

ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF POLITICAL ADVERTISING: A TARES MODEL ANALYSIS OF PPP AND PML-N ADS

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Abstract

Political communication, particularly through political advertisements, plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and influencing voter behavior. Consequently, assessing the ethical dimensions of political communication is essential for understanding its impact on democratic processes. This study conducts a qualitative content analysis utilizing the TARES Test (Truthfulness, Authenticity, Respect, Equity, and Social Responsibility) to evaluate the ethical dimensions of political advertisements from the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). The research analyzed four video advertisements from each party, published on their social media platforms during the first six months of 2018, preceding the general election. The findings indicate that the political advertisements of the selected parties generally do not meet the ethical criteria established by the TARES Test. The study concludes that political parties may lack awareness of ethical considerations or may not prioritize them in political advertising. Unethical advertisements can result in disinformation, misinformation, and diminished public trust. In light of these findings, this study advocates that political parties and advertising agencies be trained and equipped with skills regarding the TARES Test to ensure adherence to ethical standards. The government and relevant departments should establish a comprehensive ethical code of conduct and implement updated ethical guidelines to prevent the dissemination of unethical political advertisements. Adopting these measures is crucial for fostering a more responsible political communication landscape and enhancing the democratic process in countries like Pakistan.

Introduction

Mass communication plays a vital role in the dissemination of political messages. Political advertising is an integral part of political communication through which political parties reach out to voters. It is a fundamental component of political communication that influences and reshapes voters' perceptions. However, the ethical dimensions of these advertisements, especially in emerging

democracies such as Pakistan, are increasingly concerning. Media create or reshape the decision-making ability of voters. Consequently, the media act as an opinion leader to provide the messages of political parties through political ads to the targeted voters (Pühringer, Dahinden, Rademacher, Gerth, & Siegert, 2008). According to scholars Shami & Ashfaq, (2018), in the current world political communication is a subpart of political science. It refers to the

broadcasting of political messages and its effect on the political behavior of general public and policymakers. It focuses on the dissemination of general resources and power for decision making, laws and rule. In political communication, the sender of the political messages has intentions to create or reshape the political viewpoint of the public, such as,

Political communication is used for enhancing media coverage for achieving goals in election. It establishes, create, and maintain goodwill and coordination with its targeted public.

Keeping in view the above points, political parties through political communications are using political advertisement to sustain their support in general public. Political ads are considered to influence, build and redesign voters perception and narratives. Understanding of the metaphors applied in those political ads has become important, serving an important analysis tool. This study offers scholastic insights for political parties, enabling them to revisit their advertising policies. Additionally, this study also equips advertising agencies with the skills needed to design political campaign and create ads effectively especially focusing on the ethical dimensions of ads in the context of the TARES Test Model.

According to (Ledingham, 2011), political parties use political communication strategies specifically political ads to collect strength from general voters. These political ads serve as important tools for broadcasting narratives and messages to public and streamlining coordination with different media franchises. These advertisements share an important role in the marketing and commercialization of political campaign and messages. According to Maryville University Missouri advertisement has been defined as the inclusion of all the actions an organization takes to bring its opinions, products or narrative to the attention of general public or targeted audiences. The aim of advertising is to convince masses to respond in a specific way to buy the product or think to act in a certain way, such as public service messages encouraging public to keep the city clean, vote for a specific party or to avoid smoking. The history of advertisement revealed

that Egyptians were the first to use papyrus for the purpose of posters of walls and messages of sales. The mixing of images and words began during 19th century which is the evident of the progress in the field of advertisement. Governments across the globe started recognizing the power of advertisement in the 20th century by spreading their messages to citizens through ads. In Pakistan, the history of ads is not so shining; because of the center of advertisements in the sub-continent was Delhi. Although after independence some work was started which was further nourished specially after the emergence of electronic media (Arshad, & Aslam, 2015).

Albert Lasker, considered the pioneer of modern advertising, defined advertising as "salesmanship in print, driven by a reason why", which predates the era of radio, television, and the internet. This definition of political ads indicates that political ads had roots in the history of political communication (Godwin, 2015). In contemporary changing media landscape, political parties have significantly turned to political ads as a tool to broadcast their narrative and manifesto to the voters. However, the ethical dimensions of these political advertisements have elevated high concerns.

Political advertisement is an advertisement that attempts to influence or comment on a subject matter of the extensive political debate. It includes communications about a political party, candidate or representative to communicate about political issues or issues of public interest, and advertise the relation to government policies. Political advertising is a vital tool of political parties, candidates, democracies and public representatives, etc. which hire it to sell themselves, their manifesto and narrative (Batta, Batta, & Mboho, 2015). Within the territorial boundaries of a democratic nation, political parties hold a crucial role as the primary actors creating the country's democratic landscape. For voters, political parties serve as the primary channel through which they engage with the democratic process. A fundamental function of political parties is their role in representation, which involves translating public opinion into actionable political agendas, thereby ensuring a

dynamic interplay between public sentiments and political leadership (Cross, 2011).

