

Framing of ‘Operation Decisive Storm’ and Saudi e-press

Dr. Nasser N. Alotaibi and Dr. Abida Eijaz

Abstract

The Saudi e-press coverage and treatment of the Operation Decisive Storm is examined through an analysis of media frames for the type of coverage, paths of persuasion, lexical choices, referential frameworks, framing strategies, and policy patterns for the Operation Decisive Storm campaign. Through content analysis of the op-ed pages of Al-Riyadh, Al-Madina, and Al-Youm, for the period from 26/03/2015 to 22/04/2015, the study concludes the following: political aspects formed a large proportion (90.3%) of the editorials covered in the Saudi e-newspapers, followed by the military developments, and the support for the legitimate Yemeni government. The supportive coverage reached (93.5%), indicating that the editorial policies of Saudi e-newspapers are in line with the policy of the leadership of Saudi Arabia. The results also revealed that fear/danger is commonly used as a strategy and Iran is used to create danger/fear not only for Yemen but for the entire Gulf region.

Keywords: Framing; Persuasive narratives; Operation Decisive Storm; Referential frameworks; e-media.

Introduction

Media plays an important role in terms of formulating opinions, altering perceptions, shaping attitudes, transforming behaviors at all levels. Role of media becomes more crucial during the times of crises, conflicts, wars and military operations as it can shape and transform realities. The role of news media is not limited to providing information rather it provides a structured news content that enables recipients to understand, interpret, and evaluate the content in the light of given frames.

In the recent Saudi-led military operation in Yemen during 2015 labelled as Decisive Storm, Saudi media gave sectarian orientation to the Yemen crisis to counter the other narratives. The Decisive Storm operation was launched in March 2015, as a result of comprehensive national dialogue, in line with the UN resolution (No. 2216). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia played a leading role by establishing an Arab military alliance, to implement the executive mechanism chalked out in the ‘Gulf Initiative’. Yemen crisis emerged due to military coup by the Houthis and their ousted ally Ali Abdullah Saleh against the legitimate elected government headed by Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi.

*Authors are Assistant Professor, Journalism, Media and Communication, IMAM University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and Assistant Professor, Institute of Communication Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

The Operation Decisive Storm campaign is one of the most prominent event and political crisis that preoccupied the Arab media, as it was at the heart of the coverage in various media. Despite the differences in views and the different media reactions to it, the Saudi press has given extensive coverage to this operation, which in turn represented the second source of information after satellite channels. The electronic press has been able to effectively capture the attention of the public because of its technical development and international reach. It also combines all the advantages and characteristics of other media in terms of reading, writing, searching, documenting, listening, live watching, and interacting using writing and voice, as well as seeing speakers at any time from their multiple locations around the world, using new media technologies. Therefore, the study relies on the coverage of e-newspapers to explore the treatment given to Operation Decisive Storm.

Literature Review

There is a broad literature available on traditional media's coverage, framing and treatment of political issues and events particularly by western media. E-media is a new phenomenon with its peculiar attributes. There is an increased trend of doing research to explore cyber world phenomenon. This paper draws ideas from the following traditional media studies on framing of political events to analyze the coverage, framing, and treatment of Operation Decisive Storm by Saudi e-newspapers. The operation received worldwide coverage. "The media's framing of war normally comes from the perspective of its country of origin. The media and the general public tend to adopt a patriotic/nationalist stance, supporting the country's armed forces and their operations and reducing space for legitimate criticism of the official policy" (Vladislavljevic, 2015; p.10).

People usually rely on media to obtain information about current events and generally take the information as true. Based on that information, opinions are formulated in a routine manner without ascertaining the facts (Freyenberger, 2013). People's reliance on media for information and media's role in formulating public opinion gives media the power of setting agenda. McCombs, Shaw, and Weaver (1997) describe framing as second level of agenda-setting as frames inherently promote an agenda. Frame analysis is a multi-disciplinary approach as the roots of framing can be traced in various disciplines including linguistics, media studies, psychology, sociology, and political science. Framing can be defined as 'a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events ... The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue' (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989; p. 13).

Framing of ‘Operation Decisive Storm’ and Saudi e-press

Frames essentially serve as colored lenses to perceive reality therefore, lenses of different colors can lead to perceive the same phenomenon in different ways. That’s how multiple realities can be created by using different frames. In this regard media can play a significant role in constructing and maneuvering the perceptions about political events. News production is just one level to understand framing from the encoders’ perspective, the other level includes audience information processing, perceptions, and public discourse that happens at the decoding and feedback stage.

While discussing the forms of frames, Kaufman, Elliott, and Shmueli (2013) suggest that frames of intractable disputes tend to include identity frames, power frames, informational frames, conflict process, and conflict management frames, risk frames, and loss versus gain frames. Framing is a micro level as well as macro level construct. “As a macro construct, the term ‘framing’ refers to modes of presentation that journalists and other communicators use to present information in a way that resonates with existing underlying schemas among their audience” (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 12). As a micro construct, framing refers to reception of information by the audience and its usage that explains perceptions and understanding on that issue. While discussing the consequences of framing, De Vreese (2005) maintains that framing has its repercussions on individual and societal level.

