

Analyzing Media Coverage and Framing of the Digital Security Act: A Comparative Study of The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for
the degree Masters in Communication

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ULAB
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ABSTRACT

In an era where press freedom faces increasing challenges under the guise of digital governance, media framing plays a pivotal role in shaping public understanding and civic engagement. This study investigates how the Digital Security Act (DSA)—a controversial law with significant implications for freedom of expression—was framed in two prominent Bangladeshi dailies, The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune, during the critical period of October to December 2018. Through a content analysis of 77 articles, the research explores editorial focus, narrative framing, and the intensity of media attention devoted to the Act. Findings indicate that The Daily Star adopted a more vocal and advocacy-driven approach, publishing 46 articles and employing frames such as human interest, ethical concerns, and intimidation—emphasizing the law’s perceived threat to journalistic independence and democratic norms. In contrast, Dhaka Tribune, with 31 articles, leaned toward legal and regulatory frames while still acknowledging ethical and security dimensions, offering a more cautious yet critical tone. This comparative analysis underscores the divergent editorial strategies in navigating press freedom in a rapidly digitizing media environment. The study contributes to current global conversations on media autonomy, policy framing, and the evolving digital rights landscape in the Global South.

Keywords: Digital Security Act, media framing, press freedom, journalistic discourse

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Dedication

To my mother, the woman I admire most.

Her constant support, love, and gentle care have carried me through every step of this journey. I'm where I am today because of her.



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I am a dedicated journalist with over seven years of experience in reporting, storytelling, and content creation. With a solid academic background in Communication and Media Studies, complemented by a Master's degree in Communication, I specialize in investigative and data-driven journalism. Passionate about the power of journalism to drive change, I strive to inform, engage, and inspire through meaningful storytelling.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BBA	Bachelor of Business Administration
CPO	Cyber Protection Ordinance
CSA	Cyber Security Act
CMEC	China-Myanmar Economic Corridor
DSA	Digital Security Act
DT	Dhaka Tribune
e.g.	exempli gratia (for example)
etc	et cetera
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ID	Identification
OP-ED	Opinion-Editorial
UODA	University of Development Alternat



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The Digital Security Act (DSA) 2018 was introduced in Bangladesh to provide a framework for regulating cyberspace and ensuring national security and public order. However, it has been a contentious debate among scholars, civil rights activists, and media practitioners. Critics argue that the DSA poses significant threats to freedom of speech and press, allowing authorities to suppress dissent under the guise of security concerns (Amnesty International, 2018). Thus, understanding media coverage and framing of the DSA becomes critical for discerning public perception and its implications for civil liberties. This study compares The Daily Star and the Dhaka Tribune; two Bangladeshi Daily Newspapers, about how they covered and framed the Digital Security Act 2018 from 1 October 2018 to 31 December 2018.

The background part is outlined in five sections. First, it briefly conversed about the Digital Security Act 2018 and its history. Second, it discussed media coverage and its impact on the audience. Third, it sheds light on the index of press freedom. Fourth, it shortly justified why The Daily Star and the Dhaka Tribune have been chosen for this study. Finally, the discussions focused on The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune's framing of the Digital Security Act 2018.

1.1.1 Digital Security Act 2018. Prior to the Digital Security Act, Bangladesh enacted the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act, 2006 (ICJ, 2013) which was one of the first comprehensive attempts at regulating cyber activities. The ICT Act focused primarily on preventing cybercrimes such as hacking, fraud, and identity theft. It also provided a legal framework for the protection of electronic documents and signatures (Badruzzaman, 2016). However, the ICT Act faced criticism for its limited scope and several controversial provisions, especially concerning freedom of expression and the scope of online speech.

The turning point in the evolution of digital security legislation came with increasing concerns about the misuse of digital media platforms, particularly social media, for the spread of hate speech, misinformation, and extremist ideologists. The parliament endorsed the Digital Security Act 2018 on 8th October 2018 as a modern law to change the discussions that emerged encompassing the ICT Act 2006 and its corrected adaptation. The DSA amended and superseded several portions of the ICT Act. The Act was a bill that provided measures for guaranteeing digital security and the identification, prevention, suppression, and trial of offenses committed using a digital device, among other things. (Digital Security Act 2018, 2018). It was structured into 62 sections that addressed numerous information and communication connections in great detail. This legislation was passed to prevent prejudice, sectarianism, radicalism, psychologically aggressive planned publicity, and disrespect for religious or ethnic minority groups from disseminating through print, digital, or social media. It was established primarily to defend national digital security and to identify, remedy, diminish, mitigate, examine, and prosecute breaches of digital technology, Rahman and Rashid (2020).

There were nine chapters in the Digital Security Act of 2018. Chapter-1 was all about the deal and definition of the Act, with those who are consistent with this Act. Chapter-2 and Chapter-3 offered government agencies the authority to take various preventative steps, including information blockage. Chapter-4 carried the purpose of the Act and Chapter-5 was critical information infrastructure. Chapter-6 provided for several computer crimes and speech offenses. Chapter-7 and Chapter-8 were about the investigation of the trials and the cooperation of international and regional respectively. Chapter-9 was concerned with miscellaneous powers such as the power to delegate, section 59's removal of difficulties, and the power to make rules by the government for several purposes including reviewing data and the process of its collection (Digital Security Act 2018, 2018).

Notwithstanding, the media had played a crucial role in the debate over DSA in Bangladesh, both in terms of reporting this law's potential and advocating for freedom of expression. After facing numerous criticisms, on September 13, 2023, the parliament of Bangladesh enacted the new Cyber Security Act (CSA) 2023, aimed at combating cybercrime and curbing the dissemination of false information. This development came shortly after the government decided on August 7, 2023, to abolish and replace the controversial DSA with the proposed CSA (Rezwani, 2023).

In August 2024, following a student-led mass uprising, an interim government announced plans to revoke the CSA and enact the Cyber Protection Ordinance (CPO) of 2024, (The Daily Star, 2024). This move aims to address the shortcomings of previous laws and better protect digital rights and freedom of expression in Bangladesh. As of January 2025, the CPO has been enacted, marking a significant shift in Bangladesh's approach to digital security and freedom of expression (Daily Star Digital, 2024)

1.1.2 Impact of Media Coverage. Media coverage has a substantial impact on public awareness and emergency management. The number of reports is used to reflect media coverage, while the media represents the content of the reports (Xue et al., 2024). Having a clear channel of information distribution and an effective information dissemination mechanism among the government, media, and public, alternatively, would serve to reduce societal dread and prevent the spread of negative effects in the event. At the same time, the interactive information platform can potentially improve the government's and media's public image.

1.1.3 Press Freedom. Press freedom is a cornerstone of democratic societies, allowing for the open exchange of ideas, information, and opinions. According to Lichtenberg (1987), while the press is vital for public discourse and accountability, it must also navigate the complexities of ethical reporting and the potential for harm. The balance between unrestricted expression and responsible journalism highlights the dual nature of press freedom: it empowers the media to investigate and critique authority while imposing a responsibility to avoid misinformation and protect individual rights.

In the context of Bangladesh, the DSA has been a controversial piece of legislation impacting press freedom. Proponents argue that the DSA aims to protect citizens from cyber threats and misinformation; however, critics contend that it poses significant risks to journalistic independence and the right to free expression. The law's vague provisions, which include stringent penalties for publishing content deemed harmful to the state and its leaders, have led to widespread fears of self-censorship among journalists and media organizations. Activists and human rights defenders have raised alarms about the potential misuse of the DSA to suppress dissent and silence critical voices, undermining the very fabric of a free and open society.

1.1.4 Justification for Selecting The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune for this Study. Several key factors were crucial in selecting The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune for this comparative study on media coverage and the framing of the Digital Security Act (DSA) 2018. One of the primary considerations was their differing relationships with the former government, the Bangladesh Awami League.

Mahfuz Anam serves as both the editor and publisher of The Daily Star, which is owned by Mediaworld, with a significant stake held by Transcom Group (Transcom Group, 2013). The Daily Star had maintained a critical stance toward the Awami League through its editorial coverage. For instance, the newspaper published opinion pieces scrutinizing the party's policies and decisions (Anam, 2023). Notably, in 2015, the then government suspended all tender notices and advertisements in The Daily Star, a move widely perceived as an attempt to exert pressure on the publication (Bergman, 2015)

In contrast, the Dhaka Tribune is owned by 2A Media Limited, a subsidiary of Gemcon Group (Gemcon Group, 2021). Notably, Kazi Nabil Ahmed, the vice chairman of Gemcon Group, is a former Awami League lawmaker (Bangla Tribune, 2018), indicating a different political alignment compared to The Daily Star.

Another key factor in their selection is their readership influence and language accessibility. According to MediaBangladesh.net (2024), the five leading daily newspapers in Bangladesh play a significant role in shaping public discourse on socio-

political issues, including legislation like the DSA. The five newspapers typically regarded as the most prominent in Bangladesh are: The Daily Star, with an approximately daily circulation of 45,000; Dhaka Tribune, with an approximately daily circulation of 15,000; Prothom Alo, with an approximately daily circulation of 500,000; Kaler Kantho and New Age respectively with an approximately daily circulation are 300,000 and 12,000 copies (MediaBangladesh.net, 2024)

Each of these newspapers plays a significant role in the media landscape of Bangladesh, with varying editorial lines and readership profiles. While Prothom Alo and Kaler Kantho are major Bangla-language dailies that dominate the local market, The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune are two of the country's most widely read English-language newspapers. However, other newspapers like Prothom Alo and Kaler Kantho are also influential, but they are significantly different in language, audience, and editorial approach. Conversely, English-language dailies like The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune often take a more nuanced, internationalist approach to digital rights and governance issues. For instance, The Daily Star reported on concerns regarding the potential misuse of the DSA to suppress journalistic activities, highlighted in the article "Editorial: Right to freedom of expression is in mortal danger" (Editorial, 2020). Similarly, Dhaka Tribune addressed the challenges surrounding digital rights with its article "Social media and human rights: Friend or foe?" (Ovi, 2023), which underscores concerns about the law's application and its implications for press freedom.

