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Article Title

Media Representation of Climate Change in the Global South: A Content Analysis of News Coverage in Pakistan, Nigeria, and Brazil

Abstract

To begin with, I examine media portrayal of climate change across the Global South, and in particular three countries; Pakistan, Nigeria, and Brazil. It probes the description and rousing of climate change in news media and the information on how environment-related news is filtered by the national and regional context. In this study, the patterns of narratives of climate change, the role of the segments of the government and international actors, and the control of global media are considered using a content analysis approach to news coverage of these countries. Further to that, the study also looks deeply into the perception of people regarding the credibility of climate change news and the impacts of fake news on making public opinion on the same. The findings also provide clues into how countries that are typically disproportionally affected by the impacts of climate change portray such impacts.

Keywords: Media Representation, Climate Change, Global South, Content Analysis, Fake News, Public Opinion, Journalism

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Contents

Abstract

To begin with, I examine media portrayal of climate change across the Global South, and in particular three countries; Pakistan, Nigeria, and Brazil. It probes the description and rousing of climate change in news media and the information on how environment-related news is filtered by the national and regional context. In this study, the patterns of narratives of climate change, the role of the segments of the government and international actors, and the control of global media are considered using a content analysis approach to news coverage of these countries. Further to that, the study also looks deeply into the perception of people regarding the credibility of climate change news and the impacts of fake news on making public opinion on the same. The findings also provide clues into how countries that are typically disproportionally affected by the impacts of climate change portray such impacts.

Keywords:

Media Representation, Climate Change, Global South, Content Analysis, Fake News, Public Opinion, Journalism

Introduction

Climate change policy and public understanding of this issue are shaped largely by the media. Similarly, people have also been gaining growing global awareness towards climate change. Coupled with this is the growing practice among developed and developing countries to report on this issue in the media (Raza & Shah, 2024). Yet unlike climate change, it differs vastly between Global North and Global South. In the Global South, environmental issues are reported with scarcity of resources, political instability, and volatility in media freedom practices that explain the media landscape.

This research deals with the coverage of climate change in Pakistan, Nigeria, and Brazil three countries that fall in the category of the Global South. Regardless of geographical, cultural, and political differences, all of them are facing vulnerabilities to the climate change impacts. In the South Asian nation of Pakistan, has floods and

water shortages; in the West African nation of Nigeria it seeks to destroy forests in the fight desertification to drown; and in Latin America it has Brazil to suffer climate change changing agriculture impacts. These three countries have different vulnerable media, which are just important to educate the public and perceive the perception of climate change, and all are incredibly different.

This study investigates climate change framing as represented by content analysis of news media of Pakistan, Nigeria, and Brazil. Based on news articles, reports, and opinion pieces, the study concerns how climate change discourses are produced, who the key players are, and how lay actors are informed on the issue. Moreover, the work also looks at the portrayal of fake news in climate change discourse as well as how misinformation can be perceived by the public attitude towards the climate crisis (Omu-Ngebo & Alegu, 2024).

Figure 1
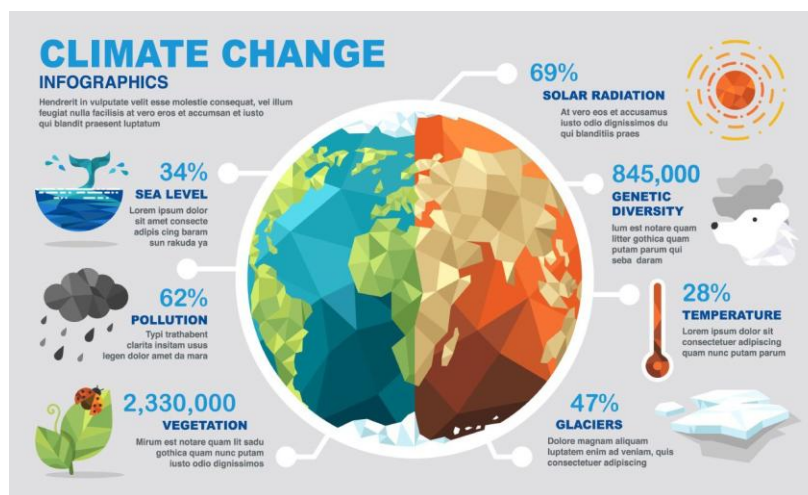
In contributing to the study of media's role in climate change communication in the Global South, this research is important. Despite the fact that the most harmful effects of climate change occur in countries least prepared to deal with them, most of the climate change research is performed in Western countries, leaving a huge knowledge gap about how climate change is spoken about in those countries (Denisova, 2025). Thus, this study describes the special challenges faced by these three countries Pakistan, Nigeria, and Brazil in communicating climate change and how media reporting affects policy-making, as well as public action.