In the context of media framing, Entman (1993) mentions the four theoretical debates which are as follows: audience autonomy; journalistic objectivity; content analysis; and public opinion and normative democratic theory. This paper deals with the first three aspects of framing.

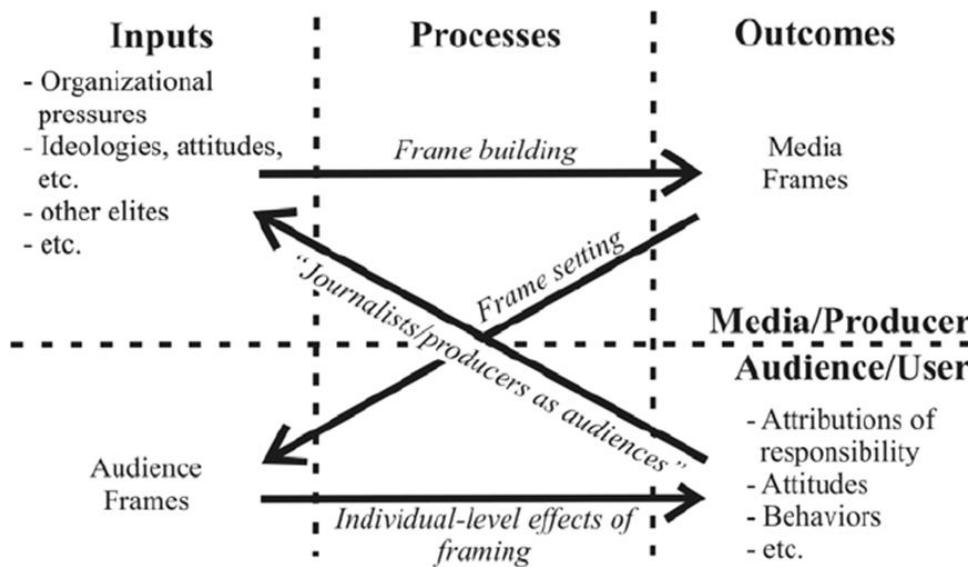
The study aims at

- Identifying topics, directions, treatment and lexical choices applied in the editorials of the selected Saudi e-papers for the coverage of Operation Decisive Storm.
- Exploring the consistent policy, if any, in the editorial treatment of the selected Saudi e-papers for the coverage of Operation Decisive Storm.
- Determining the persuasion narratives constructed in the editorials of Saudi e-papers for the coverage of Operation Decisive Storm.
- Evaluating the persuasive citations and reference frames on which the editorials in the selected Saudi e-papers relied that are relevant to Operation Decisive Storm.
- Describing the rhetoric strategies in the editorials of selected Saudi e-papers for the coverage of Operation Decisive Storm.

Theoretical framework

The tradition of cognitive media effects research is enriched by framing, agenda-setting, and priming. According to Gitlin (1980) frames are devices that help journalists to develop “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion,” by organizing huge data into a meaningful package for both the journalists and their audience (p. 7). Entman (1993) associates the process of framing with selection and salience. “Framing entails selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution. They use words and images highly salient in the culture, which is to say noticeable, understandable, memorable, and emotionally charged” (Entman, 2005: 417). In the light of the above, the study adopts the process model of framing suggested by Scheufele (1999) to uncover and understand the most important and prominent frames used in the editorials of Al-Madina, Al-Riyadh and Al-Yaum newspapers for their treatment, analysis, and interpretation of the Operation Decisive Storm in Yemen.

Figure 1 Scheufele’s Process Model of Framing



Framing of ‘Operation Decisive Storm’ and Saudi e-press

In the backdrop of the reference frameworks, the suggested process of Chong and Druckman (2007) is applied in this study to identify the predefined frames in the editorials of selected e-papers. Media develops reference frameworks to build public perceptions. Reference frameworks can be multiple, ingrained in existing political system on which the independence of the media is determined like the nature of the mainstream communication system in terms of policies and journalistic systems. Reference frameworks also include the values and perceived benefits for the society. Therefore, it seems pertinent to investigate the implied reference frameworks in the coverage and treatment of Operation Decisive Storm. For this purpose, Chong and Druckman’s (2007) four steps are followed for the analysis of framing. First, frames in communication are contextual and content specific, therefore content and context both need to be considered. Second, effects of framing needs to be evaluated by isolating the specific attitude under study for thematic and episodic attributions. Third, initial set of frames has to be identified through inductive approach by involving most relevant people. Fourth, coders need to apply initial set of frames to determine presence or absence of predefined frames on the selected sample. All the four steps are followed in this study to identify the frames applied in the e-newspapers.