This study, however, focuses on Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN) as a case study. PPP is left-wing mainstream party established by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (ZAB) on November 30, 1967. The first Chairman of PPP was ZAB. The main objectives of the Party are; Islam is our faith, Democracy is our polity, Socialism is our economy and all power to the people (Dawood, & Malik, 2017). ZAB was the foreign minister in the cabinet of Ayub Khan but after the war 1965 differences emerged between the two and consequently Bhutto established his own party. The main goal of PPP was the achievement of a free society, which is possible through the policy of socialism. It is generally believed that an independent foreign policy of Pakistan is the essential feature of promoting the national interest of the country.

ZAB believed in an independent foreign policy of mutualism in which no country would be allowed to interfere in the affairs of other countries (Zain, 2012). Bhutto was a charismatic leader of his time who shares the party manifesto to a large segment of the general public across the Pakistan. PPP wanted to introduce true democracy in Pakistan and to transfer the power to local masses via the process of election. The core aim of the Party was to uplift the socio-economic condition of the country, especially to resolve the grievances of common people (Ahmad, 1996). To achieve this goal PPP started implementing various policies. Initially, the party initiated the abolition of feudalism in the country. PPP also took measures to protect the rights of workers. Roti, Kapra and Makaan (Bread, clothing, and shelter) was the popular slogan of PPP to attract the lower-income segments of the public (Ahmad, 1996). ZAB was the founder of 1973 Constitution of Pakistan and the Pakistan's nuclear program was also started by him. The period of PPP government always assume is public centric (Dawood, & Malik, 2017). Benazir Bhutto, the daughter of ZAB took over the party charge after the assassination of her father. After the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in 2007 nowadays her son

Bilawal led the party. PPP is currently sharing federal coalition government with PML(N) and also chairing provincial government of Sindh province. According to Faiz, (2022), the questions rise here: Will Bilawal be a Bonaparte and flourish on the inherited charisma of his grandfather (the late ZAB)? Will the Pakistan Peoples Party be able to enhance its position in the contemporary politics of the country?

The second party selected for this study is Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN). Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz is one of the largest parties who govern the country many times in the democratic system of Pakistan. Before 1988 Pakistan Muslim League was the component of Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI). In 1993 it was divided into two factions the one was called Pakistan Muslim league Junejo (PMLJ) and other was named as PMLN. with this division the political history of PMLN started (Nisa, Umar, & Khan, 2021). A Punjab based businessman Nawaz Sharif was the first president of the party and nowadays working as a supreme leader of the PMLN because after political disqualification in PANAMA case. According to the rules of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) he is not qualified to keep the position of party president. Therefore the president of PMLN is Shahbaz Shairf the younger brother of party's supremo. The party issued manifesto for the general election of 2013 in which it was announced to follow the guidance of Jinnah's vision. In light of that vision it was decided to remove the fear of public towards liberty, fraternity and equality. The PMLN believed in the promotion of the rights of the female. The party announced a policy to combat terrorism and extremism also strategize a plan to education for all, employment for youth, elimination of corruption and economic revival of the country (Akbar, Ahmad, Malik, & Akhtar, 2022). In May 2013 general elections were held in Pakistan in which the party secured a majority with 199 seats out of total 342 in National assembly and Nawaz Sharif became the prime minister of the country (Ullah, Ahmad, & Azim, 2020).

PMLN enjoying credit for testing nuclear weapons in 1998 and declaring Pakistan the 7th

world wide and First Islamic nuclear state in the world. According to Akhtar, (2013), with the passage of time ups and downs come in the party but still this party is counted one among the largest parties of Pakistan. Despite being disqualified from holding the chairmanship of the party Nawaz Sharif is still the main player of the country's politics and PML (N) remains an important competitor in the current politics of Pakistan.

PMLN played a vital role in enhancing legislative development, balancing civil military relations, structural reforms in government institutions and finalizing counter terrorism policy through initiatives like the National Action plan. However, evidence shows that this party is believing in dynastic politics, media constraints and centralization of governance (Din, Sher, & Ahmad, 2025). After the 2024 election this party is again in power in central under the premiership of its president Shahbaz Sharif as well as in Punjab province under the chief minister Maryam Nawaz the daughter of party's supremo Nawaz Sharif. Political parties in Pakistan are do not seem serious to become admirable to the party in government. Almost all parties trying to hold the ruling party responsible for all failure in democratic system. The political rivalry between PPP and PMLN for political power is a threat to derail the fragile democracy of the country (Amin, Shabir, & Riaz, S, 2020).

