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## **Projecting Sports/Cricket Diplomacy between India and Pakistan: A Comparative Analysis of leading Media Outlets from both the Countries**

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### **Abstract**

Sports diplomacy has gained much importance with increasing interest in sports internationally. The importance of this new arena as a focal tool of traditional diplomacy cannot be neglected anymore. Bringing nations together on one ground along with their differences in culture and language helps the societies to fill-in the vacuum of understanding one another. Sport is meant to connect the people across the globe and act as a means for many governments to pursue the political interests. This study aims to answer the quest of how sports/cricket diplomacy is depicted by leading media outlets from India and Pakistan and how it differs among the two countries. For this purpose, a comparative content analysis was conducted to examine two newspapers representing India and Pakistan. Findings reveal that sports are the most mentioned topic presented in the news, followed by Pakistani Cricketers as the most stated source of information. Rivalry and Human Interest frames constitute a greater share in framing of news on cricket. Both countries, more or less, share similar patterns in depicting news on sports/cricket diplomacy in the media. Finally, some recommendations for future studies have been suggested in the research.

The research holds several limitations due to the lack of useful resources. First and foremost, in the Subcontinental region, there has been a lack of research on sports/cricket diplomacy since its inception and there has not been any concrete work done that could define sport's role in contemporary relations among the countries. Moreover, no academic researchers have yet come up with a comprehensive method for the evaluation of sports diplomacy hence; no indicators for its measurement have been evolved. Secondly, this research only analyzes newspapers from both countries. It does not examine websites, television, and other versions of the news. That is the reason; the findings of this research are only applicable specifically to the print media, therefore, the comparison with electronic and print media is not presentable.

**Keywords:** sports, diplomacy, India, Pakistan, media outlets, cricket diplomacy, media

### **1. Introduction**

In 1987, President of Pakistan, Zia-ul-Haq surprised the whole world by travelling to India to watch a cricket match between the two countries amid a serious level of volatility in relations and hostility in diplomatic behavior among the two neighboring countries ([BBC News, 2005](#)). The visit helped to diffuse a highly tense situation between India and Pakistan; hence the term "Cricket

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Diplomacy” was coined. The president’s choice to select a cricket match as a venue for diplomacy was not unintentional as those who are aware of the dynamics of South Asia must be familiar with the importance of cricket and the role it plays in building relationships in the respective society. Sports are considered as a reflection of society. It enjoys a huge fan-following in South Asia and the game receives much attention in Asian countries like India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. Cricket in these countries enjoys a great deal of respect and credibility and occupies a vast proportion of the advertising market as they are often seen on television while campaigning for the eradication of polio and other consumer drives as well. The message from a cricket celebrity is widely respected and appreciated among the masses.

Therefore, the game might also serve as a political tool to bridge a vacuum in diplomatic relations between both countries. Sports experts in South Asia believe that cricket in the region has been assumed with a similar role because of the magnificent performance of scores of players from South Asia in different parts of the world consistently (Chatterjee, 2004). Furthermore, S.M. Khan (Khan, 2005) regards cricket as the greater unifying force in the region apart from ethnic and religious differences as it binds the society together and brings unity and peace as well.

The history of enmity between India and Pakistan goes back to decades. In 1947, British India was partitioned into two separate states based on Muslims and Hindu majority areas and they still share a similar geographical region, cultural patterns, and civilization, but their post-colonial differences merged with some meager interests, have divided the region. The rivalry between these two countries remains as one of the most eminent issues of the world (Behera, 2002: 211).

Relations between India and Pakistan often remained worst since the emergence of two countries and earlier cricketing ties between the two nations reflected their political relationship as the game was perceived as war between the two countries. President Zia’s version of cricket diplomacy didn’t bring a major swift in India-Pakistan relations at the beginning and the Indian team never toured Pakistan since 1997 (Racine, 2004). However, both cricket teams faced each other in 1997 to play a limited number of One Day International cricket matches on Pakistani soil. But, this bilateral cricket series could not last long with both countries testing nuclear weapons, further escalating the bilateral tension. Ice seems to be melted after informal talks between the two Prime Ministers in SAARC meeting in Sri Lanka followed by a formal visit of Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee in 1999. Both Prime Minister made a valuable decision to resume cricketing ties (Ganguly, Hagerty, 2005).

The diplomatic process was reestablished once again in 2003 with the resumption of bus service between Delhi and Lahore and agreement of ceasefire in Kashmir (BBC News, 2005). Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Musharraf met in Islamabad on account of the SAARC summit where both leaders agreed to resume talks and bilateral cricket series between the two countries (Talbot, 2006:219). The series was labeled as “Friendship” series. Chief Operating Officer of Pakistan Cricket Board. Ramiz Raza while commenting on the breakthrough said, “Until people to people contacts are established and trust is developed, these conflicts cannot be resolved and cricket can be a major vehicle for this purpose (CNN, 2003). Even Imran Khan, the cricketer-turned-politician and current Prime Minister of Pakistan exclaimed, “I have never witnessed such atmosphere in India-Pakistan series. War is not an option anymore... we need something new (Astill, 2004).

The purpose, however, of this research is not to analyze whether this episode of sports/cricket diplomacy has been successful or not instead the paper is focused on media coverage of sports/cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan from 2008 to 2013.

This paper will explain to what extent cricket is presented as a tool of sports diplomacy to strengthen/improve relations between India and Pakistan and what the similarities and differences are in the coverage of cricket among the leading media outlets of India and Pakistan. Assessing media coverage of cricket and sports/cricket diplomacy, this research will ground its inquiry on two complementary theoretical components that will be mobilized in building up the theoretical background for the research: (a) Introduction to Sports/cricket diplomacy, (b) Media coverage on how issues are presented.

## 2. Materials and methods

While analyzing news framing of sports/cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan, this study incorporates a quantitative content analysis approach. Authors like K.A. Neuendorf (Neuendorf, 2002) defines content analysis as: “A summarizing, quantitative analysis of messages

that relies on the scientific method (including attention to objectivity-inter subjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability, and hypothesis testing) and is not limited as to the types of variables that may be measured or the context in which the messages are created or presented.”

Furthermore, K. Krippendorff (Krippendorff, 1980) believes that the process of doing content analysis involves several steps which include unitizing, sampling, recoding/coding, reducing data, inferring contextual phenomena, and finally narrating the answer to the research questions.

It is a scientific study of the content of a communication, whereas here studies are referred to the meanings, contexts, and intentions contained in messages. Moreover, B.D. Prasad (Prasad, 2008) argues that content analysis is restricted to three principles of the scientific method

Content analysis interprets data about media content such as topics or issues, volumes of mentions, “messages” determined by keyword in context, circulation of media (media reach), and frequency (Macnamara, 2005). This expectation could be interpreted as a reliable scientific method to extract less subjective data from a framing that could be elusive (Maher, 2001). This statement is supported by Macnamara’s concept of media content analysis: “Media analysis is a non-intrusive research method that allows an examination of a wide range of data over an extensive period to identify popular discourses and their likely meanings” (Macnamara, 2005).

Therefore, as this research analyzes how sports/cricket diplomacy is portrayed by the news media from India and Pakistan, for this purpose content analysis is the most appropriate method to apply. An empirical approach is important to measure the media frame. Using quantitative content analysis, this study attempts to be more systematic in identifying the extent of sports/cricket diplomacy in the news and minimize the researcher’s subjectivity during the analysis.

The codebook is a reference document summarizing definitions used to assign items from open-ended survey content or media content analysis and other related text (e.g. focus group transcripts) to specific categories (generally assigning numeric identification) for purposes of further analysis (Priest, 2010). Few scholars have recently tried to examine cross-cultural framing in the Fukushima crisis case in several chosen country newspapers: Singapore, Germany, USA, UK, Japan, and India. For this purpose, quantitative content analysis has been undertaken, with human coding (instead of computer coding) chosen as content analysis methodology (Mazahir et al., 2019). Hence, this research will also follow a similar methodology and formulate a codebook. In order to conduct the content analysis, a codebook has been developed as guidance to recode the news samples, which are the news articles from the two leading newspapers from India and Pakistan. The codebook has been divided into two categories. 1-) Formal Categories: It consists of those variables that reveal the general information about the articles. 2-) Content Categories: It consists of those variables which have been deduced from the relevant literature and research questions, thus help in answering them.

**Formal Categories:** In this section general characteristics of the articles will be coded. It covers formal information of the articles such as article number, publishing date, country of origin, and media from which the article has been taken.

**Content Categories:** In order to have a comprehensive analysis of the depiction of sports/cricket diplomacy in leading media outlets from India and Pakistan, content categories contain several variables that are included within these sections.

Content categories comprised of the following section:

#### 1. *News Topics*

The range of news topics covered in the news is measured by the different indicators of sports diplomacy as proposed by the report from the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy, Berlin with some modifications from this researcher. Here, news topics referred to six indicators of sports diplomacy i.e. sports as soft power, sports as development, sports as peace, sports as national identity, and sports as Confidence Building Measures. In this research, the idea is to measure which indicators are prominent in the media coverage of cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan and to which extent.

#### 2. *Tone of the article*

It will be interesting to analyze whether cricket diplomacy between India & Pakistan is usually portrayed positively or negatively. Therefore, it is interesting to ascertain the general tone of the article.

### 3. *Source of Information*

While analyzing the news coverage of sports/cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan it would be interesting to analyze which actors have been quoted in the articles.