Methodology

This is an analytical descriptive study that deals with the analysis of editorial treatment and framing for the coverage of Operation Decisive Storm. The study is based on content analysis method as a basic instrument for collecting data from the newspapers under study and to analyze the editorial content of these newspapers in terms of the implications of the coverage of Decisive Storm. The sample consists of three e-newspapers; Al-Riyadh, Al-Madina, and Al-Yaum. Sample frame consists of issues available from 26/3/2015 to 22/4/2015, in order to identify the features and characteristics of the editorial treatment. The content analysis includes frequency, themes/ideas, meanings, and treatment that focus on the topic or the issue and which help identify the main points of interest. Six categories are devised to analyze topical treatment of the Decisive Storm in the editorials that includes: 1- Political, 2- Economic, 3- Religious, 4- Social, 5- Humanitarian, 6- Military. For the further analysis of reference framing, six frames are identified which are as follows: 1 – support of legitimacy, 2 – army supply and the resistance with arms, 3 - military splits, 4 - sectarian dimension, 5 - peaceful initiatives, 6 - civilian casualties. To analyze the policy of editorials and treatment, content is evaluated for three elaborative categories: positive treatment, negative treatment, and neutral. For the evaluation of rhetoric strategies, content is evaluated for presentation of one view,

presentation of more than one point of view, and unclear. Persuasion is evaluated for citing figures and statistics, statements, reports, experiences, history. Language of the editorials is further analyzed for the categories of classical, literary, journalistic, and scientific language. Communication strategy of the editorials is assessed on eight categories: 1 - direct speech, 2 - attack and criticism, 3 - questioning, 4 - spreading the sense of danger, 5 - highlighting the contradiction, 6 - salvation, 7 - refutation, 8 - confirmation. Editorials are also evaluated for being consistent or non-consistent with the Saudi government's policy. To analyze who is considered as a main player or driving force behind the Operation Decisive Storm, nine players are identified including: 1- Saudi Arabia, 2- UAE. 3. the legitimate Yemen government, 4. Iran, 5. Egypt, 6. United States, 7. United Nations, 8. Houthis. 9. Hezbollah.

To record the observations, a coding sheet is prepared according to the categories mentioned above so as to answer the study questions. For the pilot study, coding sheet was presented to a group of jurors and experts in the field of media and research methods. The coding sheet was revised in the light of notes and guidance from the pilot study.

An initial test was done for fifteen (15) issues of the three newspapers; five (5) issues for each newspaper to ensure the validity of the categories and non-overlapping. Then, some amendments were made to the categories of content analysis to produce the final form which ensures the clarity of its question items. The researcher also measured the reliability of the analysis with himself by re-analysis, which is known as the Intra-coder Reliability.

On the other hand, the researcher and another analyst re-analyzed fifteen (15) issues of the three newspapers, five (5) issues of each newspaper. The percentage of reliability reached 95%, which indicates the clarity of the form. The initial test demonstrated the validity of the form to measure the objectives and questions of the study.

Research sample

The researcher conducted the study on the issues of Decisive Storm used in the editorials of the Saudi electronic newspapers during Operation Decisive Storm in the three newspapers under study.

Three Saudi newspapers were selected to represent the group of newspapers under study - Al-Riyadh, Al-Madina, and Al-Yaum - for several reasons, the most important of which are:

Framing of ‘Operation Decisive Storm’ and Saudi e-press

- 1) Al-Riyadh newspaper is regarded as one of the largest Saudi newspapers in terms of circulation and readership, in addition to its publication in the political capital of Saudi Arabia.
- 2) Al-Madina newspaper represents the Western Region of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- 3) 3. Al-Yaum newspaper represents the Eastern Region of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The number of days of study was twenty-eight (28) days - the duration of Decisive Storm, so the researcher studied only the three newspapers mentioned above during this period, which amounted to eighty-four (84) issues, twenty-eight (28) issues of each newspaper. Eight issues of Al-Riyadh, five issues of Al-Madina, and nine issues of Al-Yaum were excluded because there were no relevant topics in these issues. The number of newspaper issues studied and analyzed was 62: 20 issues of Al-Riyadh, 23 issues of Al-Madina and 19 issues of Al-Yaum.

The analytical study period for the journalistic treatment of the events of Decisive Storm in the newspapers under study consists of 26/3/2015 to 22/4/2015.

The researchers identified the statistical operators through the program (SPSS) used in the analysis of social research, and statistical measures in analyzing the data of this study through simple frequency tables and percentages of the variables and the different values of the study.

Results and Findings

Table (1) shows the topics of the editorials of the newspapers under study

Newspapers Topics	Newspaper						Total	
	Al-Riyadh		Al-Madina		Al-Yaum		Frequency	%
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Political	16	80.0	17	73.9	12	63.2	45	72.6
Economic	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	10.5	2	3.2
Religious	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	5.3	1	1.6
Humanitarianan	0	0.0	1	4.3	1	5.3	2	3.2
Military	4	20.0	5	21.7	3	15.8	12	19.4
Total	20	100.0	23	100.0	19	100.0	62	100.0

Table (1) shows the frequency of the topics published about the events of Decisive Storm in the Saudi electronic newspapers under study: (Al-Riyadh – Al-Medina – Al-Yaum). The results are as follows:

- Comparing the topics about Decisive Storm published in the three Saudi e-newspapers, the "political" topics ranked first with a frequency of 72.6%. The

level of coverage by Al-Riyadh ranked first with 80.0%; Al-Madina ranked second with 73.9% and Al-Yaum with 63.2%.

