Post newspapers found that minors and females are frequently depicted as victims. The findings further reveal that official government statements are reflected by the content of the coverage [14]. As a result of systematic review conducted by [135], it was found that sex trafficking was mainly employed in the coverage of human trafficking. The review further indicate that media, community members, experts and victims have different social perceptions and understandings regarding human trafficking. Moreover, [136] study on UK newspapers found that the media over reported on sexual trafficking whereas other forms of trafficking like forced labour and domestic servitude are under reported.

Regarding the portrayal of victims, media coverage of human trafficking is frequently stereotypical. In their study, [133,136] confirm that media portrays human trafficking victims as weak, inactive people and the coverage is frequently sensationalized. A growing body of research demonstrate that the cultural and political factors influence the media's focus on certain forms of trafficking. For instance, [137] examine how the local media and campaigns in the UK influenced public perceptions of modern slavery and human trafficking. Findings from the study show that human trafficking is often associated with illegal migration in the local media and the media reinforced stereotypes about the relationship between trafficking and immigration.

Furthermore, a study conducted by [138] found that the south Korean and the Western, particularly the US and British newspapers framed human trafficking as an issue and problem mainly affecting women while ignoring the male victims' experiences and predispositions. Research by [139] on the Russian media demonstrates that gender bias to act as committers of human trafficking are exploited by some women which is against to the belief that men carry out a crucial part of trafficking. The finding of this study is challenging in a way that it undermines from the usual perception of trafficking as being perpetrated by men. As noted by [10] because of the impact of different sectors, it is important to assess the local newspapers' coverage of human trafficking victims. In the study, it is highlighted that social justice issues could be addressed by the media and the media can offer different insights to the policymakers so that they would combat the problem efficiently [132].

Regarding the sources employed in print media stories, various scholars and studies show that sources can play prominent roles in influencing public perceptions and shaping narratives. The media often employ official sources such as government officials, law enforcement authorities and policymakers when they cover human trafficking stories. Besides, these sources frequently give a crime-focused perspective by emphasizing on the need for stricter laws and increased enforcement.

In contrast, victims of human trafficking and their advocates are often underreported in media coverage. This would lead to a narrow understanding of the issue and the problem due to the fact that the voices of these survivors and marginalized groups are barely heard [140,141]. In certain instances, journalists managed to provide a through

and detailed coverage by encompassing various and alternative viewpoints so as to break away from the official narratives [12,142]. Also, the studies reveal that the media usually employ non-governmental organizations and international bodies like the UN in their coverage of human trafficking.

The literature discussed above on media and human trafficking demonstrate that media in general and print media in particular can play a crucial role in influencing and shaping the perceptions of the public on human trafficking. It emphasized that the media advocacy, awareness creating and raising role in responding and combating human trafficking.

Nevertheless, the media coverage of human trafficking is frequently constrained by limited themes, specific sources and stereotypical depiction. Prior researches on media coverage of human trafficking indicate that the media employ primarily and heavily official sources while covering human trafficking. Since human trafficking is a multifaceted and complex issue and problem, it is crucial to enhance the quality of coverage by employing diversified sources, including primary sources like victims, potential migrants and traffickers. The media can assist by performing this so as to create knowledgeable and thoughtful public debate and help the policy interventions towards human trafficking successfully.

Moreover, the media and human trafficking literature explains that the human trafficking media portrayal often highlights on certain forms of trafficking, particularly sex trafficking. Also, much of the studies conducted on media and human trafficking focused on Western and global media. In spite of the fact that a number of researches have been conducted on media and human trafficking, there are still limitations. Several studies gave greater attention to the Western and global media coverage of human trafficking and predominantly emphasized on sex trafficking while other regional contexts and forms of trafficking have been given limited focus and less attention.

Generally, the above literature provides insights on how interpretations of human trafficking can be shaped by media narratives and how much it is significant to explore it. From a framing perspective, the problem, causes and solutions are influenced by media representations. From the above literature, it can be understood that the comparative analysis on how human trafficking is framed in different regional contexts of newspapers is limited. As a result, this study explores how The Astana Times and The Ethiopian Herald newspapers framed human trafficking issues within a specific period of time. Lastly, this would contribute to provide insights and have a better understanding on how human trafficking is covered and represented in various socio-political and regional contexts.

### **1.8 Theoretical Framework: Theory of Framing**

Human trafficking has been explored and investigated through different theoretical frameworks such as human rights, criminology, migration etc. However, the current study is based on how human trafficking is represented and interpreted by the aforementioned newspapers. In this case, framing theory is the most appropriate framework since it

explains how meanings are constructed and narrated by selecting, emphasizing and interpreting certain aspects of reality. Hence, public understanding of multifaceted issues like human trafficking can be shaped by media narratives through framing process.

The term framing has become a popular and critical concept in the fields of communication, sociology, and linguistics. Most crucially, political communication, social movements, and media studies have been applying framing theory to understand how messages are constructed and interpreted [143,144]. Erving Goffman and Charles Fillmore are among the founding fathers of the theory. Sullivan [145] confirm that the “idea of frame” was introduced by Goffman in the 1970 which explained frames as cognitive structures that organize and make sense of social experiences.

A growing body of prior studies suggest that the concept of framing is now more or less established and developed as a field of study in media and communication. Framing has been explored and defined by different scholars in various ways. The theory of framing is a multidisciplinary concept that explores how language and communication shape perceptions and outcomes in various contexts. Despite that framing concept is profoundly valuable and useful, it is in lack of comprehensive and accurate definition [146,147]. Yet, [148] argues that the definitions that have been used indicate a variety of alike traits.

Goffman [149, p.21] was the first scholar to focus on framing and described it as a communication form and defined it as a “schema of interpretation” that enables individuals to “locate, perceive, identify and label” occurrences or life experience. Gamson and Modigliani [150] see framing as a significant central principle that helps to analyze pertinent events and shows what is important.

In light of the above definitions, Entman [146, p.55] states framing as a process of selecting some aspects of reality and highlighting them within media contents so as to influence how issues are understood by the public. Frames also define problems, identify causes, provide moral judgement and suggest solutions to the issue being addressed.

Similarly,[151] also consolidates Entman’s framing definition. According to them, diagnostic, motivational and prognostic frames are the three core categories within the framework of framing. Diagnostic frames are those which identify a problem; motivational frames are those that motivate and advocate their audiences by producing emotional and cognitive resonance. Lastly, prognostic framing is the articulation of recommended solutions to combat and end social issues like human trafficking.

Contemporary scholars and studies have also defined and explored framing theory. Robert Entman’s theory of framing underscores two key dimensions: selection and emphasis of issues. This approach has been applied to analyze media coverage of conflicts such as the Russian-Ukraine war revealing how different outlets frame events to support their ideological perspectives [152]. Chong and Druckman, and vok Sikorski and Matthes [153,154] describe that framing involves highlighting certain aspects of an issue while downplaying others. According to [154], framing involves defining the problem,

explaining causes, proposing solutions, providing normative assessment, shaping public perceptions, and political discussion.

Roslyng and Dindler [155] explain that framing theory analyzes how issues are constructed, represented and interpreted within institutionalized policy spheres. In addition, [156] notes that framing refers to how people perceive and make sense of events and issues affecting their lives. Frames are understood as structured bundles of concepts accessed meaning [157]. The theory of framing by Robert Entman is a significant concept in media studies and communication research. Framing refers to how information is presented to the audience, shaping their perception and understanding of the issue at hand. Entman's theory of framing has been widely used in various studies to analyze how media outlets frame news stories and events.

In addition to the above definitions of framing, a number of scholars have also explored the term media framing. In the early years, Scholars like [158, p.7] states that media frames deal with perception, analysis, interpretation, and portrayal, of selection, focus, and exclusion, by which symbol communicators regularly establish discourse, whether spoken or visual. Besides [159], note that media framing focuses on the thought that the way an issue is covered in news reports can bring an impact on how the story is interpreted by the audience.

Recently, media framing has also been redefined, explained and explored by different scholars and studies. Rodgers [156] states that media framing discusses how people perceive and interpret issues and events in their lives. Furthermore, media framing involves structured bundles of concepts accessed through linguistic expressions to create meaning [157].

According to [160,161] frame construction, frame presence in media messages and frame reception and interpretation are the stages in the media framing process. According to them, frame construction deals with the creation of frames by different bodies such as media organizations, political elites and social movements. Frame construction involves the selection of specific words, images and narratives that convey a particular interpretation of an issue. And, frames are embedded in media messages once constructed where they are presented to the audience. This stage is called frame presence which involves the strategic use of framing devices to ensure that the intended interpretation is conveyed effectively. The final stage which is called frame reception deals with the audience's reception and interpretation of the frames. At this stage, individuals process the information and construct their own meanings based on the frames presented in the media [160,161].

The concept of media framing has been investigated in various studies. And, different studies have assessed the media framing impact and influence in various frameworks, focusing on how it molds the opinion and attitude of the public. Asiamah [162] conducted a study on research on media framing in Ghana, employed media framing theory and agenda setting theory to thematically analyze the data. The findings of the study indicated that most of the media framing studies twisted on print media and

traditional media websites. However, the study neglected the media framing of local print journals and other databases. And, [163] conducted media framing by analyzing news coverage from two online news channels namely CNBC Indonesia and Tempo National, indicating variations in how the media framed the same topic.

Furthermore, [164] examined media framing and coverage of contemporary armed conflicts largely focus on the defense of national security and war propaganda, revealing the predominance of war journalism framing focused on national security and propaganda rather than reconciliation. Moreover, [165] assessed the media framing of COVID-19 globally, indicating that human interest and fear/scaremongering frames dominated the global media coverage of COVID-19.

This study neglected the public response and relied heavily on published media articles. Also, [166] investigated media coverage and framing of Oakland's Sugar - Sweetened Beverage Tax, showcasing how media framing can influence public perception of policies. In addition to this, recent studies have explored the implications and impacts of media framing in various situations and contexts. For example, [167] investigated a study on news media framing of food poverty and insecurity in high income countries emphasized the need for a significant transformation in print media discourse related to food poverty and insecurity.

Similarly, the study by [168] on the framing of suicide circumstances and gender in news media highlighted the need for a nuanced analysis of how such sensitive topics are presented to the public. The study also indicated that the gender based linguistic differences in the use of stigmatizing or glorifying language in suicide reporting may contribute to widening suicide disparities. Furthermore, [169] research employed Semetko and Valkenburg's five-dimension media frame to analyze the Hartal Doktor Kontrak movement in Malaysia, highlighting how media framing influencing public perception and policy responses. Furthermore, a comparative study on media framing of the 2013 Westgate Mall attack, investigating Kenyan and U.S. media perspectives, highlighted how media narratives shape and mold public perception and policy discourse. This study demonstrated the influence of broader cultural contexts and national interests in framing these narratives [170].

In the field of health communication, a study focused on the impact of moral framing in the coverage to promote De(stigmatization) of depression on social media analyzed how moral framings influence stigma and approval attitudes [171]. In addition, a study conducted by [172] on how the Chinese government sponsored newspapers frame HIV revealing differences predisposed by attitudes toward media, political environment and cultural identities in the country. Moreover, research on framing the U.S. and Russia Coverage examined how bias in news coverage is reinforced by the U.S. and Russian correspondents. The study demonstrated the influence of sociopolitical contexts, marketization and bilateral tensions on journalists' ability to alter dominant narratives about each country [172].

Media framing has also been explored in issues like migration. A study by [173] examined media framing of migration in the UK and Brazil, indicating negative portrayal of migrants in conservative media. It contributes to understanding the intersections of media framing, migration, and populism, focusing the prevalence of victim frames. Moreover, [174] demonstrate how news framing of immigration affects public opinions and emotions. The study highlighted conventional media directly affects support for firmer policies whereas partisan media indirectly shapes feelings toward immigrants, indicating the importance of media framing in public perception.

Furthermore, recent studies have also explored framing in disaster responses. For example, print media framing and coverage of Hurricane Harvey was explored by [175], analyzing how various tones were applied to government and private sector responses. The findings confirmed that there are substantial differences in media coverage and focus. In addition, it also found that human interest was the most prevalent while the morality frames got little attention.

Moreover, media framing research has also been investigated in social media. Civila and Lugo-Ocando [176] explored media framing by assessing how social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram construct narratives on news of international conflicts. The findings indicated the framing of messages and audience perceptions in online communication are influenced by the features and capabilities of digital platforms. Additionally, [177] investigated media framing in the digital age by examining the interplay between online real estate and welfare narratives in South Korean news. The findings show a negative association between thoughts in these domains especially influenced by the rise of the conservative party. Some studies have also explored framing in the context of social movements. Further, [178] study employed a systematic review to identify more than 180 relevant articles published in the last decade and selected a final sample of 78 high-quality articles from top-tier journals. This study indicates that framing studies have advanced significantly with the rise of social media resulting in theoretical and methodological innovations as well as a shift in the focus of research agendas. Moreover, [179] critically review of framing studies in social movement research found that the concept of frames and framing in social movement research remains theoretically and methodologically unsatisfactory. In addition, the study by [180] explored the effects of mass media framing of protest movements. The study employed Pearson's correlation coefficient as the effect size. The study revealed that mass media framing of protest movements has stronger effects on content categories than survey participants.

It is understood that frames in media can be found in different locations. However, there is a little consensus as how to identify frames in media. From the cold war example [146] suggests that frames in the news can be examined and identified in four locations namely the communicator, the receiver, text and the culture. Likewise, [181] state that frames are frequently embedded in the selection of words and phrases employed in media texts. And, how the audience interpreted the information is influenced by certain words that arouse mental schema. They further stated that the interpretation of a message can

also be shaped by certain arrangement of clauses and the focus on certain details. Also, frames can be identified in the broader narrative structures of media texts. Besides the above location, [143] note that frames can also be found in visual elements where the media use certain visual devices to convey specific interpretation of events.

The above literature on framing and media framing theory emphasize that framing theory play a crucial role and it is an important instrument for recognizing how public discourse and interpretation are influenced and shaped by media. Furthermore, examining and analyzing scholarly conceptualization of framing, the process of framing, its steps and locations of frames in media contents can offer various insights into the mechanism through which meaning is created and distributed. The above literature also shows that framing theory and media framing theories have been applied by several fields to examine how multifaceted issues like migration, conflict, natural disasters, health are depicted and shown by the media. Also, the prior framing researches have progressively studied the digital and social media contexts by showing how the framing process is applied by the digital news platforms. Having understanding of how the traditional and digital media apply framing theory would help to know how various issues are represented.

Nonetheless, there are also gaps and misunderstandings on the overall definitions and concepts of framing. Thus, the applicability of framing theory in various fields can be done by addressing the gaps that it has. Although framing theory has been applied to various fields and media extensively, limited focus has been provided comparatively to how human trafficking is framed in the non-Western contexts including in Kazakhstan and Ethiopia.

### **1.8.1 Media Framing Types**

Newsmaker have a wide array of options in framing their coverage of an issue. Scholars in the field agree that these distinctive approaches to storytelling and narrative construction can be analyzed and identified through certain distinctive characteristics. Generic and issue-specific frames are the most common classification of frames. While issue-specific frames are tailored to a specific topic and are important only to the issue being examined, generic frames go beyond the confines of a single framing study and can be applied across different framing research contexts.

In addition, scholars have studied and explored episodic and thematic framing approaches to indicate how public understanding of social issues like human trafficking and other humanitarian and political issues are shaped. For instance, [182] categorized generic frames into episodic and thematic frames. Episodic frames focus on particular events or individual cases whereas thematic frames address larger social and institutional issues. Some frames are relevant only to particular topics or events, and these can be referred to as issue-specific frames. In contrast, other frames are more universal, appearing across various topics sometimes even over time across different cultural contexts. These frames are known as generic frames [183, p.54-55].

Episodic and thematic frames are widely used and applied in media analysis. In research conducted by [184] confirmed the public perception can significantly be

impacted by the choice of the frame. The findings indicated episodic frames were employed predominantly and framed positively whereas negative portrayals used thematic frames in reporting of China related stories in the Zambian media. In addition, [185] study on framing femicide in the news explored that episodic frames tend to individualize issues and attribute responsibility to victims. Also, [186] findings stated that thematic frames often address systematic problems.

Semetko and Valkenburg [148] conducted a study and identified five generic frames that are mostly employed in media coverage and framing. These frames-conflict, responsibility, economic consequences, human interest and morality provide valuable analytical tools for exploring how issues are portrayed in the media. In addition, these frames have significantly advanced the understanding of media framing practices and they are frequently employed in media to show how the narratives of news stories are shaped.

- a) **Attribution of responsibility frames:** It raises an issue or problem by attributing its cause or solution to the government, an individual or a group. In addition, this frame type underscores on who or what is responsible for a particular issue or event. This frame has been used in various fields. In [187] study on the framing of the war in Ukraine, attribution responsibility frame was employed to indicate that the roles of various bodies in the conflict.
- b) **Human interest frames:** This type of frame adds a human perspective or emotional dimension to the portrayal of an event, issue or problem. Moreover, it gives attention to the private and emotional aspects of a story by showing how an issue affected the experiences and emotions of individuals. In [185] study on framing femicide in the news found that the media employed human interest frames to create and raise public awareness GBV and its consequences for people and society by comparing thematic and episodic frames.
- c) **Economic consequences frame:** It depicts an event, an issue or a problem by emphasizing on persons, groups, organizations, regions or countries economic impacts. This type of frames is mainly employed in the media coverage of policy reforms. For example, [188] study found that this type of frame has been employed in the Denmark, Spain, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom newspapers to show the financial implications of pension reform in Europe.
- d) **Conflict frames:** this kind of frame indicates disagreements among people, groups, or institutions as a means to involve and grab the public's interest. This type of frame is widely used in social and political situations to indicate differences and tensions. For instance, [189] studied the application of framing in press publications in Poland and found that conflict frame was employed in the media coverage of protest against abortion law changes in the country to show the various groups conflicting point of views.
- e) **Morality frames:** This type of frame contextualizes the event, issue or problem within religious principles or moral guidelines and it tries to present issues in terms of right and wrong. A study by [190] examined five TV networks media framing

related to public digital involvement, addressing on gun control measures, psychological well-being and personal and political responsibility found that this kind of frame has been used to show the moral implications of gun control measures and mental wellness policies.

Several studies have employed the above generic frames. A study conducted by [191] used the five generic frames namely conflict, human interest, economic consequence, morality and responsibility frames. The findings of the study showed that these generic frames are crucial for examining how news narratives are presented by elite press. However, this study is limited only to the five generic frames and emphasized only on the European politics which can be difficult to generalize to all contexts.

Moreover, a study by [192] explored the five generic frames and how these frames are employed to examine framing practices. This study is also limited to tonality and generic frames which might not cover and address all issues and aspects. These frames have also been employed in a study on news framing of the U.S. immigration debate during election years by [193]. This study added two other frames besides the generic frames. It was found that conflict frames were the most prevalent one in the media coverage. However, this study was restricted to the four newspapers during the election years and the findings may not apply to other news outlets such as broadcast media. Besides the above typology of frames, there are also other frames used by media in framing social issues like human trafficking.

#### **i) Diagnostic and Prognostic Frames**

According to [194], diagnostic framing deals with the definition of a problem while the prognostic framing focuses on solutions. As it is discussed above, media framing can play a significant role in influencing the perception of the public and policy decision makers in issues like human trafficking. The diagnostic and prognostic frames have been identified in human trafficking and related researches. Most crucially, [195] study on media framing of human trafficking indicated that diagnostic frame has been employed to indicate the need for responding the causative factors that lead to human trafficking. In the current study, diagnostic framing provides an assessment of the causes of human trafficking. On the other hand, prognostic frames emphasize the effects of human trafficking.

It can be summarized that the above literature on media framing types indicates and emphasizes how different kinds of media frames are important in shaping the perceptions of the public and influencing the policy decision makers. In spite of the fact that the [148] generic frames can be used for a wide range of topics and helps to compare across different issues and contexts. Nevertheless, multifaceted social issues like human trafficking demands to include issue specific frames that are relevant to the topic. Hence, in addition to the five generic frames which are identified by Semetko and Valkenburg, the current study includes other issue-specific frames such as diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, solution framing, educative framing, empathy framing and policy and legal framing so as to have a better understanding of the narratives present in the newspapers' portrayal of

human trafficking. Above all, the presence of diagnostic and prognostic frames in human trafficking studies point out that the importance of a holistic approach that responds to both the sources and the effects of the issue. In this research, prognostic frames refer to the human trafficking consequences and outcomes, indicated in the newspapers' coverage. In a complex and multifaceted issues like human trafficking, the episodic and thematic frames can be helpful in terms of providing a thorough and detailed media framing of issues.

### **1.8.2 Contextual Factors Influencing Media Framing**

Despite the primary emphasis of this research is to examine the newspapers' framing of human trafficking, the brief discussion on the contextual factors that influence media framing gives significant theoretical contexts for having a better understanding on how frames may emerge in news reporting of social issues like human trafficking. As indicated and discussed in detail in the framing theory section, it is suggested that textual representations alone do not only shape the media frames but also by internal and external factors like newsroom routines and organizational influences.