### 4. *News Frames*

The framing technique used in this research follows the list of frames approach (Tankard, 2001). In order to identify frames empirically, Tankard suggests to “make the range of possible frames explicit, put the various possible frames in a manifest list, develop keywords, catchphrases and symbols to help detect each frame, use the frames in the list as categories in content analysis, and get coders to code articles into categories”. To identify the news frames that associate sports/cricket diplomacy in the news, a list of keywords has been developed. The list of keywords is obtained through a qualitative analysis of several relevant articles on the relevant topic.

During the initial stage of the research process, the researcher tried to incorporate some dimensions of sports diplomacy as proposed by the annual report of Institute of Cultural Diplomacy, Berlin (ICD, 2011) to the research model. However, after extracting news frames while applying J.W. Tankard (Tankard, 2001) approach to the articles, the researcher observed these so-called indicators as the news frames that were evident in the media coverage of both countries. So, after much consideration, it is decided to enlist them as news frames.

However, since the idea is to gather articles covering at least 20 percent content related to cricket/sports diplomacy between India and Pakistan, hence it allows other topics of discussion in the remaining 80 percent content of the article. Therefore, during the process of conducting a pretest, with the help of other literature recommendations as well as from the news articles – the following news topics were extracted for further analysis in the research process. The idea behind this attempt is to gauge to which extent sports is portrayed as the focus of the articles in comparison with other news topics for instance like terrorism, economics, etc.

News topics in this research cover:

*Sports.* Since the coverage of India-Pakistan cricket matches constitutes a vital share in the gathered articles for this research, therefore sports/cricket has been a major topic of discussion in many news articles. Hence, it makes a solid ground for the inducement of Sports/cricket in the list of news topics on a priority basis. It would help in analyzing to what extent sports/cricket is in the focus of an article as opposed to terrorism, economic issues, etc. It also helps to examine if sports are reported more often in connection to for instance economic issues or terrorism.

*Politics.* Another important aspect of the news coverage of sports/cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan are political relations between the two countries. Therefore, this category is intended to analyze to which extent political relations between India and Pakistan have been portrayed in the news coverage of what share it constitute in comparison with other news topics of the articles.

*Terrorism.* One of the major topics found in the news coverage of both newspapers in India and Pakistan is terrorism. It refers to terrorism activities carried out in both countries. Each side blames the other for initiating insurgency and terrorist activities in the rival countries. It also involves policymaking for the counter-terrorism strategy in both countries.

*Kashmir Issue.* Kashmir is actually referred to as a bone-of-contention in friendly relations between India and Pakistan. Soon after independence Kashmir conflict raised that also became base of the enmity between both Pakistan and India, the state of Jammu and Kashmir is actually a landlocked territory that lies in the northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent. Kashmir became a disputed territory soon after the partition in 1947, the Kashmiri people were mostly Muslims and were having their affiliations with Pakistan but the ruler of the Kashmir was a Hindu so he refused to opt for Pakistan (Hussain, 2009). Since then both countries termed this land as an integral part of their respective country. Both countries have fought three wars for this piece of land.

*Economic Issue.* Another important issue that has been covered by the news media is economic progress and initiatives, which include ranges of steps like initiating trade between the two countries, business exchanges, introducing strategies for raising economy, depreciating rupee value, and others.

*Culture and Entertainment.* Each society exhibits certain cultural values and norms. Sporting events present a great opportunity to represent one owns culture to the whole world. It also includes arranging a series of entertaining events for the visitors. Both newspapers have also covered such events and happenings where the culture of both India and Pakistan was projected and several pleasant aspects of India-Pakistan relations were portrayed.



The following section will demonstrate the Sampling technique. Print media is one of the traditional and basic forms of mass communication, which includes newspapers, weeklies, magazines, monthlies, and other forms of printed journals. The contribution of print media in disseminating information among the masses can never be neglected. Even after the advent of electronic media, this traditional medium of communication has not lost its charm. Various surveys on the usage of print media acknowledge the increasing demand of print media globally. This has been supported by the fact when Time Magazine referred Johannes Gutenberg's printing press invention as the most crucial event of the millennium (Kipphan, 2001). The importance of print media and newspapers in the modern world is also supported by several studies. For instance, S. Chaffee and S. Frank (Chaffee, Frank, 1996) in their study on influencing the power of newspaper and television on audiences' political knowledge in the United States, concludes that people seeking political news turn to newspapers more often than electronic media. Meanwhile, C. Neuberger, J. Tonnemacher, M. Biebl, A. Duck (Neuberger et al., 1998) also acknowledge that online publishers are dependent on printed newspapers to base their activities; hence they design their product accordingly.

Thus, this research has selected the most prominent, reputed, and credible newspaper of the respective country for the analysis i.e. *The Dawn* (Pakistan) and *Hindustan Times* (India). Both newspapers have been selected with the perception that they represent the views of their respective country.

*The Dawn*: The oldest newspaper in Pakistan is *The Dawn*. It is a widely-read English-language newspaper. Dawn and Pakistan, both are founded by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah – one in 1940 and other in 1947 as a part of his struggle for an independent homeland for Muslims. It was first published from Delhi, the capital of British India, to raise voice against the British administration. It has a week-day circulation of over 138,000 copies and a total readership base of over 759,000. Read every morning by policy and decision-makers in the public and private sectors, at the federal and provincial government level, *The Dawn* has been at the forefront of the many events that constitute Pakistan's history (Malik, Iqbal, 2010).

*Hindustan Times*: *Hindustan Times* has been considered as the most widely read newspaper across the capital and surrounding regions of New Delhi. It has been voted on the list of top three English-language newspapers of the country which boasts a readership of 3.7 million and a daily circulation of 1.4 million copies a day. *Hindustan Times* is a newspaper that is popular among readers of all ages. This makes it ideal for all kinds of advertising-Matrimonial, Recruitment, Education, Retail, Travel, Announcements, Business, and more (www.hindustantimes.com).

The sample is obtained by the online version of the respective newspapers from both countries during the time period of 2008-2013. This time period has been selected since a major shift in India-Pakistan relations were witnessed during the same time frame. The articles were retrieved from the "Advance Search Options" on the websites of the respective newspapers by using keywords like "India-Pakistan relations, India vs Pakistan, Cricket diplomacy, India-Pakistan cricket match, etc. Hence, a total number of 353 articles were gathered out of which 154 articles were collected from *The Dawn* while 199 were obtained from the website of the *Hindustan Times*. The following guidelines were followed while data gathering.

- a) The article should be in English.
- b) The article should discuss sports/cricket diplomacy or cricketing relations between the two countries for at least 20 % of the content. Therefore, other articles having very little proportion of cricketing coverage are ignored from the sample.
- c) Opinion pieces are treated as a sample since it also undergoes editorial check.
- d) Repetitive articles are excluded from the sample.

**Table 1.** Distribution of news sample from India and Pakistan

S/No.	Newspaper	Website	Retrieved Articles	Relevant Articles
1	<i>The Dawn</i>	www.dawn.com	154	150
2	<i>Hindustan Times</i>	www.hindustantimes.com	199	141

Before the data collection started, one coder training session is conducted to familiarize the coder with the codebook. In the following sessions, the researcher coded 10 % of the total articles

and noted the problems that occurred during the coding process. Hence, based on these coder training sessions, the codebook was revised by including extra coding guidelines and examples so as to improve the understanding of the codebook.

Inter-coder reliability is the widely used term for the extent to which independent coders evaluate a characteristic of a message or artifact and reach the same conclusion. Although, in its generic use as an indication of measurement consistency. Authors like H.E.A. Tinsley and D.J. Weiss (Tinsley, Weiss, 2000) note that the type of specific term for the type of consistency required in content analysis is inter-coder (or inter-rater) agreement. They argue that while reliability could be based on correlational (or analysis of variance) indices that assess the degree to which "ratings of different judges are the same when expressed as deviations from their means," inter-coder agreement is needed in the content analysis because it measures only "the extent to which the different judges tend to assign exactly the same rating to each object". In other words, reliability means whether coders code identical content in the same way. Therefore, In order to improve reliability, a pretest was conducted prior to data collection. For the inter-coder reliability, 10 % of the total sample was randomly selected which are 33 articles in total. The researcher code the articles on the basis of guidelines mentioned in the codebook, with the help of a fellow student. Since the fellow student was not familiar with the code book, enough time was planned for the coder training of the coders. Both coders coded identical articles.

The Holsti coefficient was calculated after an inter-coder reliability test is conducted. The result shows that the codebook is acceptable with the Holsti coefficient of .86. Good reliable result is obtained for both formal and content category. Formal category shows a perfect agreement, with a coefficient of 1.00, while the coefficient for the content category is 0.86. Most of the categories obtain good reliability coefficient of more than 0.80. in general. Nevertheless, there are two variables (out of 30 categories) that obtain a seemingly low-reliability coefficient; soft power (0.723) and competition (0.725.) Hence, a more specific explanation and examples of two variables were added to the codebook in order to improve the coder's understanding of those variables and to improve its reliability. Hence, the changes in the following two categories include adding a few pertinent examples to each category as well as improving its description.

Before starting this coding procedure, a pre-test is conducted to identify the list of news frames from the terms of the article. As explained in J.W. Tankard (Tankard, 2001), to identify the news frames, several steps have to be conducted; "make the range of possible frames explicit, put the various possible frames in a manifest list, develop keywords, catchphrases and symbols to help detect each frame, use the frames in the list as categories in content analysis, and get coders to code articles into categories". Applying these steps to this study, the researcher selected 10 % of the total articles to be treated as pre-test sample, and note all associating terms found within a news article, by paying attention to 11 focal points suggested by Tankard that involves headlines and kickers, subheads (small headlines over the main headlines); photos; photo captions; leads (the beginning of news stories); selection of source or affiliations; quotes selection; pull quotes (quote that are blown up in size for emphasis); logos (graphic identification of the particular series an article belongs to); statistics, charts, and graphs; concluding statements or paragraphs of articles. The list of news frames extracted from the news articles was then incorporated into the codebook for further analysis.