- The "military" topics ranked second with 19.4% overall. This is in line with the nature of the military operations carried out by the Arab coalition led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia against the militia of the Houthi coup and Saleh's forces.
- In terms of military operations, the frequencies in Al-Madina and Al-Riyadh were approximately 21.7% and 20% respectively, while in Al-Yaum it was only 15.8% out of the total occurrences published in each newspaper.
- Overall, the frequencies of the other topics in the newspapers under study were low with 1.6% for the "religious" topics.
- Al-Yaum was the only newspaper to deal with the "economic" topics with 10.5% out of the total topics in the newspaper. Al-Riyadh and Al-Medina did not address this topic.
- Al-Yaum dealt with the "religious" topics with a frequency of 5.3% of the total topics whilst Al-Riyadh and Al-Medina did not address this topic.
- With regard to the "humanitarian" topics, the percentage of coverage in Al-Yaum reached by 5.30%, and Al-Madina by 4.3%, while these topics were completely absent from Al-Riyadh.

.Table (2) shows the indicators of editorials in the newspapers under study

Indicator	Newspaper						Total	
	Al-Riyadh		Al-Madina		Al-Yaum		Frequency	%
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%		
Support of legitimacy	20	100.0	18	78.3	18	94.7	56	90.3
Supplying the army and the resistance with arms	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	5.3	1	1.6
Military splits	0	0.0	1	4.3	0	0.0	1	1.6
Sectarian dimension	0	0.0	1	4.3	0	0.0	1	1.6
Peaceful initiatives	0	0.0	3	13.0	0	0.0	3	4.8
Total	20	100.0	23	100.0	19	100.0	62	100.0

Framing of 'Operation Decisive Storm' and Saudi e-press

Table (2) shows the published topic indicators of the events of Decisive Storm in the Saudi electronic newspapers under study: (Al-Riyadh – Al-Medina – Al-Yaum). The results are as follows:

- Compared with the published topic indicators of the events of the Decisive Storm in the three Saudi e-newspapers, the "Support of Legitimacy" indicator ranked first at 90.3% of the total indicators of the editorials published in the three newspapers combined. The same indicator ranked first in each newspaper, with 100.0% in Al-Riyadh, 94.7% in Al-Yaum and 78.3% in Al-Madina. This result is in line with the editorial policy of Saudi e-newspapers: adopting Saudi Arabia's position in favor of the legitimate Yemeni government emanating from the Gulf Initiative Agreement, its executive mechanism and the outcomes of the comprehensive national dialogue.
- Al-Madina topped the other newspapers in terms of the "peaceful initiatives" indicator with 13.0%, while this indicator was absent from the priorities of Al-Riyadh and Al-Yaum.
- The indicators of "supplying the army with arms", "sectarian dimension" and "military splits" were equal in percentage of coverage with 1.6% overall. However, they varied in each newspaper alone. The three indicators were absent in Al-Riyadh's interests. The indicators of the "sectarian dimension" and the "military splits" were absent from Al-Yaum's interests, compared to 5.3% for the indicator of "supplying the army and the resistance with arms" in the same newspaper. The "supplying the army and the resistance with arms" indicator was absent from Al-Madina, compared to 4.3% achieved by the "sectarian dimension" and "military splits" indicators of the same newspaper.

Table (3) shows the attitudes of the editorials in the newspapers under study

Treatment	Newspaper						Total	
	Al-Riyadh		Al-Madina		Al-Yaum			
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Positive	16	80.0	23	100.0	19	100.0	58	93.5
Negative	4	20.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	6.5
Total	20	100.0	23	100.0	19	100.0	62	100.0

Table (3) shows the attitudes of the content of the published topics about the events of Decisive Storm in the Saudi electronic newspapers under study. The results are as follows:

- The positive attitude of the content of the topics published in the Saudi electronic newspapers about the Decisive Storm events reached (93.5%) out of the total frequency of treatment attitudes for the topics published in the three newspapers altogether, compared to the negative and neutral attitudes. This result also differs with the nature of the Western school in the news industry, which seeks to raise the value of the negativity as the news coverage focuses on the escalation of events, highlighting the news of conflict and violence in the Arab countries in particular, as well as in some countries of the world such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Mali, Nigeria, and others.

- Other studies pointed out some methods of bias in the management of the media for international conflicts, such as disinformation in the interest of the actors in the crisis; exaggeration and intimidation in describing events or the context in which they occur; the media diagnosis of a particular pattern in dealing with events such as focus on characters and leaders; media dependency for both political power at home and for the international system abroad, in accordance with the relations of the forces controlling events and information.

- The same attitude was also reported in each newspaper, with 100.0% in both Al-Madina and Al-Yaum and 80.0% in Al-Riyadh. This result is consistent with the editorial policy of the Saudi newspapers, which adopt Saudi Arabia's position in support of Decisive Storm and the legitimate government emanating from the provisions of the Gulf Initiative and the outcomes of the national dialogue.

- The "negative" attitude of the content of the published topics about the events of Decisive Storm recorded very low percentages. It was completely absent from Al-Madina and Al-Yaum, while its percentage in Al-Riyadh was 20.0%. The content in Al-Riyadh criticized the slow pace of Operation Decisive Storm, for the rebels would not benefit from the humanitarian situation and market this internationally, because of the mass displacement of civilians from conflict areas and the deterioration of the living and health standards of the Yemeni people.

- No "neutral" attitude content was found in the three newspapers under study.