In spite of the fact that this study did not examine empirically the internal and external factors that shape media framing systematically, in-depth interviews was employed as a supplementary with reporters and editors of The Ethiopian Herald newspaper to provide contextual insights and explanations about the editorial routines that may shape and influence the framing of human trafficking stories. Hence, discussing the factors that affect media framing is crucial in order to have understandings on how media frames are produced.

The way the media frame an issue like human trafficking is significant in shaping the perception of the public and influencing the decision-making process. Newspapers are one of the most influential media platforms for dissemination of information to the public on issues like human trafficking. In addition, there are various factors that shape and affect the framing process and strategies. Media framing studies have identified that there are several internal and external factors that affect media framing of issues. According to [183], the structural qualities of news frames are called fame-building. He further noted that the internal and external factors that influences the framing of issues.

Journalistic norms are one of the internal factors that can influence how media frame stories and help to know on which aspects of an issue are the media focusing. In spite of the fact that journalists should disseminate information in an objective and fair way, various studies indicate that the way they frame stories sometimes show subtle biases. A study by [188] on framing policy reform in Europe found that the way the European newspapers framed policy reforms varied, for instance the left-leaning newspapers focused on frames regarding to inequality. In addition to journalist norms, organizational policies and priorities of media organizations can also affect media framing. In this case, editorial policies of a media organization can dictate the tone and direction of news portrayal.

Furthermore, [188] note that the newspapers framing of policy issues can be influenced by the editorial instance that supports certain political thoughts. Besides these, the extent of independence that journalists have in their overall affairs can also affect the media framing process. Various studies indicate that those journalists who have better autonomy are effective at producing frames that shows their expertise judgement. In contrast, journalist who do not have autonomy may be restrained by institutional and external pressures. Recent research conducted by [196] found that those journalists working in government and public media organizations prone to suffer more from internal editorial pressures compared to those who are working in commercial or private media organizations. Similarly, A research conducted by [197] on three Spanish newspapers revealed that editorial policy and sources influenced the media frame building. Moreover, in terms of professional ethics [198] note that those journalists who are committed and adhere professional ethics may challenge the external influence and striving to create framing that is more objective and balanced.

There are also external factors that can influence the media framing of issues. Literatures indicate that political pressure is one of the key factors that can influence media framing of an issue. In [199] study on framing depression indicate that the media which are controlled by the state in China framed depression as a public health issue in accordance with the government priorities. This indicated that government can put forth their influence on media through censorship, legal restraints or economical motives. Similarly, the political partiality can also influence newspaper framing. This happens when newspapers try to align their portrayal with the owners the media and the political allies.

A study conducted by [200] on media framing biases and political power in the 2008 US presidential campaign found that media framing of the Republican Vice-Presidential nominee Sarah Palin changed over time because of the political and cultural dynamics. Furthermore, the influence from government can also be an external factor that influences media framing. In this case, governments can exert their influence directly using censorship and subsidies and indirectly by using their regulatory bodies of their countries. Hence, this influence can crucially shape policy issues and news events framing. Recent scholarly work conducted in the newspapers based in Ethiopia indicate that the government-owned media framed political reforms in ways that supported the incumbent party and the government [201]. Similarly, government can also employ economical motives and penalties to affect the media framing of issues. Another significant factor that affects media framing of an issue is the opinion of the public. As newspaper generate their income from advertisements and subscriptions, the opinion of the public can shape the framing of the issue by addressing the interests and concerns of their readers.

Furthermore, [202] found that the factors that affect the use of economic and conflict frames in foreign news coverage are prominence of economy, the relatedness of culture and the variables of conflict. Additionally, there are factors that affect specific

health issues like depression and diabetes. These factors include personal aspects including journalists' realities and institutional influences such as editorial policy and external factors like news sources, public interests, the newsworthiness of the issue, and the established societal rules [203]. Similarly, [204] state that the journalists' framing building process can be influenced by the perception of news, news values, the selected media, media owners, peers and sources. Moreover, [205] study identified that the 2018 FIFA World Cup media narratives were shaped and influenced by cultural context, expectation of the public, institutional influences and the competition of media markets.

Overall, the above literature indicated the internal and external contextual factors that influence newspaper framing of issues. Among the internal factors, journalistic norms, institutional policies, journalists' independence can shape and influence the practice of the profession and the decision of the editorial. On the other hand, political influence and pressure, public opinion and audience feedback, government pressure and influence can also make it complicated the framing building process by producing and exposing external pressure and audience expectations. Thus, it is significant to understand these factors to critically investigate the media's role in influencing the perception of the public and the discourse in general.

### **1.8.3 Criticism of Media Framing Theory**

Media framing theory is a crucial instrument to understand on how the media portrays different social issues. In spite of the fact that framing is one of the most influential theories that provides various insights on how media cover issues and shapes the public opinion, it has its critics. In media studies, framing theory has been widely applied yet it is criticized and faces different theoretical limitations. Many scholars argue that framing theory lacks a unified definition and it is fragmented. In the early studies, to [147], media framing theory limitations relate to its shortage of a clear and concise conceptual and theoretical definition. Systematic empirical research, a tendency toward descriptive bias, static tendencies, reification, reductionism, elite bias and monolithic tendencies are ignored by the framing perspective [206]. Similarly, [8] note that framing theory is frequently described as a "fractured paradigm" due to the lack of a common conceptual frameworks among scholars [207]. As a result, having a shortage of coherence has led to inconsistent applications of the theory with various researches using varying definitions and operationalizations of frames, making it challenging to compare findings across research [179,208].

Furthermore, Scheufele attributing the idea to [146] 'fragmented conceptualization' state that framing theory has no steady or a basic commonly recognized and understood meaning that indicates how frames are constructed and recognizable within a text including how thinking is influenced. Additionally, [146] further criticizes framing that with media direct effect theory which do not consider the independence of the audiences in terms of meaning making. Although framing suggests the notion of dominant meaning which consists of the problem definition, causal interpretation, evaluative and treatment

interpretation, it is arguable as to whether people could recall their own experiences and facts that were not given in the text to decode meaning. Over all, audiences are not inactive receivers who may absorb framed media texts. Scheufele [147, p.117-118] also states that “even when researchers undertake experimental studies, they do not exactly show how and why news frames influence audiences’ or readers’ behavior, attitude and cognitive”. In addition to this, [209] points out that the audiences are perceived by framing theory as passive to be against the persistent, pervasive, and emotionally manipulative.

Beside the above critiques, there are also recent limitations and critiques linked with the framing theory. Ytterstad [210] study on framing global warming found that the role of implied meanings and the wider ethical implications of communication particularly in the situations of universal issues like climate change are frequently ignored by framing theory. In addition, [155] state that this narrow focus on manifest interactions can result in a diminished sensitivity to systematic exclusion and power dynamics in media discourse.

Moreover, [211, 212] described that media framing theory’s polysemic nature and various approaches in different fields have led to uncertainties in its explanation and operationalization. Similarly, [207] criticize that framing analysis is overly standardized, which uses a universal solution model to various contexts and issues. Thus, its development has been vague and questioned. A review conducted by [213] state that media framing theory is relied more on verbal data, ignoring the analysis of visual data. Thus, this limitation restraint the media message in-depth comprehension. Correspondingly, [143] confirms that there has been a priority of literal representations over visual conventions or techniques of production. And, this has limited the ability for substantial examination and analyzing critically. Also, [214] indicate that frames are treated as static in media framing theories and this underrating their dynamism. In addition, there is confusion in terms of how the public perception and emotional influences leading framing changes are shaped by the media. Furthermore, [147] criticize framing theory in a way that it depends on display interactions which can lead to a reduced recognition of systematic exclusion. In addition, systematic or dominant power structures might be disregarded that would limit its efficiency in examining the difficulties of the power of media and politics. Eventually, [210] also criticizes the media framing paradigm in terms of lacking anthropocentrism, a strategic approach to truth and an underestimation of the significance of the underlying meaning. In addition, he argued that issues which are complex like global warming has decreased them to planned challenges rather than responding ethics related challenges.

In terms of methodology, framing is also liable to criticisms. Various studies indicate that there is a shortage of common and standardized methods for identifying and analyzing frames. In spite of the fact that different methods are developed such as content analysis and experimental designs, a consensus has not been reached on the most appropriate methodology for studying framing effects [208, 215]. Thus, this inconsistency has led to make generalizations on the findings of the studies. According to [215,216], for

example, there are no standardized methods and it is common to see studies employ both quantitative content analysis and qualitative methods. And, this has made difficult to compare the results and draw broader conclusions. Besides this, there is also difficulty in identifying the effects of framing from other communication effects including persuasion and agenda-setting [208]. Additionally, framing is also criticized in terms of cultural bias as it is studied more by US based scholars and institutions in the field. This had led to lack of diversity in the theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches employed in framing research and this would limit the generalizability of the findings to other continents and cultural contexts [217].

The above literature indicates that the framing research has been widely used in media and communication research. It is a crucial theory in terms of providing insights on how the media molds and shapes the discourse of the public. However, it suffers different limitations and criticisms as it was stated in the above literature. Theoretical limitations such as lack of having a comprehensive and unified definition and the neglect of cultural factors are crucial challenges to the application of the theory in all contexts. In addition, absence of consistent methods and the complexity of discerning framing effects from alternative communication effects make the use of framing theory more challenging in media studies. Moreover, responding to these challenges will require a more integrated and culturally sensitive approach to framing research as well as the development of more robust methodological tools for studying framing effects. Consequently, it can be deduced that critically investigating the limitations and drawbacks is significant to respond and avoid the media text biases so as to have and portray a deeper insight about social issues like human trafficking.

## **1.9 Summary of the Chapter**

Chapter one has presented the conceptual and theoretical frameworks underpinning this research. Firstly, it made a clarification regarding the key conceptual frameworks of the study. It began by clearly stating the scholarly and widely acceptable definitions of human trafficking. In addition, it discussed the extent and the severity of human trafficking in the global arena, including the causes and factors contributing to it. Besides this, the chapter also emphasized the consequences and the impact of human trafficking globally.

Meanwhile, the chapter also details the extent and magnitude, sources, and impacts of human trafficking in Kazakhstan. While discussing all the topics noted above, Kazakhstan's policies, initiatives and legislative frameworks to combat human trafficking were discussed. The chapter also mainly explored the various laws, provisions, initiatives that the government of Kazakhstan is taking to mitigate and combat human trafficking in the country.

Furthermore, the chapter also discussed in detail the extent and magnitude of human trafficking in Ethiopia. It tried to explore internal and external trafficking in the country by citing various literature and prior studies. Additionally, as the country is highly affected by human trafficking, the root causes and factors of the problem are discussed in detail by

stating the previous empirical studies and current literatures on the problem. Also, human trafficking has brought several consequences to the victims and to the country in general these days. So, the consequence of human trafficking in the country is also addressed in this chapter. Besides, the chapter discussed the Ethiopian policies, initiatives, and efforts to combat human trafficking by showing different explanations.

The chapter also discussed the role of media in relation to human trafficking. It clearly stated that media plays a crucial role in influencing the opinion of the public and policy decision makers. It aimed to explain the role of media advocacy in addressing misunderstandings and confusion about human trafficking. Furthermore, the chapter in the media and human trafficking section discussed how the contemporary media portray HT in their coverage, particularly how the media focused on sex trafficking while covering the issue by demonstrating different empirical studies conducted so far. In addition, it also tried to present how the contemporary media, particularly the newspapers played a significant role in creating and raising the awareness of the public regarding human trafficking. This chapter is supported by empirical studies conducted previously, which demonstrate the print media's capacity to foster societal awareness and combat human trafficking. Most importantly, it also tried to show the gaps in the previous conducted researches on how the print media covered human trafficking, including in sources usage and others.

On top of that, this chapter presents the theoretical frameworks, mainly the framing theory that underpin the current study. It discussed how the framing theory has been applied to political science, communication, and linguistics, particularly it discussed how it was mainly employed in media studies. It underscored that framing theory is crucial for this type of research in making an issue like human trafficking salient. In addition, the theoretical framework in this chapter discussed in detail the term framing theory and media framing theories and how different studies assessed the media framing impact and influence in various fields and frameworks. Moreover, the different media framing types were also discussed in this chapter, including generic, issue specific, episodic and thematic frames. Most importantly, the chapter discussed the five generic frames of Semetko and Valkenburg and how they were applied to explore the media portrayal of issues like human trafficking. Besides these frames, diagnostic and prognostic frames were also discussed, as these frames are important for the current research. The contextual factors that affect the framing process and strategies, particularly the internal and external factors were discussed in detail as they shape and affect the media framing process and strategies. The chapter also presented the various critiques of framing theories.

Eventually, the combination of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks gives a systematic foundation for the analysis, which is empirical that follows. The following chapter is based on these frameworks by outlining the study methodology, including philosophical foundation, methods and design, instruments of data collection, sampling techniques and sampling methods, methods of coding, and frame analysis.

## **2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

### **2.1 Philosophical Foundation of the Study**

It is commonly acknowledged that studies are built upon certain philosophical foundations to gain a better insight about the nature of the reality and how knowledge about that reality can be achieved. These philosophical foundations are often reflected in terms of ontology and epistemology that determines methodological choice in any research [218]. Correspondingly, [219] point out that ontology and epistemology are associated with methodologies of studies by influencing the study's choice of approach, strategy and design. Ontology and epistemology are widely recognized concepts in social science research, and ontology refers to the central premises about the constitutive elements of social reality, and epistemology is also a philosophical foundation deals with how knowledge about the reality is produced [220-223].

From the ontological philosophical foundation, this study is based on social constructivism, which dictates and sees reality as a socially constructed one rather than as an objective interpretation [224-227]. Concerning media and communication studies, the way in which the media report does not merely reflect events but it also contributes to the creation of meanings and analysis of issues. Hence, the way the media frame and present a complex issue like human trafficking is crucial in influencing and shaping the public's perception and the discourse in general.

Based on the aforementioned philosophical foundation, the current study understands that through framing process, media can play a crucial role in influencing the understanding of the public regarding social issues like human trafficking. It is suggested by framing theory that media including newspapers select and focus on a certain aspect of reality when covering a multifaceted issues like human trafficking. Therefore, the above mentioned ontological philosophical foundation gives the perspectives for assessing how the two newspapers constructed meanings regarding the human trafficking issue.

This study has employed mixed-method research design, primarily quantitative content analysis and qualitative in-depth interviews as supplementary. In this regard, quantitative content analysis was employed to systematically analyze the newspapers' framing of human trafficking and qualitative in-depth interviews provides the contextual insights concerning the routines of newsrooms, the selection of framing and the institutional factors that impacts the framing process.

Researchers agree that triangulation helps to improve the reliability and validity of research findings by merging various methods, data collection instruments, investigators and theories to research similar phenomena. Triangulation is a research methodological approach that includes using several methodologies and sources of data to enhance the validity and credibility of research findings. Triangulation is rooted in the thought that no single research method can entirely capture the complexity of a phenomenon and thus, combining and using various approaches can give a more a comprehensive understanding by employing both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies [228].

**2.2 Quantitative Research Methodology:** It is a systematic approach that relies on statistical and numerical analysis to analyze phenomena. It is based in the positivist paradigm, which assumes that reality is objective and it can be measured, quantified and analyzed using systematic methods [229, 230]. Moreover, quantitative research primary goal is to test hypothesis, predict outcomes and establish generalizable patterns across population [231].

**2.3 Qualitative Research Methodology:** Pyo J. et al. [232] explain that qualitative research methodology is especially crucial for investigating unfamiliar subjects, giving comprehensive explanations and offering novel insights on multifaceted issues. Likewise, [231] state that unlike quantitative methodology, qualitative research methodology explores new scientific studies, raises inquiries and develops theories through inductive reasoning. Besides this, while qualitative research methodology uses case-based models to abstract from individual characteristics, quantitative research methodology employs variable-based models to abstract from individual cases. In terms of generalization process, qualitative research implementing a bottom-up methodology while quantitative research primarily employing a top-down approach [233].

Various scholars and studies show that mixed method approaches combine quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of multifaceted issues. In spite of the fact that there are some disagreements, the mixed approaches have become important in the global study since the 1980s and 1990s. The combination provides broader insights and increased confidence in findings [234]. For example, recent research in Ethiopia on communication during hostilities and strategic communication practices have employed mixed- method approaches to obtain holistic findings. Kiflu and Tekare [16], for instance, used quantitative content analysis and qualitative in-depth interviews as supplementary to explore the practices of public relations and strategic communication during the Tigray war.

These research methodologies are especially crucial for capturing both the prevalence and the meaning of media frames. Several researches indicate that quantitative and qualitative research methodologies enable researchers to measure patterns and tendencies while also examining the nuanced qualitative features of media contents. Mixed approaches have been employed in recent media framing studies, indicating their usefulness in capturing the multifaceted nature of framing processes. Research conducted by [235] on framing of adult education in the Tanzanian print media employed mixed method approaches particularly content analysis and key informant interviews to assess how Tanzanian newspapers framed adult education. The findings revealed that the newspapers predominantly focused on the positive aspects of adult education initiatives and indicate that balanced portrayal that responds the challenges and complexities are essential. Furthermore, a study on language framing of climate change in three Indonesian online media used mixed method approach, combining discourse analysis and survey methods to examine how language features in online media contribute to reader apathy

toward climate change. The study found that a correlation between news consumption frequency and apathetic attitudes with specific language features triggering apathy [236].

Research on framing of protests in China, France and the U.S. employed mixed method approach using network analysis and content analysis to examine variations in media framing of protests across different countries. The research indicated the geopolitics, protest goals and actions roles in influencing and shaping media frames [237]. Moreover, a news media framing of trans homicide between trans men and trans women in the U.S. from 2016 to 2022 employed mixed method analysis of news articles and interviews, indicated that most articles refrained from delegitimizing victims, some officer-engaged shooting cases featured narratives that shifted blame onto victims [238]. Framing COVID-19 preprint research also employed a mixed method with the combination of experimental and qualitative methods to investigate how the framing of scientific uncertainty in news articles about preprint research influenced public attitudes. The study revealed that hedged language in news articles led to less favorable attitudes toward vaccines and reduced trust in scientists and media [239].

Meanwhile, mixed-method approaches have also been used in media framing of human trafficking researches. Studies show that employing quantitative and qualitative research methods can provide a comprehensive view of media framing. For instance, a study on how generated mediation affects local news framing of trafficking victims employed both quantitative and qualitative analyses to show gender and racial differences in media portrayal, advocating for an ethics of care journalism approach [10]. Similarly, research assessing on media framing of human trafficking in British, Dutch and Serbian media employed a mixed-method approach to investigate the media product, its producers and its effects, and the findings demonstrated that human trafficking was mainly framed as criminal legal system issue in British, Dutch and Serbian media [240]. Furthermore, a recent study conducted on twittering child trafficking used a mixed method to investigate the portrayal of child trafficking discourse on Twitter combined with corpus-based methodologies with qualitative discourse analysis to reveal both the explicit and implicit depictions of the issue [241].

In summary, the above literature reveals that the combination of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies is crucial in media framing studies to capture the multifaceted nature of framing processes. As mentioned above, the mixed method approaches help researchers to quantify patterns and trends while also exploring the nuanced ways in which media frames are constructed and interpreted. The application of mixed research methodologies will continue to be important for comprehending the changing and multifaceted essence of media framing since the media ecosystem has continued changing.

Meanwhile, quantitative and qualitative research methodologies are also significant and influential tools in understanding the multifaceted nature of media framing of human trafficking. Studies have been able to demonstrate the prominent frames, sources, themes, and prejudices in media portrayal as well as the relevance for policy and advocacy efforts

by combining the strengths of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Therefore, this research has employed quantitative research method to gather data from the newspapers about the extent, themes, sources of human trafficking stories, types of human trafficking, media functions, legal and policy framing while covering human trafficking. And qualitative methodology was employed to provide contextual insights about the newsroom routines while covering human trafficking.

## **2.4 Instruments of Data Collection**

The data collection instruments that were used for this study are quantitative content analysis and qualitative in-depth interviews. Quantitative content analysis has been used as a research tool for many studies on a variety of subjects and topics. In addition, this systematic data collection instrument is used to quantify and analyze the presence, meanings and relationships of certain words, themes, sources or concepts within media content. It has been used to study various issues focused on how the media can influence perceptions of objects or individuals. It is also widely used in media studies to examine different subjects including media framing, highlighting a structured way to investigate how media construct and convey messages.

Several scholars have defined and explained quantitative content analysis. Huxley [242] explains that quantitative content analysis deals with systematic coding of content whether it is written, visual or oral to quantify the data and the process involves developing coding schemes, testing for interrater reliability and performing analysis to ensure reliability and the validity of the data. Furthermore, quantitative content analysis deals with systematic categorization and counting of content elements whereas qualitative content analysis on interpreting meanings and themes [243].

Quantitative content analysis has been widely employed in media and communication studies to methodologically investigate media framing patterns and contents. A recent study by [16] employed quantitative content analysis which was supplemented by in-depth interviews to explore public relations and strategic communications during the war in Tigray, Ethiopia. Similarly, the current study primarily employed quantitative content analysis which is supported by in-depth interviews to enhance and validate findings.