1.1.5 The Framing of Digital Security Act 2018. Framing is an important aspect of research papers. The importance of framing in research lies in its ability to shape public discourse, guide interpretations, and influence opinion on particular issues. By establishing a particular frame, researchers can elucidate the implications of various interpretations and better understand the mechanisms of influence in media representation and communication strategies (Carter, 2013).

In the context of the role of The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune in framing, these publications are significant players in shaping public perception. Both newspapers have distinct differing editorial slants and priorities in addressing the implications of this contentious legislation. The public is primarily not well-informed about the law. They rely heavily on the media for it. People's perceptions of media differ from one another. To accept a law or denying, the media plays a vital role. This study delved into the details of the framing of The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune articles, as both of these media have published several news regarding the Digital Security Act 2018. Some of the headlines of those articles are “Digital Security Act a hanging sword of Bangladesh rights defenders, says Irish organization” (The Daily Star, 2022). “All that is wrong with the Digital Security” (Sabera, 2021). “Digital Security Act: 11 sued, two sent to jail”, Islam and Saad (2020). “How section 57 morphed into Digital Security Act provisions” (Mamun, 2018). “Upsurge in Digital Security Act cases during the Covid-19 pandemic” (Trainee, 2020). “TIB: Digital Security Act Curtailing Freedom of Expression” (Dhaka Tribune, 2020).

These are a few articles of many that were published in both newspapers that covered the Digital Security Act 2018.

1.2 Problem Statement

The Digital Security Act 2018 (DSA) in Bangladesh has sparked significant debate since its inception, primarily due to its broad provisions that many critics argue could trespass on freedom of expression, press freedom, and the digital rights of citizens. The Act, which was introduced with the stated goal of tackling cybercrimes and ensuring national security in the digital realm, has been widely criticized by civil society organizations, media outlets, and human rights groups for its potential to be misused to stifle dissent, suppress critical voices, and curtail press freedom. These concerns have led to widespread calls for the amendment or repeal of the DSA, with many civil society actors urging the government to reconsider the Act's more controversial provisions.

As key players in public discourse, newspapers have been at the forefront of shaping public opinion on the Digital Security Act. Media outlets such as The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune, which significantly influence educated, urban, and international audiences, have played crucial roles in reporting on and critically analyzing the Act. These

newspapers have highlighted its potential for abuse, particularly in its impact on journalists, bloggers, and online users, while also calling for necessary reforms to ensure that the law does not undermine the fundamental rights of citizens, especially the right to free speech.

However, despite their common stance on the need for reform, The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune have approached the issue from slightly different editorial perspectives and focus. This study investigated and compared how The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune have covered and framed the Digital Security Act 2018 in their editorial positioning and news coverage. It sought to understand the differences and similarities in their approaches to the Act, exploring how they have framed the law's impact on press freedom, civil society, and digital rights, as well as the role of media in advocating for its reform. By examining the content, coverage, and framing techniques employed by these two major newspapers, this research shed light on the broader media response to the DSA and its implications for freedom of expression, and cyber security in Bangladesh.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- 1) To analyze the Digital Security Act 2018 coverage in terms of attention, emphasis, and prominence in The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune.
- 2) To understand the Digital Security Act 2018 news framing in The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune.
- 3) To understand the editorial position on the Digital Security Act 2018 by comparing the coverage and framing of the act by The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune.

1.4 Research Question

To understand the media's portrayal of the Digital Security Act 2018, this study seeks answers to the following research questions:

- 1) How did The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune portray the Digital Security Act 2018 in terms of attention, emphasis, and prominence?
- 2) How did The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune frame the Digital Security Act 2018 in their respective newspapers?
- 3) How did The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune differ in their coverage and framing of the Digital Security Act 2018, and how do these differences reflect their editorial position?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research held significant relevance in various domains, including media studies, political science, sociology, and digital rights. The Digital Security Act 2018 has been a contentious legislation in Bangladesh, raising questions about freedom of expression, press freedom, and digital rights. Therefore, examining how media outlets cover and frame this law can yield profound insights. Here are several key areas of significance:

1.5.1 Complexity of the Digital Security Act. The Digital Security Act of 2018 was passed into law as new legislation to rectify the problems identified by the ICT Act of 2006 and its amended version (Badruzzaman, 2016). Some of the provisions of the ICT Act have been altered or repealed by the Digital Security Act. This law is intended to punish people who commit crimes using digital media and safeguard individuals from crimes perpetrated using the internet or digital media. Enacting such legislation had two key goals: to preserve national digital security and to identify, address, decrease, mitigate, analyze, and execute digital media offenses.

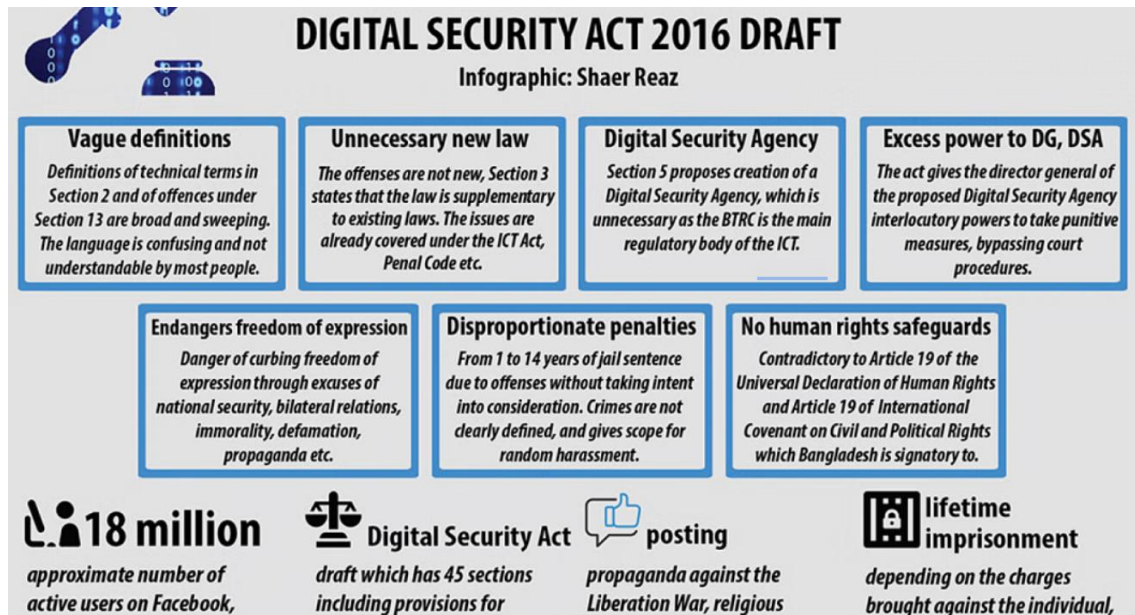


Figure 1. Infographic Presentation of Digital Security Act 2016 Draft. (The Daily Star, 2016).

In 2018, the Cabinet Division officially approved the bill following extensive deliberations and evaluations at different points in time. In this research, the thesis also went through a thorough understanding of the Digital Security Act 2018.

Notwithstanding the announcement on August 7, 2023, to repeal the Digital Security Act raised significant concerns among citizens, particularly because the government introduced a new law, the Cyber Security Act, 2023, without engaging with stakeholders. The application of the DSA continues to be contentious, with ongoing debates about its implications for civil liberties, (Khan, 2023).

1.5.2 Connection between Media and Digital Security Act 2018. There is an interconnection between media and the Digital Security Act 2018. Examining narratives within the coverage, and framing the research gave an insight into how media prioritization, press freedom, and digital security are interconnected, and why it is essential for media organizations to evaluate issues through both lenses to ensure responsible journalism.

1.5.3 To Know the Public Perception and Engagement. The way the DSA was framed in the media can significantly impact public perception and engagement. If one newspaper frames the DSA primarily as a tool of oppression, while the other frames it as a necessary means for ensuring national security, this can lead to divergent public reactions. This research revealed how media framing affects citizens' awareness and response to government actions, crucial for fostering informed civic engagement.

1.5.4 Intersection of Digital Rights and Press Freedom. In the era of digital communication, laws like the DSA are pivotal in the discourse surrounding digital rights. This study explored the intersection of digital rights, as well as press freedom, and highlighted the importance of protecting both to ensure a free and open society. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, ongoing dialogue and advocacy are essential to safeguard these fundamental rights.

1.6 Scope and Delimitation

While numerous studies have been conducted regarding the Digital Security Act 2018, focusing on its legal impact, human rights concerns, and broader socio-political consequences, there is a significant gap in comparative studies specifically addressing how different media outlets have covered and framed this law. Most existing research has primarily focused on the legal implications, policy debates, and civil society responses to the DSA. This research has conducted a comparative study of the media coverage and framing of the DSA in two prominent Bangladeshi English-language newspapers: The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune. By analyzing how these two major dailies have reported on the Act, this study explored the differences in editorial focus, tone, and framing strategies employed to address the controversial aspects of the law, particularly in relation to freedom of expression, press freedom, and the broader implications for digital rights in Bangladesh.