### 3. Discussion

Diplomacy has been classified as an essence of International Relations or serves as a master institution of any society (Joensson, 2002: 212). In order to understand the basic concept of diplomacy, several scholars have gone far from restricting the meaning of diplomacy to certain actors and practices (Joensson, 2002: 213). Authors like J. Melissen (Melissen, 1999) says that diplomacy may not be referred to specific purposes performed by specific actors revolving around one of its several functions but it may be explained as a process of representation, communication used by states, or other international actors to conduct their business. Some researchers argue that diplomacy is an art of practicing international relations by representatives who are official persons (Bull, 2004). However, this theory is outdated if seen from a broader perspective, classification of diplomacy. In addition to diplomats, states do have other representative sources as well, which include development corporations, tourism agencies, banks, airlines, etc. These new diplomatic actors are obviously an extension in international relations (Dubinsky, 2019).

Therefore, an extension in approach is required while viewing diplomacy in terms of representation. Meanwhile P. Sharp (Sharp, 2004) concludes that athletes and other sports personalities should be considered as diplomatic actors like in the case of national cricket teams of India and Pakistan. In 2005, when the year was declared as International Year of Sport and Physical Education, the national cricket team of India and Pakistan were appointed as “Spokesperson” to promote the objectives of the year (United Nations, 2005). Both teams were selected due to their marvelous efforts and excellent contributions to overcome tension and bridging peace among the two nations.

According to E. Gilboa (Gilboa, 2008), several scholars have come up with different confusing, problematic, and vague definitions of public diplomacy. G. Malone (Malone, 1985) defines public diplomacy as a direct communication with foreign public with an aim of influencing their thinking and their public policies. H. Tuch (Tuch, 1990) states that public diplomacy is a mean of communication with foreign public to projects its culture, national goals and policies internationally. With a major advent in international relations and communications, researchers have come up with modern definitions of public diplomacy. Some other authors including B. Signitzer and T. Coombs (Signitzer, Coombs, 1992) defines public diplomacy is an exchange of behavior and opinions between two countries which structures foreign policy. This theory redefines the concept of public diplomacy by addition of non-state actors to its essence and validates the growing interdependency among all of them. Other scholars differentiates between non-state actors and government stating that government conducts public diplomacy while non-state actors like NGO`s companies and firms pursue practical International Public Relations (IPR). However, on the other hand scholars like D.L. Wilcox, P.H. Ault, W.K. Agee (Wilcox et al., 1992: 409) argue that IPR is a well-planned strategy on the behalf of company, institution or government to initiate mutually-beneficial-relations with other nations. Diplomacy is, for instance, essential to the questions of acknowledgement and governance which enable representatives of nations to come together to compete (Allen et al., 2017). Despite growing significance of public relations in this contemporary world, researchers and scholars have not yet come up with concrete and comprehensive theoretical research in this area. Although several research model and tools have been developed in various disciplines of public diplomacy but it still lack an integrated framework (Gilboa, 2008).

Sports diplomacy has developed into a vibrant field of inquiry relevant to both practitioners and scholars (Pamment, 2019). Sports diplomacy is an example of the fact of how sports play an important role in relations between the states. Although academic scholars have ignored this intertwining relations between sports and politics while doing research on international relations (Levermore, Budd, 2004:6). But scholars like A. Beacom (Beacom, 2000:4) have referred to the merging of sports and politics at a different level while labeling them as a theme for diplomacy, confidence-building, and international relations. P. Dimeo (Dimeo, 2003:379) points out several potential factors that link sporting institutions to the political process and endorse its importance in political actions. Sports diplomacy between India and Pakistan has been revolving around several of these factors making it a potential factor for political action. Thus sports and politics have intersected in various ways: countries have used sports for two purposes: Firstly, to project themselves on an international level and secondly to build their image internally as a nation (Houlihan, 2004). Furthermore, H. Mills (Mills, 2005: 3) argues that sporting events have also been utilized to initiate propaganda messages: from fascist regimes to commercial interests, from national identities to racial stereotyping, and from colonialism to cultural imperialism – all these propaganda messages have also been transmitted through various national sports. Sports event is considered are a great source to create good relationship with other countries (Beacom, Brittain, 2016).

Sports diplomacy is a relatively new research term in the theory of public diplomacy and international relations but the role of sports in contemporary life can never be undermined (Allison, Monnington, 2002). Researchers like A. Beacom (Beacom, 2000) believe that a great deal of transformation in diplomacy has taken place, which has widened the scope and range of activities.

Dr. Caitlin Byrne as cited in S. Murray (Murray, 2012) states: Sports diplomacy comes under the branch of public diplomacy, which involves sports-persons to carry on diplomatic activities on behalf of their government. Although, the practice is supported by traditional elements of diplomacy but it takes an advantage of sporting celebrities or events to build a positive image of the

respective country among foreign public that ultimately helps the sending country in bridging and boosting foreign relations.

Certainly, sports do have an impact on the international arena. It has the potential to bring people from different castes, creeds, cultures, and religions to one platform. A report from Sports Development and Working Group ([Sports..., 2008](#)) suggests that sports provide an opportunity to the people to move beyond their cultural, national, and traditional constraints. The European Sports Charter recognizes sport's role in the fulfillment of the objectives of the European Council by acting as a unifying force among the member countries ([ICD, 2011](#)), .

While cultural diplomacy ponders on people to people contacts and cultural exchanges, sports diplomacy also facilitates the negotiation and peace process between states and individuals, sometimes even transcending cultural and traditional differences ([ICD, 2011](#)). The report from the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy, Berlin encourages the induction of sports diplomacy as an aspect of cultural diplomacy in the theory of international relations. Ideas are exchanged between the participating countries during such mega-events like Olympics or FIFA World Cup, while the idea for co-hosting European Football championships: Belgium and the Netherlands in 2000, Switzerland and Austria in 2008, and Ukraine and Poland in 2012 also set an arena for the neighboring countries to achieve mutual understanding and accept those values based on each other's culture.

S. Murray ([Murray, 2012](#)) has cited six reasons for this "sportification of diplomacy. He states that recent changes in diplomatic environment have compelled the government to adopt new methods and tools for practicing it. Governments have been actively involved in sports diplomacy after post-cold war tensions, also people have become tired of witnessing violence and disruption in the world. Therefore, the public is more likely to be engaged in this soft power ventures like sporting and cultural exchanges from nation to nation. Sports are an essential part of this modern world arena.

The idea to use sports as a tool of cultural/public diplomacy is not new for those scholars working in the field of political and social sciences and many academicians have idealized sports as a powerful instrument of diplomacy but unfortunately, no proofs of its durability have been ascertained yet ([Henry, 2005](#)). Neither any relevant theory has come that could reveal the possible indicators of sports diplomacy and measure its effectiveness. However, a report compiled by Institute of Cultural Diplomacy ([ICD, 2011](#)) has illustrated how sports can be and is already applied as a tool for cultural/public diplomacy. After going through the extensive literature review of relevant theories on sports and cultural diplomacy, the report has proposed few possible dimensions of sports as a tool for public diplomacy that may evaluate the effectiveness of sports in diplomatic practices. These possible indicators for sports as an instrument for public diplomacy are explained below, followed by some other indicators proposed by this researcher after careful review of the relevant theories and literature.

Sports games is considered as a tool for the development of under developing countries ([Reis et al., 2016](#)). One of the major applications of sports in contemporary international relations is directly related to development issues. Sports can play an effective role in the achievement of United Nations Millennium Development Goals, by providing an opportunity to the deprived community including socially excluded groups like refugees, orphans, and street children for the rehabilitation process ([ICD, 2011](#)). The idea coined as so-called Olympic truce (suspension of hostilities between states during sporting events) can also open the access of humanitarian aid to operate freely in battle zones ([Sports..., 2008](#)). Sports events are playing essential role to create a peaceful environment within a country ([Peachey, Cohen, 2016](#)).

Sports play a crucial role in shaping collective identities like continental clubs competition, attracting people and fans from different cultures and countries leading them to the admiration of foreign players ([Markovits, Rensmann, 2010](#)). Therefore, sports can be perfectly linked to Robert Putnam's concept of "bridging capital" meaning bringing people from different groups together beyond their cultural boundaries. Commercially sports and entertainment industry have become more intertwined than ever before. Olympics and FIFA World Cup are the most-watched programs in the world. Moreover, building relationships and networks, demonstrating country benefits to business partnership with other big organisations ([Peachey et al., 2018](#)).

Soft power is the capability to achieve desired diplomatic goals by winning one's heart through peace rather than by force. The recent example of such activity goes back to the Beijing Olympics in 2008 where there was a notable presentation of Chinese culture and projection of



China as an upcoming economic power. (Xu, 2006). Sporting events at international levels are always accompanied by big businesses and a huge amount of money, therefore, hosting high profile sports competition involves tough bidding process. International sporting events can also be an effective medium for expressions of dissatisfaction and hostilities between one country and another (Rowe, 2020). For instance, countries have boycotted global sporting competitions like Olympics for political reasons as the U.S did not participate in the Moscow Olympics in the 1980s as a protest on the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. Finally, there is a more recent phenomenon linked to the use of soft power through sports. Some countries send their best athletes – superstars known all over the world on diplomatic missions abroad to foster a positive image abroad.