Various studies have employed quantitative content analysis (Quant CA) in media framing believing that it provides a systematic and objective way to identify and analyze the frames employed in media coverage of issues. For instance, [169,244] employed quantitative content analysis to analyze the media portrayal of political events and social movements since it provides evidence-based findings into media framing. A study conducted on COVID-19 portrayal on Twitter in two leading newspapers in Germany employed quantitative content analysis to assess the textual visual frames employed in 2479 tweets. The study revealed that nine news frames such as politics and instructions, update information, economic impact and social impact and analyzed the semiotic signs in the visuals [245]. In addition, a study on framing climate solutions in U.S. based outlets

employed an inductive quantitative content analysis, particularly cluster analysis to identify three previously unexplained news frames. Adoption over mitigation was the most dominant frame focused while the least prevalent frame focused on mitigation and moral responsibility [246]. Correspondingly, research on Malaysian media coverage of the 15<sup>th</sup> General Election employed quantitative content analysis to investigate the mainstream and independent media framing practices. The study found crucial varieties and similarities in the framing practices employed by the media outlets that the media predominantly focused on morality and responsibility frames [244].

Recent media framing researches on human trafficking and related issues have also employed quantitative content analysis. Rosas-Moreno [10] study on how gender mediation affects local news framing of human trafficking victims employed quantitative content analysis. The quantitative analysis revealed that there were gender differences in reporting as well as racial differences in reported on trafficking actors. Also, [247] also used mixed method approach, particularly quantitative content analysis was employed to analyze 2672 UK newspapers that were collated from 2013 to 2022 to investigate how social representations of modern slavery and immigration become entangled in newspaper media. Further, [141] also employed quantitative content analysis to systematically measure frequency and representation aspects in the media in a four-year span of U.S. news reports of law enforcement and judicial actions against sex trafficking. And, a study on newspapers' coverage of human trafficking in Nigeria also used quantitative content analysis to examine the frequency of coverage, prominence, forms of coverage and sources cited in the selected newspapers.

In this study, content analysis was used to gather data from The Astana Times and The Ethiopian Herald newspapers on the extent, themes, sources employed in trafficking coverage. It was also employed to analyze the types of trafficking predominantly portrayed, the media functions in such coverage, the kinds of framing techniques employed, and the newspapers' legal and policy framing. The study has utilized a strict-literal content analysis method to the newspapers framing of trafficking, applying a coding sheet adopted from the theory of framing [148,183]. In each frame, explicit Yes/No indicators were used to extract what was mentioned in the text explicitly. This has helped so that the study would be objective, reliable and replicable.

Although content analysis is an appropriate data collection instrument for studying media coverage and framing of issues, it has also weaknesses. Studies indicate that quantitative content analysis frequently investigates on the content of media coverage of issues, however, it ignores the media organization particularly the journalists' role in influencing and shaping the portrayal. A [132] study on framing the problem of sex trafficking in the U.S. reveal that crime-focused frames dominated the portrayal whereas the role of the media organizations and the journalists in choosing and framing the stories were not explored in the analysis.

Likewise, [133] research on representation of trafficking in persons in UK national newspapers indicate that the analysis did not explore the role of the news organizations

and journalists while the official sources dominated the coverage of human trafficking. Furthermore, quantitative content analysis is also criticized by its emphasis only on the manifest content which only deals with the directly stated and easily observable content in a text while it neglects the latent content, which is the underlying and implicit meaning in a text. For example, [248] study on print media coverage of child mistreatment in Bangladesh indicate that the quantitative content analysis showed the dominance of episodic framing. However, the societal and structural factors contributing to the issue were not explored in the analysis. Additionally, quantitative content analysis is also criticized for prioritizing official sources and dominant frames while disregarding alternate opinions and representations. In the earlier study by [12] on human trafficking in the U.S., Uk and Canada found that official sources and crime-focused frames dominated in the media coverage whereas alternate opinions and from survivors and activists were not included.

Similarly, [249] study on sex trafficking in Thai media found that the voices of the victims and advocates were understated and these constraints the ability to understand the comprehensive perspectives on human trafficking and hinders the potential solutions to the combat the problem. In addition, it is also argued that quantitative content analysis frequently focuses on large samples of media portrayal to ensure representativeness. But biases that limit the validity of the findings can be introduced while selecting these samples. A study conducted by [140] reveal that in the U.S. newspapers coverage of sex trafficking, crime frames and official sources were prevalent. However, the study was limited to major newspapers and omitted regional and smaller media outlets that may give various perspectives. A study conducted by [133] show that stereotypical representation of victims and traffickers were dominated in the UK media. However, the selected sample was only limited to national newspapers that ignored the variety of coverage in the community-based and local newspapers.

In addition to the aforementioned limitations, quantitative content analysis is limited by many other factors. These are lack of thematic and contextual depth, an overrepresentation of certain types of trafficking and insufficient comparative and longitudinal analysis. Additional limitations include the neglect of visual, cultural and ethical considerations as well as the absence of audience reception analysis. Moreover, it also suffers from a lack of transparency in coding and measurement and fails to account for historical context [14,133,140,141,249,250].

Thus, to address the gaps and the limitations of quantitative content analysis, this study employed in- depth interviews as supplementary data collection instrument so as to substantiate the study and obtain adequate information and details that quantitative content analysis alone could not provide.

Knott et al. [251] note that in-depth interviews are a versatile form of qualitative data collection instrument where individuals explain how they understand and interpret the world around them. Besides, in-depth interviews as a most popular qualitative research method helps to enhance a thorough understanding instead of presenting abstract or

factual information [252]. Similarly, [253] state that in-depth interviews help researchers to explore the lived experiences and perspectives of individuals. Meanwhile, the significance of in-depth interviews has also been stated by critical realist researchers though it has a problem regarding methodological guidance for formatting questions [254].

In the context of media studies, in-depth interviews play a decisive role in data gathering process from key informants such as journalists, editors, policymakers, and the public. Besides quantitative content analysis, in-depth interviews can be used as a crucial supplementary, especially in comprehending how journalists and editors frame a story. Studies indicate that though content analysis provides insights into the manifest content of media messages, it frequently lacks the depth and context that can be gained through direct engagement with the creators of those messages. In story framing, in-depth interviews with the journalists and editors can provide a deeper understanding of the decision-making process, professional roles and contextual factors that shape the story framing. For instance, a study conducted on frames and journalists' roles in Chinese reporting on HIV show that study 1 employed in-depth interviews with journalists to contextualize content analytical findings, shedding light on how words and visuals contribute to news framing and journalistic role performance [255]. Also, a study on news framing and in-depth interview used semi-structured interviews with international and Korean journalists to investigate their point of views on news framing and their professional practices [256].

Hence, this study has used in- depth interviews in order to collect and get better and deeper understanding of how stories of human trafficking are framed and how the journalists and editor give salience to the issue. Qualitative interviews were conducted only with journalists and editors of The Ethiopian Herald newspaper who reported and edited on the human trafficking issues. Due to involuntary participation, interviews were not conducted with The Astana Times newspaper journalists. In-depth interview has also helped to show clearly some factors such as newsroom routines, editorial priorities and socio-political constraints that shape the media coverage of human trafficking that are neglected by content analysis in The Ethiopian Herald newspaper. Eventually, in- depth interviews with journalists and editors were qualitatively interpreted to provide contextual insights and explanations only.

To sum up, quantitative content analysis and qualitative in-depth interviews are crucial tools for exploring media coverage and media framing of issues. As mentioned above, quantitative content analysis provides crucial strengths regarding objectivity, reliability and generalizability. However, it has also some drawbacks that has to be addressed to enhance the validity and comprehensiveness of the research findings. By responding to the limitations, it can be gained a more nuanced understanding on how issues like human trafficking are framed in the contemporary newspapers and how these framing influence public perceptions and policy responses. Besides quantitative content analysis, qualitative in-depth interviews is also a significant data collection tool for

understanding the journalists' and editors' perspectives especially when it is used with quantitative content analysis. As noted above, in-depth interviews can increase the depth and validity of media framing studies by offering comprehensive insights into the decision-making processes and professional standards that influence story framing. All in all, both quantitative content analysis and in-depth interviews are powerful tools in media framing researches.

## **2.5 Sampling Method of the Study**

This research includes two subjects mainly the selection of English language newspapers: The Astana Times from Kazakhstan and The Ethiopian Herald from Ethiopia. The two newspapers from the two countries were selected purposefully, believing that they cover political, social and economic issues. In addition, they were selected due to their distribution, readership, and issue frequency. The two English newspapers have high publication and distribution rates compared to other English version newspapers in the countries. The Ethiopian Herald is a daily English language newspaper which is owned by the government, and The Astana Times is not officially a government owned outlet but it works with strong government affiliations and influence, and it functions as a daily news outlet in its digital format and the print edition is issued biweekly.

### **2.5.1 The Ethiopian Herald (Ethiopian Herald)**

The Ethiopia Herald, established in 1943 is a state-owned daily English newspaper and it was established and intended to serve the state as the sole way to provide information and propaganda for overseas readers [257]. Various studies show that The Ethiopian Herald newspaper is the oldest English language newspaper, and it mainly focuses on political, economic and social issues. In addition, since its establishment, The Ethiopian Herald newspaper has continuously covered through coverage of both internal and global affairs and it has become a historical record of key moments in the nation's journey [257]. Furthermore, the establishment and development of the newspaper indicate bigger media policy shifts in Ethiopia, from its commencement under early imperial media policies to the implementation of development journalism frameworks and later political control mechanisms. Editorial changes often coincide with regime shifts affecting content focus and journalistic roles [258,259].

The newspaper has played a crucial role in influencing and shaping the public discourse by reinforcing the narratives of the state and also contributing to media diversity in language and reach. Its influence extends to framing national development issues and ethnic conflict, impacting societal debate and political participation [260]. However, the newspaper is criticized for being a government mouthpiece that often reflects official narratives and limiting opposition representations which constrained media pluralism and journalistic independence [261].

The Ethiopian Herald newspaper was purposefully selected as a subject in this study due to its comprehensive coverage of political, economic and social issues, including

critical topics such as human trafficking. Moreover, the newspaper was selected for its daily distribution under the assumption that serious issues like human trafficking in the country receive consistent portrayal and priority.

### **2.5.2 The Astana Times**

The Astana Times is Kazakhstan's leading English -language newspaper which was founded in November 2010 on the eve of the summit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) which was held in Astana. It is a source of information about Kazakhstan and Central Asian countries for global decision makers, expats and the attentive global public interested in current political and economic affairs, modern culture and the history of the country. The newspaper covers the full range of issues in Kazakhstan from local human-interest stories to visits by heads of state. The reporters work on an international scale covering the economy, security, business, culture and government news [262].

Secondly, Reporters and editors of The Ethiopian Herald newspaper were also involved. Scheufele [147] claims that the common limitation of framing research relates to the neglect of frame building process and factors that affect this process. Thus, to minimize this limitation, the study included reporters and editors of The Ethiopian Herald newspaper who had higher involvement in reporting and editing human trafficking stories. Although an attempt was made to interview journalists of The Astana Times newspaper, they were not voluntary. Thus, the qualitative data that were collected from The Ethiopian Herald newspaper were only used to enrich the interpretation of content analysis findings and to provide contextual insights about the editorial routines regarding the coverage of human trafficking instead of comparison.

### **2.6 Sampling Techniques**

Various scholars and researchers note that choosing an appropriate sampling technique is important for research. Khan N. [263] state that sampling techniques are crucial component of study since they importantly impact the validity of the study findings and conducting a rigorously detailed study is almost impossible. As this research intended to study how The Astana Times and The Ethiopian Herald English language newspapers framed human trafficking issues, it employed non-probability sampling techniques. According to [264], non-probability sampling deals with choosing participants through the researchers' judgement instead of randomization. This sampling technique is regarded as the ideal due to the fact that it involves all subjects' representation of the whole population.

From the non-probability sampling techniques, it has employed purposive sampling. According to [265], purposive sampling deals with choosing participants according to the criteria established pertinent to the study objectives. Similarly, [266] state that the appropriate implementation of purposive sampling can improve the quality and the relevance of the data in both quantitative and qualitative researches. Thus, this study purposefully selected The Astana Times and The Ethiopian Herald newspapers due to the

fact that they cover different themes including political, economic and social issues like human trafficking. As stated in the Literature review, human trafficking is the main concern of these and other themes. Besides, the further criterion for selecting the two newspapers are regular publication and distribution, dominance, extensive domestic and global reach, ownership and substantial organizational support and online availability.

### **2.6.1 Time frame**

It is apparent that human trafficking is a global concern and severe problem. Hence, it would be unfair to establish a time frame for obtaining a higher number of stories dealing with human trafficking since it happens now and again. Levine and Smith [267] argue that short-term frames may not capture the long-term consequences of victims of human trafficking including social and psychological outcomes. Similarly, [268] study analyzed data from 2010-2020 and revealed that the significance of a decade-dataset to identify trends and patterns in victim demographics and trafficking methods. However, in this study, the researcher intended to fix a time frame for looking stories that were published starting from September 2020-September 2025. The reason for selecting this time frame was to obtain recent data on human trafficking. Further, this time period might correspond to the assumption of getting higher number of stories where most of the critical issues concerning human trafficking would be raised in the media due to the internal conflict, political instability mainly in Ethiopia. This time frame in Ethiopia was chosen due to the fact that the country has been affected by internal armed conflict, political volatility, humanitarian disaster and information blockade. As a result, this crucially affected the human trafficking media narratives and social susceptibilities. Recent studies on public relations and strategic communication also explored similar conflict communication situations during this period [16]. Unlike Kazakhstan where human trafficking is perpetrated by organized criminal traffickers' networks, the Ethiopian context between 2020-2025 was largely affected by internal armed conflict, political volatility, internal displacement of people which are the factors that may influence human trafficking media patterns in a different way. Accordingly, 52 editions of The Astana Times and 37 editions of The Ethiopian Herald newspapers within the time period of five years (sixty months) were taken for the analysis.

### **2.6.2 Story Selection**

This study included all types of stories from The Astana Times and The Ethiopian Herald newspapers. It included all issues of the two newspapers related to human trafficking stories. The stories were selected from the online pages of the two newspapers, and meeting the media organization particularly, The Ethiopian Herald newspaper. Hence, all news, features, editorials, commentaries and interviews were included in the study. These types of stories were coded whether they mentioned human trafficking and related issues. Consequently, 89 stories written for five years (from September 2020- September 2025) in the two newspapers were included in the study.

### **2.6.3 Unit of Analysis**

The unit of analysis in this study includes individual stories on human trafficking and related ones which were published in The Astana Times and The Ethiopian Herald newspapers from September 2020 to September 2025. In addition, the unit of analysis includes all human trafficking and related stories published in the newspapers such as news, feature, commentary, interviews and others. Each human trafficking stories selected from the newspapers constituted an individual unit for coding and analysis, employing the predefined and prepared coding sheet, which was adopted from previous human trafficking studies and modified for the purpose of the current research. In this study, two coders were involved in the coding process so as to assess each story of human trafficking starting from the headline of the stories to the whole text. Finally, this study excluded written stories that dealt with legal migration.

### **2.6.4 Reporters and Editors**

This study employed in -depth interviews with six reporters and two editors of The Ethiopian Herald newspapers and they were selected purposefully. The selection was used in order to involve reporters who had written most of the analyzed stories and editors who had edited the analyzed stories. The researcher used the frequency of the names mentioned on the bi- line section to select reporters and editors, particularly The Ethiopian Herald newspaper. Besides, the editors who involved more in editing the stories were selected by contacting the chief -editor of The Ethiopian Herald newspaper. An interview guide was developed for conducting interviews (See Appendix D). The interview guide consisted of various questions on reporters and editors on the human trafficking portrayal throughout the study period.

### **2.7 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The data that were collected by using content analysis were coded accordingly. The formats of the questions and coding protocol for the content analysis were adapted from the previous studies of media coverage and framing (See Appendix B). The current study mainly employed quantitative content analysis to assess the newspapers' framing of human trafficking in terms of certain patterns. Additionally, it employed qualitative in-depth interviews with reporters and editors of The Ethiopian Herald newspaper so as to get contextual insights about the editorial practices and the contexts that influences media framing.

The primary analysis is based on quantitative content analysis of the newspapers' coverage of human trafficking whereas the qualitative in-depth interview data are employed to provide contextual insights. Hence, the quantitative results for each newspaper are presented, analyzed and discussed within each subtopic. The qualitative results are discussed and analyzed in a separate section to supplement and support the findings of the quantitative results, particularly The Ethiopian Herald newspaper. The data that were collected by using in- depth interviews were discussed to enrich explanations

and provide contextual insights. Most importantly, the researcher has connected the findings of the study with theoretical frameworks employed in this study.

## **2.8 Categories of Items and Definitions in the Coding Sheet**

As previously stated, this research aimed to study how The Astana Times and The Ethiopian Herald newspapers framed human trafficking stories for the past five years (September 2020 to September 2025). Moreover, it intended to analyze the dominant themes, sources and frames of the written stories. The written stories were coded accordingly in relation to a number of variables including story information, type, theme, types of trafficking, sources, frames and their types, media functions.

Story type means whether the story is presented in terms of news, editorial, commentary, feature and interviews. Furthermore, theme was identified as the main message of the story. Under this category, there are extent and magnitude of human trafficking, causes and factors, consequences, solutions, legal issues, international dimensions and others. Sources of the stories are the origin of information for the coverage of human trafficking stories (government officials, non-government organizations and international organizations, police officers, victims, victim families/relatives/friends/,traffickers,community,members,experts/researchers/advocates , potential migrants, media channels and others. The other two parts of the coding sheet included framing and their types, media functions and policy and legal (See Appendix C)

### **2.8.1 Analysis of Frames**

Semetko and Valkenburg [148] has developed a sequence of questions that coders answer using ‘yes’ or ‘no’ format so as to measure frames. These series of questions are crucial for having a comprehensive understanding on how the public perception and opinions are influenced by media contents. Semetko and Valkenburg [148] questions are designed to identify the presence of specific frames with media contents such as responsibility, morality, economic, human interest and conflict frames. Hence, this study adopted the questions that were developed by [148]. Some minor changes were made on the questions to measure whether frames of conflict, human interest, economic, morality and attribution of responsibility were available in the human trafficking stories in the newspapers. Additionally, the researcher has developed a range of similar questions relied on the review literatures by following the Semetko and Valkenburg’s questions to gauge the existence of frames of diagnostic, prognostic, solution, empathy, and educative. In a parallel case, alternative ‘yes’ or ‘no’ questions were formulated to analyze the media functions and policy framing of the newspapers carried out in portraying human trafficking.

### **2.8.2 Coding Process**

The researcher trained two doctoral students in order that they code written stories of the newspapers that dealt with the human trafficking issues. Having given training, the coders collected the coding sheet and coding book containing with lists of questions and guides respectively. The coders were given training and instruction on how to code the

stories in a strict literal way so that they would not infer or interpret latent meanings. This method of coding helped the study to achieve objectivity, replicability and ensure high intercoder reliability.

Moreover, Manual method of content analysis was used to examine how The Astana Times and The Ethiopian Herald newspapers framed human trafficking stories from September 2020 to September 2025. From each newspaper, stories were read and identified attentively and systematic coding system was employed to examine the story type, story themes, types of human trafficking, sources and the types of frames, media functions and policy and legal framing. This study employed the coding sheet depending on the literature of framing, incorporating [8], [148] and communication researches on human trafficking.

Stories that stated trafficking whether as main focus or within the scope of political, social and broader security discussions were integrated in the sample to make sure that the whole depiction of human trafficking discourses even human trafficking is mentioned briefly or in passing by. This is due to the fact that the objective of this study is also to explore how human trafficking issue was the agenda of the media not only when it got high coverage only.

The lists of questions for the coding sheet were developed from the literature and the current issue of human trafficking in the global arena, national and regional levels. In addition to this, the questions that dealt with framing and the existence of a frame in the stories were adopted from previously made framing researches. Lastly, the coders filled in the coding sheet by replying ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the lists of questions.

## **2.9 Reliability and Validity of Coding**

It is real that research is reliable if the researcher must make confirm that the study is systematic, objective or both. The consistency between different coders is known as reliability. One of the most important steps that must be carried out by any researcher who uses content analysis as a research method is to test the reliability of the coders. According to [269], inter-coder reliability can be improved by precisely specifying variables and coding categories and break down the coding process into smaller steps.

Inter coder reliability therefore was measured by using Ole Holsti’s formula. This formula is one of the methods employed to calculate inter-coder reliability. It is employed by researchers when they require a clear and straightforward method to assess the degree of agreement between coders. Coleman [270] notes that the formula is simple to apply and interpret and making it accessible for researchers who may not have advanced statistical training. As a result, this study tested inter-coder reliability using Ole Holsti’s formula, which is:

Reliability =  $2 \cdot m / (N1 + N2)$  where;

m is the number of coding decisions upon which the two coders reached agreement  
N1 and N2 represent the total count of coding decisions by the first and second coder respectively. Thus, the inter-coder reliability across all categories lies between 90% to 100%.