The period of this study covered the initial phase of the DSA, from its introduction in October 2018 through December 2018. This time frame is strategically chosen for several key reasons: The months immediately following the passage of the Digital

Security Act in October 2018 were crucial for understanding the early public and media reactions to the law. During this period, the law generated significant debate and controversy, particularly in the context of its potential impact on freedom of expression, press freedom, and the digital rights of Bangladeshi citizens. This was a time when civil society organizations, human rights activists, and media outlets began expressing concerns about the Act's wide-reaching and opaque provisions, especially those related to online defamation, digital surveillance, and the prosecution of journalists and bloggers, (Runa, 2019).

However, it is crucial to acknowledge the study's delimitation. This study only focused on the two Bangladeshi newspapers, The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune, and did not include other newspapers or media outlets in Bangladesh. The research only analyzed the framing and coverage of the Digital Security Act 2018 within a specific timeframe, from 1 October 2018 to 31 December 2018, except 22 November 2018, as that day both newspapers remain closed on the occasion of Eid-e-Miladunnabi. Due to the emphasis on full-page metrics in this study, the researcher was unable to specifically quantify without the commercial performance of the newspaper.



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CHAPTER II

STUDY FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Literature Review

This section of the study delved into existing literature regarding media coverage. The literature provided more research related to media coverage, framing, and the Digital Security Act 2018. This chapter provided insights into how media is framed, how coverage is viewed from different perspectives, the editorial positioning of media, the role of media in portraying law, and the Digital Security Act 2018. Additionally, this chapter introduced the Agenda-setting Theory conceptual model and defined its practical structure.

2.1.1 The Power of Media in Agenda-setting. The news media has a strong and extensive track record of influencing national policy and drawing attention to a small number of pressing public issues. Although the news media provides accurate information about public events, readers and viewers can also determine the significance of a topic by observing how much coverage it receives in the media. Newspapers offer several cues about the importance of articles in the daily news, including enormous headlines, additional front-page displays, and the main article on special pages. Therefore, the power of the news media to shape the significance of items on the public agenda is known as “agenda-setting.”

Matusitz and Ochoa (2018) analyzed the Agenda-setting Theory in US media on terrorist attacks that were held in France and Nigeria. Following the Agenda-Setting term the research stated that US media was giving more attention to terrorist incidents in France, and Nigeria was getting less attention while the terrorist attacks were the same. Similarly, Strömbäck and Kiousis (2010) analyzed the new look at agenda-setting effects in the context of the 2006 Swedish parliamentary election. The authors evaluated the effectiveness of general political news intake to media-specific news consumption. They discovered no consistent evidence of differences related to media channels or media types,

even though the Swedish news media can collectively exert enormous agenda-setting influence over their audiences. Following this, Schweinsberg et al. (2017) examined the agenda-setting and framing role of news media in the tourism sector. This article assessed the agenda-setting and framing function of the news media in the ongoing growth of the draft's master plan.

In addition, Khraiche (2017) investigated the media's agenda power in domestic violence law among Lebanese. The author found that media leads to political behavior and the way of its coverage creates an impact on certain issues. The outcomes demonstrated that the likelihood of political action increases when that particular media outlet publishes a story. Besides, Pedro-Carañana et al. (2020) analyzed the agenda setting on Twitter during the 2018 Colombian election campaign. The research had a quantitative approach. The study revealed that candidates' visibility, appraisals, framings, and issue diffusion were significantly influenced by media outlets that set the agenda. Consequently, the role of media in public agenda-setting on the Jakarta flood is investigated by Perbawainingsih (2013). The researcher applied the framing research method to analyze news and public comments posted in internet media. The study concluded that Indonesian internet media positively communicated the issue by providing information. An additional finding of the paper was that online media is not powerful enough to shape the public agenda. In contrast, Jung (2019) investigated the Korean waves in East Asia on the following agenda-setting. The study examined how news coverage of Korean TV drama popularity in China affects Koreans' perceptions of Chinese audiences in addition to the first and second agenda-setting effects.

2.1.2 Role of Media in Framing Public Policy. The media has a tremendous amount of influence over public opinion, public discourse, and eventually policy-making processes. With the advent of digital technology, the landscape of media has rapidly evolved, providing new platforms for discussion but also posing challenges to democratic governance.

According to Gilens and Hertzman (2000), media can amplify certain policy issues while silencing others, impacting governmental responses. Oo et al. (2024) analyzed the framing of the media's perception of the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC). The author looked at how Chinese projects in Myanmar are portrayed in the mainstream media. Finding media frames with Chinese investments in Myanmar was done using Entman's four frames in qualitative content analysis. In answering the research question, "How do news media frame news about Chinese projects in Myanmar?" the study demonstrated four themes were relevant. The news media was found to have had a major role in framing two variables that stifled the smooth implementation of Chinese investments in Myanmar: domestic issues and public concerns.

Additionally, to examine the aspect of media framing as a media strategy Anshori et al., (2022) used comparative framing. Kompas.com and cnnindonesia.com were chosen by the study's authors to be compared. They looked at the various approaches used by the media to present the same problem. This study found that the media uses a similar frame strategy when it comes to event-driven reporting. Moreover, media organizational structures, historical ideological influences, and media features all contribute to the occurrence of contrast frames in micro-issues.

2.1.3 Editorial Position in Media. The editorial position in media refers to the stance or viewpoint adopted by a media outlet, which is often reflected in its editorials, OP-EDs, and general framing of issues. Media outlets, while striving for objectivity, may exhibit a certain editorial bias that aligns with their political, economic, or ideological leanings. The editorial position can significantly influence how news stories are reported, particularly on controversial issues like the Digital Security Act (DSA) 2018 in Bangladesh.

A study by Shoemaker and Reese (2013) emphasized that media outlets' editorial positions are shaped by internal factors, such as ownership, editorial leadership, and organizational culture, as well as external pressures, including government policies and audience expectations. The editorial line taken by a newspaper can manifest in various

forms, from direct commentary on policy to the subtler positioning within news coverage, framing, and language used in reporting. For example, media outlets that support government policies may downplay the potential negative consequences of laws like the DSA, while those with an opposing viewpoint might highlight the act's potential for censorship and misuse.

Entman (2010), in his *Media Framing Biases and Political Power* Journal urged while some scholars downplay bias in mainstream media, research shows that framing shaped by real-world events, cultural norms, and journalistic practices often favors one side in political disputes. This slanted framing results from the interplay of competing elites' efforts to manage news narratives. Additionally, (2013) analyzed the framing of People Living with Disabilities (PWD) issues in two major Kenyan newspapers, *The Nation* and *The Standard*, between November 2012 and April 2013. It examined the frequency, space allocation, and prominence of PWD coverage, using a sample of 181 newspapers. The findings revealed that *The Nation* dedicates 58.6 percent of its PWD coverage to general news, while *The Standard* allocates 70 percent. Additionally, *The Nation* places 17.2 percent of PWD stories prominently, compared to 16.7 percent in *The Standard*. The study concluded that both newspapers should increase their coverage of PWD issues to better represent this community.

2.1.4 Portrayal of Laws in Media. The media provides numerous insights into law and justice. Because most people have little direct interaction with the court system, media portrayals of law and legal processes rely significantly on public understanding and views of law and the legal system. Many academics have discovered that the media mirrors a misleading perspective of the law.

Shum (2019) investigated the media portrayal of immigration law and policy from 2008 to 2017. The author discovered that media is a potent weapon for changing the attitudes and behavior of those influenced by how articles were presented on media platforms. The key finding of this paper was when reporting on migrants and migration, the use of strong negative phrases generates a disputed image of migration and migrants

in general. Similarly, Scharf et al. (2021) analyzed the characteristics of Hong Kong news portrayal during civil unrest over 22 years. The results show that there is a clear conceptualizing difference between Western and Hong Kong-based newspapers as well as over time. Newspapers in Hong Kong stopped mentioning police violence during the Anti-extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement. Following this Menjívar (2016) examined the media portrayal of immigration as they work together to directly and indirectly affect the lives of immigrants, particularly Latinos. The study demonstrated that media performed significantly to fuel the effects of laws and policies.

Additionally, Aziz (2021) the Hajj Pilgrims' Departure Policy coverage of media during the pandemic. The study used Norman Fairclough's method of critical discourse analysis. According to the report, the media played a significant impact in the departure's cancelation. It helped to spread the news to the targeted audience which became a public discourse and understandable for all. Besides, Hébert (2016) analyzed the media framing and the Affordable Care Act to understand the coverage of the act. A qualitative content analysis method was conducted for this paper. The paper claimed that to appeal to their respective politically motivated audiences and to represent particular political and economic actors, the mainstream but partisan publications The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal crafted their ideological positions differently, emphasizing different aspects of the law and writing in different styles. Furthermore, Stephens (2016) analyzed how the media portrayed male rape and debunked several myths following the Law and Order special victims unit. The investigation revealed that Law and Order: Special Victims Unit faithfully captures the thoughts and emotions underlying male rape, despite the report's serious shortcomings. The television program also emphasized how these stereotypes about male rape affect how the legal and police systems deal with male victims and male rape cases.

2.1.5 Digital Security Act 2018 and Media. The Digital Security Act was passed by parliament on October 8, 2018, with the claim of ensuring digital security against any heinous cybercrime perpetrated by digital devices or computer technologies.

Rahman and Rashid (2020) analyzed the impact of the Act on journalistic practices in Bangladesh. The authors found that some of the provisions of the act may curtail the public's access to information and freedom of expression. Investigative journalism requires access to official data and information. However, they found this act may put a bar to the practice of the form of journalism. Kundu and Hoque (2019) examined the impact of the Act on press freedom and journalistic investigation in Bangladesh. It was found by the authors that the country's legal system was causing anxiety in the work of investigative journalists and other media workers. In the meantime, Article 19 (2019) analyzed the Act and recommended it be repealed and reviewed in many sectors. According to the report, the Act is widely applied to stifle free speech rights across the nation.