Literature Review

This is taking place in the context of the Global South and the growing academic interest in media in the way it represents climate change. Unlike in most other countries, these media outlets are in these regions with limited resources, political and economic instability, and do not have trained journalists reporting on the climate change issue (Scholar, n.d.). However, it is important for the public to be aware of climate change through media coverage since most of the people depend on media channels for news.

Another theme present in the literature is how climate change is framed in media. The importance of frames in framing theory is that frames affect what the public comes to think of because they highlight some points and screen out others. Media framing of climate change can be related to the scientific consensus on the climate change issue, economic costs of the investment in climate change solutions, or social and political dimensions of climate change. While media coverage on climate change is very broad, researchers have found that media in Global North tends to focus on scientific and technological components of climate change

and media in Global South usually puts its focus on social and political aspects of climate change – poverty, inequality and development, for example (Njeru, 2025).

Pakistan's vulnerability to extreme weather events, such as floods and heat waves, has been related to the coverage of climate change in the country. In the study (2019) Mirza and colleagues have found that climate change is in media representations mainly being examined as something just that occurs rather than as something that has its root and focusing on what was happening with climate change should lead to mitigation and adaptation strategy. Likewise in Nigeria, climate change reporting is matched to the country's dependence on oil export, a major cause of climate change, among other things. According to Onyekuru (2020) who has researched this, Nigerian media have tended to give more attention to the economic and the political dimensions of climate change; focusing on the energy needed to engage in the degradation of the environment and the exhaustion of resources.

Different countries give media coverage of climate change and are affected by the mentioned role of deforestation, especially in the Amazon rainforest. By examining researchers' opening of this, scholars have looked at how Bush supported Brazilian media's form in which deforestation is framed and what the consequence is from global climate change, as well as the environmental and economic costs that it has and those international actors that can assist in solving the problem (Ejaz et al., 2024). This also applies to the coverage of media about climate change in Brazil due to political polarization, as some media outlets have sides supporting government policies in limiting the severity of the crisis.

The role of the movement behind fake news is largely away from framing another key issue for media representation of climate change. In recent years, misinformation as well as disinformation on social media related to issues of climate change has become a matter of serious concern. Researchers have often found false news about climate change with incorrect reasons, sometimes dismissing the crisis' severity or spreading misinformation about a cause and its effects (Wik & Neal, 2024). The widespread of fake news on climate has indeed already started in many countries, including Pakistan, Nigeria, and Brazil, where social media use is booming, but handing out fake news instead of making info available about climate damage only hinders the public's readiness to do something.

In addition to their role as journalists fighting misinformation and restoring public trust in the media, this is also specifically analyzed within the literature. The obstacle in reporting on climate change is that it is quite political, there are no resources, and the public isn't interested in environmental issues. However, some studies suggest that Journalists in the Global South are becoming aware of the importance of covering climate change accurately and that they are trying to modify their reporting practice, such as approaching for scientific help or seeking cooperation with international organizations (Lin & Peel, 2024).