In addition to reliability, the validity can be assured from the categorizations of pertinent issues on the coding sheet as well. As noted by [271] various methods can be used to assure the validity of categorization in coding sheets for studies. Similarly, [272] state that a thorough understanding of the theoretical frameworks and the constructs involved as well as careful selection and definition of categories would help to avoid irrelevant variance. In connection with this study, the aim of examining the extent to which how The Astana Times and The Ethiopian Herald newspapers portrayed and framed human trafficking would be indicators of the validity since the essential points in each category were rationally developed and included.

### **2.10 Prevalence of Frames**

The prevalence of a frame was decided based on the following calculation: The number of 'yes' was divided by the total number of questions under that frame. The coefficient of frame existence varies from 0.00 to 1.00. It was assumed that a specific frame existed if the coefficient was more than half (more than 0.5).

### **2.11 Summary of the Chapter**

The research methodology and design were applied in this chapter to examine how the two selected Kazakhstan and Ethiopian English version newspapers, The Astana Times and The Ethiopian Herald framed human trafficking. The current study used both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. The chapter presented that quantitative content analysis was predominantly used as a main research methodology by involving a systematic content analysis of the two newspapers' human trafficking articles published with a period of 60 months from September 2020 to September 2025.

It further discussed that the articles that were selected, were coded based on the coding sheet and prepared criteria in alignment of the theoretical framework, which is the framing theory. Additionally, the chapter also presented the coding process, and it details that the process of coding is based on identifying the extent of coverage, story type, themes, trafficking types, sources of stories, frame types, media functions, and policy and legal framing. The chapter indicated that the quantitative method is used to compare the two newspapers based on the frame analysis.

Furthermore, the chapter showed that qualitative in-depth interviews were held with reporters and editors of The Ethiopian Herald newspaper. It was employed to provide insights regarding the newspaper's editorial routine. The chapter also discussed that the interview that was held with only The Ethiopian Herald newspaper was due to the fact that The Astana Times newspaper journalists' lack of consent to be interviewed. However, the chapter emphasized that using qualitative in-depth interviews from The Ethiopian Herald newspaper is crucial for an explanatory depth and providing insights into framing of human trafficking within the newspaper.

The chapter also discussed the sampling techniques, instruments of data collection, story selection, time frame, selected reporters and editors, coding categories and process, reliability and validity, and prevalence of frames. By mainly using quantitative content

analysis and supporting by qualitative in-depth interviews, the current study adopts a complementary methodological system that enhances the analytical precision and contextual understanding regarding framing of human trafficking. Lastly, the next chapter discusses the data presentation, analysis, and discussion.

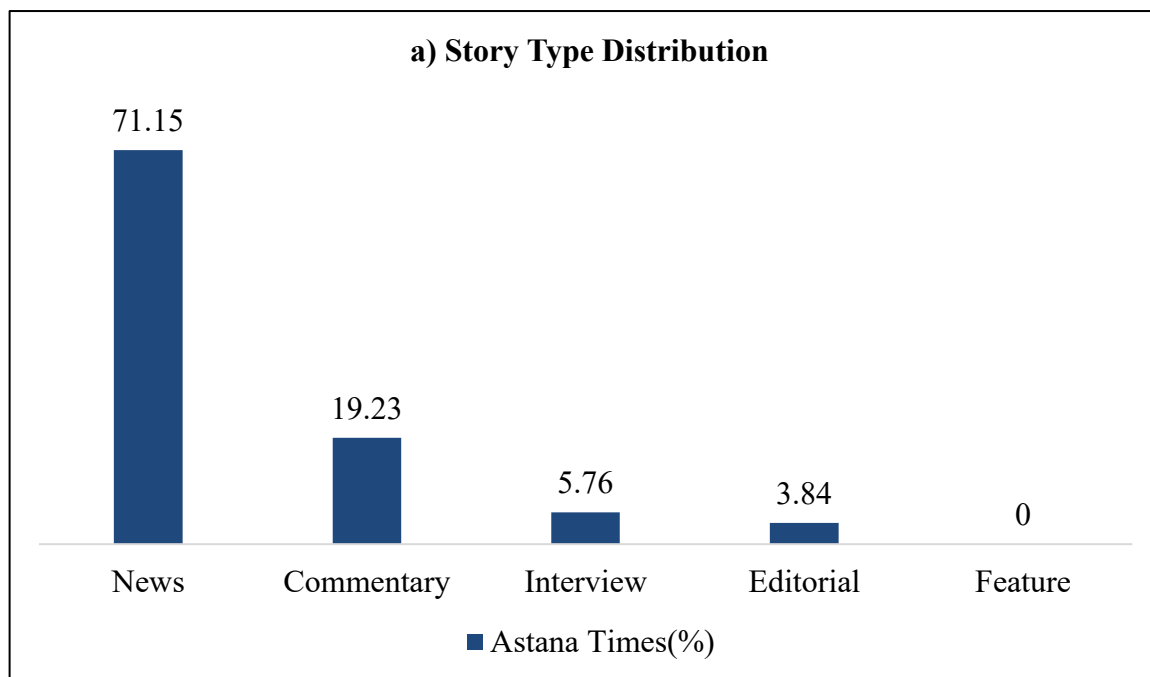
### 3 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings of the current study, its analysis and discussions. The data gathered using quantitative content analysis and qualitative in-depth interviews are presented respectively. The gathered data are on how The Astana Times and The Ethiopian Herald newspapers framed human trafficking stories from September 2020 to September 2025. The results from the content analysis and in-depth interviews responses are presented, analyzed and discussed separately. In addition, they are also compiled and presented in charts with their proper analysis and discussions.

#### 3.1 The Extent and Story Type Distribution of Human Trafficking in The Newspapers

In this study, since September 2020 to September 2025, fifty-two stories of human trafficking and related stories were analyzed from The Astana Times newspaper. As can it be seen below in Figure 3.1a, out of the total stories, 37(71.15%) were ‘News’, 10(19.23%) were written as ‘Commentary’, 3(5.76%) were ‘Interview’, 2 (3.84%) were presented in ‘Editorial’. On the other hand, Feature stories were not employed in the newspaper.

Figure 3.1b on the distribution of story type in The Ethiopian Herald newspaper shows that 24(64%) of the total stories were ‘News’. Next, 8(21%) were ‘Feature’ stories. Of the total stories, ‘Commentary’ was employed as story types to 4(10%). On the other hand, ‘Editorial’ and ‘Interview’ were the least used ones and accounted for 1(2.7%) each respectively.



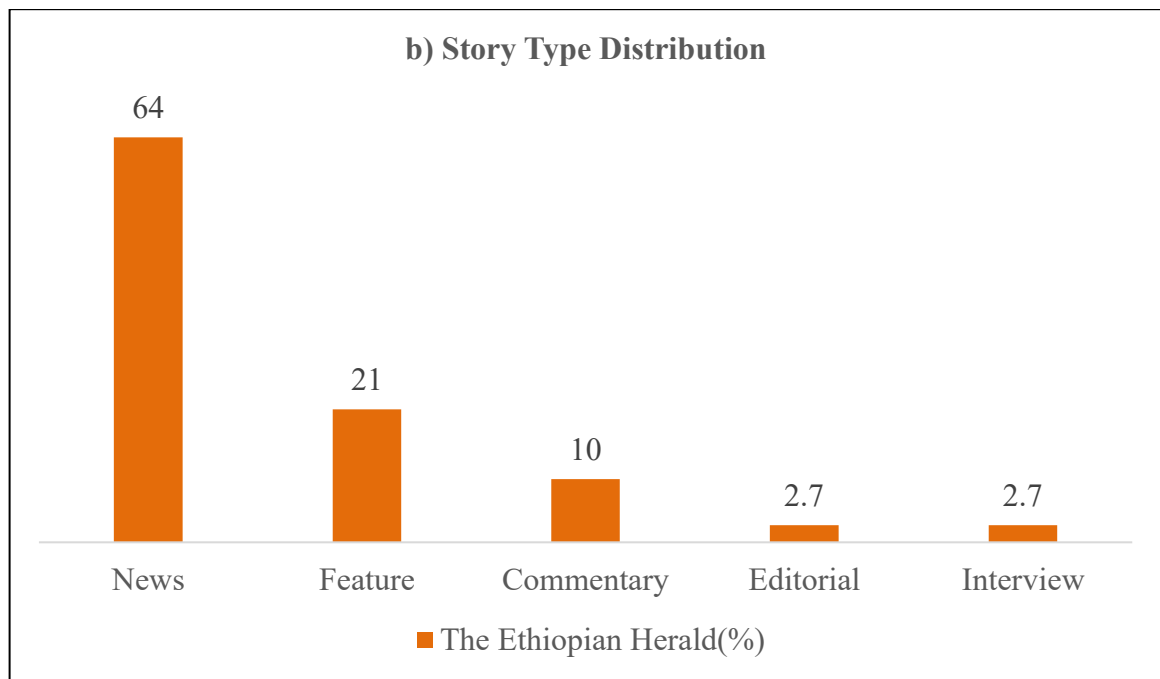


Figure 3.1: a) Story Type Distribution in The Astana Times (September 2020-September 2025; N=52), b) Story Type Distribution in The Ethiopian Herald (September 2020-September 2025; N=37)

As discussed in the literature reviews, the extent of media coverage of an issue would impact the response the problem receives from the policy makers and the public in general. Prior studies' findings indicate that media coverage and framing of various issues is important for public responsiveness and influencing public policy [273-276].

Various scholars and researchers demonstrate that sizing of stories is crucial for silencing stories. Cristti et al. [277] acknowledge the Robert Entman's work that sizing of stories is one way of silencing stories. Accordingly, the findings show that the 52 stories covered in The Astana Times, and 37 stories of human trafficking published in The Ethiopian Herald for 60 months (from September 2020-September 2025). Comparatively, The Astana Times gave much better coverage than The Ethiopian Herald. Nevertheless, the coverage of the stories in both newspapers still remain limited comparing to the extent and magnitude of human trafficking in both countries. According to the [278], Ethiopia is a source and to a lesser extent a destination for human trafficking. Meanwhile, Kazakhstan is also one of the countries which is affected by human trafficking where traffickers exploit victims internally and externally [279].

The findings of this study correspond with previous researches conducted on human trafficking and related issues. For instance, [12], in media depiction of human trafficking in the United States, Great Britain, and Canada, found that media coverage of human trafficking is limited. Despite there are no clear-cut criteria and rules to make judgement about the extent of newspapers coverage based on numbers to say that the coverage is enough or limited, it can be concluded from the above discussion that both newspapers

didn't give enough attention comparing with the alarming nature of the problem in both countries.

With regard to story types, the quantitative findings indicate that both newspapers covered human trafficking in news form. The Ethiopian Herald also gave emphasis to feature stories; however, The Astana Times didn't cover the human trafficking stories in feature form. The Astana Times focused on opinion (commentary) human trafficking story telling next to the news. In contrast, interviews and editorial also appeared less frequently in both newspapers. In sum, both newspapers prioritized news reporting.

The findings show that news stories were mainly employed in both newspapers, and this demonstrates that human trafficking stories were primarily portrayed in the newspapers as event-driven issue and episodic. The less coverage of editorial and interviews in both newspapers, and almost no coverage of feature articles in The Astana Times newspaper show that the issue were not offered an adequate space for critical and broader reflection. Overall, the predominantly news coverage in both newspapers indicate that the newspapers focused on neutrality and proximity concerning human trafficking issues.

The patterns that were observed in the story types usage are associated with prior studies of human trafficking media coverage and framing. The findings of the prior content analysis studies indicate that newspapers focus and rely on straight news reporting while covering human trafficking [130,140,142]. On the contrary, a study conducted on Illinois newspaper reporters using qualitative interviews found that newspapers do not only depend on straight news reporting while covering human trafficking [280]. Overall, the comparisons of the current study with the previous studies suggest that newspapers coverage of human trafficking mostly rely on news reporting and it is a common pattern in the coverage of the issue.

### **3.2 The Distribution of Themes Across the Newspapers**

As Figure 3.2a presents, the most dominant theme in the newspaper was 'Solutions' theme and accounted for 45(25.56%). Next, 'Legal issues' and 'International dimension' themes were accounted for 40(22.72%) and 40(22.72%) each respectively. 'Extent/Magnitude and 'Other' themes were accounted for 15(8.52%) and 15(8.52%) separately. And, 'Consequences' themes were accounted for 14(7.95%). On the other hand, 'Causes' of human trafficking themes were the least employed ones and accounted for 7(3.97%).

As it is indicated in Figure 3.2b, 'Solutions' and "International Dimension' themes were the most dominant ones and accounted for 34(22.8%) and 34(22.8%) respectively. And, 'Consequences' and 'Legal' themes accounted for 21(14.09%) and 21(14.09%). Out of the total stories, 'Extent/Magnitude' and 'Causes' themes were accounted for 19(12.75%) and 19(12.75%) respectively. Lastly, 'Other' themes of human trafficking were accounted for 1(0.67%).

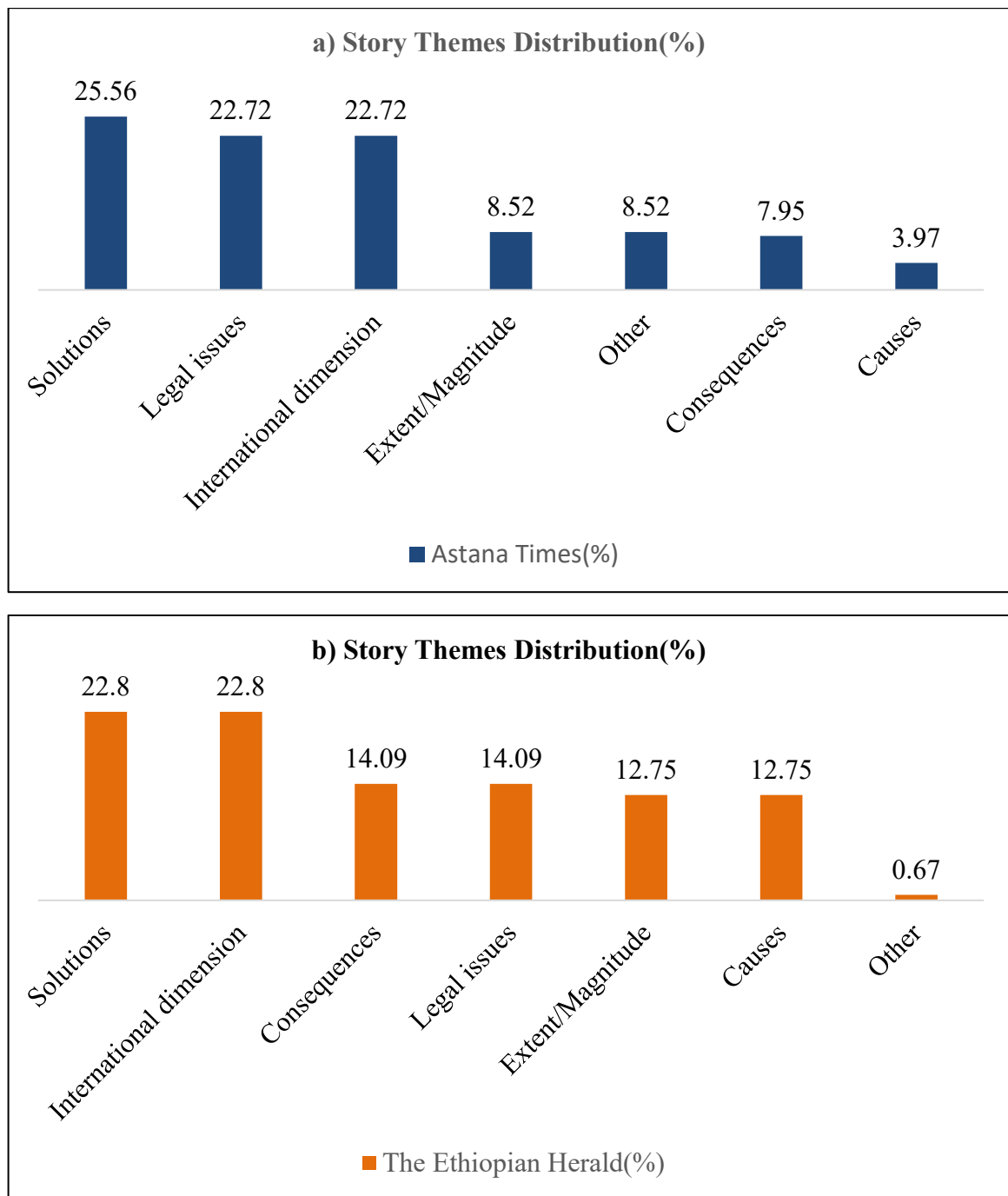


Figure 3.2: a) Story Themes Distribution in The Astana Times (September 2020-September 2025), b) Story Themes Distribution in The Ethiopian Herald (September 2020-September 2025)

The stories that were covered in The Astana Times and The Ethiopian Herald newspapers had their own main messages in disseminating the intended messages to the readers regarding human trafficking. The thematic distribution of this study indicates that solutions and international dimension themes were the most dominant and prevalent themes in both newspapers. Comparatively, The Astana Times emphasized on legal issues

themes whereas The Ethiopian Herald did not give it much attention to the legal issues themes. The Ethiopian Herald devoted considerable attention to the consequence theme than The Astana Times. Regarding the extent/magnitude and cause themes, both newspapers addressed them to a limited extent.

The prominence of solutions and international dimension themes in both newspapers indicate that human trafficking was portrayed in the newspapers as an issue that needs an urgent solution and an international collaboration to combat the problem. Furthermore, The Astana Times emphasis on the legal issue theme suggest that the issue requires legal responses. In addition, the portrayal of consequence themes in The Ethiopian Herald newspaper indicates that the impact of the problem is high in the country.

The findings of this study are partially related with the findings of prior studies on human trafficking that there is an increasing number of visibilities on solution and international dimension themes while covering and discussing human trafficking. Some prior content analysis studies indicate policy response solutions and international coordination intervention as themes [281,282]. Moreover, The Ethiopian Herald emphasis to some extent to the consequence themes indicates that human trafficking is severe in the country, where prior studies found that human trafficking has social, economic and psychological impacts for victims [65,87,107,283]. The Astana Times newspaper focus to legal issues corresponds with prior researches of content analysis which indicates that human trafficking is framed as legal and policy issue in newspapers [131,140,284,285]. The pattern of this study which indicates that both newspapers covered causes themes to a limited extent align with previous studies which found that causative factors of human trafficking were not discussed well [249,286]. In sum, the analysis show that both newspapers tended to give emphasis to the solution and international dimension themes while extent and causative factors of human trafficking were given little attention.

### **3.3 Coverage of Human Trafficking Types**

Figure 3.3a shows the types of human trafficking stories that were covered in The Astana Times. Accordingly, most of the stories mentioned human trafficking generally. As a result, 'Not specified' accounted for 36(63.15%). Next, 'External trafficking' was accounted for 14(24.56%). On the contrary, 'Internal trafficking' was the least employed one and accounted for 7(12.28%).

Figure 3.3b illustrates the distribution of human trafficking types in The Ethiopian Herald newspaper. The majority of the stories focused on 'External trafficking', accounting for 27(67.5%), followed by 'Not specified', accounting for 9(22.5%). 'Internal trafficking' represented the smallest proportion of the coverage accounted for 4(10%).