2.1.6 Media Coverage. Media coverage is the term used to describe the attention and exposure that an individual, brand, event, or topic receives in print, broadcast, and digital media. It consists of news articles, feature stories, interviews, book reviews, and any other kind of writing that explores and concentrates on the subject.

Calderón et al. (2015) examined the Media coverage of climate change in Spanish-speaking online media. They explored the media attention on environmental change in developing countries. However, the statistics suggested that politicians are the primary sources of information, with news wire services accounting for over half of the news articles. Deal (2020) analyzed the narrative of news media coverage of the #IfTheyGunnedMeDown situation. In this study, the researcher identified and evaluated reporting models on #IfTheyGunnedMeDown in mainstream national, mainstream regional, and Black American-centered news media sites. However, she discovered that the mainstream media frequently avoided addressing criticisms of its institutional processes. In addition, Porfiri et al. (2019) explored media coverage and firearm acquisition in the aftermath of a mass shooting. In this study, they examined internet news coverage of terrorism and discovered that public concerns about stricter gun laws partially explain increases in the frequency of firearms. They experimented with educating the

public and inciting terror. They found out that the media did not give enough consideration to terrorism and published unnecessary information about the victim's family that had no connection with the main context.

To conclude, the above literature discusses that media coverage plays a vital role in portraying a law or any occurrences to the public people. Media creates a mind setup on the general people on the specific term.

2.1.7 News Framing. News framing refers to the way media organizations and journalists present and structure information in news stories, influencing how audiences perceive and interpret events, issues, or topics. It involves selecting certain aspects of reality to highlight while downplaying or omitting others, thus shaping the context and emphasis of the narrative. This framing can significantly affect public opinion, understanding, and engagement with the subject matter, as it often guides the audience's emotional and cognitive responses.

Kang and Park (2024) examined the Russia-Ukraine War's news in terms of framing. This study looked at how the Russia-Ukraine war was framed in international news sources. A literature study of well-known news frames covering wars and conflicts was created using the framing theory. Regarding whether news frames are more important than others and how the national interests of news organizations relate to the frames' focus, two theories were put forth. Jiaxuan (2023) analyzed framing studies in social media news, where the findings of the author are the way a news story is framed might result in several stories that have distinct effects on the public's perceptions. The findings demonstrate how various frames can produce distinct explanations and thus have varied effects on the general population.

Additionally, Shehata et al. (2024) examined similar news frames in distinct issues. The study explored how the dynamics of longitudinal news framing are conditioned by issue familiarity. The researchers explored longitudinal effects across two similar issues that differ significantly in salience and politicization, focusing on how different effect dynamics influence citizens' beliefs over time. They compared how the economic consequences frame impacts the interpretation of two global problems: climate change and antimicrobial resistance.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Conceptual Model of Agenda-setting Theory

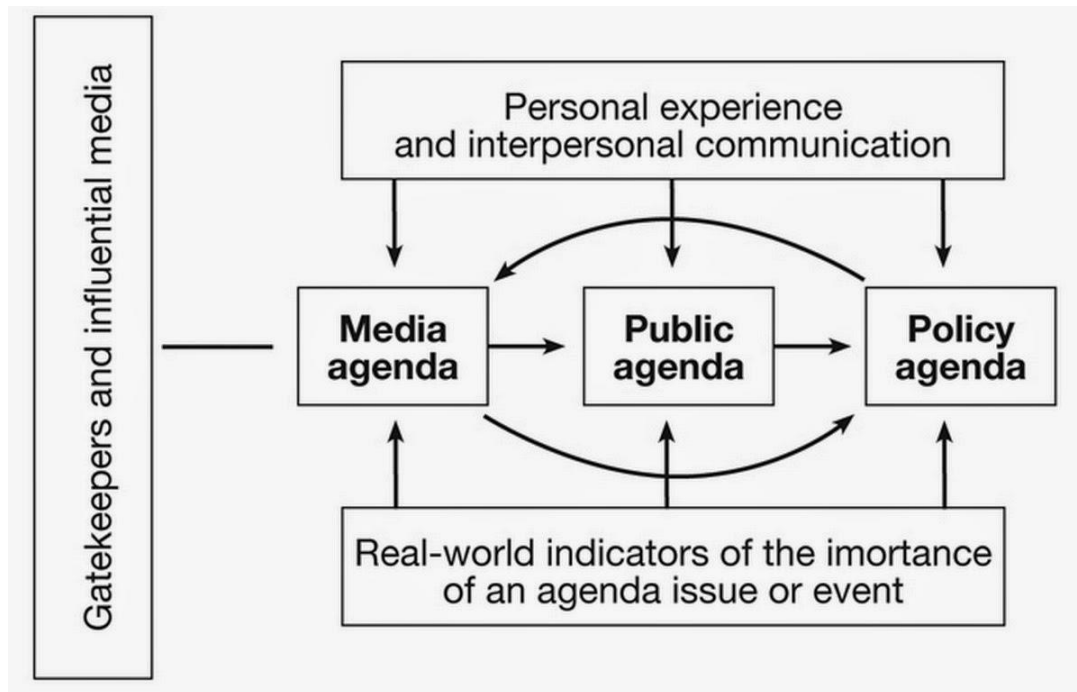


Figure 2. Agenda-setting Theory, Source: McQuail & Windahl (1993).

Agenda setting is a mass communication theory that defines how the media communicates with and impacts its target audience. The theory is founded on the concept that mass media is the primary means of communication between the general people and the entire globe around them.

The agenda-setting concept emphasizes the media's tremendous influence. It demonstrates the ability to inform people what concerns are essential. Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw created agenda-setting theory in 1972 when they conducted a breakthrough study of the role of the media in the 1968 presidential campaign in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Agenda-setting theory rests on two key assumptions. The first contends that the media filters and shapes reality rather than just reflecting it. For example, news pieces are not displayed chronologically or by the number of people affected by them, but rather in the order that a producer or editor considers to be the most ‘sensational,’ or appealing to spectators.

The priority of this theory is which news comes first and then the next is set by the media according to how people think and how much influence it will have among the audience. The time range for this phenomenon is one of the most important parts of the concept of mass communication’s agenda-setting role. Furthermore, different media have varying agenda-setting capabilities.

2.2.2 Conceptual Model of Framing Theory. Framing theory is a vital concept in media studies that examines how information is presented and its influence on public perception and opinion. The fundamental premise of framing theory is that the way news is framed can significantly shape the audience’s understanding of issues, events, and actors. In the context of newspapers, framing influences how stories are told, which aspects are emphasized or downplayed, and how audiences interpret the information.

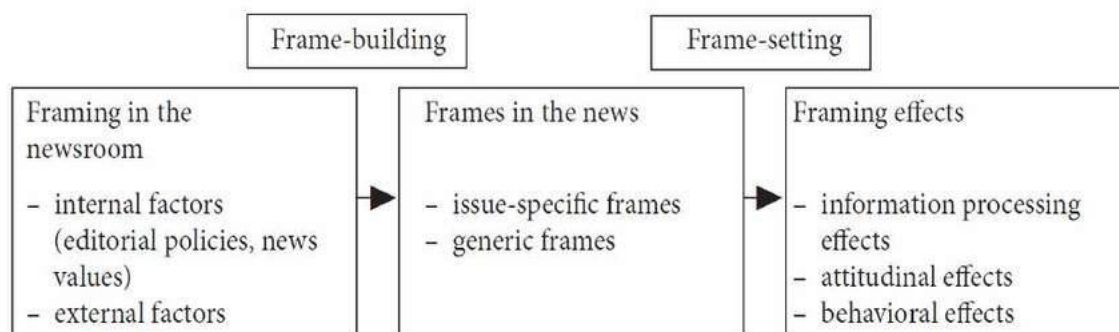


Figure 3. An Integrated Process Model of Framing, Source: Vreese (2005).

The Integrated Process Model of Framing, proposed by Claes de Vreese in 2005, focuses on the process through which media framing affects public opinion and understanding of issues. This model synthesizes various aspects of how information is

processed by both media and audiences. At its core, framing theory is concerned with the selection and emphasis of certain aspects of an issue while neglecting others. This selective presentation serves to shape the narrative and, consequently, public perception. Newspapers often highlight specific frames in their coverage, such as conflict, human interest, economic implications, or moral lessons.

Tankard (2001) identified 11 mechanisms that facilitate the recognition of news frames. These mechanisms include headlines, subheadings, images, captions, lead paragraphs, source selection, quotations, pull quotes, logos, statistical data, and charts, as well as concluding statements and paragraphs.

The security frame emphasizes themes related to safety, protection, and national security. It often highlights threats or risks and the need for protective measures. In research, this frame can influence public perception by framing an issue as a matter of security, thereby prioritizing protective actions or policies over other considerations (Entman, 1993).

The human-interest frame focuses on personal stories and emotional engagement, aiming to elicit empathy and connect audiences to individual experiences. This frame shifts the discourse from statistics or abstract issues to personal narratives, making the subject matter more relatable and impactful (Cappella and Jamieson, 1997).

The intimidation frame portrays issues in a manner that instills fear or unease, often focusing on potential negative outcomes and risks. Essentially, this frame may amplify emotions of concern, caution, or fear, influencing public discourse towards a more defensive or protective stance (Drezner, 2010).

The ethical consideration frame raises questions about moral responsibilities and ethical dilemmas related to the issue at hand. It encourages consideration of values, ethics, and morality, and it examines the potential impacts of decisions and policies from an ethical standpoint (Bynum, 2010).

The legal framework frames structures conversations around laws, regulations, and legal precedents related to an issue. It focuses on the legal implications and structures governing behaviors or policies, guiding public understanding through a legal lens (McCann, 1994).