Ethics is derived from the Greek word 'ethos', which means 'way of living', it is a branch of philosophy that deals with human behavior and conduct of individuals. Ethics is a science that deals with the conduct. It is the systematic response of our judgment about the conduct in the context of right or wrong (Dewey, & Tufts, 2022). Ethics is often assumed as a reference to "just or 'right' values of behavior between parties in a specific situation, based on individual moral thoughts". Ethics tends to focus on 'what is right and what is wrong' just on moral grounds. It refers to set of moral ideas, thoughts and actions (Shabbir, Maalouf, Griessmair, Colmekcioglu, & Akhtar, 2019). This brief discussion emphasizes the multidimensional nature of ethics, serving as a guiding parameter for organization and

individuals in their moral decision-making processes to create a society on the grounds of goodness, respect and justice for fellow humans. However, the absence of universally accepted international guidelines for political advertisements has led to discrepancies and inconsistencies in their ethical standards. Issues related to violence, negativity, and defamation within political advertising have become particularly alarming over time.

To address these ethical concerns, our research adopts a comprehensive approach, conducting a multifaceted content analysis focusing on the portrayal of violence in political advertisements. Through this analysis, a systematic classification scheme is developed, enabling a structured examination of violent content within these advertisements. This study utilizes normative ethical analysis, as proposed by Jones et al. (Jones, 2014), to formulate ethical guidelines. These guidelines serve as a valuable resource for advertisers, regulators and planners, providing a framework for assessing the ethicality of violent political advertisements. By incorporating content analysis and normative ethical analysis, this research contributes to developing a standardized ethical framework essential for ensuring the responsible and ethical use of political advertisements in modern-day political communication.

Political ads have been the trademark of political parties in general elections in Pakistan. Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing the ethical dimensions of political ads to determine the extent to which PPP and PMLN follows the TARES Test in their advertisements. More precisely, this study examines the practice of ethical guidelines in advertisements by PPP and PMLN and evaluates the extent to which the parties adhere to these guidelines.

Ethical Dimensions in Political Advertising

Media specifically political ads play a vital role in convincing and guiding the public toward a targeted party or political candidate. The democratic countries have utilized various forms of political ads to manipulate their voters to get favorable results (Aziz, Muslim, Parveen, Qazi,

Qasim, Farooq, & Alam, 2023). As a sub-form of political communication, political ads first emerged in the political campaigns in the 1950s. Since its appearance it has become an important tool of communication between political parties, candidates and voters. Political parties utilized political ads as communication strategy to attract voters' minds and influence their voting decision (Kaid, 2004). Political advertisements often play a decisive role in election campaigns by framing issues and portraying political parties in particular ways (Semenik, 2012). However, the ethical repercussions of these portrayals are often questioned, especially concerning their truthfulness, authenticity, respect for audiences, equity, and social responsibility (Bennett & Entman, 2000). Various research studies show that unethical political ads can lead to disinformation, misinformation, voter manipulation and decreasing public trust in political system (Kaid & Holtz-Bacha, 2006). Additionally, researchers have emphasized the need for strong ethical standards to ensure that political ads are not only influential but also responsible and respectful to the audience (Iyengar & Simon, 2000). The significance of ethical advertising is specifically relevant in the context of emerging democracies like Pakistan, where political communication can highly influence electoral outcomes and the democratic system (Gandy Jr, 2011).

The TARES Model as an Ethical Framework

The TARES Test, developed by David L. Martinson and Sherry Baker (2001), offers an inclusive framework for assessing the ethical dimensions of advertisements. This model consists of five principles: Truthfulness, Authenticity, Respect, Equity, and Social Responsibility. The TARES Test provides advertisers with a set of guidelines that can be used to evaluate the ethical nature of their messaging (Baker & Martinson, 2001). The TARES Test framework is the first to illuminate the notion of practitioner accountability toward the message receiver in persuasive advertising. The TARES, through a five-part (Truthfulness, Authenticity, Respect, Equity, and Social

Responsibility) test, establishes ethical boundaries for persuasive communications specifically for ads (Lee, & Cheng, 2010). Research studies highlight the utility of the TARES Test in evaluating the ethical dimensions of different types of advertisements, including political ones (Schauster, & Neill, 2017). The application of the TARES model has been utilized in various studies, specifically concerning commercial advertisements, where it has been found to be an effective tool for stimulating ethical persuasion (Drumwright, & Murphy, 2004).

Political Advertising in Pakistan

In Pakistan, political advertising has become a fundamental component of electoral process. Almost all parties including PPP, PMLN and others have utilized advertisements to deliver their messages, gathering support, and influence public opinion (Javed & Javed 2023). However, the ethical repercussions of these advertisements have not been comprehensively studied, particularly concerning the application of ethical models like TARES Test. Studies have shown that the general election of 2018 in Pakistan watched an unparalleled use of various modes of media including political ads by political parties, leading to an increased attention on the ethical dimensions of political advertisements and communication (Ahmed, 2021). Various research has shown that the advertising of different parties like PMLN, PPP, PTI etc. often highlight issues such as truthfulness and social responsibility but have been critiqued for lacking authenticity and equity (Islam, Zubair, & Muhammad 2019). These observations stress the need for a detailed ethical assessment of PPP and PML-N's political advertisements, specifically through frameworks like the TARES model. Despite extensive discussion on political advertising ethics and application of the TARES model in various contexts, there remains a significant gap in the literature concerning the ethical assessment of political ads in Pakistan using this framework. This study aims to address this gap by conducting a comprehensive evaluation of PPP and PML-N's political advertisements during the general elections of 2018 through the TARES Test,