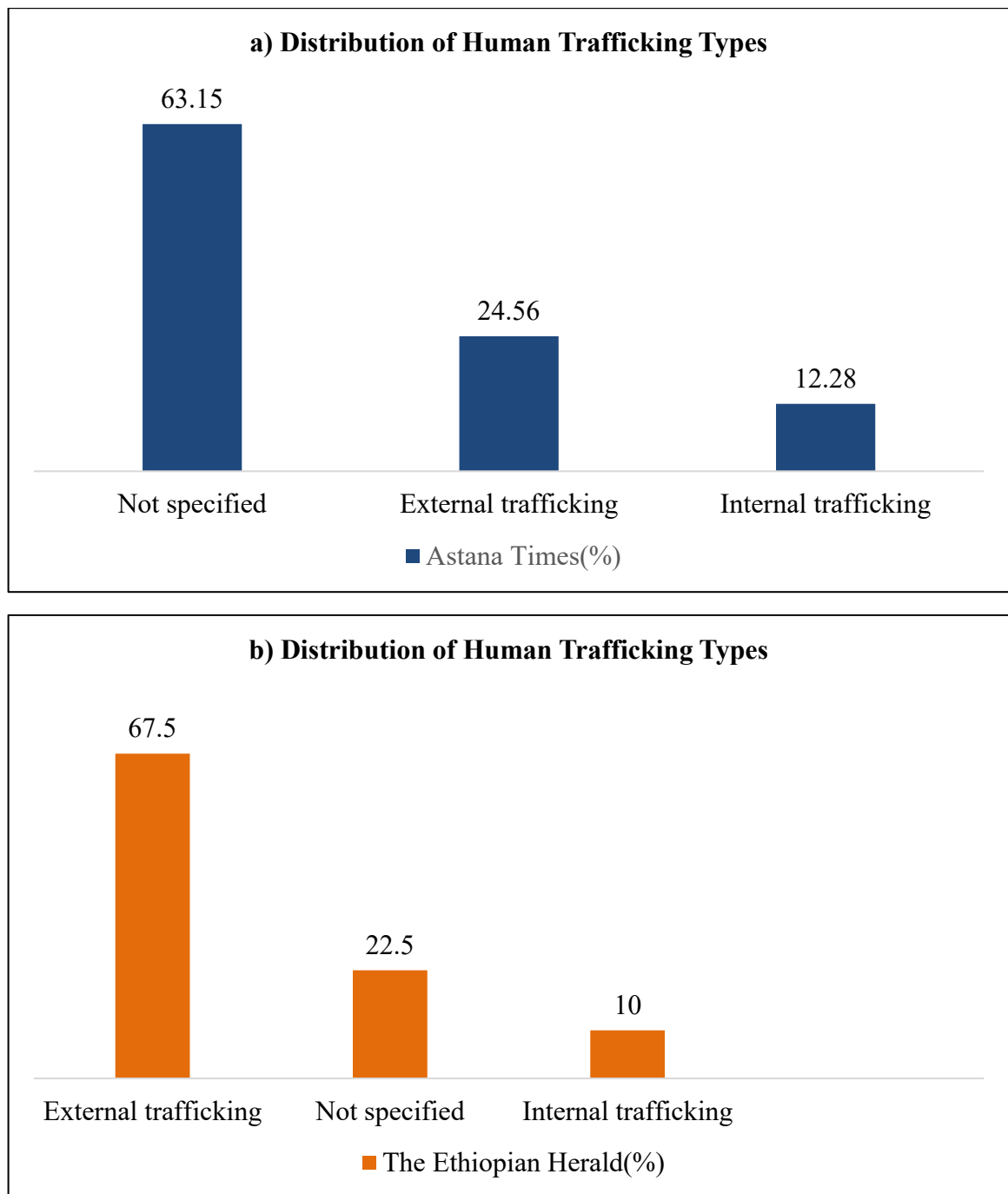


Figure 3.3: a) The Distribution of Human Trafficking Types in The Astana Times (September 2020-September 2025), b) The Distribution of Human Trafficking Types in The Ethiopian Herald (September 2020-September 2025)

The trafficking types distribution in The Ethiopian Herald newspaper indicates that human trafficking was portrayed more as an external, which is transnational crime. Nevertheless, The Astana Times addressed the external trafficking partially, and the majority of the newspaper's human trafficking stories did not specify whether they are

external and internal. On the other hand, the results show that both newspapers covered internal trafficking to a limited extent.

The emphasis on external human trafficking in The Ethiopian Herald, and The Astana Times to some extent demonstrate that human trafficking was depicted in the media as border-transcending crime, which demanded focus and global cooperation to combat the problem internationally, particularly in Kazakhstan and Ethiopia. On the contrary, the little attention that was given to the internal trafficking by both newspapers suggest that it did not get adequate editorial attention in the newspapers, and the consequence of it would not be as impactful as the external one. This pattern may lead to have understanding on the readers and the public that human trafficking would be perceived as external crime rather than internal due to the underreporting of internal trafficking.

The findings of this study are consistent with existing literatures and prior studies which indicated and found that external human trafficking is severe in Ethiopia and the country has become a source and a transit for the crime [55,65,93,106]. Moreover, The Astana Times coverage of external human trafficking aligns with the previous studies which indicated that the country is also affected by cross-border crimes of human trafficking [72,279,287]. At the same time, the analysis of this study is in contrast with prior study that was conducted by [288] which found that about 60-80% of human trafficking for sexual exploitation is a domestic crime. Despite that internal trafficking is also prevalent in Ethiopia, The Ethiopian Herald newspaper covered it to a less extent. Prior studies suggest that the problem of internal human trafficking is also severe in the country [65,93,289]. Additionally, The Astana Times also gave little attention to internal trafficking which is in contrast with the reports that domestic victims are trafficked to financial center, prosperous and oil center cities like Almaty, Astana, Aktau and Atyrau [290]. Overall, it can be deducted that both newspapers gave comparatively more attention to the external human trafficking whereas the internal one did not get enough attention.

### **3.4 Sources Identified and Quoted in The Analyzed Stories**

Figure 3.4a demonstrates that ‘government officials’ were used as dominant source of human trafficking stories and accounted for 45(36.58%). Secondly, ‘NGOs/International Organizations’ are used as main sources and accounted for 30(24.39%). ‘Media channels’ and ‘Experts/Researchers/Advocates’ are accounted for 22(17.88%) and 16(13%) respectively. Following these, ‘police officers’ were identified as sources and accounted for 5(4.06%). ‘Victims’, ‘No specified source’ and ‘Community members’ accounted for 2(1.62%), 2(1.62%) and 1(0.81%) separately. On the other hand, ‘Victim families/friends,’ ‘Traffickers’ and ‘potential migrants’ were not used as sources of the stories at all.

As presented in Figure 3.4b, The Ethiopian Herald employed different sources while covering human trafficking. The largest proportion was attributed to ‘Government officials’, accounting for 29(47.54%) out of the total coverage in the newspaper. The second most frequently cited source was ‘NGOs/International Organizations’, accounting

for 12(19.67%). ‘Experts/Researchers/Advocates’ and ‘Media channels’ were equally represented, each constituting 6(9.83%). This was followed by ‘Police officers’ and ‘Victims’, accounting for 3(4.91% each). ‘Potential migrants’ and ‘No specified source’ were minimally employed, each accounting for 1(1.63%) of the total coverage. On the other hand, ‘Victim families/friends’, ‘Traffickers’ and ‘Community members’ were the least used sources and accounted for (0%).

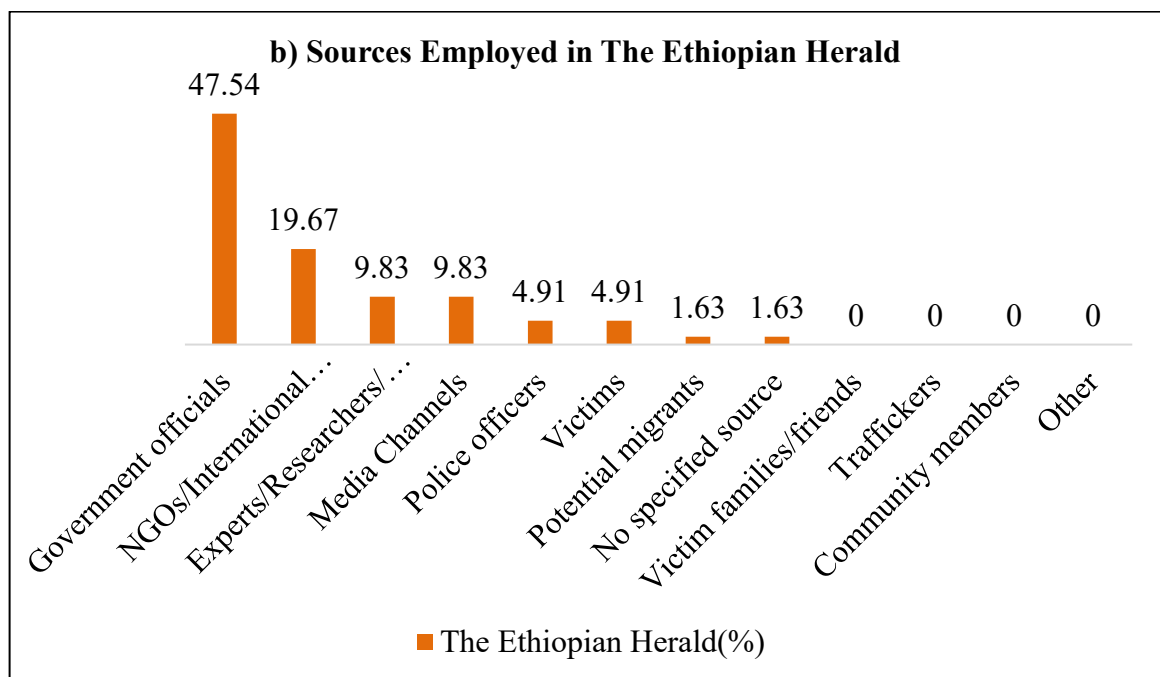
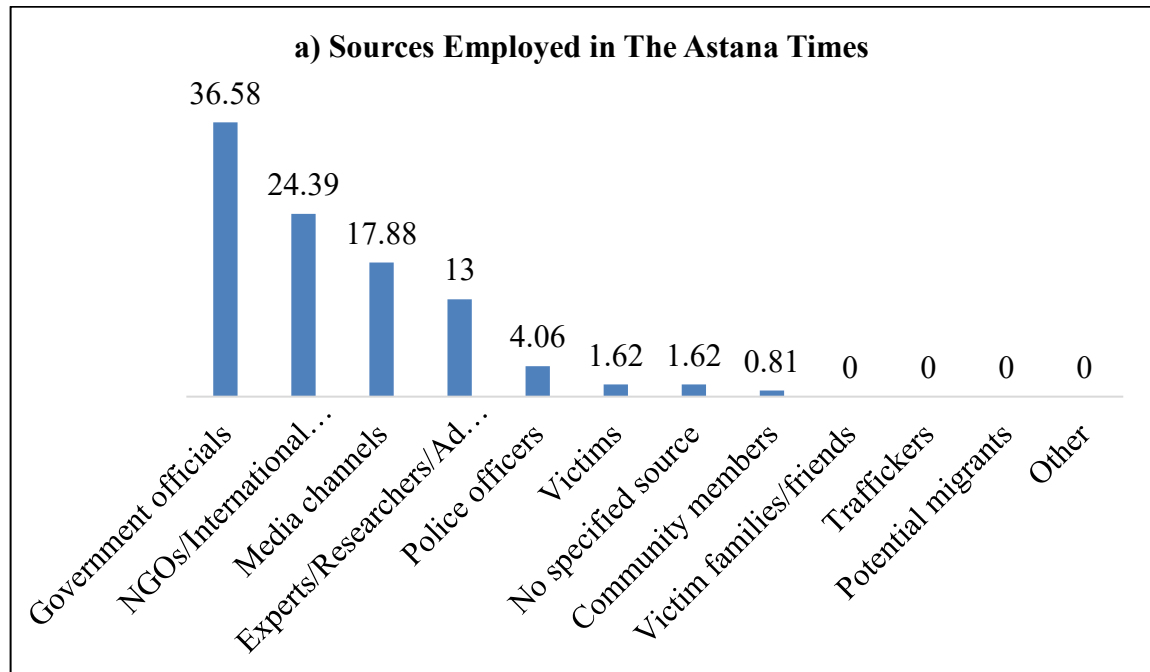


Figure 3.4: a) The sources of the stories employed in The Astana Times (September 2020-September 2025), b) The source of the stories employed in The Ethiopian Herald (September 2020-September 2025)

One of the main objectives of this study was to examine the types of sources employed in the newspapers. The findings of this study show the predominantly usage of government officials in both newspapers while covering human trafficking stories. Subsequently, both newspapers also employed NGOs and international organizations as their sources of human trafficking stories. Meanwhile, The Astana Times newspaper gave relatively attention to media channels and experts as sources of stories comparing with The Ethiopian Herald. On the contrary, both newspapers demonstrated similarly limited use of victims as sources and not employed totally traffickers as sources of human trafficking stories.

The predominantly usage of government officials in both newspapers indicates that the newspapers portrayed and constructed human trafficking issues within the government and organizations frameworks. Moreover, the employment of NGOs and international organizations in both newspapers show that these sources may have the authority and capacity to solve and combat the problem in collaboration with stakeholders. Most crucially, the dependency on government officials, NGOs and international organizations may suggest that the newspapers relied on accessible, official and authoritative sources. However, it limited the visibility of other important sources such as victims, traffickers, potential migrants, and victim families/friends/relatives. Consequently, the coverage of human trafficking in the newspapers may prioritize the governments' interests, actions and policy construction of stories over the victims' living experiences.

The greater emphasis on government officials' sources in both newspapers align with prior studies on media and newspaper coverage of human trafficking that newspapers depend on government sources, perceiving that the sources are accessible, credible, and reliable [12,132,249,291,292]. Most importantly, The Ethiopian Herald predominantly usage of government officials as main sources is in line with the study that found that Ethiopian journalists employ government officials as sources so as to not to be blamed and be secured from government's pressure[293]. The predominantly usage of government officials and non-government organizations as sources of information in the Ethiopian Herald newspaper indicates the comprehensive communication strategies seen in the armed conflict in Ethiopia. Prior studies conducted on public relations and strategic communication during the course of the war in the Tigray region of Ethiopia also revealed a heavy dependence on government and NGOs sources due to availability, credibility and the demands of communicating during a crisis [16].

Moreover, the employment of NGOs and international organizations as sources of human trafficking stories in both newspapers are also in consistency with the previous study that revealed that their voices can better be heard and make their influence and efforts in framing human trafficking [294]. The newspapers limited and rare coverage of

victims and traffickers in this study indicate that these sources are rarely employed in newspapers' coverage of human trafficking as they predominantly depend on officials' sources to frame the issue [12,131,132,294]. In summary, it can be claimed that the newspapers mostly focused on government officials, NGOs and international organization while using the primary source of information like victims to a limited extent.

### 3.5 The Predominant Human Trafficking Frames in the Newspapers

Regarding framing, Figure 3.5a shows the normative frame intensity ( $Y_f / (N \times k_f) \times 100$ ). Where:  $Y_f$  is the sum of Yes (1) codes in each frame types across all coded stories in The Astana Times;  $N$  is the total number of stories coded in the newspaper and ( $N=52$ ),  $k_f$  is the sum of categories and questions in each frame ( $k_f$ = Diagnostic=13, Prognostic=8; Attribution of responsibility=8, Solution=8, Empathy=4, Morality=7, Human interest=5, Economic=4, Conflict=5 and Educative=5).

Since frames are not mutually exclusive and may co-occur within similar story, the frames percentages are not expected to sum to 100% and they are not additive. Accordingly, 'Educative frames' were the dominant one and recorded 28.07% normalized intensity ( $Y_f=73$ ). Next, 'Attribution of responsibility frame' accounted for 27.64% normalized intensity ( $Y_f=115$ ). 'Morality frames' recorded 23.35% normalized intensity ( $Y_f=85$ ). Following this, 'Solution' and 'Empathy' frames accounted for 21.15% and 21.15% normalized intensity ( $Y_f=88$ ;  $Y_f=44$ ) each respectively. 'Prognostic frames' accounted for 10.57% normative intensity ( $Y_f=44$ ) and 'Human Interest' and 'Economic' frames recorded each 9.61% ( $Y_f=25$ ;  $Y_f=20$ ). Moreover, 'Diagnostic frames' accounted for 6.95% normative intensity ( $Y_f=47$ ). On the other hand, the least recorded frame was 'Conflict' and it accounted for 3.84 normative intensity ( $Y_f=10$ ).

Figure 3.5b presents the normative frame intensity ( $Y_f / (N \times k_f) \times 100$ ). Where:  $Y_f$  is the sum of Yes (1) codes in each frame types across all coded stories in The Ethiopian Herald newspaper;  $N$  is the total number of stories coded in the newspaper and ( $N=37$ ),  $k_f$  is the sum of categories and questions in each frame ( $k_f$ = Diagnostic=13, Prognostic=8; Attribution of responsibility=8, Solution=8, Empathy=4, Morality=7, Human interest=5, Economic=4, Conflict=5 and Educative=5).

As it is indicated in the Figure 3.5b, 'Educative' frames were the most dominant frames in The Ethiopian Herald newspaper, accounting for 28.64% ( $Y_f=53$ ). This was followed by 'Empathy' frames, 27.7% ( $Y_f=41$ ), 'Attribution of responsibility' frames, 25.3% ( $Y_f=75$ ) and 'Solution' frames 23.31% ( $Y_f=69$ ). Subsequently, 'Morality', 'Human interest' and 'Prognostic' frames constituted 18.53% ( $Y_f=48$ ), 15.13% ( $Y_f=28$ ) and 14.52% ( $Y_f=43$ ). A comparatively smaller proportion of stories employed 'Economic' and 'Diagnostic' frames, accounting for 13.51% ( $Y_f=20$ ) and 12.68% ( $Y_f=61$ ). Meanwhile, 'Conflict' frames were the least employed frames and represented for 3.24% ( $Y_f=6$ ) of the total analyzed stories.

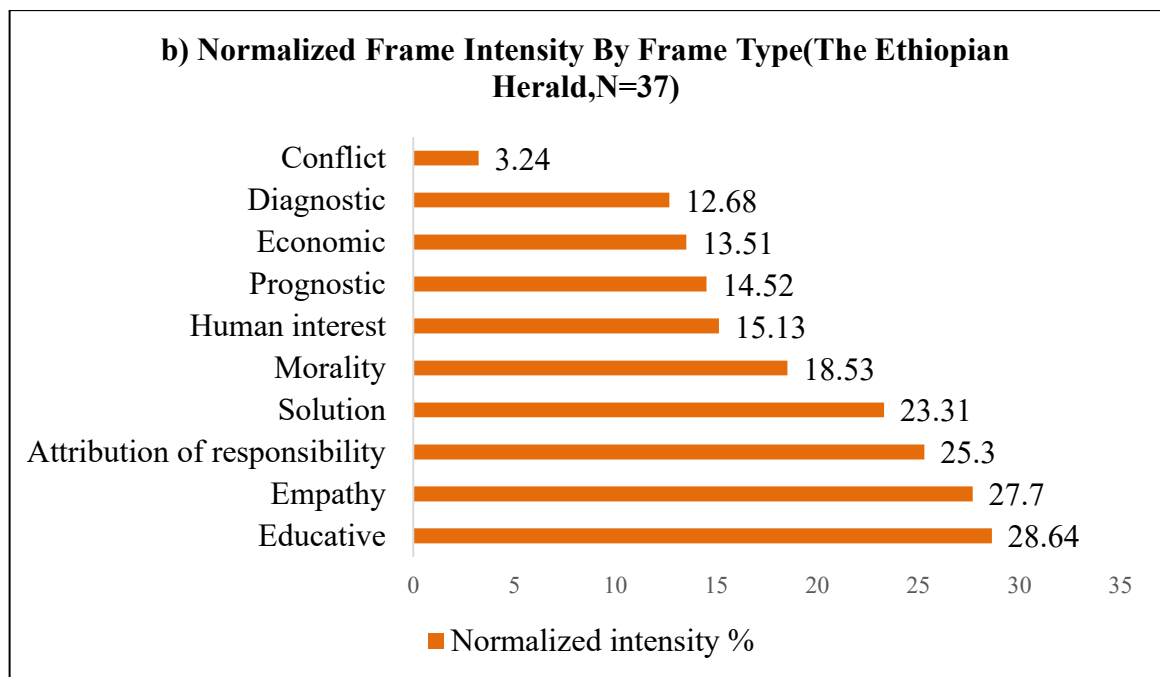
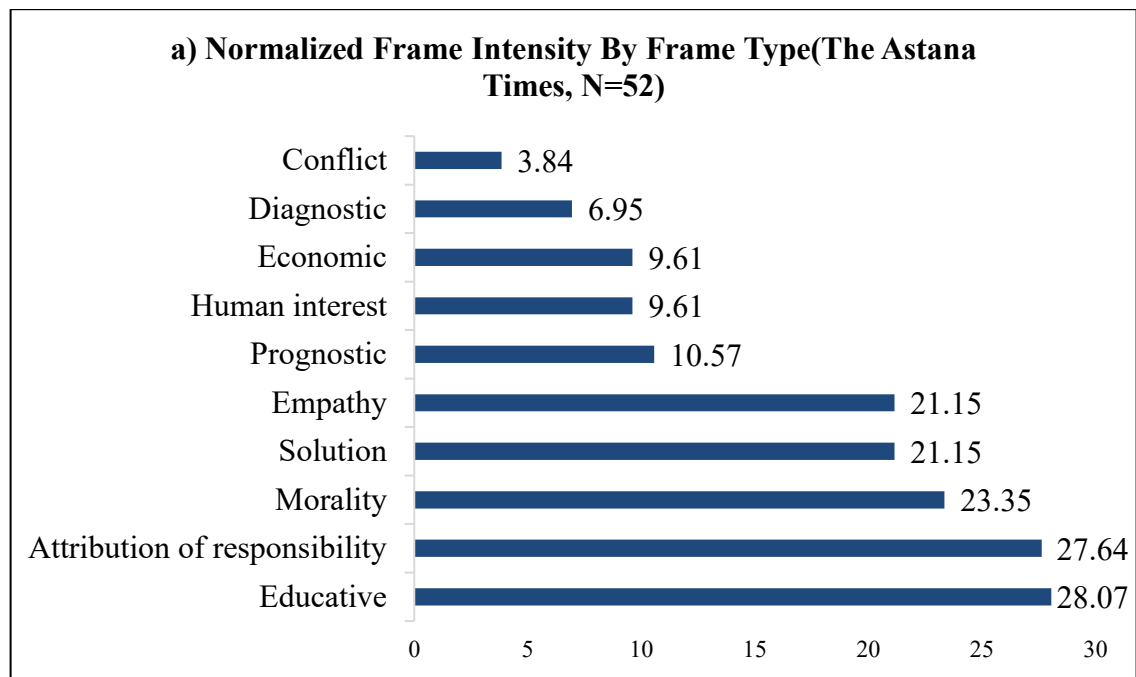


Figure 3.5: a) Normalized frame intensity (%) by frame type in The Astana Times(N=52), b) Normalized Frame Intensity (%) by frame type in The Ethiopian Herald(N=37)

Building on [148] five frame types, the analysis discusses the dominant frames employed in the newspapers' coverage of human trafficking. In addition to these types of frames, the analysis also employed diagnostic, prognostic and educative frames to discuss how the newspapers used them in the human trafficking stories.