The social implications frame emphasizes an issue's broader social consequences, including its impact on communities, relationships, and social structures. This frame encourages consideration of how certain phenomena affect social norms, group dynamics, and interpersonal relations (Goffman, 1974).

The technological context frame considers the role of technology in shaping issues, innovations, and societal change. This frame highlights how advancements in technology influence the discourse around an issue, often addressing the benefits and risks associated with technological integration (Ling, 2004).

In the context of a research study on newspapers, it is essential to analyze the specific frames employed in coverage of particular issues to uncover underlying biases and ideological undercurrents. By examining headlines, news, language choices, and the prominence given to certain voices or perspectives, researchers can gain insights into not only how issues are presented but also the potential implications for public opinion and civic engagement. Ultimately, framing theory provides a robust framework for understanding the dynamics of news production and consumption, emphasizing the power of media in shaping societal narratives.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a structured representation that outlines the theoretical foundations and variables of a research study, helping to clarify and illustrate the relationships between these components. It serves as a guide for the research process, aiding in the formulation of hypotheses, the design of methodology, and the interpretation of findings. By synthesizing existing knowledge and theories relevant to the research topic, a conceptual framework provides a coherent pathway for understanding the phenomena under investigation.

As Denzin and Lincoln (2011) articulated, conceptual frameworks are not static entities; they evolve and adapt as research progresses. This highlights the dynamic nature of conceptual frameworks, positioning them as essential tools in both the development of theory and the practical implementation of research. The conceptual framework of this study was developed based on content analysis of the Digital Security Act-related news, where coverage was analyzed in terms of attention, emphasis, and prominence, as well as the framing was scrutinized in several factors.

Nonetheless, the code of the framing, defined as the number of articles and headlines of the articles and pre-defined frames, is the variable of this study. If the following codes emerge in the article, the story is encoded under this:

Security Frame: Digital Security Act, personal data protection, national security, threats, risk assessment, online safety, privacy violations.

Human Interest Frame: Individual stories, personal impact, human experiences, emotional appeal, victim accounts, public response, and community impact.

Intimidation Frame: Fear, arrest, censorship, suppression, intimidation, chilling effect, authoritarianism, self-censorship.

Ethical Considerations Frame: Ethics, moral implications, ethical dilemmas, accountability, surveillance, consent, integrity, responsible use, and whistleblowing.

Legal Framework Frame: Legal analysis, judicial review, law enforcement, regulations, legality, compliance, due process, amendments, and human rights.

Social Implications Frame: Social impact, societal trends, public opinion, community reaction, social justice, inequality, collective rights.

Technological Contexts Frame: Technological advancements, digital tools, platforms, innovation, tech industry impact, digital literacy, social media.

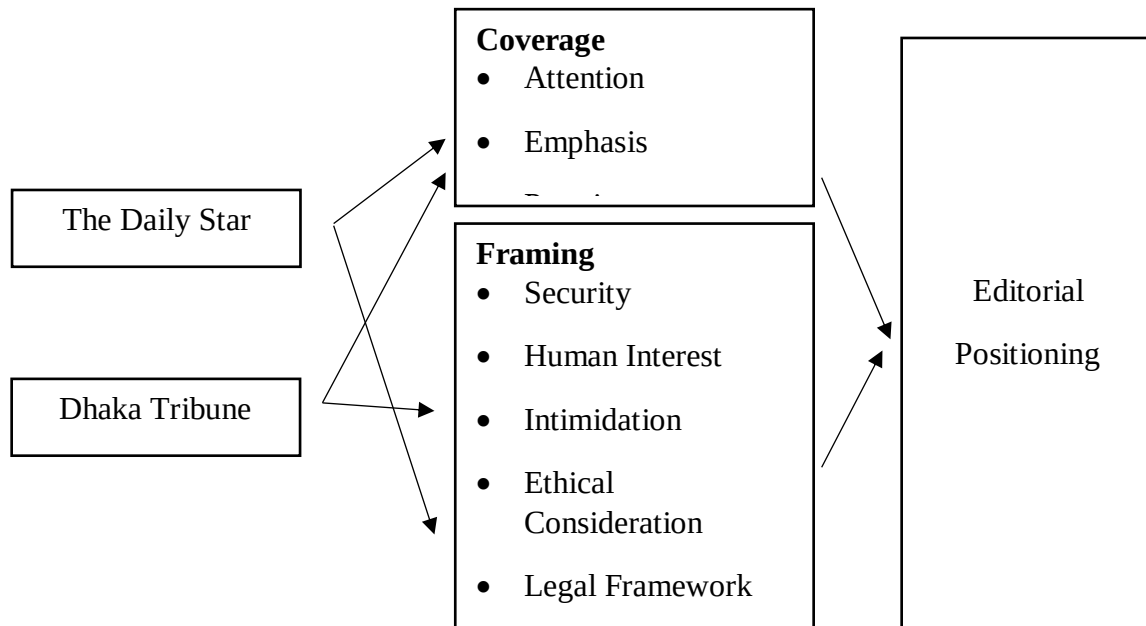


Figure 4. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Therefore, the conceptual framework of the study of coverage refers to the theoretical foundation that guides the investigation and analysis of media coverage. This framework was essential in understanding how topics, events, and issues are portrayed in the media, as well as the factors that influence this coverage. The conceptual framework represented the process of how the media evaluates the Digital Security Act 2018 in national newspapers.

2.4 Operational Definitions

The variables highlighted in this paper include news framing, media coverage, the Digital Security Act, attention, emphasis, prominence, Bengali, and English newspapers. Media coverage and newspapers are independent factors, while attention, prominence, emphasis, stance, Bengali, and English newspapers are dependent variables. Below is the operational definition of an independent variable and a dependent variable:

2.4.1. News Framing. With frames, specific characteristics are chosen and emphasized to increase their salience. Framing comprises selecting particular characteristics of a perceived reality and emphasizing them in a communicated language to support a specified issue diagnosis, cause interpretation, moral judgment, and therapy recommendation for the supplied item (Entman, 1993).

2.4.2. Media Coverage. This is the volume, pace, range, and breadth with which the media provides its audience with massive volumes of information (Adeyanju S A, 2013).

2.4.3. Digital Security Act 2018. One measure that addresses legal issues of the internet and cyberspace is the Digital Security Act of 2018. To address the issues raised by the ICT Act of 2006 and its revised version, the parliament passed this Act as a new piece of legislation. The legislation has been divided into 62 sections that describe the many kinds of arrangements for information and communication systems. This law was passed to make it illegal to use print, electronic, social media, or other forms of media to spread hate speech, racism, discrimination, extremism, or terrorist propaganda against members of minority religious or ethnic groups (Digital Security Act 2018, 2018).

2.4.4. Attention. Attention pertains to the process of concentrating or noticing a particular activity to achieve a specific subject. This section delves into how frequently a news/content or issue has been portrayed in media (Penn, 2014).

2.4.5. Emphasis. Emphasis seeks to highlight a certain design aspect for the audience. A section of material, an image, a link, etc., could be that (Soegaard, 2016)

2.4.6. Prominence. People, places, objects, and circumstances that are well-known to the general public because of their accomplishments, social standing, weather, or prior press are considered prominent (Richey, 2022).

2.4.7. Daily Newspaper. A newspaper is a publication with news and articles of both general and niche interest. Folded sheets with articles, ads, letters, and current news are included in the printed edition, Forsyth and Hendricks (2023). A daily newspaper is a publication issued every day, typically containing news articles, feature stories, editorials, advertisements, and other information related to current events, (Webster, 2023).



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CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology for this study aimed to systematically analyze and compare how The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune, two prominent English-language newspapers in Bangladesh, have framed the Digital Security Act 2018. By applying a mixed-methods approach, this study combined both quantitative and qualitative methods to comprehensively examine the media coverage of the DSA, its framing, and the editorial positions taken by the two newspapers. The discussion encompassed various components, including the identification of key variables and measures, the delineation of the population and sampling techniques, the selection of research instruments, and the data collection and analysis processes. Furthermore, the researcher addressed the timeframe of the study, while also exploring the philosophical underpinnings that inform this research endeavor.

3.1 Research Design and Method

The methodology of this study was designed to provide a comprehensive account of the research processes employed, including the research design, sampling techniques, data collection procedures, and data analysis methodologies. This section established the contextual framework for the study, articulating the rationale behind the selection of both quantitative and qualitative approaches while delineating the specific objectives and research questions that guided the inquiry. The methodology provided an overview of the research design, which included a discussion of the unit of analysis, the time frame for the study, and other key design features.

Subsequently, the methodology elucidated the sampling techniques implemented for the selection of articles for analysis. This involved a systematic approach to selecting articles from The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune, detailing the criteria employed to ensure that the sample accurately reflects the broader population of news articles concerning the elections.

The data collection methods were thoroughly outlined, including a description of the coding and categorization processes applied to the articles based on various dimensions of news framing. The methodology also addresses the implementation of inter-coder reliability checks to validate the consistency of the coding process.

Finally, the data analysis procedures were explicated, illustrating how the analyzed data were utilized to address the research questions formulated for this study. This comprehensive methodological approach ensured that the findings were both robust and relevant to the research objectives.

3.1.1 Philosophical Worldview. The philosophical perspective that researchers embrace is one of the crucial elements that aid them in selecting the best research methodology. They may better justify their choice of qualitative, quantitative, or hybrid research approaches due to this perspective (Creswell, 2013).

The positivist worldview is another name for post-positivism. It is one of the research philosophies that is most frequently applied. According to this philosophical outlook, the researcher does not accept the existence of reality but instead prefers to contest it by attempting to independently discover the truth using quantitative methods (Nickerson, 2023), which corresponded with this research topic.