Framing of 'Operation Decisive Storm' and Saudi e-press

Table (4) shows the persuasion narratives in the editorials in the newspapers under study

Demonstration	Newspaper						Total	
	Al-Riyadh		Al-Madina		Al-Yaum			
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
One point of view	6	30.0	7	30.4	3	15.8	16	25.8
More than one point of view	10	50.0	16	69.6	6	31.6	32	51.6
Not clear	4	20.0	0	0.0	10	52.6	14	22.6
Total	20	100.0	23	100.0	19	100.0	62	100.0

Table (4) shows the persuasion narratives of the published topics about the events of Decisive Storm in the Saudi electronic newspapers under study. The results are as follows:

- Within the categories of proof paths used in the topics published in the Saudi electronic newspapers about the events of Decisive Storm, the "presenting different points of view" was the most frequent category in the three newspapers combined with 51.6% out of the total. The three Saudi e-newspapers tend to offer different views in their editorials due to the freedom they enjoy in this regard in terms of intensifying and simplifying the information and knowledge they are dealing with about Decisive Storm. The audience is passionately waiting for such information, details and facts, especially in the context of the events and conflict in Yemen. These events imposed themselves on the coverage in the Saudi press in particular and the Saudi media in general.
- The same category topped Al-Madina by 69.6% - the highest percentage compared to other newspapers; Al-Riyadh achieved 50.0% and Al-Yaum achieved 31.6% for this category.
- The "presenting one point of view" category ranked second in terms of use in the three newspapers combined at 25.8%. It was ranked second in the Al-Riyadh and Al-Medina by 30.0% and 30.4% respectively, whereas Al-Yaum achieved 15.8%.

- This refers to the commitment of the three newspapers; specifically, Al-Madina is more professional in publishing topics related to the events of Decisive Storm; in terms of its adherence to "presenting both views of the topic".
- The category "unclear" ranked third in comparison with the other categories used in the newspapers combined, but this category was ranked first in Al-Yaum with 52.6% and ranked third in Al-Riyadh with 20.0%, while absent altogether in Al-Madina.

Table (5) shows the language of the editorials in the newspapers under study

The Language	Newspaper						Total	
	Al-Riyadh		Al-Madina		Al-Yaum			
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Journalistic	20	100.0	23	100.0	19	100.0	62	100.0
Classical	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Literary	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Slang	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	20	100.0	23	100.0	19	100.0	62	100.0

Table (5) shows the language of the published topics about the events of Decisive Storm in the Saudi electronic newspapers under study. The results are as follows:

- 100% of the three newspapers combined wrote their editorials using language based on a simple, sound style that was comprehensible for all readers. This result was the same for each newspaper separately.
- Classical, literary and colloquial language was absent from the three newspapers. This means that Saudi electronic newspapers rely on the language of media journalism as the basis for their media articles.

Table (6) shows the persuasive arguments in the editorials in the newspapers under study

arguments	Newspaper						Total	
	Al-Riyadh		Al-Madina		Al-Yaum			
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Emotional	0	0.0	1	4.3	2	10.5	3	4.8
Intellectual	8	40.0	8	34.8	15	78.9	31	50.0
Frightening	2	10.0	1	4.3	0	0.0	3	4.8
Mixed	10	50.0	13	56.5	2	10.5	25	40.3
Total	20	100.0	23	100.0	19	100.0	62	100.0

Framing of 'Operation Decisive Storm' and Saudi e-press

Table (6) shows the persuasive arguments in the published topics about the events of Decisive Storm in the Saudi electronic newspapers under study. The results are as follows:

- In the categories of persuasion methods used in the topics published in the Saudi electronic newspapers about the Decisive Storm events, the "intellectual arguments" category in the three newspapers collectively reached a frequency of 50% of the total. The same category in Al-Yaum reached 78.9%, which is the highest percentage compared to other newspapers; in Al-Riyadh, it came to 40.0%, and in Al-Madina 34.8%. This result reflects the feature of the editorials based on monitoring a reality or an event, and describing it in a mental context. It is also necessary to rationalize when talking about political and security issues, since they can only bear witness to the reality and represent a scoop for most competing media. Therefore, the emergence of mental arguments in dealing with the Decisive Storm topics in the Saudi press is in line with the press coverage of many crises and political issues within the Arab arena.
- The "mixed argument" category ranked second in terms of use in the three newspapers collectively with 40.3%. It was ranked first in Al-Madina at 56.5% and in Al-Riyadh with 50.0%. It came in third place in terms of use percentage in Al-Yaum with 10.5%.
- "Emotional" and "frightening" arguments were ranked third in the three newspapers under study, but varied in use. The "emotional" argument was absent from the topics of Al-Riyadh, but it appeared in Al-Yaum at 10.5% and in Al-Madina at 4.3%. On the other hand, the "frightening" argument was absent from the topics of Al-Yaum, but in contrast it appeared in Al-Riyadh with 10.0% and in Al-Madina with 4.3%. These results are consistent with many studies and media campaign research investigations aimed at convincing the public of the content of the media message on which the media campaign was based.