The findings of this study show that educative and attribution of responsibility frames were employed by both newspapers dominantly. Next, the newspapers further used solution frames while covering human trafficking stories. The Ethiopian Herald gave greater attention to empathy frames comparing with The Astana Times. On the other hand, morality frames were appeared more in The Astana Times than in The Ethiopian Herald newspaper. Furthermore, both newspapers covered prognostic, human interest and economic frames to some extent. On the contrary, the newspapers employed diagnostic and conflict frames to a limited extent. Lastly, the frame distribution in both newspapers indicates that there were a vivid hierarchy of focus among the types of frames employed while covering human trafficking stories.

The newspapers focus on both educative and attribution of responsibility frames indicates that they mainly narrate the human trafficking stories, emphasizing on the need to create awareness to the public, and require the intervention of government and other stakeholders. In addition, the newspapers employment of solution frames suggests that the issue requires solutions and urge those who have power like governments and other agents to tackle the problem. Also, the relative dominance of empathy frames in The Ethiopian Herald indicates how the victims were affected, emphasizing their vulnerability, and the personal and emotional impact.

The Astana Times newspaper emphasis to the morality frames suggest that a collaboration and an entirely efforts to condemn human trafficking morally by appealing to the social norms and values. The newspapers usage of prognostic, human interest and economic frames suggests that the multi-dimensional portrayal and narration of human trafficking, including the consequences, victims' vulnerability and sufferings and the economic impacts. In contrast, the limited usage of diagnostic frames in both newspapers indicates the reduced attention and emphasis to the underlying causative factors of human trafficking. In summary, the framing types in both newspapers molds the portrayal of human trafficking that gave attention to awareness creation and government and other agents interventions.

The dominantly usage of attribution of responsibility frames in the newspapers is in consistent with the [295] study, which found that attribution of responsibility frames was used prominently in the news. Most crucially, the findings of this study align with prior studies on media coverage of human trafficking that attribution of responsibility frames were quite often employed by newspapers [132,282,291]. In addition to this, the employment of empathy frames in both newspapers especially to a greater extent in The Ethiopian Herald is similar with prior studies that found that people who were affected by human trafficking were portrayed as victims [285,296]. On the other hand, both newspapers employed diagnostic frames to a limited extent. This aligns with previous studies conducted on media and human trafficking that there is a lack of discussion on causative factors of human trafficking in media [12,249,291]. Taken together, the findings of this study indicate that educative and attribution of responsibility frames were

predominant in both newspapers while the diagnostic frames got little emphasis by the newspapers.

### **3.6 Media Functions in the Newspapers' Coverage of Human Trafficking**

Figure 3.6a demonstrates the media functions distribution in The Astana Times throughout the stories coded. Additionally, the percentages in each media functions category shows the stories proportion where the media function occurred. Most importantly, a single story may have different functions. And, the media function indicators are not mutually exclusive nor additive, and they are not expected to sum to 100% all together.

Hence, 'Covers human trafficking as an issue' appeared in all coded stories (100%; 52/52) that would make it the most dominant media function in the newspaper. Subsequently, 'Suggests solutions' were reported in 82.69% of the stories. Thereafter, 'presents issues socially/economically/politically', 'provides logical reasoning' and 'Includes multiple sources' appeared in 78.84%, 65.38% and 61.54% respectively. 'Frames as a crime' and 'Provides moral evaluation' were evident in 51.92% and 38.46%. Lastly, 'Defines problem and causes' is the least prevalent media function in the newspaper.

Figure 3.6b presents the media functions distribution in The Ethiopian Herald newspaper and most crucially the media function indicators are also here not mutually exclusive nor additive and they are not expected to sum to 100% all together. As a result, the most prominent media function in the newspaper was 'Covers human trafficking as an issue', accounting for (100%;37/37). This was followed by 'Suggests solution' (89.18%) and 'Presents issues socially/economically/politically' (83.78%). Meanwhile, 'Frames as a crime' and 'Provides logical reasoning' were equally represented, each accounting for 48.64%. Subsequently, 'Includes multiple sources' and 'Defines problems and causes' were also equally represented, each accounting for (37.83%). Lastly, the least frequently media function was 'Provides moral evaluation', accounting for 32.43%.

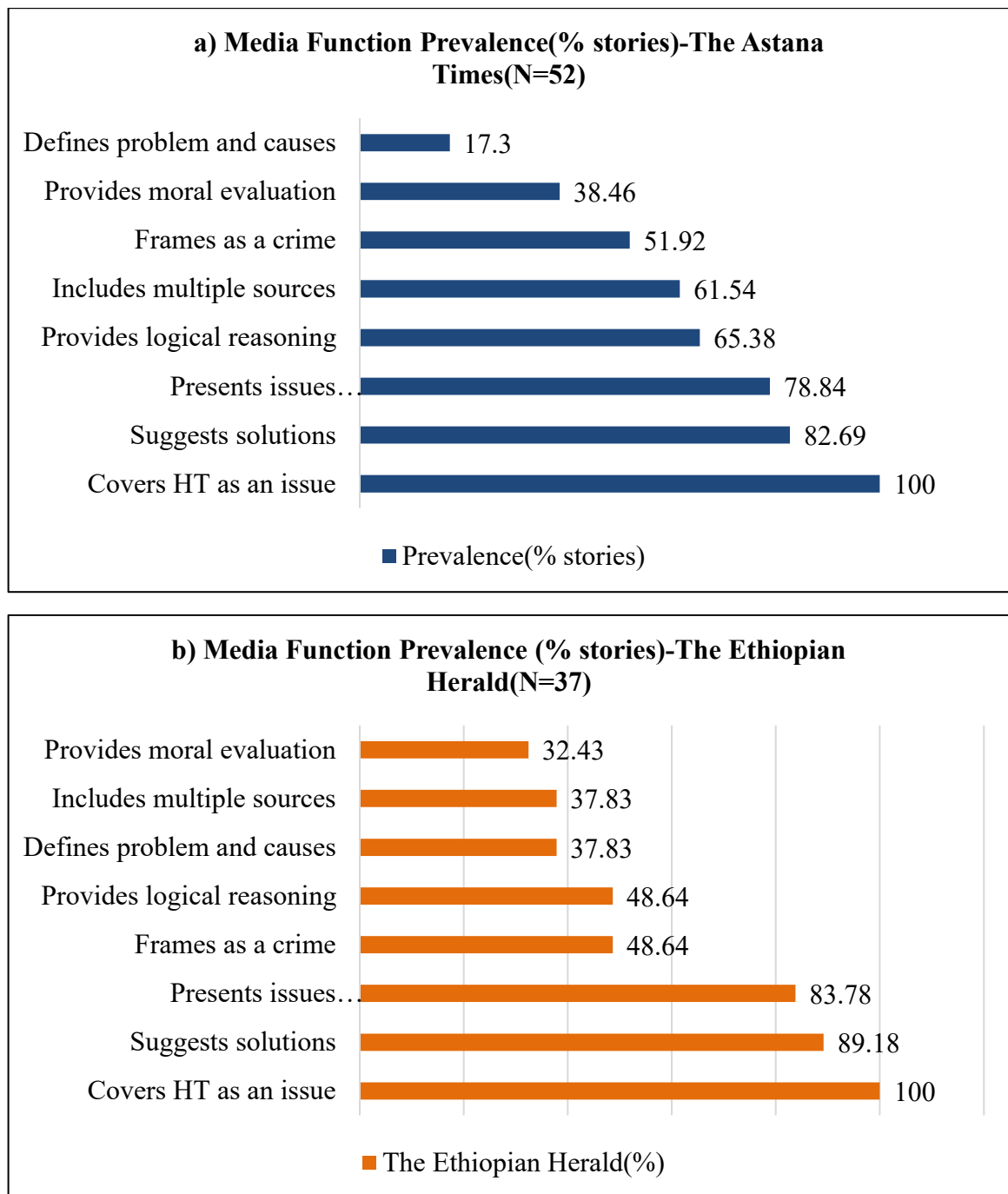


Figure 3.6: a) The Prevalence of Media Function (% of Stories) in The Astana Times,  
b) The Prevalence of Media Function (% of Stories) in The Ethiopian Herald

The distribution of media functions in both newspapers indicates that, covers HT as an issue, suggests solutions and presents issues socially/economically/politically were predominantly used. The Astana Times relatively gave greater emphasis to provides logical reasoning and includes multiple sources media functions. In addition, both newspapers also employed frames as a crime media functions to some extent. On the

contrary, defines problem and causes were one of the least employed media functions in both newspapers.

The newspapers predominantly usage of covers as an issue, suggests solutions and presents the issue socially/economically/politically media functions suggests that the newspapers covered it as a social issue and problem. In addition to this, it emphasizes that the newspapers focused on the solutions to the problems and presenting the issue socially, economically and politically. The comparative usage of multiple sources in The Astana Times newspaper indicate that the newspaper focused on entertaining the various sources while covering human trafficking stories. Furthermore, the employment of frames as a crime media functions in both newspapers to some extent suggests that the newspapers acknowledged the seriousness and the consequences of the crime. On the contrary, the newspapers media functions usage to defines problem and causes to a limited extent shows that they gave less emphasis to the root causes of the problem. Eventually, the newspapers predominantly emphasized on suggesting solutions to the problem.

The dominantly use of media functions such as suggests solutions and presents the issue socially, economically and politically aligns with the prior studies that newspapers dominantly cover and frame human trafficking issues as solutions oriented [131,282,297]. Nevertheless, the results of this study differ with research conducted by [140] which found that news coverage of human trafficking was predominantly constructed as crime issue without suggesting the solutions. The crime frame media function was employed by both newspapers to some extent and this is similar with previous studies that found that newspapers employ crime frames while covering human trafficking stories [131,132,249]. Meanwhile, the newspapers limited extent of the media functions regarding defines the problems and causes align with previous content analysis researches that found that causative factors of human trafficking were also limited [12,132,142,249]. In summary, the analysis show that the newspapers gave higher emphasis to cover as an issue, suggest solutions and presents the issue socially while defining the problem and causative factors were underreported.

### **3.7 Policy and Legal Framing of Human Trafficking in the Newspapers**

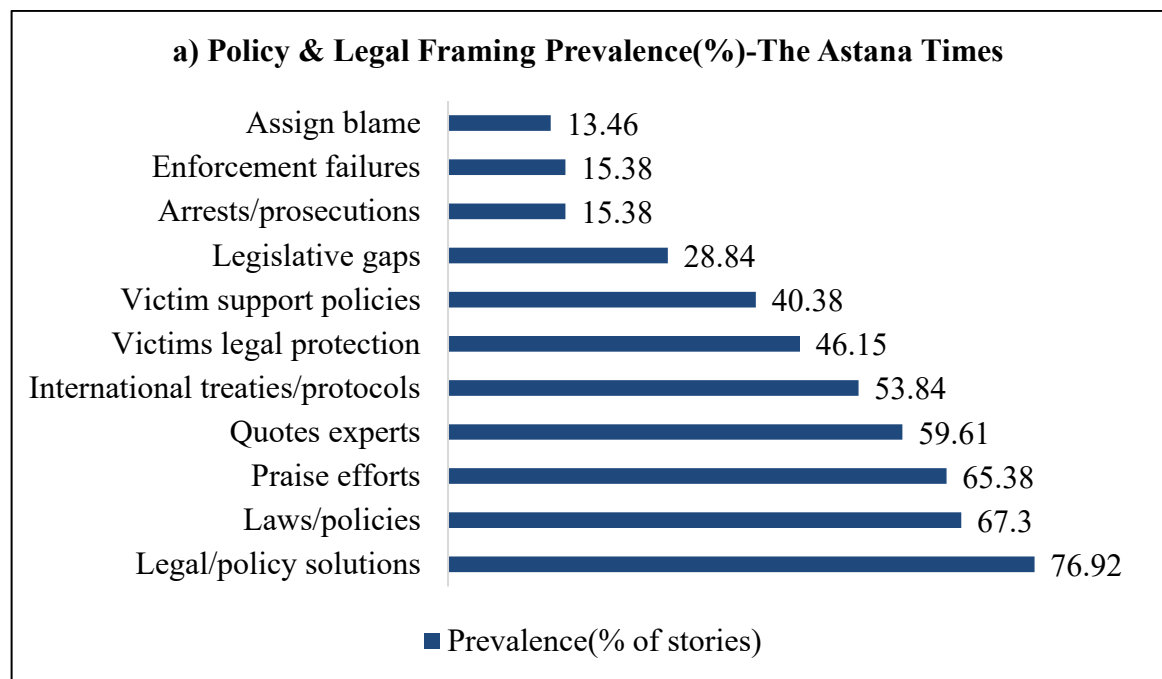
As indicated in Figure 3.7a, the indicators of policy and legal framing differed in terms of prevalence throughout the coded stories in The Astana Times newspaper(N=52) and percentages do not sum up to 100% as the policy and legal framing indicators can co-occur now and then.

Accordingly, ‘proposes legal solutions’ is the most prominent and observed in 76.92%, followed by ‘Mentions specific laws and policies 67.3%. Thereafter, ‘Praise anti-trafficking efforts’, ‘Quotes advocates/experts’ and ‘Mentions international treaties/protocols’ were present in 65.38%,59.61% and 53.84% respectively. ‘Frames victim as deserving of legal protection’ and ‘Mentions Victim support policies’ were reported in 46.15% and 40.38% separately. Furthermore, ‘Highlight legislative gaps’, ‘Discusses arrests/prosecutions and ‘Notes enforcement failures’ appeared in 28.84%,15.38% and 15.38% respectively. Out of the policy and legal framing indicators,

‘Assign blame to a specific actor’ are the least employed in the stories and appeared in 13.46%.

As shown in Figure 3.7b, the policy and legal framing indicators vary regarding the prevalence within the analyzed stories in The Ethiopian Herald newspaper(N=37) and most importantly the percentages are not expected to sum up to 100% since indicators of policy and legal framing may occasionally co-occur.

Out of the policy and legal framing indicators, ‘Praise efforts’ is the most dominant one and appeared in 40.54%. This was followed by ‘Legal and policy solution, accounting for 29.72%. ‘Assign blame’ and ‘Victims legal protection’ accounted for 27.02% each. ‘Mentions victim support policies’, ‘mentions specific laws’ and ‘Quotes experts’ accounted for 21.62%, 18.91% and 18.91% respectively. Meanwhile, ‘Discusses arrests/prosecutions’ and ‘Mentions international treaties/protocols were prevalent at 10.81% and 8.1%. Lastly, ‘Highlight legislative gaps’ and ‘Notes enforcement failures’ are the least employed policy and legal framing indicators and accounted for 5.4% each.



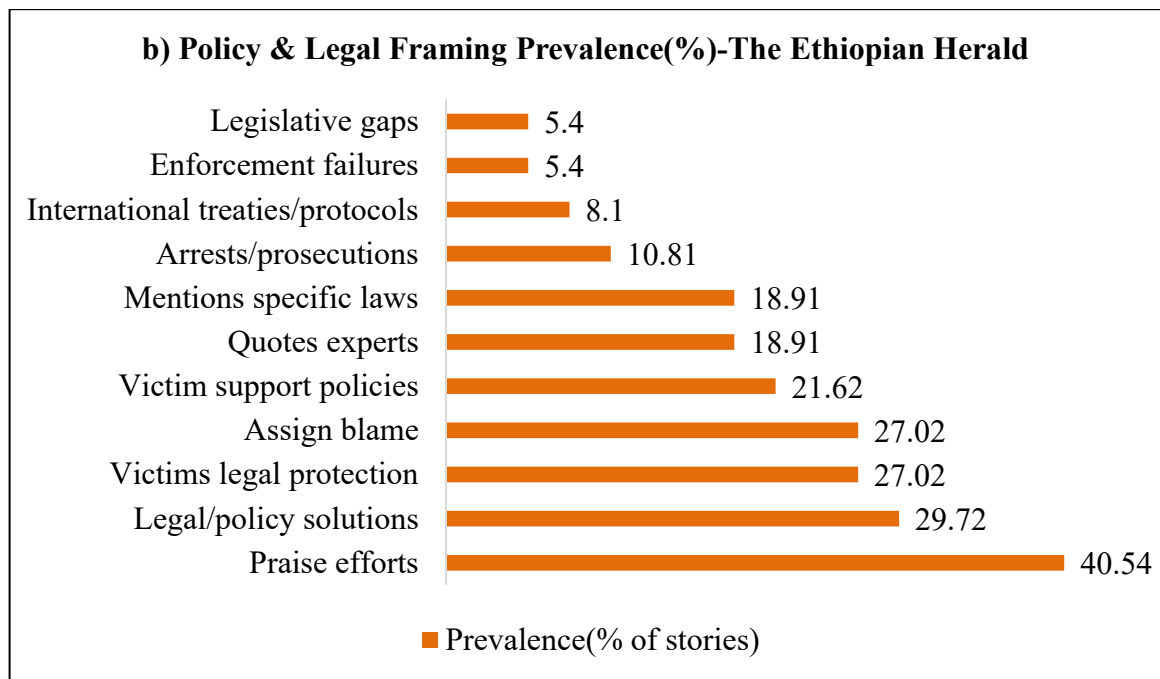


Figure 3.7: a) The Prevalence of Policy and Legal Framing in The Astana Times(N=52),  
b) The Prevalence of Policy and Legal Framing in The Ethiopian Herald(N=37).

Note: A single story can consist of different policy and legal framing indicators. Thus, the percentages can overlap.

The findings indicate that both newspapers, The Astana Times and The Ethiopian Herald, gave relatively greater emphasis to legal/policy solutions. The Astana Times covered the mentions specific laws and polices framing much better than The Ethiopian Herald newspaper. On the other hand, The Ethiopian Herald newspaper emphasized more on praising efforts legal framing. In terms of assigning blame framing, The Astana Times employed it comparatively greater than The Ethiopian Herlad newspaper. Furthermore, The Astana Times quoted experts more than The Ethiopian Herald newspaper. Meanwhile, victims' legal protection and victim support policies were also used by the newspapers to some extent. Legislative gaps and enforcement failures were the least employed policy and legal framing in The Ethiopian Herald whereas assign blames and enforcement failures were the least used ones in The Astana Times.

The focus of the newspapers on legal and policy solutions suggest that the newspapers portrayed human trafficking in a way that the issue requires legal and policy solutions. Moreover, the emphasis of The Ethiopia Herald newspaper on praising efforts of policy and legal framing indicates that the newspapers covered the efforts of governments and other stakeholders so as to increase, appreciate and encourage similar efforts to combat the problem.

The Astana Times inclusion of quotes of experts to some extent in the coverage of human trafficking stories indicates that the newspaper's effort to include experts' knowledge and predisposition in covering human trafficking. The acknowledgement of

both newspapers to victims' legal protection indicates that the newspapers recognized the rights of the victims. In addition, the newspapers usage of victim support policies also shows policy focused approach that focusses the organizational duties to combat and respond to human trafficking. However, the limited attention to legislative gaps and enforcement failures in both newspapers suggests predominantly event motivated reporting, and employment of officials' sources of the newspapers. Thus, this could restrain investigative reporting on human trafficking and related issues.

The newspapers emphasis to legal and policy solutions framing is similar with the prior media framing studies that found that newspapers emphasize legal and policy solutions in their coverage of human trafficking because of the dominantly usage of government official sources and the newspapers' portrayal of HT as crime [12,140,249,291,298]. Moreover, the newspapers employment of quotes of experts to some extent aligns with the [299] study which found that journalists depend on experts to get background knowledge on issues. In addition, prior studies on human trafficking also suggested that journalists rely on experts to gather detailed information about the issue [12,14,142,280,281,300]. On the other hand, the newspapers limited attention to legislative gaps and enforcement failures is in consistent with previous studies which found that newspapers give little attention to them [12]. Overall, the findings indicate that legal and policy solutions were given greater attention whereas the newspapers relatively gave little attention to legislative gaps and enforcement failures.

### **3.8 Qualitative Data Presentation, Discussion and Analysis of In-Depth Interviews with The Ethiopian Herald Newspaper**

In this section, the data that was gathered from six reporters and two editors of The Ethiopian Herald newspaper are discussed and analyzed. Through the data obtained by quantitative content analysis, the comparison between The Astana Times and The Ethiopian Herald newspapers were made systematically. As mentioned in the methodology section, in-depth interviews were used in this study as a supplementary and interviews were only conducted with The Ethiopian Herald newspaper. In spite of the fact that The Astana Times newspaper journalists were repeatedly requested to participate in the study, they were not voluntary. The data that was obtained from The Ethiopian Herald newspaper is employed in this study to provides contextual insights regarding newsroom routines while covering and framing human trafficking. Most importantly, the data that was gathered by using in-depth interviews is not used for comparison.