3.1.2 Research Design. Researchers utilized a framework of methods and techniques known as a research design to arrange the many components of the research in a way that effectively manages the research difficulties. Following the process of defining the study topic is the challenging task of developing the research project's design or research design (Kothari, 2004).

This study adopted a comparative content analysis design to evaluate how the Digital Security Act was covered and framed in the selected newspapers. The analysis focused on the attention, emphasis, and frequency of news stories related to the DSA, as well as the specific ways in which these stories are framed to reflect certain security, human interest, intimidation, ethical, legal, social, and technological dimensions.

3.1.3 Research Methodology. The framework ‘Research Methodology’ explains how research issues are dealt with systematically (Kothari, 2004). Research methodology encompasses the processes and techniques used to conduct a particular study. More specifically, it involves the systematic approaches that a researcher adopts during the planning phase to ensure accurate outcomes aligned with the study’s goals and objectives (Jansen and Warren, 2020).

There are three research methods. They are the quantitative research method, the qualitative research method, and the mixed research method (Taherdoost, 2022).

In this study, the researcher implied mixed methods. Mixed methods research defines as an approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative forms. This methodology involves collecting and analyzing both forms of data in a single study (Creswell, 2013).

To analyze the content, quantitative research was conducted. Furthermore, to explore how the DSA was framed within the specific newspaper, qualitative analysis was carried out using a codebook.

By utilizing all these, the methodology provided a comprehensive approach to understanding the coverage and framing of the Digital Security Act 2018 in two major Bangladeshi dailies to draw comparisons and analyze media effects on public opinion and policy discourse.

3.2 Variables and Measures

The number of the articles, headlines of the article, defined codes, pre-defined frames, media coverage, and framing were the variables of this study, which is an ‘independent variable’. The independent variable in a cause-and-effect relationship is the supposed cause (Flannelly et al., 2014). Media coverage is measured with the number of articles, allotted place, and frequency, while the framing was analyzed with formulated questions that delve into various aspects of the Act.

3.2.1 Security Frame. Three questions were measured in the security frame: How did the article present the importance of digital security in the context of national or personal security? What specific threats or risks to security were highlighted concerning the Digital Security Act? How did the article discuss the balance between security measures and individual freedoms?

3.2.2 Human Interest Frame. Three questions were measured in the human interest frame: Were there personal stories or testimonies included that illustrate the impact of the Digital Security Act on individuals? How did the article evoke empathy or emotional responses regarding those affected by digital security issues? Did the article focus on how it perceives a group of people's security and privacy under the Digital Security Act?

3.2.3 Intimidation Frame. The following three questions were going to be measured: Did the article discuss the chilling effects of the Digital Security Act on free speech or expression? Were there examples provided of individuals or groups that have experienced intimidation due to the act? Did the article describe instances of people facing harassment, arrest, mass arrest, threats, or false charges?

3.2.4 Ethical Consideration Frame. Two questions measured in the ethical consideration frame: What ethical dilemmas were raised in the article regarding the implementation of the Digital Security Act? How did the article address issues of privacy, consent, and surveillance related to the act?

3.2.5 Legal Framework Frame. By responding to the following query, the legal framework was created: How did the article describe the legal basis of the Digital Security Act? What legal challenges or debates surrounding the act were covered? Were there references to other laws or international frameworks that intersect with the Digital Security Act?

3.2.6 Social Implications Frame. To measure the social implications frame, the article was measured with the following questions: How did the article reflect on the role of various stakeholders (government, citizens, organizations) in adapting to this act? Were there discussions on how different communities (e.g., journalists, writers, cartoonists, NGOs) were affected differently by the act's provisions?

3.2.7 Technological Context Frame. The following two questions were measured: Were there discussions on the efficacy of technology used for security measures proposed by the act? How did the article relate the Digital Security Act to broader trends in technology (e.g., cybersecurity, data protection)?

3.3 Population and Sampling

3.3.1 Population and Characteristics. According to Casteel and Bridier (2021), the population of interest consists of the people, groups, organizations, or other elements that one hopes to achieve and to whom or to which the study results may be directed.

As stated by Shukla (2020), the collection or grouping of all units to which the research findings are applied is referred to as the population.

Consequently, the population for this study consists of all articles, editorials, and opinion pieces about the Digital Security Act published in The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune during the entire period of interest (from 1 October 2018 to the ending of DSA, 07 August 2023). The study focused on the following characteristics:

Article-Type: The population included news reports, editorials, opinion pieces, and feature articles that either directly discuss the Digital Security Act or mention it concerning broader political, social, ethical, technical, and legal issues.

Content-Type: Articles covered multifarious aspects of the DSA, including its provisions, implications for digital rights and freedom of expression, government and opposition reactions, legal challenges, and public discourse around the law.

Media Outlet: The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune were the two selected English-language daily newspapers. Both newspapers are widely read and respected in Bangladesh, particularly among the educated, urban, and politically engaged populations. The study examined how these two outlets -- each with its distinct editorial position -- have framed the DSA, potentially reflecting different perspectives on its implications.

Pages: The analysis focused on the 20-page broadsheet edition of The Daily Star and the 16-page tabloid edition of Dhaka Tribune, excluding any supplementary sections, to examine their coverage of the Digital Security Act.

3.3.2 Sample Design. According to Rai and Thapa (2015), as judging, selective, or subjective sampling, purposeful sampling depends on the researcher's judgment in choosing the units (people, cases/organizations, events, or data points) to be examined. In most circumstances, the sample being investigated is quite small, especially in comparison to probability sampling approaches.

Purposive sampling tools are used in this research's sampling because the researcher is not making findings generalizable. Key elements of the sample design include Articles that were directly discussed or referenced in the DSA. Articles that were published within the designated timeframe of October 1, 2018, to December 31, 2018, except 22 November 2018 as on that day both newspapers remained closed on the occasion of Eid-e-Miladunnabi. Articles from any pages that covered the Digital Security Act was taken. This period is particularly significant because the DSA was enacted in October 2018, and media coverage during this initial phase of implementation is crucial for understanding how the law was framed and discussed by the press in Bangladesh.

The sample included news articles - reports about the enactment, reactions, and debates surrounding the DSA. Editorials - articles reflecting the editorial stance of the newspapers on the DSA. Opinion pieces - articles offering personal or expert opinions on the law and its potential impacts.

3.3.3 Sampling Frame and Size. The two daily newspapers (The Daily Star, and Dhaka Tribune) that covered Digital Security Act 2018 news from October 1, 2018, to December 31, 2018, were selected as the sampling period for this study because that year the Act was passed and that period it the center of public discourse (Digital Security Act 2018, 2018). Both newspapers publish on a daily basis, with a total of approximately 91 days of publication during the study period (31 days in October, 29 days in November, and 31 days in December). Each edition of both newspapers included every other page where DSA was mentioned.

3.4 Locale of the Study

This study focused on two influential English-language newspapers in Bangladesh: The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune. These newspapers are crucial in shaping public discourse on socio-political issues, particularly those related to legal frameworks such as the DSA. The locale of the study examined how these two newspapers have framed the coverage of the Digital Security Act, which was passed in October 2018 and sparked widespread debates concerning digital rights, freedom of expression, and governmental control over online spaces.

The Daily Star is widely regarded as one of the most respected and influential English-language newspapers in Bangladesh. Established on January 14, 1991, it has consistently upheld high journalistic standards, making it a trusted source of news for both local and international audiences (Wayback Machine, 2007). The Daily Star is known for its editorial independence, investigative journalism, and impartial reporting. The newspaper has a reputation for in-depth coverage of national and international news, including political accountability, press freedom, and legal reforms. A significant aspect of The Daily Star's editorial line is its critical stance on repressive government policies, especially those impacting media freedom and digital rights. The newspaper has been vocal in its opposition to laws that may restrict digital freedom, making it a vital player in the ongoing public discussions around the DSA, (Zahra, 2016).

The Daily Star is situated in Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215. The newspaper employs a wide range of editorial and reporting staff, including journalists, editors, columnists, and research analysts. It operates with an editor-in-chief, who oversees the editorial direction and content strategy of the publication. Below the editor-in-chief, there are section editors responsible for various departments such as national news, international news, business, opinion, editorial, and culture. In addition to these key editorial positions, The Daily Star also has a significant number of reporters and freelance contributors who work on covering daily events, including high-profile issues like the DSA. It has often been a strong critic of government policies seen as repressive, including those affecting media freedom and digital rights. It has maintained the slogan ‘People’s Right to Know’ as its motto, (Zahra, 2016).

Conversely, Dhaka Tribune is a prominent English-language tabloid daily newspaper based in Dhaka, Bangladesh. It was established on April 18, 2013, amidst the growing demand for quality journalism in the country (Dhaka Tribune, 2013). The newspaper was founded by a group of journalists and entrepreneurs who aimed to create a platform for independent news that provides comprehensive coverage of local and international events, catering primarily to an educated and global audience, and later turned into a compact newspaper on March 1, 2015. Its Editor-in-Chief, Zafar Sobhan, was formerly the Op-ed editor of The Daily Star (Yale Jackson School of Global Affairs, 2018).

The newspaper has built a reputation for independent reporting and public discourse, focusing on social issues, political transparency, and governance. Dhaka Tribune is known for its comprehensive coverage of national policy debates, often incorporating expert opinions and voices from civil society into its discussions on sensitive issues like the DSA. In addition, Dhaka Tribune has also hosted public forums and discussions in collaboration with academic institutions and civil society organizations, making it an important platform for discourse on issues such as digital rights, media regulation, and national security (Brinti, 2022).