Table (7) shows the persuasive citations which the editorials used in the newspapers under study

Citations	Newspaper						Total	
	Al-Riyadh		Al-Madina		Al-Yaum			
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Figures and statistics	0	0.0	1	4.3	1	5.3	2	3.2
Statements	8	40.0	9	39.1	6	31.6	23	37.1
Reports	6	30.0	1	4.3	6	31.6	13	21.0
Experiences	2	10.0	8	34.8	6	31.6	16	25.8
History	4	20.0	4	17.4	0	0.0	8	12.9
Total	20	100.0	23	100.0	19	100.0	62	100.0

Table (7) shows the persuasive citations of the published topics about the events of Decisive Storm in the Saudi electronic newspapers under study. The results are as follows:

- Comparing the persuasive citations used in dealing with topics published in the Saudi newspapers about the events of Decisive Storm, the use of "statements by senior officials" is greater than the use of all other citations (reports - experience - history – figures, and statistics) whether in each newspaper separately, or for the three newspapers collectively. The percentage of using "statements by senior officials" reached 37.1% out of the total use of all the goals in the three newspapers. It came to 40.0% in Al-Riyadh, 39.1% in Al-Madina - the highest number of uses - and 31.6% in Al-Yaum. This result can be explained by the Saudi press's reliance on the statements by senior officials about Decisive Storm as the media policy of the Saudi press harmonizes with the general policy of the state and adopts the official position in the Saudi media discourse. In addition, the international press often relies on the statements of senior officials in their articles.

- The use of ‘reports’ by Al-Riyadh and Al-Yaum were 30.0% and 31.6% respectively, however, the use of ‘reports’ by Al-Madina was much lower at 4.3%.

- The use of "experiences" by Al-Madina and Al-Yaum proved very similar at 34.8% and 31.6 respectively. The use in Al-Riyadh was significantly lower at 10.0%.

- Al-Riyadh and Al-Madina were equal in the number of uses of "history" at 20.0% and 17.4% respectively. This category was absent from Al-Yaum's priorities.

- The combined use of ‘figures and statistics’ was 3.2% made up of one use each by Al-Madina and Al-Yaum (4.3% and 5.3% respectively). It was not used in Al-Riyadh. "Figures and statistics" are usually presented in the reports and news features rather than the editorials.

- Table (8) shows the editorial reference frameworks in the newspapers under study.

Framework	Newspaper						Total	
	Al-Riyadh		Al-Madina		Al-Yaum		Frequency	%
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%		
Conflict	0	0.0	4	17.4	2	10.5	6	9.7
Emotional	0	0.0	1	4.3	1	5.3	2	3.2
Intellectual	6	30.0	9	39.1	11	57.9	26	41.9
Frightening	6	30.0	1	4.3	2	10.5	9	14.5
Interest and gain	2	10.0	4	17.4	1	5.3	7	11.3
Religious dimension	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	5.3	1	1.6
Various frameworks	6	30.0	4	17.4	1	5.3	11	17.7
Total	20	100.0	23	100.0	19	100.0	62	100.0

Framing of 'Operation Decisive Storm' and Saudi e-press

Table (8) shows the editorial reference frameworks of the published topics about the events of Decisive Storm in the Saudi electronic newspapers under study. The results are as follows:

- Within the frame of reference for the editorials used in the topics published in the Saudi newspapers about the events of Decisive Storm, the "mental frames" category in the three newspapers collectively reached 41.9% of the total frequencies. The same category ranked first in Al-Yaum with 57.9% - the highest percentage in comparison to other newspapers - in Al Madina at 39.1%, and in Al-Riyadh at 30.0%.
- The "different frames" category ranked second in terms of use in the three newspapers together at 17.7%. It was ranked first in Al-Riyadh with 30.0%, lower in Al-Madina at 17.4% and very low in Al-Yaum at only 5.3%.
- The "frightening" framework was ranked third in the three newspapers under study with 14.5%, but varied in its use. Al-Riyadh used it with a high percentage of 30.0%, Al-Yaum by a lower percentage of 10.5% with Al-Madina lower still with 4.3%.
- The "interest and gain" framework came in fourth place with 11.3%. The three newspapers were different in terms of use. Al-Madina used it 17.4%, which is high compared with the other two newspapers, Al-Riyadh 10.0% and Al-Yaum 5.3%.
- The "conflict" framework ranked fifth with 9.7% collectively; 17.4% in Al-Madina and 10.5% in Al-Yaum. Al-Riyadh did not use this framework.
- The "conflict", "emotional", and "religious" frameworks were absent from the priorities of Al-Riyadh and were used at very low and weak levels in the other two newspapers: Al-Madina and Al-Yaum, as shown in Table 8.

The researcher thinks that the "mental frameworks" category in the three newspapers collectively refers to the target audience of the speech, which consists of an elite audience and opinion leaders. This audience has many visions, theses and extensive information, and therefore must be convinced mentally, not emotionally as with the ordinary public.