During the interviews, the respondents from The Ethiopian Herald newspaper stated their experiences regarding the extent of human trafficking coverage and story type distribution in order to provide contextual insights about their newsroom practices. All the respondents from The Ethiopian Herald newspaper emphasized that human trafficking is a serious and pervasive crime, a violation of human rights in Ethiopia as well as globally. And all the respondents indicated how human trafficking has an effect on individuals and community and how it is bringing social, economic and psychological burdens. Due to

this, they all pointed out that it is one of the issues which grabs the attention of the media including The Ethiopian Herald.

All the respondents generally agreed that the newspaper's coverage of human trafficking is inadequate given the extent and magnitude of the problem in the country and globally. Respondent 1(Reporter), indicated that although human trafficking is one of the most severe issues, the newspaper's focus of attention is directed towards political matters. In addition to this, Respondents 6 and 8 (Reporters) argued that since the newspaper is owned by a government, it mainly prioritized the government's agenda.

From another perspective, the chief editor (Respondent 3) consistently explained that as much as they get information, they tried to give possible coverage. According to him, this is due to the fact that the reporters usually face lack of information on the issue. Respondent 4 (Editor) further stated that the newspaper tried to exert its effort to cover human trafficking whenever information was available on the issue.

All the respondents stated that the newspaper mostly covered human trafficking in the form of feature and news. They all agreed that the purposes of the news stories were to expose the issue and to make it a public agenda, and they also explained that feature stories were also used to explain the extent and the depth of the problem so that they could get a chance to explain it in detail.

The findings of the interview data suggest that The Ethiopian Herald gave limited coverage to human trafficking issues. Also, the findings indicate that the editorial practices and routines of the newspaper shape the story type selection regarding human trafficking. The newspaper's dominantly usage of news stories reflect that the issue demands public attention and awareness and positioned it in the newspaper's agenda. This observation is in line with the quantitative findings that indicates the newspaper employed dominantly news stories. In addition, the relatively employment of feature stories in the newspaper suggests the newspaper's effort to provide depth analysis on the issue instead of covering it with routine ones. This analysis shows that the story type decisions concerning human trafficking are influenced by the newspaper's editorial routines and practices rather than by the nature and features of the problem.

Regarding the story themes, Respondents 3 and 2 (Reporter) shared a common view that the newspaper clearly conveyed the themes and they indicated that the themes were trying to communicate the depth of the problem, consequences and solutions. Respondents 4 and 5(Reporter) further noted that they couldn't say that there were human trafficking themes that were not covered in the newspaper. Respondent 1 on the other hand did not share their views and underscored that the themes of human trafficking were not clearly stated in the newspaper as it is expected, like what are the main causes and solutions to combat the problem. In addition, Respondent 6 argued that the causes and factors that are driving to human trafficking are not mostly covered and given much attention.

All the respondents agreed on the view that most stories focused on solutions and international dimensions of human trafficking. According to the respondents, this is due to the fact that the issue requires international cooperation as it is a cross-border problem

and it demands and necessitates cooperation as one country alone cannot solve the problem. Respondent 3 pointed out that “As a country, the image of human trafficking is really terrible. The government wants the problem to be eradicated. Hence, we prioritized on remedies and global collaboration to tackle the problem.”

The interview findings reveal more focus to solutions and transnational dimensions of human trafficking. The newspaper’s dominant employment of these frames shows that human trafficking was depicted as a transnational crime and as an issue that needs solution and international cooperation. The dominance of solutions and international dimension themes observed in the quantitative analysis of The Ethiopian Herald newspaper can be further understood through the interview that the issue requires solutions and collaborations. On the other hand, respondents also indicated that the causative factors of human trafficking as themes were not giving adequate attention. This reflects that the newspaper’s editorial practices focused on the solutions rather than portraying the underlying causes and factors of the problem.

Regarding the types of human trafficking employed in The Ethiopian Herald newspaper, the respondents expressed a general consensus that the stories mostly focused on external trafficking. They reasoned that this emphasis was largely driven by the nature of external trafficking that it is cross border crime, has networks, and big consequences. More specifically, Respondent 3 stated, “Just in our media, the reporters address that because of the nature of our audiences. In most cases, even though it has roots in the country, it has networks, it crosses borders. That is the reason we usually focus on the external.”

With regard to internal trafficking, the respondents noted that the newspaper didn’t give much coverage to it. Respondent 4 described that the newspaper gave much coverage for the external trafficking even though they discuss the internal one in relation to the external one. According to him, the one that takes the attention of the journalists is the external one. On the other hand, as Respondent 2 stated, “it is a constitutional right to move and work from one place to another within Ethiopia, and it is not considered as internal trafficking. So, I can’t say it is illegal”. Unlike the other respondents, Respondent 1 argued that human trafficking regardless of internal and external is raised in the newspaper when the youth face accidents and are heard that they are dead. Overall, most respondents agreed that the stories gave much attention to the external one.

The findings of the interview data indicate that the newspaper gave greater attention to external human trafficking. The focus of the newspaper on the external one can be perceived the newspaper’s editorial priority and attention to the transnational crime that is more frequently common in the newspapers human trafficking coverage practices. At the same time, the less coverage of internal human trafficking may suggest that the editorial decision of the newspaper offered lower priority rather than investigating the magnitude and the severeness of the problem internally. Overall, the dominance of external human trafficking in the newspaper would provide contextual insights of the quantitative findings that it was dominant types of trafficking. This is also in line with the

extent of the external trafficking in the country, which is increasing at an alarming rate and bringing social, economic and political consequences [87,100-102,114].

Concerning the sources employed in The Ethiopian Herald newspaper, the respondents noted that the sources used determine the main messages of the human trafficking story. All the respondents consistently stated that they had employed government officials, international organizations and NGOs as main sources of information while covering human trafficking stories. According to the respondents, the information that are obtained from the aforementioned sources is believed to be credible and those are the right bodies to find solutions to the problem.

Furthermore, Respondents 1 and 7 emphasized that the government officials, international organizations and NGOs were used as main sources of information because others lack the courage to address the issue and provide information. Respondents 5 and 8 also explained that government officials were used as sources of information in majority of the human trafficking stories due to the fact that they have responsibilities to combat the problem. According to Respondents 3 and 4, as editors, they thought that the usage of government officials, NGOs and international organizations as key sources of information is that because they are the ideal bodies to find solutions for human trafficking. The respondents generally agreed that they had employed these sources because it was easy to retrieve information about the issue and did not take much time and effort.

On the other hand, the Respondents of The Ethiopian Herald newspaper acknowledged that they used traffickers, victims and potential migrants to a limited extent due to the fact that they are not easily accessible and hard to find them. Respondent 2 explained that “Honestly speaking, not only are traffickers hiding from journalists, but they are also concealing themselves from governments”. Respondent 7 also explained that the journalists only reach and report on the traffickers whenever they are arrested by law enforcement bodies and appear in courts. He stressed that only international investigative journalists who specialize in human trafficking can only reach them but it is hard for journalists who work inside the country. In general, respondents noted that the coverage is less as the crime mostly happens in borders and made it hard for the journalists to find them.

As it is indicated in the interview findings, government officials were the dominant sources of the stories in the newspaper. In addition to this, the respondents also stated that they used NGOs and international organizations as sources while covering human trafficking stories. The emphasis of the newspaper on government sources suggests that the human trafficking coverage was influenced by the journalistic and editorial routines that gave priority to official and authoritative information. In addition, the employment of NGOs and international organizations as sources may indicate that the journalists would get information regarding the problem and solutions from them. Nevertheless, the interview data reflect that the primary sources of information like victims and traffickers were not given attention by the newspapers. The limited employment of these sources in the newspaper may be associated with some practical and journalistic challenges such as

the difficulty of contacting the victims and traffickers. The findings of the interview data indicate that government officials were predominantly used as sources of HT stories with less usage of victims and traffickers, suggesting the practical and ethical challenges in the coverage of human trafficking. This is in line with the quantitative findings that the newspaper relied heavily on government officials and NGOs and International organizations as sources of human trafficking stories. Overall, it shows that the availability and the trustworthiness of such bodies may impact the choice of sources in the human trafficking stories.

From the interviews, the respondents of The Ethiopian Herald newspaper mentioned that they were conscious of how human trafficking stories were portrayed and framed. According to the respondents, the newspaper has different columns and for each column there are reporters, and consultations are made with editors on how to frame the human trafficking stories. Respondent 3, editor in chief, particularly emphasized that it is part of his duty, as an editor in chief of the newspaper. The editor in chief further stated that “I know the beginning; I know the way the story goes on and the procedure it follows. Lastly, I must read the whole story before I let it to the publication department”. In addition, Respondent 2 stated that journalists know how stories of human trafficking are framed, and he stressed that there are assigned reporters and editors for the social column and consultations are made with editors on how to frame the human trafficking stories. Overall, there was a broad consensus among the respondents that they were aware of how the human trafficking stories were framed.

From the interview, the respondents noted that factors such as lack of professional skills on reporting the issue, and lack of vigorous research traditions are affected how human trafficking stories were framed. Regarding journalistic routines, several Respondents (R2, R3 and R4) stated that there was not any pressure from government bodies, media officials, or editors on how to write and how to report the issue. Respondents 7 and 8 also explained that they were provided directions from the government to pay attention to the problem, exposed it, and invited experts on the problem, and experts suggested solutions for the government. Respondent 3, editor in chief, emphasized that “As an editor, I do not exert my influence on the reporters. The only requirement I might say and demand from my colleagues is ask them to do adequate and well-balanced stories”.

Though there was a general agreement that they had freedom to write the stories, Respondent 1 and Respondent 6 expressed a different view, emphasizing that there was a pressure from government bodies, media officials and editors on how to cover and write human trafficking stories. Respondent 1, particularly stated that “We are not covering enough to expose the government bodies in order not the people would be against the government inefficiencies regarding combating human trafficking. Any human trafficking story that is against the government is not covered even in an opinion section if they don’t like the topic of the story, and it is against the government.”

During the interviews, the respondents explained that educative, attribution of responsibility and solution frames were predominantly used. The respondents agreed that they used these types of frames dominantly to create awareness to the public and to bring solutions to the problem.

When questioned why the majority of the stories indicated luring promises of better life, organized crime, ignorance, and naivety as major causes of human trafficking, the respondents explained that the newspaper focused on giving awareness to their readers to protect the society from the deceptive strategies of traffickers so that the potential victims might ignore the false promises.

Furthermore, when asked why poverty, limited employment opportunities, and government ineffectiveness were not mentioned as key factors behind human trafficking in the stories, Respondent 1 noted that this is due to the fact that the government doesn't want to take responsibility and doesn't want the issues to be raised in the newspaper. On the other hand, Respondents 2, 6 and 8 noted that changing the societal attitudes should be given high priority as contributing factor. Respondents 3 expressed disagreement with the question that poverty, limited work opportunities and government inefficiency were not mentioned as main causes in the stories. The respondent further emphasized that "The assertion seems here we gave less coverage to poverty, limited work opportunities and government inefficiency. No, we do that. All these are the causes of human trafficking." Regarding the prognostic frames, the respondents revealed that the impact of human trafficking is very perilous and profound. They further pointed out that the increasing effects of human trafficking on victims and society are substantial, and it is undermining the national solidarity spirit. The respondents commonly agreed that majority of the stories emphasized on violations of human rights and physical and mental abuses due to the fact that they were helpful to create awareness among the people.

When asked about the attribution of responsibility frames, several Respondents (R2, R3, R5 and R7) generally agreed that most of the stories attributed responsibility to the government, international community and NGOs. The respondents reasoned that those are the right bodies to mitigate the problem, and have massive resources and influence. Respondent 8 especially stated that it is a misconception to assign accountability only on the government, NGOs, and international community as everyone should assume their shared responsibilities to combat the problem. The respondents were in consensus that the government is mainly responsible for addressing the issue and raising awareness. They further emphasized that NGOs, international community, media and the society must understand the negative effect of this crime and must cooperate with the government as well. In contrast, Respondent 1 stressed that the one who is responsible for addressing the problem is the youth and they need to have hope in themselves, face the challenges and difficult times and survive.

All the respondents noted that they had employed solution frames in their stories, and mainly most stories presented government and other agents' intervention as a solution to human trafficking. The respondents reasoned that these bodies have the power and

ability to solve the problem and identify the factors contributing to the problem by utilizing the existing structures.

Collectively, the respondents indicated that empathy frame was one of the dominant frames in the human trafficking stories. According to the respondents, they had employed words and expressions that could generate emotional responses. Respondent 3, emphasized that “We believe that government and NGOs can read our newspaper. They can see that they can not only understand the emotional words we use but they feel the extent of the problem”. In sum, the respondents underscored that using words and expressions is important to create awareness about the problem, and to rouse the people’s feeling that it is possible to work and change in their country.

Regarding the use of morality frames, the respondents explained that they had used in order to indicate the stories in an impartial way that the readers could have their own judgements. However, the respondents shared the view that morality frames were employed to a limited extent due to giving inadequate attention. Through the interview, the respondents also stated that they had employed human interest frames. The respondents asserted that employing human interest stories would make a story credible for human trafficking reports as they arouse emotions. However, the respondents generally shared a view that this frame was used to a limited extent due to the fact that it was not easy to reach the victims and most of them do not share their experiences.

Pertaining to economic frames, Respondents 2, 3 and 4 indicated that they tried to address the economic aspects of human trafficking though it was employed to a limited extent. On the other hand, Respondent 1 stated that “I try to include the economic aspect of human trafficking and others might not include it due to the fact that they believe that they are criticizing the government. But even the government knows that people are migrating for a better life”. Taken together, the respondents generally agreed that the economic frame coverage was inadequate.

With regard to conflict frames, the respondents concurred that there are disagreements among government officials, victims and community members regarding human trafficking issues. They further noted that they followed the ethics and put the different opposing views equally and in parallel and they let the readers to decide. There was a broader consensus among the respondents that the coverage of conflict frames was limited.

The findings of the interview data indicate that there was dominance of educative, attribution of responsibility and solution frames. The primary focus on these frames reflects that the newspaper covered and constructed human trafficking stories in a way that the issue demands government and other agents’ responsibility and public awareness. In addition to this, the newspaper’s relatively greater attention to educative frames suggests that the journalists’ orientation was educating and informing the public instead of investigating the causative factors that led the youth to be trafficked. This shows the framing strategy is based on informing the public and encouraging accountability and action. Conversely, the newspaper’s limited employment of conflict and diagnostic frames

may reflect that the causative factors of human trafficking and the opposing views regarding the issues were not given adequate attention. Overall, the newspaper's framing of human trafficking was positioned in an educative and solutions way.

In relation to media functions, the respondents noted that the newspaper focused on creating awareness and suggesting solutions. Respondents 2 and 7 noted that the role of the media is not solely to define and identify the problem but also to provide solutions and to create and raise awareness for the public and to present recommendations and suggestions so that the government would make decisions on the issues and to let the public about the economic and psychological burdens that it has. In addition, Respondents 3 and 4 stated that the media's main role and function was to create awareness to the public and policy makers about the problem by inviting and conducting interviews and analysis on the problem. Respondent 3 particularly noted that "For example a psychologist, a sociologist, an anthropologist and policy makers, we usually invite them to speak on the extent of the problem. In this case, the speakers define the problem, what human trafficking is, and they also suggest solutions and recommendations". Respondents 1 and 5 also noted that the media's role and function is mostly on suggesting solutions in order to create awareness to the youth and to break the networks of the traffickers once and for all. Overall, the respondents emphasized that the media's role was mostly on providing solutions, and the other functions come later.

As it is suggested in the interview data findings, The Ethiopian Herald newspaper gave priority to creating and raising the awareness of the public and suggesting solutions. The focus on these media functions shows that the newspaper portrays and frame human trafficking as an issue that demands the keen understanding of the audience and the practical responses from government and responsible bodies instead of focusing on coverage that is even-based. Collectively, the aforementioned functions of the newspaper suggest the media's orientations to solution-focused and informative human trafficking coverage.

With regard to policy and legal framing of the newspaper, the respondents explained that they are not familiar with policy and legal framing. Furthermore, the respondents noted that they do not see that much of newspaper's policy reading mentioning specific laws and policies concerning human trafficking. Respondent 2 particularly emphasized that "As media, we do not charge and assign blame. We leave the responsibilities to the authorities who hold power such as courts and judicial bodies. As journalists, we strive to obtain information about who is to blame from the appropriate authorities. We don't have special policies on legal framing like discussing arrests or enforcement. There are no such things in our editorial policy". Additionally, Respondents 1 and 8 explained that they didn't see much of the media's policy reading mentioning specific laws and policies. According to them, the media's policy reading simply states that traffickers should be jailed.

When asked why the newspaper focused more on praising anti-trafficking efforts rather than assigning blame, respondents stated different reasons. Several Respondents

(R1, R2, R5 and R7) reasoned that the stories of human trafficking focused on praising anti-trafficking efforts so that the potential migrants and traffickers would be fearful not to get involved in the crime. Respondents 3 and 4 also added that the stories focused on praising anti-trafficking efforts so that the traffickers and victims should understand that the government is working to combat the problem. Of particular note, Respondent 2 stated that “We focus more on praising anti-trafficking efforts because we only receive data related to them. Regarding the media, it is not expected to blame if it is not doing investigative work on human trafficking”. Respondent 3, the editor in chief, emphasized that the media in Ethiopia including The Ethiopian Herald newspaper were not praising the attention given to the issue but believed that human trafficking efforts are not adequate enough. According to Respondent 3, the purpose of stating the efforts is to increase, appreciate or to encourage similar efforts. In sum, the respondents agreed to some extent that human trafficking efforts should be given attention, and the effort of governments and NGOs should be praised.

The interview data suggest there was unfamiliarity among the journalists while covering human trafficking especially on specific policies and legal frameworks. This unfamiliarity may reflect with the journalists lack of experience, professional skills and trainings on the issue, and the limited access to specialized legal and policy information and knowledge. And this may influence how the newspaper represented human trafficking stories in relation to policy and legal aspects. Additionally, the interview data also reflects that there was a limited tendency towards assigning responsibility in terms of legal problems on the issue. This may indicate that the newspaper’s ownership and organizational contexts in which the policy and legal human trafficking portrayal tends to foreground actions instead of putting criticisms and assigning blames. On the other hand, the newspaper’s focus on praising the policy and legal efforts may reflect it focused on the government’s achievements and policy and legal responses. Taken together, the newspaper’s policy and legal framing towards human trafficking was on emphasizing the actions of the government and achievements rather than investigating the constraints in terms of legal, policy and responsibilities.

## **Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

This section presents a concise summary of the study process, conclusion of main findings and forwarded possible recommendations.

### **Summary**

Human trafficking is one of the severe and multifaceted problem that abuses human rights globally. These days, it has had its effect on persons, and the community, which is causing social, economic and psychological burdens. It has been a prevalent crime globally as well as in countries like Kazakhstan and Ethiopia.

Media particularly newspapers can play prominent roles in influencing the opinion of the public on how human trafficking stories are covered and framed. Additionally, it is the claim of this study that it is not only the extent of coverage of human trafficking stories but also the way The Astana Times and The Ethiopian Herald newspapers framed human trafficking stories has its influence and implications on combating the problem.

Despite that human trafficking is serious problem in countries such as Kazakhstan and Ethiopia (See Chapter one), previous researches were mostly focused on global and Western media coverage of human trafficking. Hence, it is crucial and reasonable to study the media houses particularly the newspapers in the aforementioned countries. This study sought to examine how The Astana Times and The Ethiopian Herald newspapers covered and framed human trafficking stories. This study mainly employed quantitative content analysis to compare and contrast the two newspapers, and it was also supported by qualitative in-depth interviews with the reporters and editors of The Ethiopian Herald newspaper.

The findings of the quantitative content analysis indicate that The Astana Times relatively gave greater coverage than The Ethiopian Herald newspaper though the coverage in both newspapers is limited in relation to the extent and perplexity of the problem in both countries. In the newspapers, news story type dominated the coverage of human trafficking stories. With respect to thematic distribution, the newspapers provided greater emphasis to solutions and international dimension than the causes and extent/magnitude of human trafficking. Comparatively, legal issue themes were provided emphasis in The Astana Times newspaper. Across the newspapers, external types of trafficking were relatively covered much better than the internal trafficking. Furthermore, the newspapers relied more on government officials, NGOs and international organizations as source while covering human trafficking stories.

In terms of framing types and practices, the newspapers emphasized more on educative, attribution of responsibility, and solution frames. On the contrary, diagnostic and conflict frame types and practices were covered to a limited extent in both newspapers. The framing practices in The Ethiopian Herald newspaper was also significantly characterized by empathy frames than The Astana Times newspaper. The findings also show that the newspapers comparatively provided greater emphasis to, covers HT as an issue, suggests solutions and presents issues socially media functions than defining the problems and causes. Regarding the policy and legal framing, the

findings suggest that both newspapers focused more on praising efforts of the government to combat human trafficking.