The head office of Dhaka Tribune is located in FR Tower, 8/C Panthapath, Shukrabad, Dhaka 1207, which is another key area in the capital city, home to various business districts, embassies, and governmental offices. This strategic location allows the newspaper to closely monitor political developments, including those related to media laws, such as the DSA. The office is equipped with modern facilities for both print and digital operations, enabling the newspaper to maintain a strong online presence in addition to its print edition.

3.5 Research Instruments

A codebook was created to analyze the coverage of the Digital Security Act 2018 for both The Daily Star and the Dhaka Tribune. This codebook documented various elements, including the date, article title, article type, attention level, emphasis, and prominence, for all relevant news articles. Additionally, a separate codebook was developed to examine the framing of articles in both newspapers. This codebook categorized topics according to broader themes and included defined codes for different frames. Each paragraph of the articles was thoroughly read by the coder twice to ensure accuracy. The frames identified in the articles were then organized within the codebook according to their respective publication dates. This systematic approach enabled the researcher to identify the comparison in coverage and framing between the two newspapers.

3.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The process of obtaining, compiling, and evaluating data to determine the answers to the research questions for a given study through a consistent, verified approach is known as data gathering. The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune newspapers' contents are analyzed to gather data for this study. Analysis of the content took place in November and December 2024.

The Daily Star: To collect The Daily Star's paper, the author contacted the marketing team of The Daily Star to inquire about purchasing physical copies of the newspaper. After discussing the terms, she agreed on a price of 85 Taka per copy for the

required editions. She visited their office to collect the relevant issues, focusing on those published between October 2018 and December 2018, which covered news related to the Digital Security Act.

Dhaka Tribune: Since Dhaka Tribune has limited archives, the researcher contacted the editor of Dhaka Tribune, Zafar Sobhan via email to request access to their archives related to DSA coverage. After receiving approval from the editor, the author visited the Dhaka Tribune office on multiple occasions to access the physical archives and review the relevant articles.

3.7 Data Analysis

Examining, purifying, converting, and modeling data to produce insightful findings and make defensible judgments is the process of data analysis. It entails going over unprocessed data to find links, patterns, and trends that can be utilized to comprehend different facets of an entity, company, or phenomenon. To extract useful information from data sets, this approach frequently makes use of statistical techniques, machine learning algorithms, and data visualization tools (Big Data Framework, 2024).

For the coverage, the study employed several units of analysis to obtain reliable results, including frequency -- the number of Digital Security Act 2018 stories covered, prominence -- placement in the newspapers in terms of high, medium, and low. The categorization of media coverage as high, medium, and low was determined based on the prominence and placement of articles in each newspaper. For The Daily Star, high coverage included half-page OP-ED pieces, front-page lead stories, second-lead stories, or back-page lead stories with accompanying photographs. Medium coverage comprised front-page third stories or articles exceeding two columns. Low coverage was defined as city-page articles spanning two or 1.5 columns. For Dhaka Tribune, given its tabloid format, high coverage included full-page articles, medium coverage consisted of half-page pieces, and low coverage was assigned to articles spanning two or three columns. This approach aligned with the content analysis method used in the study *Volume of Coverage, Story Types, and Prominence: A Content Analysis of Nigerian Newspapers*

Coverage of Education News (Guanah, 2018), which categorizes media content based on its prominence and placement within a newspaper. In this study, similar classifications were made by assigning different levels of prominence to articles based on their placement and length, reflecting the prioritization of certain topics over others. This methodology allowed for a systematic evaluation of how newspapers allocate space and attention to various stories, providing insight into editorial priorities, just as in the case of The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune. This approach ensured comparability despite differences in format between the two newspapers. Along with this, emphasis was comprised through the space allocated for the news related to DSA. These units helped to analyze the contents of the select newspapers.

Therefore, Data collection involved secondary data obtained through content analysis of The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune newspapers. The data collection was examined using descriptive statistics, presenting the findings in tables, and expressing them as simple percentages.

For the framing, the printed codebook contained all of the data documentation. The Excel sheet was manually filled out with data from the code book for analysis. Using an Excel sheet, the researcher made a table with the following column headings: The frames that are used include Date, Headline, Security, Human Interest, Intimidation, Ethical Consideration, Legal Framework, Social Implication, and Technological Contexts. The date of the article has emerged in the date column, the article ID is presented in the headline column, and the frequency of each frame in the article has appeared in the various frame columns. Using the COUNTIF function, the proportion of articles having a specific frame was determined. For example, to calculate the percentage of articles with an Issues frame, the researcher will select a cell and type the following formula:

$$=\text{COUNTIF}(\text{Security Frame}, "Yes")/\text{COUNTA}(\text{Security Frame})$$

This formula counted and divided the number of articles with an issues frame in the issues frame column by the total number of articles in the same column. The outcome was a percentage figure that indicated the share of articles that have an issue frame. This procedure was repeated by the researcher for every frame category under analysis.

3.8. Pre-testing and Reliability of the Study

To ensure the reliability of the content analysis in this study, inter-coder reliability was maintained through careful training and a pre-test involving the research team. The pre-test was conducted using a sample of articles from November 2018, with 11 articles from The Daily Star and eight articles from Dhaka Tribune selected for initial coding.

3.8.1. Pre-test Procedure. The pre-test aimed to ensure that the coders had a shared understanding of the coding framework and could apply it consistently across articles. The pre-test involved a sample of 19 articles, all published in November 2018, which were analyzed independently by the three coders. Each article was assessed for the presence of seven predefined framing themes: security, intimidation, human interest, ethical consideration, legal framework, social implication, and technological context.

One common method for calculating inter-coder reliability is Holsti's method (1969). This method calculates the percentage of agreement between coders, which helps determine whether their coding is consistent.

The formula for Holsti's method is: $C.R = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$. Where C.R means Coded Reliability (or inter-coder reliability) M = The number of items (or cases) on which the coders agree (i.e., both coders coded the same). N1 = The total number of items coded by Coder 1. N2 = The total number of items coded by Coder 2.

To pre-test the inter-coder reliability of this study, a second coder, a BBA graduate from City College, and a third coder, a Fine Arts graduate from UODA were trained to analyze five randomly selected news articles from Dhaka Tribune and The Daily Star to identify the frames. The frame agreement stood at 85 percent, which was deemed satisfactory, (Holsti, 1969).

3.9. Validity of the Study

Validity refers to the extent to which the research accurately measures what it intends to measure, in this case, the framing and coverage of the Digital Security Act 2018. Here, the researcher addressed content validity.

3.9.1. Content Validity. Content validity refers to the extent to which a measurement instrument accurately represents all facets of the construct it aims to assess. It ensures that the instrument comprehensively covers the domain of the concept under study without omitting significant elements or including irrelevant ones (Nikolopoulou, 2022).

Subsequently, content validity assessed whether the study captured all relevant dimensions of media coverage and framing of the Digital Security Act. In this study, the researcher focused on key aspects such as attention, emphasis, and prominence; where the article appeared (front page, lead story, etc.), and how much space was dedicated to it (measured in inches). For framing, whether the coverage met the mentioned frame of the Digital Security Act, based on the tone, language, and focus of the article. The themes were key issues related to the Digital Security Act, such as security, human interest, intimidation, legal framework, technological implications, ethical concerns, and social implications. The themes and framing categories used in the study were based on existing literature on media framing and policy analysis, ensuring that the study addressed all the critical dimensions relevant to the research topic.



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CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presented a detailed analysis of the Digital Security Act (DSA) 2018 coverage in The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune between October 1, 2018, and December 31, 2018. The findings were based on a mixed-method approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data. Through content analysis, the study examined the attention, emphasis, and prominence given to the DSA, shedding light on how the newspaper prioritized this issue.

The framing analysis explored the narratives and perspectives that emerged, focusing on categories such as security, human interest, intimidation, legal framework, ethical consideration, social implications, and technological contexts. By comparing the two newspapers, this section identified the difference in editorial positioning and the underlying factors that influenced their portrayals.

4.1 Findings of the Study

4.1.1. Attention to the Digital Security Act. The study analyzed news coverage of the DSA over 91 days from October 1 to December 31, 2018, focusing on the differing levels of attention given by two prominent newspapers: The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune. According to the data presented in Table 1, The Daily Star published a total of 46 articles related to the DSA during this timeframe, of which 38 were news articles, and seven comprised opinions and editorial pieces. The findings indicate that among the month of sample sizes, The Daily Star published a total of 33 news pieces in October, then November and December respectively 11 and two news pieces. This analysis reveals that the proportion of DSA-related news articles published by this resulted in a proportion of DSA-related news articles from The Daily Star was approximately 0.51 on a daily throughout the study period. In contrast, the Dhaka Tribune published a total of 31 articles on DSA during the designated timeframe, including 21 news articles and 10 opinions and

editorial pieces. Similar to The Daily Star, the Dhaka Tribune exhibited a notable increase in DSA-related news coverage in October accounting for 21 articles, followed by a decline in November and December, with eight and two articles, respectively. The proportion of DSA-related news articles from Dhaka Tribune was around 0.34 daily during the study period.

Table 1. Attention to the Digital Security Act (Number of Articles)

Newspaper	Total DSA News Published	Proportion of DSA (Total DSA article/Total Days)
The Daily Star	46	0.51
Dhaka Tribune	31	0.34

This distribution underscores a higher degree of editorial focus on the DSA by The Daily Star compared to the Dhaka Tribune, indicating that The Daily Star considered the implications and discussions surrounding the act to be a more prominent editorial priority.

4.1.2. Emphasis on the Digital Security Act. The analysis revealed that differences in DSA-related news coverage between The Daily Star and The Dhaka Tribune were influenced by their distinct publication formats and editorial approaches.