Scholars like J.H. Frey, D.S. Eitzen (Frey, Eitzen, 1991) centered sports as a core factor in people to people and nation to nation relations. They identify sports as a prominent social institution any society could have. Thus, the relationship between sports and national identity has been explained as a diversified composite. J. Sengupta (Sengupta, 2004) believes that sports have the ability to bring people/nations close to each other: they promote a sense of national belonging or more concretely, national identity.

Scholars like B. Houlihan (Houlihan, 2000) suggests that sports do elaborate symbolic functions at various levels. On the one hand, individuals are identified by their teams and players while cities and regions are symbolized by their respective squad. Sports provide several occasions for emotionally charged spectators to share a common sense of belonging and national identity. Victory at a sporting event may be used to carry out triumphal messages by a group or country besides endorsing their ideas (Mills, 2005). Meanwhile, B. Houlihan (Houlihan, 2000) asserts that the national teams do carry symbolic values as analogies for the nation and its public. So, the national team of India and Pakistan also promote their symbolic values besides serving as a national unifier in their respective countries (Dasgupta, 2004:576).

Sports play an effective part in building an image of a nation and it can be viewed as a tool for representing common symbols of the population at the national or international level. B. Houlihan (Houlihan, 2000) further extends that sports specifically any elite sports can serve the role of building a definition of national identity. Thus, In the case of India and Pakistan, cricket has served as a source of national unity and national identity among the citizens of the respective country. The nationalistic and stereotypic emotions in India and Pakistan had made the cricketing event a battlefield between the two countries, however, the situation started to normalize after 2004. Recent cricket competitions between the two counties prove that significant symbolic values attached to the national teams could serve as a powerful diplomatic tool indeed.

Every individual, culture, religion, society, or institution has witnessed different forms of conflict (Siddiqi, 2003: 34). According to the study, it is considered that sports events play a significant role for the development of confidence among players (Bjerke, Elvekrok, 2020). Thus, confidence-building is termed as a psychological process that brings a major switch in the beliefs of policymakers from hostile intentions to diffusing tensions (Rauf, 2005: 179). Confidence building measures (CBMs), therefore occupy an evident position in multi-track diplomatic efforts by minimizing conflict and diffusing tensions among the states (Mogaji et al., 2020). Another scholar S. Akhtar (Akhtar, 2003) defines CBMs as those bilateral measures that help in building confidence, reducing tensions, encouraging contacts, and uplifting negotiations. To sum up, CBM is intentionally used to melt the ice and making a path for initiating a peace process.

In every part of the world, CBMs have been used as the starting point for the restoration of trust and going towards healthy relations among the states. The same has been practiced in the case of India and Pakistan where cricket diplomacy has been recently used to build up confidence among the two countries.

Media frames have been defined as a central organizing idea or storyline that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection between them (Gamson, Modigliani, 1989). They supply content and suggest what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration" (Crawley, 2007).

Researchers like J. Matthes (Matthes, 2009) declares that two basic types of definitions of framing exist. The first ones are more general definitions, which are useful but they describe the term "frame" without clear guidelines for operationalization. For example, frames are "principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters." On the other hand, the other definitions are there that provide precise

operational guidelines – they specify what frames generally do, such as defining problems, making moral judgments, and supporting remedies (Matthes, 2009).

Other scholars like J. Matthes, M. Kohring (Matthes, Kohring, 2008) argue that most frame definitions are rather vague and thus cannot be directly translated into empirical indicators. Although they are central for the understanding of framing processes, they do not necessarily lead to an applicable operationalization of media frames. According to both authors more detailed and widely accepted definition is offered by (Entman, 1993). Moreover, researchers like R. Van Zoonen, L. Vliegthart (Van Zoonen, Vliegthart, 2011) considers that the inclusion of framing in media and communication studies "began only in the early 1990s, when Entman's article about framing as a fractured paradigm was published". He argues that framing is the kind of "scattered conceptualization" and that it essentially involves selection and salience. According to him "frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating context, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman, 1993).

Belgian academician B. Van Gorp (Van Gorp, 2009) explains that while locating some frames in the news does require some level of interpretation by the person who is conducting the analysis, hence some level of subjectivity is unavoidable; however, he tends to provide some methodological guidelines for doing framing analysis to minimize the level of subjectivity. He emphasizes making a combination of both inductive and deductive framing approach while conducting a frame analysis, which he himself found useful in his news framing of Belgian immigrant issue. This approach broadly resembles the methods proposed by R.M. Entman (Entman, 1993) and differs significantly from the approach where a predefined number of generic frames is set up before starting with the analysis. Hence, since sports/cricket diplomacy is a multidimensional issue, therefore, after careful consideration of the relevant research theories as well as the sample articles, this researcher has concluded that methodology used in Belgian academician B. Van Gorp would not apply to this study (Van Gorp, 2009).

Therefore, this research will use Tankard's list of frames approach framing approach for analyzing the media coverage of sports/cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan. Since, J.W. Tankard (Tankard, 2001) urges upon the importance of framing because according to him it's a helpful alternative for the old objectivity and bias paradigm. Moreover, framing analysis helps in understating mass media effects with some valuable insights for the media practitioners. Further, he explains that earlier research on framing was focused on text analysis when the researcher as alone was responsible for identifying frames in the media content. This, according to him might lead to subjectivity in the research process Therefore; he presented some empirical and systematic approaches for conducting frame analysis. As mentioned in Tankard's list of frame approach for systematic framing analysis are as follows:

The list of frame approach:

The "list of frame approach" is quite similar to "media package approach" as it also focuses on inclusion and exclusion of certain key terms. However, this approach presents a list of indicators for the coder to catch frames in the news content. As described in J.W. Tankard (Tankard, 2001), 11 focal points or indicators for identifying frames in news coverage, are as under:

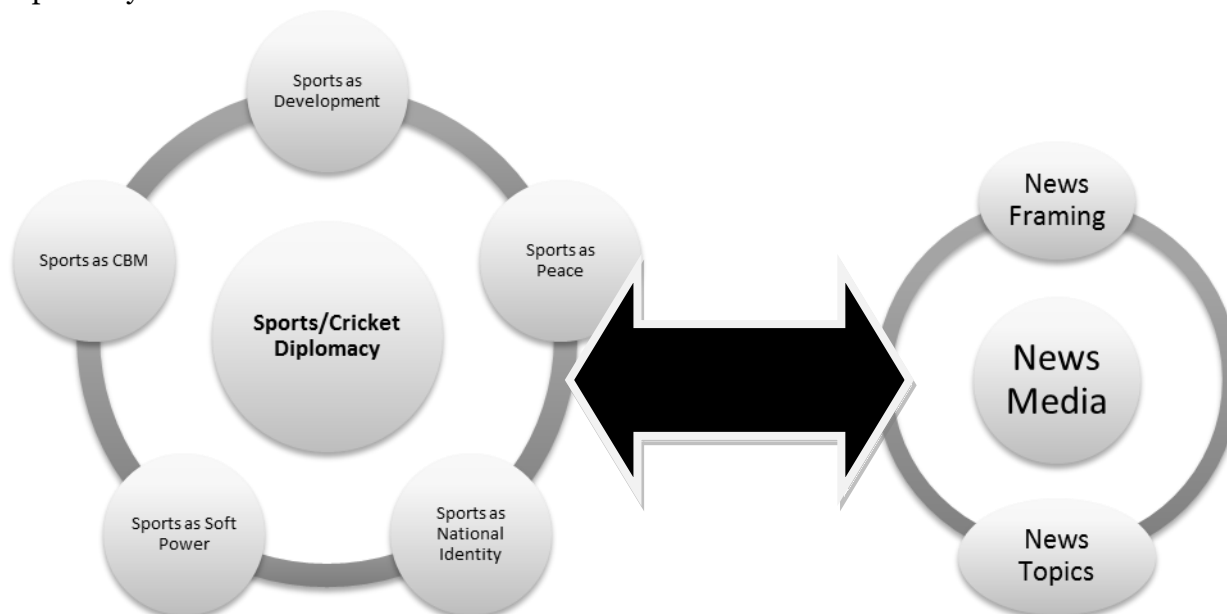
- headlines and kickers
- subheads (small headlines over the main headlines)
- photos
- photo captions
- leads (the beginning of news stories)
- selection of source or affiliations
- quotes selection
- pull-quotes (quotes that are blown up in size for emphasis)
- logos (graphic identification of the particular series an article belong to)
- statistics, charts, and graphs
- Concluding statements or paragraphs of articles

In general "list of frames approach" recommends the following steps:

- Make a list of possible frames explicit.
- Put the various variables in the manifest list.
- Develop keywords, catchphrases, symbols for frame identification.

- Use the frames in the list as categories.
- Ask coders to code articles into those categories.

This research will use “List of frames approach” for the identification of frames while doing the content analysis of media coverage of sports/cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan. So, after going through the relevant literature in the areas of sports diplomacy and its impact on India-Pakistan relations as well as studying the relevant theories of news framing, a research model. Figure and research questions have been developed to study the media coverage of sports diplomacy between India and Pakistan.



**Fig. 1.** Research Model

#### *Research Questions*

- 1) How do leading media outlets in India and Pakistan frame the media coverage on cricket?
- 2) To what extent is cricket portrayed as a tool of sports diplomacy in order to strengthen/improve the relationship between India and Pakistan?
- 3) What are the similarities and differences between media coverage in India and Pakistan?

Scholars believe that the framing of news is an effort to choose one possible way of looking at something. The Olympic Games could be framed as a celebration instead or as a pure competition among striving individuals to achieve their targets. Nationalistic frames are prominent in the portrayal of the Olympic Games when distinct costumes, flags, and uniforms of different countries are displayed for the audience. But American media usually go one step further, while constantly debating about their athletes or continuously blabbering out the U.S dominated-medal count, American media, according to authors D. Sabo and colleagues (Sabo et al.,1995), portray Olympics using hyper-nationalistic “Us vs Them” frame.