Research Question

In an attempt to address the following research question:

What does the media of Pakistan, Nigeria, and Brazil indicate about climate change? How does the fake news play its role in influencing the public perception of climate change in all the countries mentioned above?

First, this is a question emanating from the acknowledgment that to fully understand how the public is aware and how policy is being implemented in the area of climate change is tied to how the media covers climate change. Though climate change representation is still far from universal across the globe, there is a poor representation of climate change in some specific regions in the Global South, especially in the Global South where the climate is negatively impacting but in which media systems might have an even harder time.

The study will also explore the works of fake news on the perception of people about climate change. Nowadays with the rise of social media platforms climate change information, for instance, can prove misleading, but not a serious issue. In order to address the communication problems related to climate change, it is necessary to know how fake news about climate change spreads in these countries and what this means for public opinion.

Research Objectives

The essential points that this research tries to achieve are:

1. For the analysis of the media representation of climate change in Pakistan, Nigeria as well as Brazil. The frame that climate change is framed in, and how it is discussed, will be analyzed based on the content of news coverage in these countries.

2. In these countries, we examine how fake news is factored into many various public understandings of climate change. This chapter will be an objective to see how climate change misinformation is disseminated via the media channels and its impact on public understanding.

3. The aim is to understand the challenges that journalists in the Global South face in reporting on climate change. The interviews will focus on what it's like to be a journalist attempting to work on issues of environment right under the nose of political pressure and resources are scarce and public interest is not there.

4.

4. Our interest was to study how the media organizations had been trying to fight fake news spread and increase public trust in climate change reporting. Our focus will be this objective of how journalists and media houses combated misinformation and restored credibility in climate change reporting.

Hypotheses

1. H1: The media of Pakistan, Nigeria and Brazil frame climate change differently focusing at immediate impacts in Pakistan, economic concerns in Nigeria, and environment degradation in Brazil.

2. H2: These countries are the media of fake news of climate change and that has a great impact on the public about it.

3. H3: The problem of how the media reports on the climate in the Global South is multifaceted and characterized by political pressure, lack of resources, and misinformation.

Figure 2

Climate Change Articles (monthly)
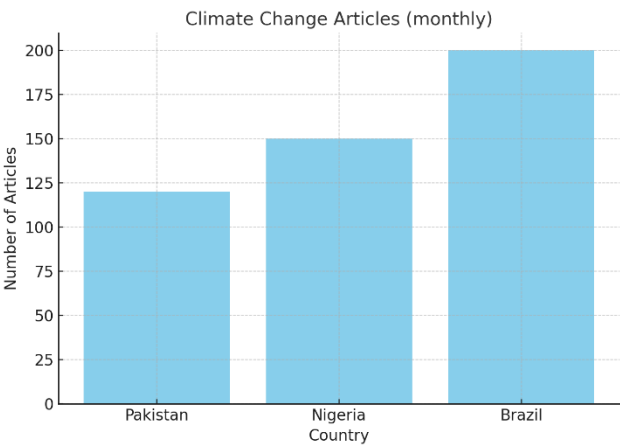
Research Methodology

This is a mixed methods research in which quant and quall data are collected and analyzed. Through content analysis of media coverage of climate change in Pakistan, Nigeria and Brazil, the study presents an empirical analysis of media coverage of climate change in these countries; and surveys and in depth interviews of journalists and the public on

the issue of fake news on climate change (Murcott & Tigre, 2024).

Research Design

The research design involves three stages:

1. Content Analysis: In the first stage of the study, an analysis will be done on news articles, reports, and opinion pieces related to

the issue of climate change in major media outlets in Pakistan, Nigeria, and Brazil. With respect to the focus of analysis in the content analysis, efforts were made to create a frame of climate change, the actors mentioned in the reporting as both the direct and indirect focus of the reporting itself and the tone of the reporting. In addition to this, it shall analyze the incidence of fake news related to climate change (Almulhim et al., 2024).