Besides the quantitative content analysis, qualitative in-depth interviews were also held with reporters and editors of The Ethiopian Herald newspaper to explain and contextualize the findings of the quantitative content analysis. The data that was obtained by using in-depth interviews reflected the newspaper's editorial and professional routines, values and norms, accessibility of sources, ethical and legal considerations on the overall decision making related to human trafficking. The findings of the interview data suggest that the organizational and editorial factors of the newspapers influence the priority coverage of human trafficking stories. This helped in this study to contextualize and explain the reasons behind reliance on news story types, solution and international dimension themes, external trafficking, educative, attribution of responsibility and solution emphasized frames, and the dependency on government officials' sources, were the dominant ones in the human trafficking coverage in The Ethiopian Herald newspaper.

In terms of methodological and practical relevance, the current study reveals the importance of using quantitative content analysis, supplemented by qualitative in-depth interviews to provide insights on how editorial routines and practices produces outcomes of framing. By relating the findings which are empirical with framing theories, the current study provides comparative evidences from the less studied countries and media, and forwarded its recommendations for enhancing the coverage and framing of human trafficking based on the thematic coverage, while acknowledging the qualitative samples limited generalizability.

## **Conclusion**

Generally, the current study suggests that the coverage of human trafficking in The Astana Times and The Ethiopian Herald newspapers is inadequate and limited. Furthermore, the coverage of human trafficking in both newspapers was predominantly in news form. The newspapers provided greater emphasis to solution and international dimension themes while underreported the causes and extent of the problem. External human trafficking was the most favored one comparing to the internal trafficking in both newspapers, and the coverage of human trafficking also focused more on educative and solution frames. Furthermore, government officials and international organizations were the most favored sources in both newspapers where as victims and traffickers were employed as primary sources rarely. The patterns of this study findings suggest that the newspapers were emphasizing on the solution and government responses instead of investigating the causative factors of the problem.

The findings of the current study have significant policy, legal, and media activity implications by involving key stakeholders in responding to human trafficking. The predominant usage of certain types of frames such as the educative, attribution and responsibility frames, and the newspapers' focus on particular types of trafficking indicate that the government and policymakers should involve and work hand in hand with the media organizations to promote and encourage comprehensive portrayal of human

trafficking. Also, the newspapers' limited coverage of policy and legal framing suggests that they need to consolidate the public communication and create and raise the awareness of the public in terms of the countries' policy initiatives, legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms to combat human trafficking. Similarly, the findings of the current study can also help the human rights and advocacy groups by providing a better understanding of the media's coverage of human trafficking so that they would collaborate with the media in order to ensure accurate and responsible portrayal of human trafficking. Meanwhile, the study also suggests that it is crucial for the media professionals to enhance their understanding and knowledge of the human trafficking legal frameworks, and employing diverse sources to improve the depth and quality of human trafficking coverage. Finally, the findings of this study emphasized the crucial role of the media, particularly the newspapers, in influencing the understandings of the public discourse and the organizational responses to address human trafficking.

In spite of the fact that the current study has a lot of contributions, it is not also without limitations. Firstly, the comparative analysis is made only based on the quantitative findings and the qualitative interviews were made with reporters and editors of one newspaper due to the lack of consent of the other newspaper. This might restrict the generalizability of the study findings. Next, the current study also focused only on the print media, particularly on two newspapers in two countries. It excluded other media outlets like radio, television and digital media which can play a significant role in influencing the perceptions of the public and the public discourse in general regarding human trafficking issues. Despite that the quantitative content analysis is important in providing the media framing patterns of the newspapers systematically, the factors that influences the media framing process in the newspapers cannot be fully captured by it. Furthermore, the current study is based on a limited time frame and only chosen English version newspapers. As a result, it might not indicate the wider trends of media coverage and framing of human trafficking in different times and across many newspapers in the countries and beyond.

Additionally, based on the findings of this study, future and further research is significant to conduct to expand on the present study and deals with the above-mentioned limitations by integrating different media outlets including broadcast and digital media. In addition, further studies should incorporate several reporters and editors for interviews in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding on the media framing practices in different countries. Future studies could also respond to the limitations by involving extensive qualitative methods and investigating the audience perceptions of the media's framing of human trafficking. Last but not least, future and further studies should conduct comparative analysis of media framing of human trafficking across various nations as it enriches the public understanding and discourse on how human trafficking issues are portrayed and represented in various contexts and countries.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, summary and conclusions, the current study forwarded the following recommendations.

- Since human trafficking is expanding in magnitude and significance in the countries, the newspapers should frame the issue in a way that the policy makers and the public respond to the problem.
- Media organizations, particularly the newspapers should incorporate diversified sources of information in covering human trafficking by involving various range of perspectives such as victims, potential migrants, traffickers and experts in order to improve the depth and quality of human trafficking reporting.
- The newspapers should work hand in hand with government officials, NGOs and International organizations and other concerned stakeholders to enhance a comprehensive reporting and combat the problem.
- The media organizations and Journalism schools in Kazakhstan and Ethiopia should prepare and give capacity building trainings on human trafficking laws, particularly on victims' trauma-informed trainings, and on human trafficking awareness raising.
- The current study tried to explore the framing of human trafficking stories in two newspapers in two countries during 60 months (September 2020-September 2025). Thus, future researches should also include different media organizations and interview sets largely so that the editorial routines and factors generalize across factors.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### Lists of Key Informants

| <b>Informants' Code</b> | <b>Position</b> | <b>Media Organization</b> |
|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 1                       | Reporter        | The Ethiopian Herald      |
| 2                       | Reporter        | The Ethiopian Herald      |
| 3                       | Editor in Chief | The Ethiopian Herald      |
| 4                       | Editor          | The Ethiopian Herald      |
| 5                       | Reporter        | The Ethiopian Herald      |
| 6                       | Reporter        | The Ethiopian Herald      |
| 7                       | Reporter        | The Ethiopian Herald      |
| 8                       | Reporter        | The Ethiopian Herald      |

## **Appendix B**

### **Coding Sheet**

*Note: The coding categories were adapted and modified based on the studies discussed in Chapter Two (Research Methodology and Design)*

- Name of the coder
- Name of the newspaper
- Date of publication
- Headline/sub headline of the story

#### **1. Story description**

##### **1.1 Type of Story**

- News
- Editorial
- Commentary
- Feature
- Interview

#### **2. Theme of the story**

##### **2.1 Themes**

- The extent and magnitude of human trafficking
- Causes and Factors
- Consequences
- Solutions
- Legal issues
- International Dimensions
- If other please specify

#### **3. Types of human trafficking**

- Internal Trafficking
- External Trafficking
- Not specified

#### **4. Sources of the story**

- Government officials'
- NGOs/International Organizations
- Police officers
- Victims
- Victim families/relatives/friends
- Traffickers
- Community members
- Experts/Researchers/Advocates
- Potential migrants
- Media channels
- If other please specify
- No specified source

## **5. Frames**

### **5.1 Diagnostic frames**

- Is poverty portrayed as a root cause of in the story? Yes/No
- Are limited employment opportunities, low wages and joblessness portrayed as causes in the story? Yes/No
- Are insufficient educational and vocational skills training portrayed as causes in the story? Yes/No
- Are gender stereotypes, peer influence, social and family displacement portrayed as causes in the story? Yes/No
- Are state repression and political volatility portrayed as causes in the story? Yes/No
- Are inexperience and ignorance portrayed as causes in the story? Yes/No
- Are sustained and growing demand for low-paid and exploitative labor portrayed as causes in the story? Yes/No
- Are fraudulent marriage and sexual servitude portrayed as causes in the story? Yes/No
- Are false promises of better life portrayed as causes in the story? Yes/No
- Is organized crime's coordinated power portrayed as causes in the story? Yes/No
- Are inefficient state actions such as policy and legal systems portrayed as causes in the story? Yes/No
- Are natural catastrophes portrayed as causes in the story? Yes/No
- If other, kindly specify \_\_\_\_\_

### **5.2 Prognostic (Consequence) frames**

- Are victims' fundamental human protections portrayed as violated due to human trafficking in the story? Yes/No
- Are victims portrayed as subjected to physical, sexual, mental abuse and exploitative labor due to human trafficking in the story? Yes/No
- Is the death of victims portrayed as a consequence in the story? Yes/No
- Is the refusal of victims by families and community members portrayed as a consequence in the story? Yes/No
- Is document confiscation by traffickers and employers portrayed as a consequence in the story? Yes/No
- Is a master and servant relationship between employers and victims portrayed as a consequence in the story? Yes/No
- Is political turmoil portrayed as a consequence in the story? Yes/No
- If other, kindly specify \_\_\_\_\_

### **5.3 Attribution of responsibility frame**

- Is government portrayed as capable of alleviating human trafficking in the story? Yes/No
- Are non-governmental organizations portrayed as having the abilities to mitigate and fight human trafficking in the story? Yes/No

- Are governmental and non-governmental organizations portrayed as capable of combating human trafficking in the story? Yes/No
- Are trafficked persons(victims) themselves portrayed as having the abilities to combat human trafficking in the story? Yes/No
- Are the victim families, relatives, friends and indigenous people portrayed as important in combating human trafficking in the story? Yes/No
- Is the global community portrayed as capable of alleviating human trafficking in the story? Yes/No
- Are media houses portrayed as having the potential to combat human trafficking? Yes/No
- If other, kindly specify \_\_\_\_\_

#### **5.4 Solution frames**

- Is attitudinal change concerning human trafficking portrayed as solution in the story? Yes/No
- Is government or stakeholders' intervention portrayed as a solution in the story? Yes/No
- Are poverty alleviation and eradication portrayed as solutions in the story? Yes/No
- Are creating job and economic opportunities portrayed as solutions in the story? Yes/No
- Is a straightforward and cohesive migration policy portrayed as a solution in the story? Yes/No
- Are severe criminal penalties for traffickers portrayed as a solution in the story? Yes/No
- Is human trafficking portrayed as unsolvable and uncontrollable in the story? Yes/No
- If other, kindly specify \_\_\_\_\_

#### **5.5 Empathy frame**

- Are people impacted by human trafficking portrayed as victims in the story? Yes/No
- Are women, men and children mentioned among the affected people in the story? Yes/No
- Are emotive descriptive adjectives or personal stories that trigger feelings of indignation, understanding, compassion and caring employed in the story? Yes/No
- If other, kindly specify \_\_\_\_\_

#### **5.6 Morality frame**

- Are moral messages, good or bad portrayed in the story? Yes/No
- Are the audiences called upon to denounce trafficking in the story? Yes/No
- Are religious references portrayed in the story? Yes/No
- Are societal expectations about how to act towards human trafficking portrayed in the story? Yes/No

- Are human right abuses portrayed in the story? Yes/No
- Are audiences urged to take actions to mitigate and combat human trafficking in the story?
- If other, kindly specify\_\_\_\_\_

### **5.7 Human interest frame**

- Is real-life example or human face employed in discussing the issue in the story? Yes/No
- Are the victims' personal lives told in the story? Yes/No
- Are individuals or groups portrayed as socially, economically and politically impacted by human trafficking in the story? Yes/No
- Are victim accounts of people who were subjected to trafficking portrayed in the story? Yes/No
- If other, kindly specify\_\_\_\_\_

### **5.8 Economic frame**

- Are financial losses due to human trafficking portrayed in the story? Yes/No
- Are financial implications and consequences of human trafficking portrayed in the story? Yes/No
- Are the harmful effects of human trafficking on attaining the national sustainable goals portrayed in the story? Yes/No
- If other, kindly specify\_\_\_\_\_

### **5.9 Conflict frame**

- Are disagreements among individuals, groups or parties presented in the story? Yes/No
- Are two or more opposing individuals, groups or perspectives presented in the story? Yes/No
- Are individuals, groups and parties presented as blaming and accusing each other in the story? Yes/No
- Are the differences on the extent and magnitude of human trafficking portrayed in the story? Yes/No
- If other, kindly specify\_\_\_\_\_

### **5.10 Educative/advocacy frames**

- Are multiple factors portrayed as causes in the story? Yes/No
- Are multiple solutions presented in the story? Yes/No
- Are change in societal attitude presented in the story? Yes/No
- Are wide-ranging migration policy reforms that fully address human trafficking presented in the story? Yes/No
- If other, kindly specify\_\_\_\_\_

## **6. Media Functions**

- Is human trafficking depicted as an issue in the media? Yes/No
- Are multiple sources included in the story? Yes/No
- Is human trafficking framed as a crime in the story? Yes/No

- Is human trafficking portrayed in a social, economic and political context in the story? Yes/No
- Are the problems and causes of human trafficking defined and portrayed in the story? Yes/No
- Are moral evaluations portrayed in the story? Yes/No
- Are solutions to the problem presented and discussed in the story? Yes/No
- Is logical reasoning provided in the story? Yes/No

**7. Policy and legal framing**

- Is assigning blame to a specific actor portrayed in the story? Yes/No
- Are anti-trafficking efforts praised in the story? Yes/No
- Are specific laws and policies mentioned in the story? Yes/No
- Are legislative gaps indicated in the story? Yes/No
- Are arrests and prosecutions discussed in the story? Yes/No
- Are enforcement failures presented in the story? Yes/No
- Are legal and policy solutions proposed in the story? Yes/No
- Are experts and advocates' quotes employed in the story? Yes/No
- Are victims support policies mentioned in the story? Yes/No
- Are victims portrayed as people who deserve legal protections in the story? Yes/No
- Are international treaties and protocols mentioned in the story? Yes/No

## **Appendix C**

### **Coding Guide (Book)**

*Note: The coding categories and operational definitions were adapted and modified based on the studies discussed in Chapter Two (Research Methodology and Design)*

#### **1. Story Description**

- Coder Name
- Newspaper's Name
- Date of Publication
- Headline/Sub-headline

#### **2. Story Type**

- News-Straight reporting of facts or events
- Editorial- the newspaper's official opinion
- Commentary-columnists and guest writers' opinion or analysis
- Feature-In-depth, descriptive, frequently human-centered
- Interview- Question and Answer format with a source

#### **3. Story Theme**

Themes are not mutually exclusive. Choose all the apply.

- Extent- Indicates frequency, scale and scope of trafficking
- Causes- Explains why trafficking occurs
- Consequences- Discusses impacts on victims, society, country or economy
- Solutions- Explains interventions or remedies
- Legal Issues- States to laws, prosecutions, or enforcement gaps and issues
- International Dimension-Discusses transnational collaboration, agreements, or movement
- Other- If none of the above apply, please specify.

#### **4. Types of trafficking**

- Internal Trafficking- Exploitation inside the country
- External Trafficking- Transnational trafficking
- Not Specified- Not stated whether internal or external

#### **5. Sources of the story**

Choose the quoted or referenced sources.

- Government officials- Ministers, agencies, government representatives
- NGOs-non-governmental organizations/ International organizations
- Police-Law enforcement officials
- Victims- trafficking survivors
- Families/Friends/relatives- Victim or survivor families, friends or relatives
- Traffickers- If perpetrators are quoted
- Community members-Witnesses, neighbors, citizens
- Expert/Researchers/Advocates-Specialists, academics, lawyers
- Potential migrants-Vulnerable people
- Media-Other print, electronic or digital news sources cited

- Other- If none of the above apply, please specify.
- None- Unknown source or No source identified

## **6. Frames**

### **6.1 Diagnostic frames (causes of human trafficking)**

- Poverty
- Unemployment/low pay
- Lack of vocational education/training
- Gender/peer influence or pressure
- Political volatility/violence
- Lack of awareness/ experience
- Demand for low-wage labor
- Fraudulent marriage/sexual servitude or exploitation
- Luring with promises of a better life
- Organized criminal groups
- Government ineffectiveness
- Natural catastrophes
- Other- If none of the above apply, please specify

### **6.2 Prognostic frames (for this study, prognostic refers to consequences or the effects of human trafficking)**

- Human rights infringements
- Abuse/exploitation
- Death
- Rejection by families/friends/relatives/communities
- Document confiscation
- Master-servant relationship
- Political volatility and crises
- Other-If none of the above apply, please specify

### **6.3 Attribution of responsibility frames (who is responsible)**

- Government
- NGOs and International organizations
- Both government and NGOs/International organizations
- Victims/survivors themselves
- Families/relatives/community members
- International community
- Media
- Other-If none of the above apply, please specify

### **6.4 Solution frames (social, legal and policy solutions)**

- Attitudinal change
- Government or other agents' intervention
- Poverty eradication
- Job creation

- Clear migration policy
- Punishment for traffickers
- Unsolvable/Uncontrollable
- Other-If none of the above apply, please specify

#### **6.5 Empathy frame (portrayal of victims)**

- Victims identified clearly
- Mentions men/women/children
- Employs emotional languages
- Other-If none of the above apply, please specify

#### **6.6 Morality frames (moral/religious appeals)**

- Includes moral messages
- Includes condemnation
- States religious references
- Mentions societal expectations/ social prescriptions
- Uses human rights discourse/language
- Calls to action
- Other-If none of the above apply, please specify

#### **6.7 Human interest frames (personal stories/testimonies)**

- Gives human examples, human faces
- Mentions personal accounts or testimonies
- Indicates impact on individuals and groups
- Other-If none of the above apply, please specify

#### **6.8 Economic frame (financial/economic implications)**

- Emphasizes on financial losses
- Shows economic implications of victims
- Explains wider development effects
- Other-If none of the above apply, please specify

#### **6.9 Conflict frame (disagreements, opposing sides)**

- Mentions disagreements
- Includes multiples sides and reproaches
- States discrepancies on the extent and magnitude of human trafficking
- Other-If none of the above apply, please specify

#### **6.10 Educative/advocacy frames (awareness, social change)**

- Identifies multiple causes
- Mentions multiple solutions
- Indicates societal change
- Mentions policy change
- Other-If none of the above apply, please specify

### **7. Media functions**

- Covers human trafficking as an issue
- Mentions multiple sources

- Portrays/frames trafficking socially/economically/politically
- Frames trafficking as a crime
- Defines problem and causes
- Provides moral evaluation
- Indicates solutions
- Provides logical reasoning

#### **8. Policy and legal framing**

- Assigns blames
- Praises efforts
- Mentions laws/policies
- Indicates legislative gaps
- States arrests/prosecutions
- Notes enforcement failures
- Proposes legal solutions
- Quotes experts/researchers/advocates
- Mentions victim support policies
- Frames victims as people deserving protection

**Appendix D**  
**Interview Guide for The Ethiopian Herald Newspaper**  
**Interview with Reporters and Editors**

This interview guide is intended to explore journalists' and editors' experiences, perspectives, and practices in reporting on human trafficking. The questions are open-ended to allow flexibility and encourage elaboration.

**1. General**

- What is your overall attitude toward human trafficking?
- How do you evaluate the newspaper's coverage of human trafficking stories?

**2. Story Type**

- Why did the newspaper mostly cover human trafficking stories in the form of news and feature?

**3. Themes**

- What were the main messages in the human trafficking stories?
- Do you think the main messages were clearly stated in the newspaper?
- Why did most stories focus on solutions and international dimensions of human trafficking?

**4. Types of Human Trafficking**

- Why were most stories focused on external trafficking?
- To what extent does the newspaper give attention to internal trafficking?

**5. Sources of the Story**

- Why were government officials, international organizations, and NGOs frequently used as sources?
- Why were traffickers, potential migrants and victims used to a limited extent?
- Did government bodies, media officials or editors exert any pressure on the story writing and reporting? Why?

**6. Frames**

- How did you develop and organize your stories? Why?
- Were you aware of how your stories were presented/framed?

**Diagnostic Frame**

- What do you think are the main causes and contributing factors of human trafficking in Ethiopia?
- Why did most stories highlight luring promises of better life, organized crime, ignorance, and naivety as major causes of human trafficking?
- Why were poverty, limited work opportunities, and government inefficiency rarely mentioned as root causes?

**Prognostic Frame**

- What do you think about the effects of increasing human trafficking on victims and society?
- Why did most stories highlight human rights violations and victims' physical, sexual and psychological abuses?

### **Attribution of Responsibility Frame**

- Who do you think is responsible for addressing the problem? Why?
- Why did most stories attribute responsibility to the government, international community, and NGOs?

### **Solution Frame**

- What do you think are the solutions to human trafficking?
- Why did most stories present government and other agents' interventions as solutions?

### **Empathy Frame**

- Do you use words or expressions that generate emotional responses? Why?

### **Morality Frame**

- Do you convey what is good or bad through your stories? Why?
- Why were society's beliefs, norms, and values not frequently included?

### **Human-Interest Frame**

- Do you think human faces are credible for this kind of report? Why?
- Why did you use human-interest elements to a limited extent?

### **Economic Frame**

- Why did most stories not address the economic aspect of human trafficking?

### **Conflict Frame**

- How did you handle opposing views in your reports?
- What are your views on disagreements among government officials, victims, and community members regarding human trafficking?

### **Educative Frame**

- Why is human trafficking covered in the newspaper?
- Do you make recommendations on what should be done? Why?

## **7. Media Functions**

- What was the newspaper's function in covering human trafficking—defining the problem, framing it as a crime, explaining causes, giving moral evaluation, suggesting solutions, and providing logical reasoning?
- What does your editorial policy say about covering social issues like human trafficking?
- What roles do you think the newspaper play in covering human trafficking?

## **8. Policy and Legal Framing**

- What was the media's policy and legal framing regarding assigning blame, praising anti-trafficking efforts, mentioning laws and policies, and discussing arrests or enforcement?
- Why did the newspaper focus more on praising anti-trafficking efforts rather than assigning blame?