Table (9) shows the strategies of editorials in the newspapers under study

Strategies	Newspaper						Total	
	Al-Riyadh		Al-Madinah		Al-Yaum			
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Direct Speech	2	10.0	2	8.7	0	0.0	4	6.5
Attack and criticism	2	10.0	1	4.3	3	15.8	6	9.7
Questioning	2	10.0	0	0.0	1	5.3	3	4.8
Spreading a sense of danger	6	30.0	5	21.7	4	21.1	15	24.2
Highlighting the contradiction	0	0.0	5	21.7	1	5.3	6	9.7
Refutation	2	10.0	4	17.4	8	42.1	14	22.6
Confirmation	6	30.0	6	26.1	2	10.5	14	22.6
Total	20	100.0	23	100.0	19	100.0	62	100.0

Table (9) shows the strategies of the editorials on the published topics about the events of Decisive Storm in the Saudi electronic newspapers under study. The results are as follows:

- A comparison of the strategies used to address Decisive Storm in the editorials published in the three Saudi newspapers under study shows that the "spreading the sense of danger" strategy was at the forefront with 24.2%. Al-Riyadh achieved 30.0%, - the highest rate of use [30% (FREQUENCY 6) IS HIGHER THAN 21.7% (FREQUENCY 5)]- Al-Madina achieved 21.7% and Al-Yaum achieved 21.1%.
- Al-Yaum surpassed Al-Riyadh and Al-Medina in using the strategy of "refutation" by 42.1% compared to 17.4% for Al-Medina and 10.0% for Al-Riyadh.
- Al-Riyadh and Al-Medina came close to using the strategy of confirmation by 30.0% and 26.1% respectively, compared to 10.5% for Al-Yaum.
- The proportion using the "attack and criticism" and "highlighting the contradiction" strategies in the newspapers under study together reached 9.7% for each. However, the three newspapers used the two strategies in different proportions: Al-Riyadh and Al-Yaum used the "attack and criticism" strategy at the relatively high proportions of 15.8% and 10.0% respectively, compared to Al-Madina which reached 4.3%. On the contrary, Al-Madina used the "highlighting the contradiction" strategy at

Framing of 'Operation Decisive Storm' and Saudi e-press

a high proportion of 21.7%, compared to less use in Al-Yaum by 5.3%, and its complete absence from the list of interests of Al-Riyadh.

- "Direct Speech" and "Questioning" strategies appeared in Al-Riyadh's list of priorities with 10.0% for each, while the first strategy was absent in Al-Yaum and the second from Al-Madina.

The results show that "spreading the sense of danger" is the most used strategy in the editorials of the Saudi electronic newspapers in the study sample when dealing with the events of Decisive Storm. This relatively high proportion compared to other strategies may be due to the importance of this war, especially as it relates to the national security of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is a fateful war for the Saudi people in the face of the Iranian threat which supports the Houthi militias in controlling Yemen and the coup against the legitimate government of President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, which aimed to give the mullahs' regime in Iran a military presence in Bab el-Mandab on the Red Sea. This presence threatens international shipping and the security of the Gulf countries, especially in the light of the Iranian ambition of seeking to expand in the Arab region in general and in the south of the Arabian Peninsula in particular.

The "confirmation" and "refutation" strategies came in second place as a result of the keenness of the newspapers under study to provide readers with accurate and reliable information about the events of Decisive Storm and to refute the spread of allegations and rumors on this issue. Al-Riyadh and Al-Madina focused on the "confirmation" strategy more than Al-Yaum which focused more on the "refutation" strategy.

Table (10) shows the driving forces in the editorials in the newspapers under study

Actors	Newspaper						Total	
	Al-Riyadh		Al-Madina		Al-Yaum			
	Frequency	% newspaper	occurrences	% newspaper	Frequency	% newspaper	Frequency	% newspaper
Saudi Arabia	12	60.0	12	52.2	6	31.6	30	48.4
Legitimate government	2	10.0	2	8.7	0	0.0	4	6.5
Iran	2	10.0	3	13.0	7	36.8	12	19.4
Egypt	0	0.0	1	4.3	0	0.0	1	1.6
Houthis	2	10.0	2	8.7	3	15.8	7	11.3
China	2	10.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	3.2
France	0	0.0	1	4.3	0	0.0	1	1.6
Arab League	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	15.8	3	4.8
Turkey	0	0.0	1	4.3	0	0.0	1	1.6
Jordan	0	0.0	1	4.3	0	0.0	1	1.6
Total	20	100.0	23	100.0	19	100.0	62	100.0

Table (10) shows the driving forces of the published topics about the events of Decisive Storm in the Saudi electronic newspapers under study. The results in Table (10) show that Saudi Arabia came in the first ranking by 48.4% of the total driving forces. This seems natural because Saudi Arabia leads the Arab alliance in Decisive Storm. Then comes Iran (19.4%); this may be due to Iran's involvement in supporting the coup militias in Yemen. Then the driving forces gradually appeared less until they reached (1.6%) for Egypt, Jordan, Turkey and France. The researcher believes that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's leadership of Decisive Storm is a natural result of it initiating the formation of an Arab alliance of 14 Arab countries to restore legitimacy to Yemen.

Framing of ‘Operation Decisive Storm’ and Saudi e-press

Table (11) shows the consistency of editorials in the newspapers under study

Consistency	Newspaper						Total	
	Al-Riyadh		Al-Madinah		Al-Yaum		Frequency	%
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%		
Consistent	20	100.0	23	100.0	19	100.0	62	100.0
Not consistent	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	20	100.0	23	100.0	19	100.0	62	100.0

Table (11) shows the consistency of the published articles on Decisive Storm in the three Saudi electronic newspapers, with Saudi Arabia's position on Yemen in general and the events concerning Decisive Storm in particular. The results in Table (11) show the high percentage of topics in the three newspapers combined and individually that are consistent with the Kingdom's position on the events of Decisive Storm was very high at 100%.