As per the study conducted by R. Gruneau (Gruneau, 1989), the projection of sports in U.S media involves multiple factors, which include decisions about camera angles, sport statistic, language, theme songs etc. – taken by the consent of a producer based on dominant ideological approaches of the society. Thus, according to him the process of selection and representation of sporting content on television has been observed expression of dominant values like, instrumental rationality, hero worship, obedience to authority, possessive individualism, meritocracy, competitiveness, and patriarchal authority. By applying these frames some aspects of sporting events are highlighted while others remain ignored or neglected.

R. Gruneau (Gruneau, 1989) points out that sports are used as a tool for storytelling events, the way sports competition is portrayed to the audiences in order to increase the entertainment level while ignoring its implication. By using the elements of drama in sports, it is easy to grab the attention of viewers. Sports competitions between different nations do generate other frames as well. For example, an author R. Levermore (Levermore, 2004) in his study observes the elements

of nationalistic bias and stereotyping in the media coverage of Football World Cup 1998 where stereotypic references were remarked to describe Japanese, Iranian, Korean, British and Cameroonian players while Germans were stated as “cold-hearted” and “without any sense of humor”. Such observations were also made by scholars like D. Sabo (Sabo et al., 1995) who found several pieces of evidence of nationalistic bias while analyzing 340 hours of coverage of American television for different sporting events. The authors summarized their results by calling national bias within sports telecasts the “fly in the ointment” for televised international sports.

Similar findings were illustrated by C. Walter, S. Murphy (Walter, Murphy, 2008) who investigated the U.S media portrayal of framing the Olympic Games and its impact on the audience as well. They conclude that media coverage tending towards nationalistic bias may lead to division and international jealousy while on the other framing these events as pure sports on international terms may help in building international cooperation.

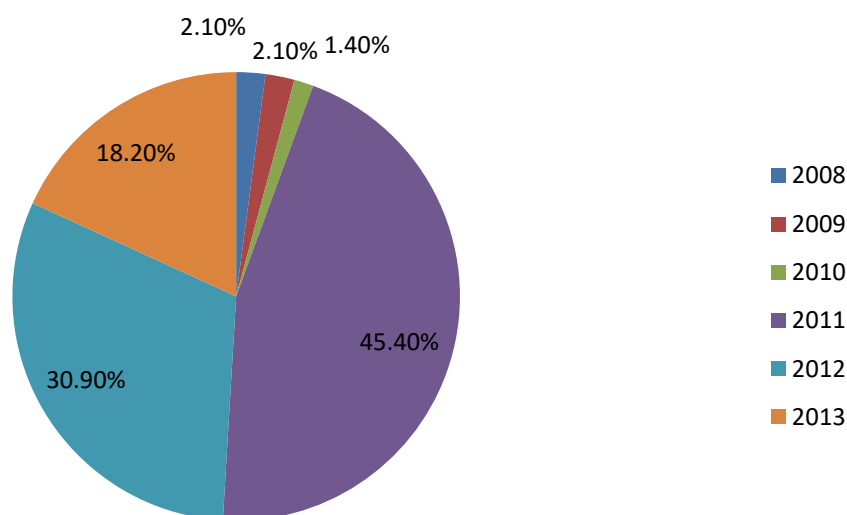
#### 4. Results

During the respective time frame, a total number of 291 articles were published in leading media outlets from Pakistan and India. In comparison, balanced coverage of sports/cricket diplomacy is found in Pakistan’s “The Dawn” and India’s *Hindustan Times* with the number of news articles of 150 (51.5 % from the total sample) and 140 (48.5 % from the total sample) respectively.

This finding on balance distribution of news covering sports/cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan suggests that this issue is equally treated in press of both countries. As S. Muray (Murray, 2012) suggests that recently people are easily engaged via sports. Perhaps this is the reason sports/cricket diplomacy is equally projected by in news media of both countries.

The articles covering sports/cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan varied each year. The highest number of coverage was found in 2011 (45.4 %) and 2012 (30.9 %). Several studies have maintained that some issues are given prominence in the media coverage because they attract public interest to a larger extent. However, the news coverage of sports/cricket diplomacy every year may have been influenced by the political happenings and cricketing occasions between India and Pakistan.

#### Distribution of news per year

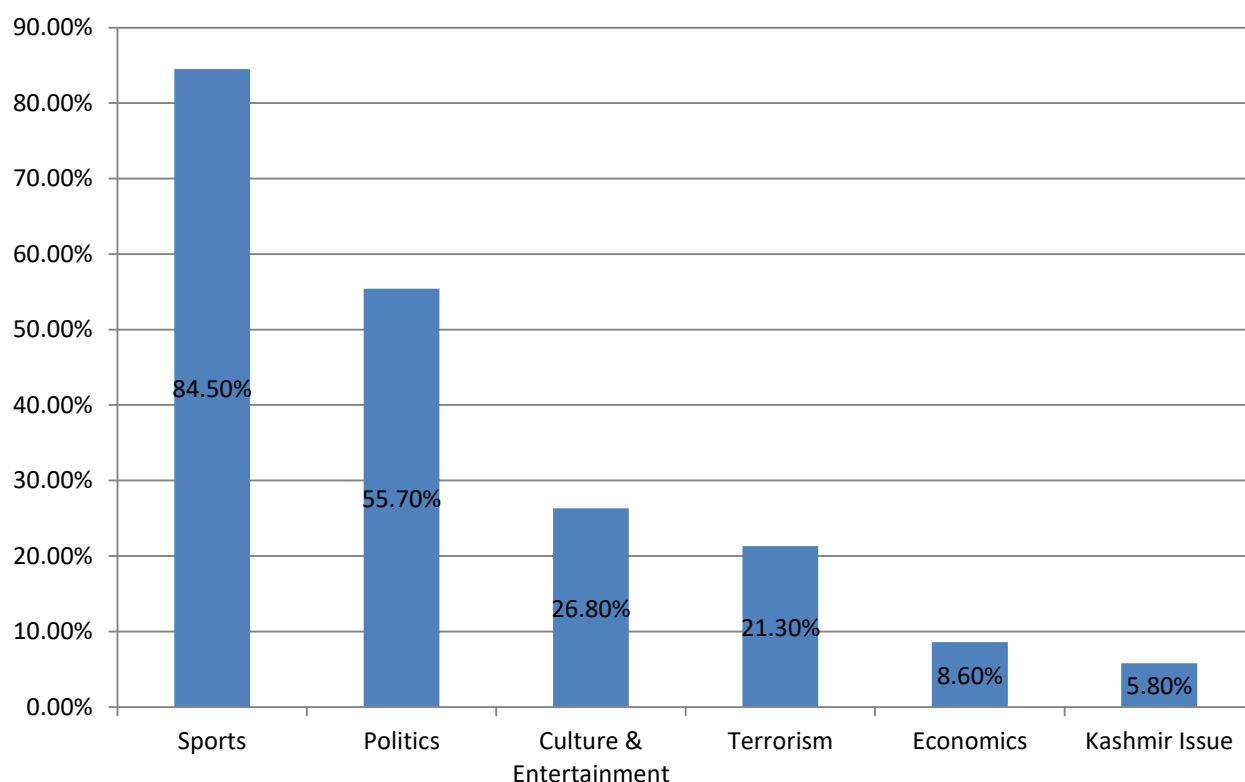


**Fig. 2.** Distribution of news in both countries per year

Five news topics are extracted by the researcher after a careful review of the limited share of a news sample. Each topic constitutes a different amount of news coverage in the media of India and Pakistan. The findings revealed that Sports (84.5) percent is the most dominating topic constituting a major share in the news article depicting sports/cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan, followed by Politics (55.7) percent while Culture and Entertainment news covering, soft aspect of India-Pakistan relation constitute a share of 26.8 % in total. Further, Terrorism



topics focusing on terrorism activities and armed insurgencies across the borders of both countries make a share of (21.3) percent followed by Kashmir Issue (5.8) percent and Economics (8.6) percent.



**Fig. 3.** Topic presented in news coverage of sports/cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan

In order to compare news topics between India and Pakistan, Chi-square tests were conducted. Findings revealed that “Sports” have been reported the most in Pakistani media (42.6 %) contrary to media in India (41.9 %). The result suggests that the “Sports” topic is not significantly different between India and Pakistan ( $\text{Chi} = 0.82, p > 0.05$ ). Politics come as the second most mentioned topic of news in Pakistan (36.4 %) in comparison with India (19.2 %). The value of the Pearson Chi-Square Coefficient is 28.21,  $p < 0.05$  which means politically motive news has a significant difference in terms of political news coverage between the two countries. More findings suggest “Culture & Entertainment” as the third most mentioned topic in Pakistan (16.5 %) in difference with Indian news media (10.3 %). Therefore, this topic also got a slightly significant value for Chi-square ( $\text{Chi} = 4.26, p < 0.05$ ).

Terrorism stands at fourth concerning the most discussed topic in the press of Pakistan (15.8 %) in comparison with India (5.5 %). The results further explain the significant relationship between the two countries in connection with terrorism as a topic ( $\text{Chi} = 16.7, p < 0.05$ ). In the case of “Economics” as a topic mentioned in the news articles from leading media outlets from India and Pakistan, it remains the fifth most discussed topic in Pakistan’s *The Dawn* (6.6 %) contrasting to its Indian rival 2.1 %. The Chi-Square value ( $\text{Chi} = 6.6, p < 0.05$ ) also suggests that this topic is significantly different among the media coverage of both countries. Kashmir Issue remains in fifth place as it has been discussed in 4.1 % of the total news sample while a similar topic was mentioned 1.7 % times in Indian media. Further, the Chi-square test also reveals a somehow significant difference between the countries in connection with this topic.