thereby contributing to the understanding of political advertising ethics in emerging democracies.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative content analysis approach to examine the ethical dimensions of political advertisements using the TARES model. Content analysis empowered the researcher to detect the extent to which changes occur in the meaning or interpretation of the text or collected data. Content analysis is a set of procedures to make results from collected data because it is a method to use for the explanation or manipulation of symbol and meaning used in communication. It is systematic way to draw conclusions from the text or data collected from various sources (Hermann, M. G. 2008). Content analysis is considered the most appropriate method for this research as it allows for a systematic evaluation of the collected data in the form of advertisements from the websites of PPP and PML-N. These ads are analyzed for their ethical standards in the context of the TARES Test. To ensure a rigorous analysis, the TARES model has been chosen as the key analytical tool to effectively address the research question. The TARES Test, established by David L. Martinson and Sherry Baker in 2001, is a clear five-step ethical persuasion assessment tool. This model is designed to define moral objectives and establish ethical boundaries that guide persuasive practices, providing a set of guidelines and principles that aim for ethical outcomes in professional persuasion. The five core principles of the

TARES Test include Truthfulness, Authenticity, Respect, Equity, and Social Responsibility (Baker & Martinson 2001). This test was employed in a study conducted in America to assess anti-smoking advertisements, wherein 826 television ads from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Media Campaign Resource Center were analyzed. The study concluded that anti-smoking ads generally scored highly in ethical standards (Lee, & Cheng, 2010). On the basis of this this precedent, the TARES model is applied in this study to evaluate the ethical dimensions of political advertisements. For the purposes of this research, four video advertisements from the selected political parties were chosen from their social media pages and channels. The unit of analysis is the "visual advertisement," covering content published or posted on various social media platforms, including the official websites, pages, and accounts of the selected parties during the first six months of 2018. This timeframe was chosen with the consideration that the 2018 general election was held on July 25th, 2018, and it is believed that data from this period would be more pertinent and accurate for the study. **To assess the truthfulness dimension of the TARES Test, claims made in the advertisements were cross-checked against publicly available documents, including government reports, international agency reports, and reputable news sources. These materials were used solely as supporting evidence for evaluating factual claims presented in the advertisements.**

Analysis and Discussion

Below are the links of selected ads against which the researcher assesses the TARES Test.

Links of selected ads of PPP are following:

- a) https://web.facebook.com/mohsinalidahar/videos/2058255987539321/?mibextid=5Ufylv&_rdc=1&_rdr

- b) https://web.facebook.com/Bilawalhouse/videos/1835809349840930/?extid=CL-UNK-UNK-UNK-IO5_GK0T-GK1C&mibextid=1YhcI9R&ref=sharing&_rdc=1&_rdr
- c) https://web.facebook.com/Bilawalhouse/videos/1842625405825991/?extid=CL-UNK-UNK-UNK-IO5_GK0T-GK1C&mibextid=1YhcI9R&ref=sharing&_rdc=1&_rdr
- d) https://web.facebook.com/watch/?ref=search&v=1701877926567407&external_log_id=c300abc4-4793-466b-b89a-5d790f04dc82&q=%232018%2C%23PPP%20%23%20TVC

Table 1. Statistical data of Advertisements of Pakistan Peoples’ Party (PPP)

Advertisements Number	Dissemination Platform	Page/Channel Name	Duration of Advertisements	Number of views on Advertisements
Advertisement number (a)	Facebook	Mohsin Ali Dahar	3:03 min	76 views
Advertisement number (b)	Facebook	Pakistan Peoples Party- PPP	1:20 min	397000 views
Advertisement number (c)	Facebook	Pakistan Peoples Party- PPP	1:14 min	230000 views
Advertisement number (d)	Facebook	Pakistan Peoples Party-PPP	1:09 min	198000 views

Analysis of PPP’s ads in the context of TARES Test

Truthfulness

a) In this ad PPP claims that there are best health facilities available in Sindh rather than Punjab. The mentioning Heart and liver transplant centers and hospital for cancer. Yes these centers are working but about all these centers are present in Karachi and some others major cities. PPP also claims in this ad that the most per capita income is in province Sindh. But it is evident that in Pakistan after Blaochistan the worse system of health is in province Sindh. Yes there are best centers like NIVCD but these are few in numbers and the large population residing in internal part of province is unable to reach these centers due to worse transportation and economic situation. All over the Pakistan the cheapest workers are available in Sindh due to high inflation. Even women and children are working in bad condition to earn bread. Another claim in this ad is about ideology and manifesto of PPP. But in today PPP there is no space for ideological workers and PPP even not able to implement their manifesto in Sindh after governing the province for many consecutive

terms. Therefore, by applying TARES Test audience perspective the factor Truthfulness is missing in this ad.