This result points to the level of perfect correspondence between the editorial policy of the Saudi newspapers with the public policy and the general position of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Decisive Storm in Yemen.

Recommendations and Suggestions:

- The results revealed that the political topics formed a large percentage of the topics of the editorials in the Saudi electronic newspapers published during the time period identified by the researcher. This applied to the total frequency of newspapers collectively or separately. This points to the emergence of the issue of Yemen as a priority for the editorial policy of Saudi newspapers which is consistent with the general policy of Saudi Arabia and its position on the crisis in Yemen because of the control exerted by the Houthi / Saleh militias in Yemen. This control poses a direct threat not only to Saudi Arabia, but also to the entire Gulf region.

- The results revealed the emergence of military developments as the second of the editorial priorities of the Saudi electronic newspapers after the political topics. This corresponds to the nature of the military operations on the ground, whether from the Arab coalition forces led by the Kingdom, the national army, or the popular resistance.

- The results showed the emergence of support for the legitimate Yemeni government in the content of the editorials by more than 90.3% of the total editorial indicators of Saudi electronic newspapers. This result is consistent with the leadership of the Arab Alliance in general and the Kingdom in particular in supporting the legitimate government in Yemen, based on the provisions and principles of the Gulf Initiative and its executive mechanism and the outcomes of the comprehensive national dialogue.
- Positive treatment of the Decisive Storm events in the editorials received a large percentage (93.5%), indicating the compatibility of the editorial policy of the Saudi e-newspapers with the general policy of the Saudi leadership.
- The results revealed that 51.6% of the topics published in the editorials presented more than one point of view. This means that the Saudi e-newspapers believe in the principle of a culture of dialogue by presenting different views of conflicting parties in terms of opinions and positions.
- The persuasive arguments used in the editorials of the Saudi electronic newspapers were predominantly intellectual and logical. This result is in line with the characteristics of the target readership drawn from the most cultured groups who understand the events well: the opinion leaders in society.
- The results indicated that "statements by senior officials and those in charge in the coalition leadership" were the most convincing persuasive citations used by the Saudi e-newspapers in their editorials on Decisive Storm in Yemen.
- The results revealed that the intellectual framework was the most used reference framework in the editorials of the Saudi electronic newspapers concerning the Decisive Storm events. This result corresponds well with the results in Table (6) about the persuasive arguments used in the editorials of the Saudi electronic newspapers as the intellectual arguments topped all arguments. This is in line with the characteristics of the articles that address a positive and active audience who are more cultured and understand the events well.
- The results revealed that spreading the sense of danger was the most widely used strategy in writing the editorials of the Saudi electronic newspapers on the Decisive Storm events, indicating that the newspapers perceive the Iranian threat not only within Yemen but also in the entire Gulf region.
- The results revealed that the largest of the driving forces (48.4%) that emerged in writing the editorials of the Saudi electronic newspapers on the events of

Framing of ‘Operation Decisive Storm’ and Saudi e-press

Decisive Storm was Saudi Arabia. This is perhaps due to the active role of the Kingdom in leading the coalition in the face of the Iranian ambitions and the Persian project in the Arab region in general and the Arabian Peninsula in particular.

- The results revealed a high percentage of topics consistent with Saudi Arabia's position vis-à-vis Decisive Storm. It reached 100% of the topics published in the three newspapers about Decisive Storm. This result indicates the absolute correspondence between the editorial policy of the Saudi newspapers and the general position taken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Decisive Storm.

References

- Entman, R. M. (2003). Cascading Activation: Contesting the White House's Frame After 9/11. In *Political Communication*, 20(4), 415-432, DOI: 10.1080/10584600390244176
- Chong, D., & Druckman, J. N. (2007) Framing Theory. In *Annual Review of Political Science*. Volume 10 Pp 103–26 doi: 10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.072805.103054
- Deidre, F. (2013). Amanda Knox: A Content Analysis of Media Framing in Newspapers Around the World. Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Paper 1117. <http://dc.etsu.edu/etd/1117>
- Gamson, W. A., & Modigliani, A. (1989). Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach. *American journal of sociology*, 95(1), 1-37.
- Kaufman, S., Elliott, M., & Shmueli, D. (2013). Frames, Framing and Reframing Beyond Intractability. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess (Eds.). Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Posted: September 2003 <<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/framing>>.
- McCombs, M., Shaw, D. L., & Weaver, D. (1997). Communication and democracy. *Exploring the Intellectual Frontiers in Agenda Setting Theory*. New Jersey: Lawrence.
- Scheufele, D.A., & Tewksbury, David. (2007). Framing, agenda setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models. *Journal of Communication*, 57, 9-20.
- Vladislavljevic, N. (2015) Media framing of political conflict: A review of the literature. Katy Parry (Ed), *Media, Conflict and Democratisation (MeCoDEM)*. Retrieved from www.mecodem.eu
- Vreese, C. H. de. (2005). News framing: Theory and typology. *Information Design Journal + Document Design*, 13(1), 51-62.