**Table 2.** News topic covered by the news media of both countries N = 291

News Topic	India	Pakistan	Total
Sports	41.9	42.6	84.5
Politics	19.2	36.4	55.4
Culture & Entertainment	10.3	16.5	26.3

Terrorism	5.5	15.8	21.3
Economics	2.1	6.6	8.7
Kashmir	1.7	4.1	5.8

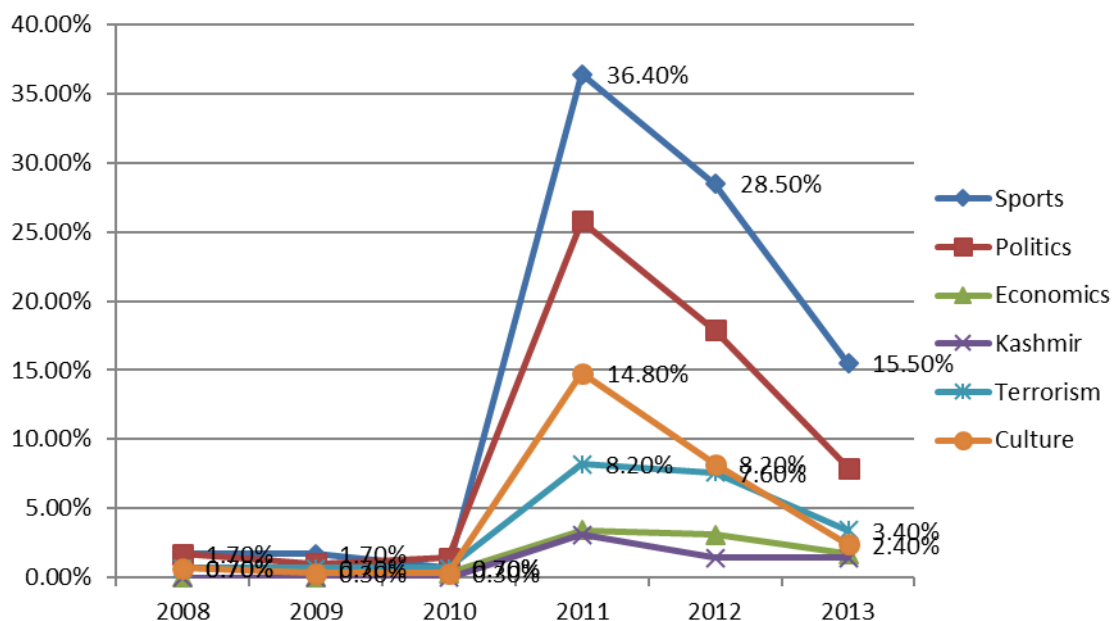


Fig. 4. Frequency of news topics during 2008-2013

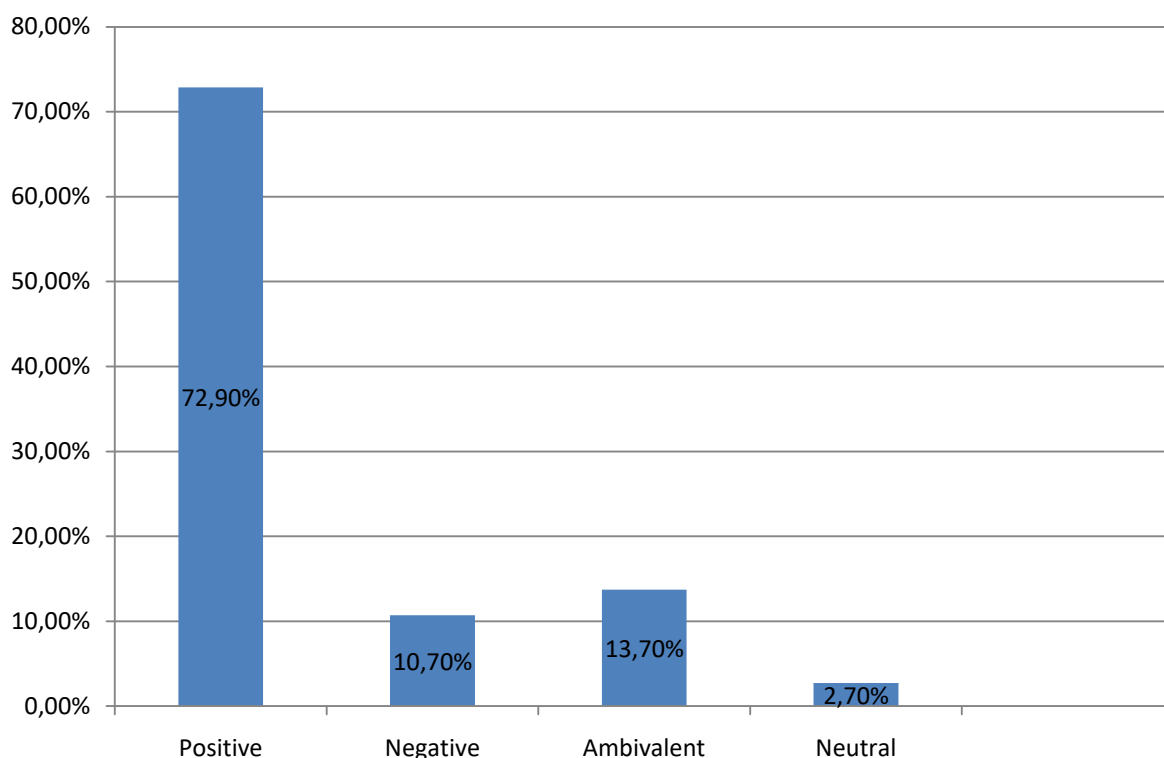


Fig. 5. News tones depicting sports/cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan

The findings on the distribution of representation of news topics from 2008-2013 reveal interesting facts as 2011 remains the dominant year as far as news coverage of topics is concerned. The figure explains the distribution of the most mentioned “News topic” every year. Hence, 2011 dominates with the larger share of articles where these topics are mentioned.

News topics present in the news media can influence the reader's perception on certain issues. In other words, news tones of articles covering sports/cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan depict the perception of the audience of both countries.

Fig. 5 discloses interesting findings regarding the depiction of the media positions of cricket matches between India and Pakistan. Among all the articles analyzed for this research, positive tones are followed in a major share of the articles 72.9 percent, 10.7 percent of the articles were reported with a negative tone followed by 13.7 percent for the ambivalent and 2.7 percent for the neutral tones respectively. A Chi-Square test was conducted to compare overall news valence in two countries.

**Table 3.** Overall news valence covering sports/cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan

<i>News Valence</i>	<i>India</i>	<i>Pakistan</i>	<i>Total</i>
Positive	33.0 %	39.9 %	72.9 %
Negative	6.5 %	4.1 %	10.7 %
Ambivalent	6.9 %	6.9 %	13.7 %
Neutral	2.1 %	0.7 %	2.7 %

A close look in to (Table 3) reveals that cricketing relations between India and Pakistan have been depicted with a positive tone in most of the articles being analyzed from leading media outlets from the two countries. Negative tones are found in India (6.5 percent) in contrary to Pakistan (4.1 percent). Ambivalent tones interestingly constitute an equal share in both Indian and Pakistani media with 6.9 percent in each country while 2.1 percent of articles are followed by a neutral tone in India while in Pakistan 0.7 percent.

The selection of sources quoted in the news by the media is one of the lists of framing devices (Tankard, 2001). This study also aims to identify ranges of actors quoted in the news about sports/cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan in the media coverage of both countries.

For each article, this research coded three most quoted actors. Coding 291 news articles as samples, all in all, 698 actors were found. These actors fall into four categories: (1) Pakistani actor, actors that are from Pakistan; (2) Indian actors, actors who are from India (3) International actors, actors who are from the other country than Pakistan and India.

A Chi-square test was conducted to see if there is a statistical difference among the quoted actors in the news media between the two countries (Table 4). The result shows that there is indeed a significant difference of quoted actors among countries (Chi = 29.79,  $p < 0.05$ ). Generally, Pakistani Cricketing Actors dominate the media coverage of sports/cricket diplomacy (30.2 percent) followed by Indian Political Actors (19.2 percent) as the second most mentioned actor. While International Actors (5.7 percent) remain the least present actors in the media coverage of both countries.

*Recode:*

In the statistical analysis due to a large number of the quoted actors recording process is conducted, Pakistani News Source was recoded into three categories: Pakistani Political Actors including government and politicians; Pakistani Cricketing Actors including Pakistan cricket board, Pakistani players, Pakistani cricket team, Pakistani experts and Pakistani team management; remaining actors including NGO, media source, fans/general citizens, artists and security agencies and others are recoded as Pakistani Other Actors. The same process is conducted with Indian News Source; hence categories of Indian Political Actors, Indian Cricketing Actors, and Indian Other Actors are formed. , all actors that come under International News Source are merged to make the 7<sup>th</sup> category of International Actors.