b) The analysis of this ad shows that all the claims made in this ad by PPP are untrue. As it is evident that PPP is one of the two parties in Pakistan who ruled this country for many terms. Specifically in Sindh province where PPP is in continuous power since 2013. But neither this party allowed students union’s elections, nor provide free-of-cost education to every child of Sindh. According to media report Sardar Shah (Sindh Education Minister), In September 2021, had contested the claim that the province had six million out-of-school children (www.thenews.com.pk). This report is evident that the claims of PPP about education are wrong. Snatching of mobile phones and other robbery cases indicated that unemployment exists in this province. The overall situation shows that experience and continuous government of PPP not transformed the life of common citizen especially in internal Sindh. Therefore, in the context of TARES Test audience perspective this ad does not fall in the category of Truthfulness.

c) By analyzing this ad the researcher found that PPP compares its reforms in agriculture sector with the reforms in Punjab. This ad shows that the availability of agriculture water and the condition of farmers is better in Sindh than Punjab. Although according to World Bank fact sheet published on 19 December 2022 the farmers in Sindh are facing severe economic problems as many of them lost their crops and majority of them go in debt further for purchasing fertilizer, seed and pesticides (www.worldbank.org). Despite governing Sindh for many consecutive years PPP has failed to change and add something fruitful to the life of farmers. So according to TARES Test audience perspective. The claims presented in this advertisement could not be fully corroborated by the available evidence.

d) The analysis of this ad shows that PPP portraying a public sector university and claiming to strengthen of higher education in Sindh. But the fact is there are total 41(Public+ Private) universities in Sindh out of which 8 are banned by HEC Sindh or non-functional since many years but the PPP government is unable to find out solution for these institutions of higher studies (sindhhec.gov.pk). Apart from this the standard and quality of many private universities in Sindh far better than the standard of Public-sector universities. Therefore, in the context of TARES Test audience perspective this ad is out from the circle of Truthfulness.

Authenticity

a) The analysis of this ad shows that PPP is making fun of their political rival Imran Khan and declaring his political gathering as “concert”. And showcasing different projects in Sindh is the performance of PPP. By applying TARES Test audience perspective all these claims are inauthentic. Because music is playing and sometimes workers are also dancing in the Jalsas of PPP. So declaring PTI jalsas as concert is baseless. Same like is the propagations of few mega project is not sufficient for the whole population of Sindh it is also worth mentioning that majority of these projects are situated in big

cities and out of the reach of common citizen in Sindh.

b) In this ad PPP making fun of their rival and also claiming that PPP will revive student union and provide free education to everyone. All these claims are contrary to their actions because PPP ruling Sindh since 2013 and this party also ruled the federal government for many times but neither they revive student unions nor provide free education. So in the context of TARES Test audience perspective the factor authenticity is missing in this ad.

c) By the analysis of this ad the researcher found that PPP portraying the farmers of Punjab complaining against Punjab government for not supporting farmers. While in Sindh the farmers are happy because Sindh government installed solar tube wells to provide agriculture water to farmers. But all this comparison is not justified because the agriculture land, requirements and priorities are all totally different of both provinces. Moreover operationalizing few solar tube wells and portraying them as the solutions to all problems facing by farmers in Sindh is not fair. As the World Bank fact sheet showing the worse situations of farmers in Sindh. So by applying TARES Test audience perspective this ad is lacking authenticity.

d) Applying TARES Test audience perspective on the analysis of this ad the claim of PPP about strengthening higher education is inauthentic. As per Sindh’s HEC about 8 universities in Sindh are non-functional since many years. These figures are contrary to the claim of PPP.

Respect

a) The analysis of this ad shows that PPP declaring the political gathering (Jalsa) of political rival especially Khan (Imran Khan; PTI chief) is concert. Defaming political rival and in other terms accusing the participants of PTI gathering that they are attending concert is disrespectful. Therefore in the context of TARES Test audience perspective the factor respect is missing in this ad.

b) In this ad PPP make fun of one of their political rival and calling him a 65-year-old youth

and his slogan for *Naya Pakistan* is fraud with youth. Similarly showcasing Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) for political gains is irrespective attitude. The integrity of poor who receiving fund from BISP is most important form the vote of specific party. Therefore by applying TARES Test audience perspective this ad is free of respect.

c) This ad shows that Punjab government is unable to provide facilities to their farmers while Sindh government by installations of solar tube wells doing very well for the well-being of Sindhi farmers. Indirectly showcasing Punjab government with disrespecting way is unfair. So in the context for TARES Test audience perspective the factor respect is missing in this ad.

d) Applying TARES Test audience perspective on the analysis of this ad the factor respect exists. As there is no defaming gesture or language is used in this ad. Although the devastating situation of higher and primary education is Sindh is contrary to the claims of PPP made in this ad.