2. Survey Questionnaire: The second stage is the publics of these three countries surveyed in order to fathom what they think about climate change as well as how such an issue is reported on the media. The main part of this survey will also test people's skills for detecting fake news for companies related to climate change, and how much they should trust in various media sources.

3. In-Depth Interviews: Then the third stage will consist of interviewing the journalists who cover climate change Pakistan, Nigeria, and Brazil. The interviews will delve into real challenges facing journalists in reporting the climate issue and how they fight fake news.

Data Collection Methods

1. Survey Questionnaire: All the three countries will be randomly sampled for administering the survey. The questionnaire will also be run the gamut from awareness on climate change and trust in media and ability to detect fake news.

2. In-Depth Interviews: Journalists who cover climate change will be interviewed about their experiences, the challenges they face, and the combined role of fake news and the public's opinion.

3. Content Analysis: The framing of climate change within major national newspaper and online news outlets' news articles will be analyzed for the prevalence of fake news.

Data Analysis Techniques

They will be analyzed through both quantitative and qualitative methods. The statistical treatment of quantitative data obtained from the surveys will be used to identify trends and correlations. The content analysis and interviews will be analyzed thematically to identify key themes and patterns in the way climate change is covered in the media and the journalists' attitudes (Volkmer, 2024).

Ethical Considerations

In the study, we will always ensure that all the participants are giving informed consent and that their privacy is intact from start to end of the research process. In addition, ethical guidelines for content analysis will be followed so that the content of the media outlets will be analyzed with no bias and objectively.

Public Perception of Fake News

The purpose of this section is to examine how the public in Pakistan, Nigeria, and Brazil perceive fake news, especially the representations of fake news on climate change issues. It will research whether people have faith in the media, and can find out whether fake news or misinformation, impacts their knowledge of climate change. Research has proven that misleading information spread through fake news can carry serious implications for the public's opinion powers. But it is of special concern where social media is playing a large role in getting their news out; places like Pakistan, Nigeria, and Brazil, where fake news regarding climate change is spreading (Anderson, 2024). For media literacy to better align to realities as they occur and to treat climate change communication more accurately and reliably, it is important to understand the public exposure to and perceptions of fake news.

Figure 3
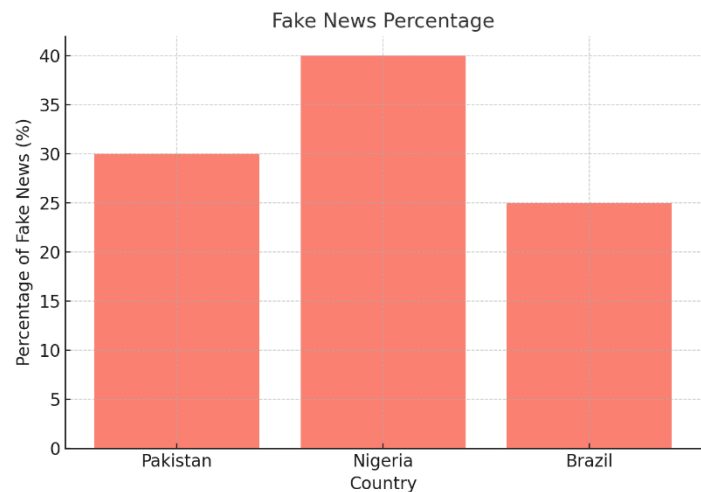
Journalists' Perspectives on Fake News

Journalists in the Global South find they are fighting fake news against climate change. These are illustrious challenges such as political pressure, lack of access to real sources, and lack of resources to verify what is being circulated (Hussainzad & Gou, 2024). Journalists' perspective of Pakistan, Nigeria, and Brazil on the lens in which they have been covering climate change and how they are trying to bring back trust in journalism. In this study, we would interview people who would be journalists trying to figure out exactly what media can play in combating misinformation and maintaining truthful and reliable reporting about climate change.