**Table 4.** Most quoted actors in the news within India and Pakistan (N=698)

<i>Actors</i>	<i>India</i> ( <i>N = 326</i> )	<i>Pakistan</i> ( <i>N = 372</i> )	<i>Total</i> ( <i>N = 698</i> )
Pakistani Political Actors	8.7 %	9.7 %	18.5 %
Pakistani Cricketing Actors	13.6 %	16.6 %	30.2 %

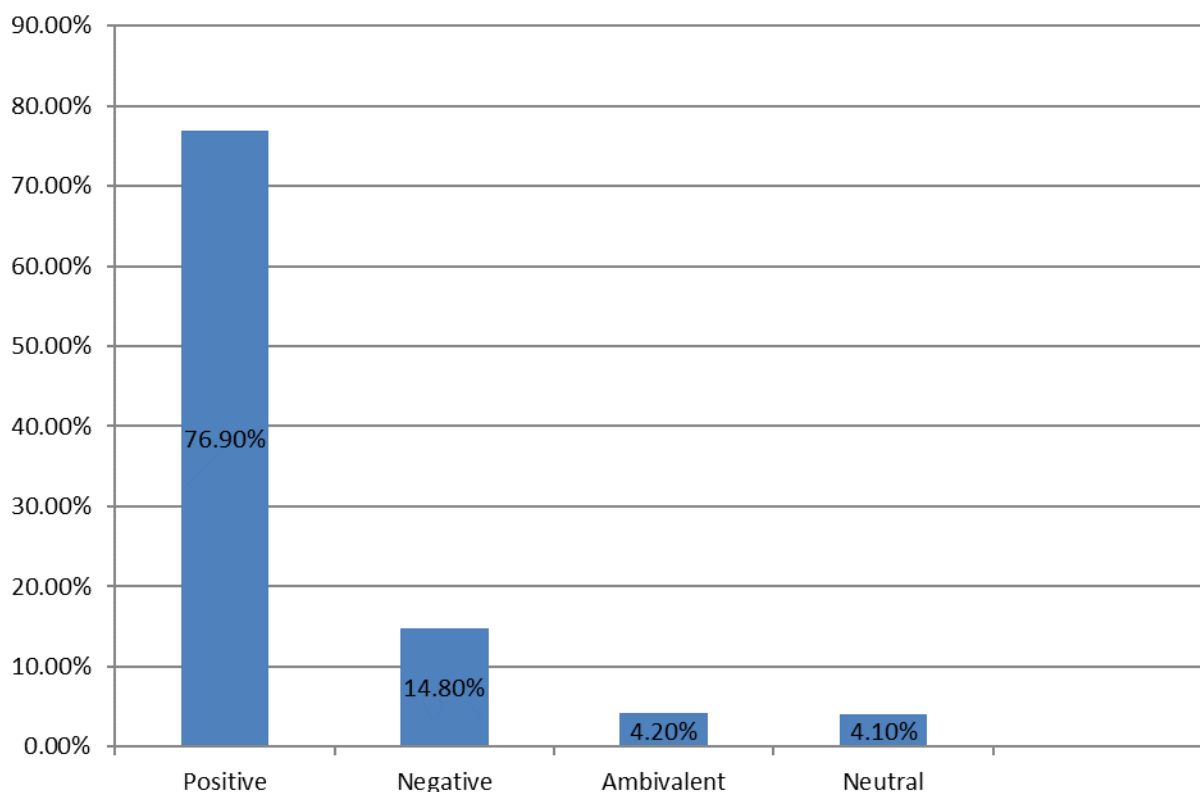
Pakistani Other Actors	2.6 %	4.9 %	7.4 %
Indian Political Actors	8.5 %	10.7 %	19.2 %
Indian Cricketing Actors	5.2 %	5.7 %	10.9 %
Indian Other Actors	6.3 %	1.7 %	8.0 %
International Actors	1.9 %	3.9 %	5.7 %

Looking specifically into each country, Pakistani Cricketing Actors dominate the media coverage both in India and Pakistan (13.6 percent and 16.6 percent % respectively). Indian Political Actors (10.7 percent) are the 2<sup>nd</sup> most mentioned actors in Pakistan while interestingly Pakistani Political Actors serve as the 2<sup>nd</sup> hot topic of discussion in India. International Actors (1.9 %) and Indian Other Actors (1.7 percent) stand at the least discussed actors in India & Pakistan respectively. Furthermore, the valences of quoted actors are analyzed in each country where the findings suggest mostly positive quotes were attributed to the quoted actors both in India (34.3 percent) and Pakistan (42.5 percent).

**Table 5.** Valence of most quoted actors in the news within India and Pakistan (N = 782)

Valence	India (N=371)	Pakistan (N=411)	Total (N=782)
Positive	34.3 %	42.5 %	76.8 %
Negative	8.3 %	6.6 %	14.9 %
Ambivalent	1.8 %	2.5 %	4.3 %
Neutral	3.1 %	0.9 %	4.0 %

\* = Significant



**Fig. 6.** Valence of quoted actors in the news coverage

While discussing how sports/cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan has been portrayed by the news media of both countries, it is important to analyze which frames have been used by news media to address cricketing relations between India and Pakistan. For this purpose, two steps of coding procedures were conducted. Firstly, 10 percent of the total articles were

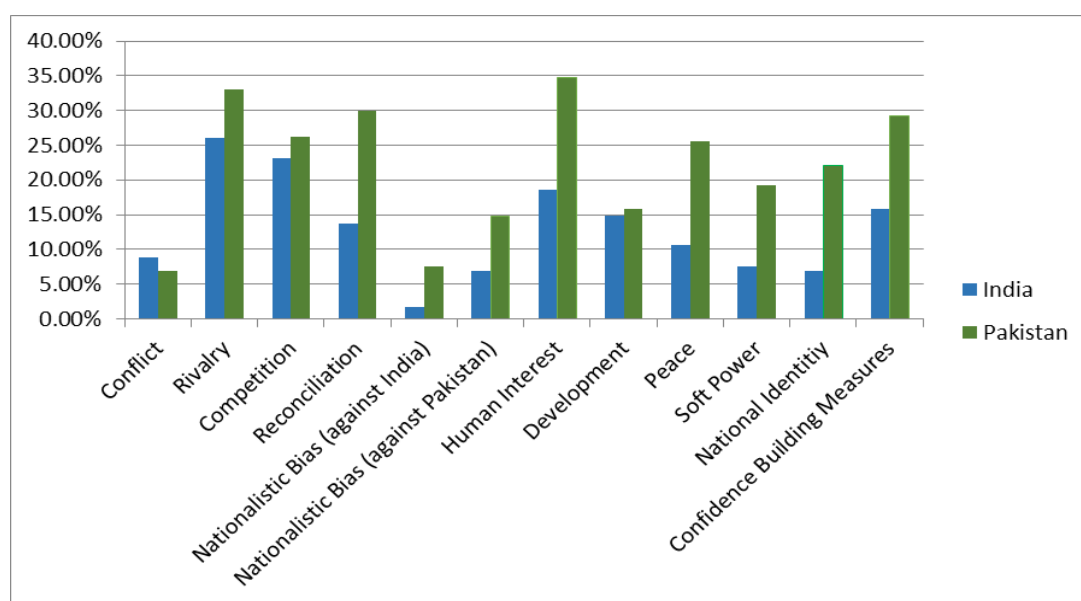


analyzed while using J.W. Tankard (Tankard, 2001) framing approach to gather a list of appropriate frames. These frames were then incorporated into the codebook with the coding guidelines. During the second coding procedure, a total sample of 291 articles was examined to check the extent of these frames used by the news media to address cricket/sports diplomacy.

**Table 6.** List of news frames extracted from the sample

<i>News Frames</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
Conflict	Referred to verbal/non-verbal brawls between cricket players
Rivalry	Traditional hostility and enmity that is associated with Indo-Pak relations
Competition	Competition frames are referred to as strong struggle to come over another while playing a cricket match.
Reconciliation	Reconciliatory frames are those frames which talk about the friendly relations between the two countries concerning cricket as a tool for cricket diplomacy
Bias against India	Nationalistic hostility against India.
Bias against Pakistan	Nationalistic hostility against Pakistan.
Human Interest	Soft stories discussing people, culture in an emotional way.
Development	Sports role for initiating development in the region.
Peace	Sports role for peace.
Soft Power	The use of sports to get your desired diplomatic goals achieved through attraction rather than force or spending the bulk of money.
CBM	Using cricket as Confidence-building measures to break the ice.
National Identity	Utilizing cricket as a national identity.

Fig. 7 illustrates the most prominent frame found in the news coverage of media in India and Pakistan i.e. “Rivalry frame” (59.1 percent) that covers the traditional hostile attitude of both countries towards each other. Meanwhile, the “Human Interest frame” (53.3 percent) covering the soft image of India-Pakistan relations concerning cricket remains the 2<sup>nd</sup> most used frame by the media to address cricketing relations between the two countries. 3<sup>rd</sup> most used frame by the news media of both countries is “Competition Frame” (49.1 percent) followed by “Confidence Building Measures frame” 45.0 percent in the 4<sup>th</sup> place. The 5<sup>th</sup> most mentioned frame is the “Reconciliatory frame” (53.6 percent) frame refers to the process of reconciliation between India and Pakistan. On the contrary, “Nationalistic Bias (India) frame” (9.3 percent) and “Nationalistic Bias (Pakistan) frame” (21.6 percent) gathered the least attention from the news media of both countries.