Equity

a) The analysis of this ad shows that all claims made in this ad are related to the urban life of Sindh. While there are nothing attractive for the native Sindhis. In internal part of Sindh majority of population are still lacking basic life needs. Also the defaming remarks about political rival in this ad putting this ad out of the scope of Equity. So in the context of TARES Test audience perspective the factor equity is missing in this ad.

b) In this ad PPP showcasing BISP for vote gaining. However it is evident that BISP is running on public tax. Therefore using public funded program for political gains is not fair. Others claim in this ad about revival of student union and free education is also contrary to the action of PPP being in government for several years. So by applying TARES Test audience perspective this ad is sans equity

c) The analysis of this ad shows that comparing the problems and facilities of Sindhi and Punjabi farmers is nu fair because the

priorities of both provincial governments and the problems facing by the farmers in respective provinces are altogether different due to different culture, eco and agriculture environment. Therefore, according to TARES Test audience perspective the factor equity is missing in this ad.

d) By analyzing this ad the researcher found that the claim of PPP about extension in higher education is not fair as still more than half dozen universities are not in working position since many years. Same like more than 5 million children are out of school in Sindh (www.thenews.com.pk). So in the context of TARES Test audience perspective this ad is sans Equity.

Social Responsibility

a) By applying TARES Test audience perspective on the analysis of this ad the factor social responsibility is missing as in this ad PPP make negative remarks for their political rival and this is not a common good.

b) In this ad PPP uses negative remarks for the political gathering of rival politician. And portraying BISP for their political gains both of these are not a common good therefore in the context of TARES Test audience perspective the factor Social responsibility is missing in this ad.

c) This ad focusing on the comparison of farmers situations in two provinces. It is evident that comparison usually provoking negative aspect more than positive. In the multi culture and multi ethnic environment of Pakistan normally the comparison between two provinces serving hate more than love. And provoking hate is not a common good. Therefore by applying TARES Test audience perspective the factor social responsibility is missing in this ad.

d) The analysis of this ad shows that PPP showcasing higher education which is apparently a common good. So in the context of TARES Test audience perspective factor social responsibility exists in this ad. However it is also evident that when PPP was in government under the president ship Mr. Zardari. His government, allegedly cut and transferred the fund of HEC to BISP.

Application of TARES on Ads of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN)

- a) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xgU5wwaGmG8>
- b) https://web.facebook.com/ShehbazSharif/videos/1893193627385901/?extid=CL-UNK-UNK-UNK-IO5_GK0T-GK1C&mibextid=5Ufylb&ref=sharing&_rdc=1&_rdr
- c) https://web.facebook.com/zubairfaridi/videos/1986093708076106/?mibextid=afzh1R&_rdc=1&_rdr
- d) https://web.facebook.com/ShehbazSharif/videos/1905773219461275/?extid=CL-UNK-UNK-UNK-IO5_GK0T-GK1C&mibextid=5Ufylb&ref=sharing&_rdc=1&_rdr

Advertisements Number	Dissemination Platform	Page/Channel Name	Duration Advertisements	of Number of views on Advertisements
Advertisement number (a)	YouTube	Shehbaz Sharif	1:17 min	21000 views
Advertisement number (b)	Facebook	Mian Shehbaz Sharif	1:02 min	331000 views
Advertisement number (c)	Facebook	Zubair Fareed	1:13 min	69 views
Advertisement number (d)	Facebook	PAS Awards	1:03 min	114 views

Table 2. Statistical data of Advertisements of Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) (PML (N))

Truthfulness

a) By analyzing the first ad (a) from the collected data of PMLN from YouTube and Facebook the researcher found that in this ad in the context of TARES Test audience perspective the claim that Nawaz bring peace to the country and defeat terrorism and claim about fulfilling electricity shortage by starting new projects. Both claims are factually wrong as it is evident that the first operation against terrorism in Swat and consequently in FATA and others areas were started in the government of PPP when Asif Zardari was president, Yousaf Raza Gillani was prime minister and Gen. Kiyani was Coas. Same is the case with electricity as IPP was started production in PPP government, However, PMLN government boast up the process. But looking in current scenario still terrorism activities are occurring in various part of the country and power blackout is the part of daily routine in majority areas are proofs that the claims in this ad of PMLN are not true.

b) The analysis of this ad shows that the claim of PMLN about the standard and access to school education in Punjab is contrary to the report of Humqadam, Uk aid funded

organization working for improvement in inclusive and safe spaces in the already existing government schools in KP and Punjab provinces of Pakistan. The report of Humqadam shows that Punjab has over 22 million children between the ages of 5 and 16 years. Of these an estimated 15% are out of school (www.humqadam.pk). Another report presented by ASER (Annual Status of Education Report, 2021) shows that the numbers of out-of-school children in Punjab are increased by 15% in which 8% are boys while 6% increase is noted in girls education (aserpakistan.org). So applying TARES Test audience perspective the claim of PMLN in this ad is not falling in the category of Truthfulness.