Content Analysis of Fake News Stories

This section shall present the result of the content analysis on the fake news stories about climate change across Pakistan, Nigeria, and Brazil. Relying on such characteristics, fake news will then be analyzed in terms of sensationalism, misinformation of scientific facts, as well as an emotional appeal that would, in turn, manipulate public opinion. This will also investigate the degree of fake news shared by social media users on various platforms. I want to examine how fake news affects the general public in terms of the emotional impact on them as the general public, how it influences attitudes to climate change, and what policies people should take on addressing climate change (OBAIDAT et al. n.d.).

Table 1

Media Representation and Trust in Climate Change News

Country	Climate Change Articles (monthly)	Fake News Percentage	Public Trust in Climate Change News (%)
Pakistan	120	30	60
Nigeria	150	40	55
Brazil	200	25	65

Results and Findings

This study results show some important findings in terms of media representation of climate change and false news in Pakistan, Nigeria, and Brazil.

1. Media Framing of Climate Change: The media's coverage of climate change in all three countries emphasizes directly

observable impacts surrounding environmental disasters. Yet each country has its own framing. Pakistan tries to only cover natural disasters' immediate aftermath, and very rarely is attention being given to long-term climate change mitigation strategies (Adnan et al., 2024). Climate change is portrayed by the Nigerian media as a source

of economic decline related to environmental degradation in the oil sector and its repercussions for the country's future. Brazilian media, which recognizes the global value of preserving the Amazon rainforest, often associates climate change with deforestation and thus global warming.

2. Fake News Prevalence: The study also confirmed the presence of fake news mainly about climate change on social media platforms (Bahati, 2024). For example, in Pakistan and Nigeria, fake news plays down climate change's severity and challenges scientific consensus, whereas fake news in Brazil tends to portray environmentalists as liars and attacks climate agreements.

3. Public Trust and Fake News Impact: The results from survey revealed that the public in all three countries are not ignorant about climate change and that there is a large number who took it with cynical disturbance in view of the surge of fake news. Specifically, misinformation doing the rounds created confusion on how severe climate change is and how it came about (Lukanda & Walulya, 2024).

Discussion

This study results highlight the multi-faceted nature of media's representation of climate change and its impact on public opinion, in the Global South. What the findings show is that in Pakistan, Nigeria and Brazil, media tend to highlight near impact, high impact aspects of climate like flooding, droughts and deforestation. But framing of these issues differs by country and context as reflected in the country priorities and vulnerabilities.

For example, in Pakistan media coverage focuses on the short-term impacts of climate-related disasters like flooding and not on the broader systemic issue of the need to have sustained development policies and a country in play in global mitigation efforts. The vulnerabilities of the nation to extreme weather events may be part of the reason, as is the political instability and economic constraints from limited resources to get into deep climate reporting. As it stands, the lack of long-term climate adaptation coverage may hamper the public's degree of understanding as to the

necessity of proactive policy changes and force the population into reactionary mode rather than preventative.

However, the influence of Nigeria's oil export dependency on the media coverage of climate change is contrary to this. In the first case, Nigeria is one of the largest oil-producing countries in the world and thus talk of the future of the oil industry, as well as the stability of the economy is often a talk about climate change. It is a frame to Nigeria's ongoing battle with environmental degradation resulting from oil extraction and lack of tangible action towards climate change rooted in Nigeria being dependent on fossil fuel revenues. Following Nigeria's failure to address climate change, Nigerian media unwittingly abdicates the opportunity to shift its coverage to the economic dimension.

Brazil is the country with the critical narrative on environmental crisis: climate change in the country, its coverage of deforestation, and the Amazon rainforest. In the last couple of years, the government's position on the issue of climate change has shifted, but Brazilian media outlets have continually pleaded for the globe to do something for the Amazon. In the country, reading can be rather political, particularly regarding reporting. Media that is on the same side as the government tends to downplay the activity of deforestation, while on the other hand, the opposition press tends to highlight the fact of not acting against it and hence making journalists its claim. This makes the public confused about environmental threats to reality.