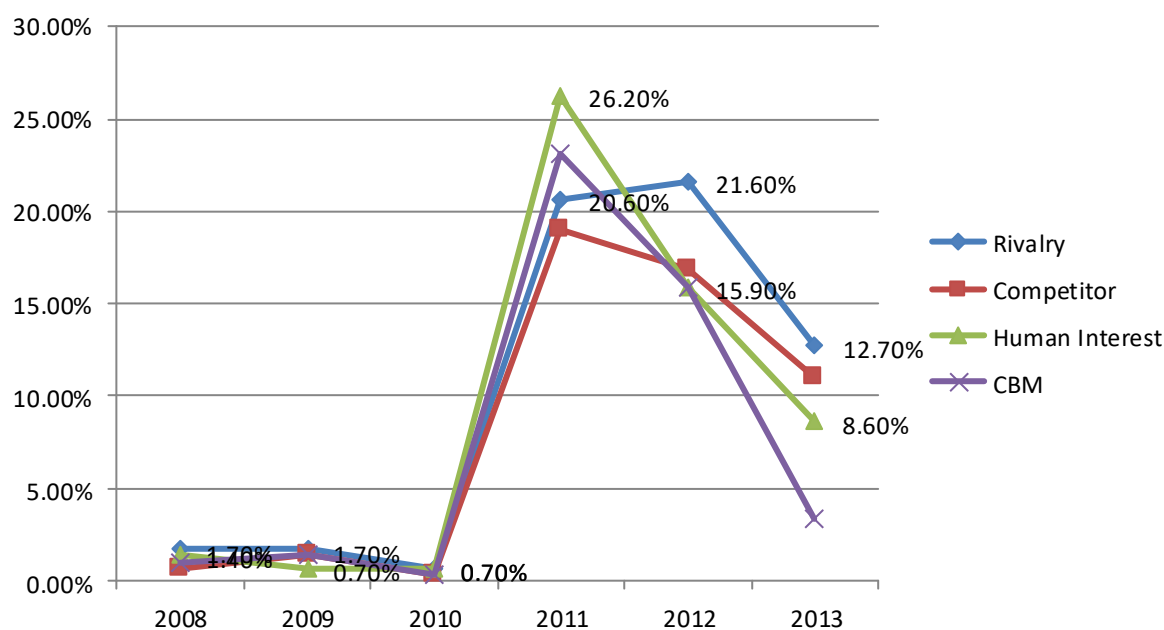
**Fig. 7.** Frequency of news frames found in the media coverage

Looking specifically into each country, the most frequent news frame that appeared in the news media of India is the “Rivalry frame” (26.1 percent) frame in contrary with Pakistan “Human Interest frame” (34.8 percent) gained the most attention of press while covering sports/cricket diplomacy. “Competition frame” (23.1 percent) stands to be the second most prominent frame in India in contrast with Pakistan where “Rivalry Frames” (33.0 percent) appeared to be the second most mentioned frame. “Human Interest frame” (18.6 percent) is found to be the 3<sup>rd</sup> most referred frame in India while “Confidence Building Measures” (29.3 percent) remains in third place in Pakistani news media. Interestingly, Nationalistic Bias (against India) remained the least mentioned frame in both countries.

**Table 7.** Frequency of news frame appeared in media coverage of India and Pakistan

<i>India</i>	<i>Pakistan</i>
Conflict 8.9 %	Conflict 6.9 %
Rivalry 26.1 %	Rivalry 33.0 %
Competition 23.1 %	Competition 26.2 %
Reconciliation 13.7 %	Reconciliation 29.9 %
Nationalistic Bias (against India) 1.7 %	Nationalistic Bias (against India) 7.6 %
Nationalistic Bias (against Pakistan) 6.9 %	Nationalistic Bias (against Pakistan) 14.8 %
Human Interest 18.6 %	Human Interest 34.8 %
Development 14.8 %	Development 15.8 %
Peace 10.7 %	Peace 25.5 %
Soft Power 7.6 %	Soft Power 19.2 %
National Identity 6.9 %	National Identity 22.1 %
Confidence Building Measures 15.9 %	Confidence Building Measures 29.3 %

Since this research aims to analyze the sports/cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan during 2008–2013, hence it is also interesting to examine which news frames are prominent in which year and how this process of representation of frames in each year follows thus to have a longitudinal image of their evolution. A cross-tabulation was conducted to check the relationship between the dates of the published frame with the frame itself. So, as the suggests among the top four news frames found, the greater proportion of news frames were found during the year 2011–2013 while the limited proportion of these frames are witnessed before 2011.



**Fig. 8.** Frequency of prominent frames per year (2008-2013)

This finding is quite explanatory as the years 2011, 2012, and 2013 constituted a major share of articles being analyzed for this research.

Analyzing how news media in Pakistan and India approach sports/cricket diplomacy between the two countries, four main areas are evaluated in the research.

*First*, this study examined ranges of news topics that are predicted to be important in portraying media coverage of cricketing relations between the two countries. Similar findings are obtained after conducting data analysis for both countries as Sports remains the most mentioned topic in India and Pakistan while Kashmir Issue stands as the least discussed topic in both countries.

*Second*, general tones of articles both from India and Pakistan are examined in this research.

*Third*, actors quoted in the news are analyzed along with the tone of their quotes. In India and Pakistan “Pakistani Cricketing Actors” are the most quoted source of information while “Indian Political Actors” are the 2<sup>nd</sup> most mentioned actors in Pakistan, interestingly “Pakistani Political Actors” serve as the 2<sup>nd</sup> hot topic of discussion in India. Quote valence is also similar in both countries as the actors are mostly quoted with a positive valence in India and Pakistan.

*Fourth*, this research extracted several news frames that are prominent in media coverage of both countries and help in shaping news on sports/cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan.

According to the research findings, a specific pattern of news framing can be identified. News media in India and Pakistan follows a quite similar pattern to portray the coverage of sports/cricket diplomacy or the cricketing relations between the two countries. Both countries are interested to cover similar actors, topics, and tones in a positive way so that the positive side of India and Pakistan cricketing relations as well as the sports/cricket diplomacy could be projected. Only in case of news framing, surprisingly “Rivalry Frames” dominate media coverage in India with respect to Pakistani media which seems to be more interested in covering human interest angle in a news story.

The findings can be interpreted from various perspectives. First, these findings have confirmed the durability of sports in international relations as pointed out by various scholars like H.E. Chenabi (Chenabi, 2004) suggests sports as a tool have been included in the diplomacy theory framework, which involves communication mainly at track-two and track-three levels and players as a symbolic representation of their home countries. Authors like S. Murray (Murray, 2012) has also acknowledged the importance of sports and sportsperson in fostering country image. That is the reason sports as a news topic enjoy a dominant position in media coverage of India and Pakistan during 2008-2013 and its potential for peace and other activities are equally projected by the news media of both countries.

Secondly, most news articles from both countries reveal a positive tone to cricketing/general relations between India and Pakistan. Thus, it can be argued that media coverage of sports/cricket diplomacy is mostly followed by a positive tone and high spirit both in India and Pakistan. One reason for these findings could be policy swift in both countries during the middle 2000s when they formally agreed to talk and resolve the disputes with mutual consent. So, in case the media might have also reconsidered its policy towards the neighboring country.

Thirdly, the prominence of “Pakistan Cricketing Actors” as the most quoted actors also makes sense, since after the re-inception of bilateral cricketing ties in 2004; unlike past cricketing actors from both countries are given due credit for their performance in the match.

Fourth, although “Rivalry Frame” remains the most dominant frame in India in comparison with the “Human Interest Frame” in Pakistan. However, the presence of other frames like “CBM`s (45.10 %), “Reconciliatory (43.60 %), “Peace (36.10 %), “Development (30.60 %)” and “Soft Power (26.80 %)” should not be undermined as they also constitute a suitable frequency in news coverage in India and Pakistan. Thus, the role of cricket as a tool of cricket/sports diplomacy between India and Pakistan is quite evident with the frequency of these news frames when cricket has been used as a tool to promote peace, development, image formation, national identity, human interest, and reconciliation to strengthen relations between India and Pakistan.

## 5. Conclusion

The research begins with a quest to ascertain the media`s role in addressing sports/cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan. Furthermore, how cricket news is depicted in the media of India and Pakistan. Grounding into two theoretical concepts (Sports/public diplomacy, news framing), the research aims to identify to which extent cricket is portrayed as a tool of sports/cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan and what are the similarities and differences of depicting news coverage of cricket in India and Pakistan.

Four framing devices of the news are analyzed, which include news topics, tone of the article, source of information, and news framing. While analyzing news content in both countries, a comparative content analysis on articles from *The Dawn* of Pakistan and *Hindustan Times* of India conducted in which the majority of the topics were related to sports which portrayed a positive image. Pakistani Cricketing Actors is the most quoted source of information in the news articles, the quoted actors were mostly quoted with a positive valence. Finally, the “Rivalry” frame remains the most prominent frame in the news coverage followed by the “Human Interest” frame. Other news frames like “Peace”, “Development”, “Confidence Building Measures”, “National Identity” and other also constitutes a valid share in the news articles, thus indicating sport`s potential for strengthening relations between the two countries. From the above discussion, it is quite evident that a similar pattern is followed by Indian and Pakistani news media while portraying sports/cricket diplomacy among the two countries. Since, a great proportion of development, peace, reconciliatory, and soft power frames have been identified from the sample. Thus it is pertinent to mention here that cricket has been positively portrayed as a tool of public diplomacy between India and Pakistan. Also, a higher proportion of positive valence of news articles justifies the greater role of media in shaping cricketing news to such an extent that it promotes friendly relations between the two countries.

The research holds several limitations due to the lack of useful resources. First and foremost, in the Subcontinental region, there has been a lack of research on sports/cricket diplomacy since its inception and there has not been any concrete work done that could define sport`s role in contemporary relations among the countries. Moreover, no academic researchers have yet come up with a comprehensive method for the evaluation of sports diplomacy hence; no indicators for its measurement have been evolved. Secondly, this research only analyzes newspapers from both countries. It does not examine websites, television, and other versions of the news. That is the reason; the findings of this research are only applicable specifically to the print media, therefore, the comparison with electronic and print media is not presentable.

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