c) By analyzing the claim of PMLN in this ad that they initiated/ started the power projects of 11,000 MW to curtail power blackouts from the country is true as they started many coal power projects in Punjab in few solar power plants too. Therefore, in context of TARES Test audience perspective the claim in this ad is true. However, investing billions of rupees in these projects Pakistan are still facing severe power crisis.

d) By applying TARES Test audience perspective both claims of PMLN in this ad are not true. Because neither Nawaz Sharif is leader of the whole country however despite having served three times as Prime Minister He is still only among the popular leaders of Punjab specifically. Nor his party finished power shortage in the country as still electricity blackout is occurring. Therefore, this ad is not falling in Truthfulness category.

Authenticity

a) The analysis of this ad shows that the claim of PMLN about the speed and efficiency of Shehbaz Sharif (ex CM Punjab, Current President of PMLN and PM of Pakistan) is not authentic in context of TARES Test audience perspective as the problems of southern Punjab are evident that Shahabaz Sharif focus was just on Lahore and others big cities to showcase his performance in the public optics. PMLN which ruled the country for three times and Punjab for almost six times is not delivered firmly and equally across the country. Therefore their claims in this ad is unauthentic.

b) From the analysis of this ad the researcher found that the claim of PMLN about Daanish Schools in Punjab is true. But in fact there are only 14 Daanish Schools in Punjab 7 for boys and 7 for girls in only 7 District of Punjab among the total 41 Districts. Apart from Daanish Schools each separate center of excellence for boys and girls working in D G Khan (<https://daanishschools.punjab.gov.pk/>) However the numbers of schools going children in Punjab is in millions in which thousands are still out of schools. Therefore, in context of TARES Test audience perspective the claim of PMLN regarding providing education is not authentic.

c) By applying TARES Test audience perspective, the claim of afore mentioned party in this ad about starting electricity project is true, therefore this ad falls in the category of Authenticity. However, besides their claims the country still facing severe electricity shortage especially in summer season.

d) In this ad the claim of PMLN about ending electric short fall from Khyber to Karachi is factually wrong as the electric blackout is still intact. Apart from this glorifying Nawaz Sharif as a PM in this ad is not authentic as this ad is disseminated before election. Therefore in the context of TARES Test audience perspective this ad is free of authenticity.

Respect

a) From the analysis of this ad the researcher found that PMLN appealing the public for voting by promoting their developmental projects and by disseminating their slogans. But in the selected ad there is no defaming words or even the name and flag of rival parties are used. Therefore in the context of TARES Test audience perspective the factor Respect is present in this ad.

b) By analyzing this ad the researcher found that showing the faces of poor children studying in Daanish Schools of Punjab government. is not respectful as providing basic education to every child is the duty of state. So admitting someone in Government School and then showcasing them for political gain is not respectful for these children and their parents. Therefore in the context of TARES Test audience perspective factor Respect is missing in this ad.

c) By applying TARES Test audience perspective in this ad PMLN presenting their achievement in the field of power generation without defaming pervious government or someone else for not focusing on the issue of energy. So this ad falls in the category of Respect in TARES context.

d) The analysis of this ad shows that there is no defaming remarks are blaming words used for rival parties or others. Therefore, in the context of TARES Test audience the factor respect is intact in this ad. However it is evident the PMLN remains many times in Government. and they leaders of this party some time even passes below the belt comments against their political rival for instance calling out Shiren Mazzari (ex MNA of PTI and professor at QAU Islamabad) as "Tractor trolley" by PMLN leader Khwaja Asif in Parliament, etc..

Equity

a) By analyzing this ad in for equity the researcher found that the visual used in the text are taken from big cities especially from Lahore. The majority of participants shown in ad are also from urban class. Apparently the ad is for urban based voter and the rulers are totally ignored. So by applying TARES Test audience perspective this add is not qualifying the criteria of Equity.

b) The analysis of this ad shows that PMLN portraying the few lac students of Daanish Schools for their political gain but ignoring the problems facing by millions of students in ordinary government schools of Punjab. The appeal in this ad not appealing the parents of millions of students studying in Madrassha system or enrolled in informal education system. Therefore, after applying TARES Test audience perspective factor equity is missing in this ad.

c) In this ad PMLN appealing the whole nation to vote them because they fulfilled their claims about electricity projects. But the visuals of the ad are again taken from major cities while still the prominent portion of Pakistan’s population is residing in rural areas. And the power breakdown is still intact therefore, in the context of TARES Test audience perspective this ad is outside the Equity category.

d) By analyzing this ad in the context of TARES Test audience perspective the factor Equity exists because the focus of the ad is on the whole country in the context of PMLN projects in energy sector.