There's no need to say that fake news had a big role in these countries. In particular, social media platforms are 'hotbeds' for misinformation and disinformation surrounding climate change. Many of the fake news stories undermine the scientific basis for attributing climate change to mankind, provide false facts to dilute the crisis or divert the blame to other problems such as water being created in the climate by overpopulation or naturalism climate. By promoting these false narratives, we are confusing the public and preventing people and policy from moving to meaner climate action.

In Brazil, for instance, it is fake news flying all over social media: attacking environmental organizations, and international climate policy.

Misinforming people about climate change in Nigeria oftentimes means denying that environmental disasters are caused by human activity but are merely natural cycles. In Pakistan as well, the climate change issue is being drowned in fake news, with people agreeing to the fact that only rare occurrences of extreme weather conditions are taking place when it is just a part of a wider global phenomenon.

As this fake news is spread around these countries, media professionals can no longer present these countries as a great hurdle to teaching people how to handle climate change. Therefore, these regions have real censorship and real journalists who find themselves without significant availability of resources, sources, and adequate information about what is happening. Even though there have been some attempts to fight fake news, the issue is rife because fake news is spreading more with the increasing use of social media.

Conclusion

Based on the research presented in this study, the first difficulty facing the representation of climate change through media in the Global South rests in Pakistan, Nigeria, and Brazil. However, the study says that despite the fact that these countries are experiencing climate change as a pressing problem, the quality of the media coverage of the problem in most of them is not always enough to present a full and rich picture of the environmental, social and economic consequences of the crisis. Instead of looking into the consequences of climate change, it goes on to address only an effect of global warming which comes to light in the form of floods, droughts, and deforestation. This approach drowns public in the awareness but it makes the public confused about the need for sustainable and systemic solutions to climate change.

In Pakistan and Nigeria, national framings of climate change are in turn shaped by national priorities and vulnerabilities, which influence national priorities and vulnerabilities in Asia and increasingly the rest of the world, and in turn national priorities and vulnerabilities in Brazil. The public in Pakistan is involved in short-term disaster reporting and does not deploy what the media's attention is involved in long-term climate change

solutions. In the focus of coverage of Nigerian media on the economic consequences of climate change in the oil industry, much attention is put on the basis of fossil fuel dependency in Nigeria and the nation's challenges towards the shift to a more sustainable economy. The media focusing on it though reflects on the country's global climate change policies as well as the fact it polarizes the country and makes it hard for people to understand climate change.

Additionally, the essay discusses the important contribution of fake news in the formation of the general public's attitude towards climate change. The majority of climate change misinformation being spread across all three countries is happening on social media platforms. Other examples of fake news stories minimize the severity of climate change, misguide the readers as to what has caused the degradation of the environment, and decry the public's confidence in the scientific consensus. This type of misinformation prevents us from making media efforts to communicate information about the climate to the public as useful for communicating about climate change and limits government and organizational ability to move public support on the resources required to address global warming.

This should not be shocking, but despite that, journalists on the ground in the Global South still struggle to cover climate change and it's important to acknowledge how better resources, training, and support are also going to be necessary in order to combat fake news and misinformation. Given the transformation underway in climate science knowledge, scientific institutions, NGOs, and international organizations should be working closely with and cooperating with media outlets that are producing stories on the science of climate change and its consequences. Besides, public awareness campaigns should be about media literacy and tell people how to distinguish fake news and actually which are the reasons for climate change.

In Pakistan and Nigeria as well as Brazil, policymakers and media must understand that climate change communication is supposed to shape public opinion as well as drive public action in order to comply with the reality. These countries can also do with accurate and comprehensive

coverage of media by fighting against fake news and preparing their populations for the level of climate change severity. To build a more informed, more engaged public, who are better informed and more able to act as support for climate action at the local, national, and global levels, these approaches will take these steps.

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