Social Responsibility

a) The analysis of this ad shows that PMLN uses the worse situation of country (Terrorism, electricity blackout) and project of CPEC for their political gain. Exploitation of country situation for political benefits is not a common good. Therefore, in the context of TARES Test

audience perspective factor Social responsibility is missing in this ad.

b) By analyzing this ad the researcher found that PMLN uses the innocent faces of little poor children who are studying in Danish school of Punjab Government, for their political agenda and gains. Showcasing the faces of poor students for political gains is against the self-respect and integrity of the students and their families. This is not a common good. Therefore by applying TARES Test audience perspective this ad does not fall in the category of Social responsibility.

c) In the context of TARES Test audience perspective The analysis of this ad shows that factor social responsibility exist as the claim of PMLN about initiating power projects to end electricity breakdown is a common good. However, the continuation of electricity breakdown still in the country is contrary to the claim of PMLN.

d) The analysis of this ad shows that power project started by PMLN ended blackout in the country and this is serves the common good. Therefore by applying TARES Test audience perspective the ad fall in the social responsibility category. Practically although during their government the focus of PMLN was prominently on the power projects today situated in Punjab. For instance Baloki power station, Quaid Azam solar power plant and Sahiwal coal power plant, etc.

Findings

Addressing the research questions, after analysis the collected data of sampled political ads of the selected political parties of Pakistan, the researcher states the resulting findings with the help of TARES Test check list presented in the following table; it is answer to the research question of this study.

Table. Summary of TARES Test Evaluation of PPP and PMLN Political Advertisements

Political Party	Truthfulness	Authenticity	Respect	Equity	Social Responsibility
PPP	0/4	0/4	1/4	0/4	1/4
PMLN	3/4	¾	3/4	- 1/4	- 2/4

Scores in the table indicate the number of advertisements (out of four) that satisfied each TARES criterion. Table summarizes the extent to which the selected advertisements satisfied the five dimensions of the TARES Test. PML-N advertisements demonstrated greater conformity with the dimensions of truthfulness, authenticity, and respect, whereas PPP advertisements showed limited conformity across most dimensions. Both parties exhibited comparatively weaker performance in the equity dimension.

The Table reveals that the factor of truthfulness, authenticity, and equity are totally missing in the ads of PPP. While only one ad fulfills the factor respect and social responsibility in the context of TARES Test. After examining the ads of PML-N through TARES Test, the above table demonstrates that the majority of the ads (3 out of 4) in the categories of truthfulness, authenticity and respect qualify TARES Test while the factor equity is missing in three ads of PML-N while analyzing the factor social responsibility the table shows that only two out of total four ads qualifying TARES Test. The findings suggest that both PPP and PML-N advertisements relied heavily on self-promotional narratives and comparative political messaging. While several advertisements demonstrated elements of social responsibility and respect, the dimensions of truthfulness, authenticity, and equity were less consistently observed. These findings align with previous studies that have highlighted ethical concerns in political advertising and persuasive communication. The findings indicate that ethical considerations, particularly those related to truthfulness and authenticity, were inconsistently reflected in the selected advertisements.

Conclusion

This study reveals that the majority of advertisements from the selected political parties generally fail to meet the ethical standards established by the TARES Test. Several factors may contribute to this shortfall. It is noteworthy that some political parties may lack awareness or

prioritization of ethical issues, challenges, and solutions associated with political advertising. Consequently, it is imperative for political parties to receive training and acquire skills related to the TARES Test to ensure that their political advertisements adhere to ethical standards during their creation and dissemination.

It is evident that candidate and party advertisements can have a direct impact on the integrity of elections, particularly affecting the reputation and voter base of political parties. Therefore, the messages conveyed in these advertisements should be truthful, authentic, and credible. Furthermore, unethical advertisements that disparage rival parties or employ fabricated data, misinformation, disinformation, and defamation should not be published or broadcast. This study recommends the establishment of awareness sessions and training modules for advertising agencies to ensure that the TARES model is considered during the development and dissemination of political advertisements. Additionally, the government and relevant departments need to formulate a comprehensive ethical code of conduct to regulate the dissemination of political advertisements.

Finally, the establishment and rigorous implementation of updated ethical guidelines are crucial to preventing the spread of unethical political advertisements. By adopting and implementing these measures, political parties and advertising agencies can contribute to a more responsible and ethical political communication landscape, ultimately enhancing the democratic process, which is essential for upholding democratic values and norms in society. In countries like Pakistan, where education levels may not be satisfactory, it is important to disseminate ethical political messages to prevent potential communal conflicts and ensure a safe political and democratic environment. This study analyzed only eight political advertisements from two political parties during the 2018 election period. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all political advertisements in Pakistan. Future studies may incorporate larger samples, multiple election cycles, and audience-

based assessments to provide a more comprehensive understanding of ethical dimensions in political advertising.

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