As shown in Table 2, The Daily Star -- a broadsheet publication with larger dimensions (21.8 inches by 13.6 inches) -- produced 20 pages daily. Over the 91-day period analyzed, the newspaper allocated a total of 539,593.6 square inches to various topics, dedicating 46 articles to the DSA. These articles occupied 8,182.57 square inches, translating to 1.52 percent of the total news space. In contrast, The Dhaka Tribune -- a tabloid-format newspaper measuring 12.6 inches by 10 inches -- published 16 pages daily. During the same period, it allocated 183,456 square inches to various topics, with 31 articles on the DSA occupying 2,402.31 square inches. This reflects a proportional coverage of 1.31 percent for DSA-related news items.

Table 2. Emphasis on the Digital Security Act (Space Allocation in Inches)

Newspaper	Total Space (in²)	Total DSA News Space (in²)	Coverage of DSA (%)
The Daily Star	539,593.6	8182.57	1.52
Dhaka Tribune	183,456	2402.31	1.31

The analysis reveals that while The Daily Star allocated a greater total space to DSA-related news due to its larger format, the proportional difference between The Daily Star (1.52 percent) and The Dhaka Tribune (1.31 percent) is relatively small. This suggests that both newspapers placed a comparable level of editorial emphasis on the topic, with The Daily Star benefiting from a larger publication size to accommodate more content overall.

4.1.3. Prominence of the Digital Security Act. This study investigated the prominence of coverage of Digital Security to ensure comparability of The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune. Despite differences in format, prominence levels were categorized as high, medium, or low, with criteria adjusted to account for each publication's unique layout.

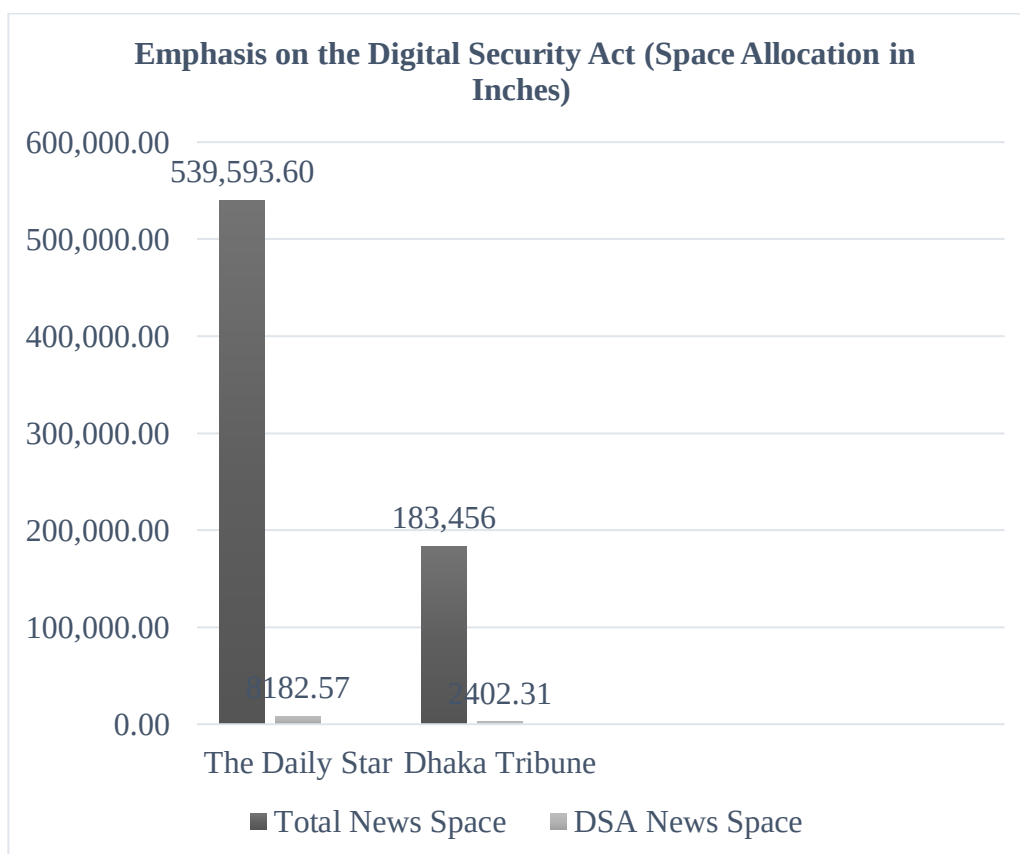
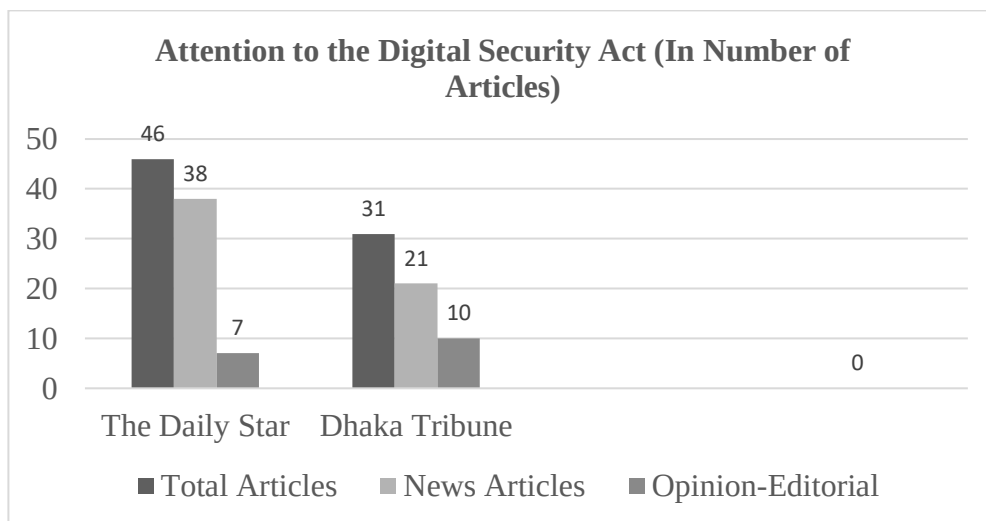
Table 3. Prominence of the Digital Security Act (Placement of Articles)

Newspaper	High Prominence	Medium Prominence	Low Prominence
The Daily Star	17	23	6
Dhaka Tribune	11	14	6

Table 3 highlights that The Daily Star published 17 articles with high prominence, reflecting a relatively greater editorial emphasis on in-depth coverage of the DSA. High-prominence articles included half-page OP-ED pieces, front-page lead stories, and visually enriched layouts (e.g., photographs), signaling the act's importance as a critical topic for public discourse. Additionally, 23 articles were categorized as medium prominence, featuring multi-column coverage on front pages or prominent internal sections. However, six articles with low prominence consisted of brief reports, typically located in the city or general news sections.

In comparison, Dhaka Tribune published 11 high-prominence articles, indicating notable attention to the DSA, though slightly fewer than The Daily Star. These high-prominence articles included full-page spreads that conveyed significant editorial weight. Fourteen articles received medium prominence, comprising half-page spreads that offered concise but meaningful coverage. Meanwhile, six articles with low prominence, spanning two or three columns, provided brief yet informative reporting on the DSA.

Overall, while both newspapers dedicated attention to the DSA, The Daily Star exhibited a relatively greater focus on in-depth and prominently placed articles, aligning with its broadsheet format and editorial priorities. In contrast, Dhaka Tribune's tabloid format emphasized shorter but impactful pieces, consistent with its compact layout and concise reporting style.



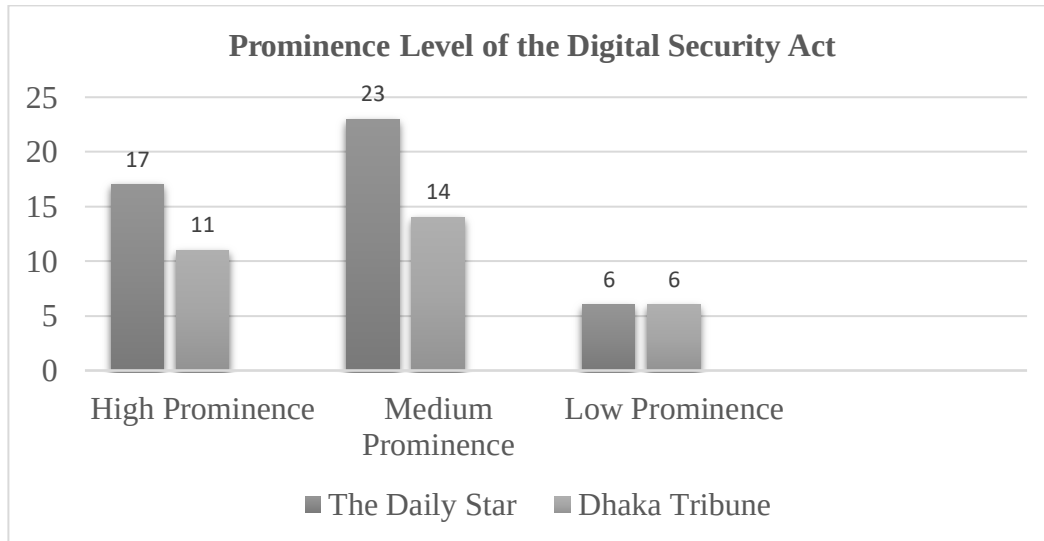


Figure 5. News Coverage Difference between The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune

This analysis offered a multi-dimensional perspective on research question one, unraveling how The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune portrayed the Digital Security Act. By examining attention, emphasis, and prominence the study captured the sheer volume of coverage, reflecting each publication's commitment to keeping the DSA in public focus.

4.1.4. Framing of the Digital Security Act. During the sampling period from October 1 to December 31, 2018, a thorough examination was conducted, resulting in the collection of 77 articles from The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune. This analysis involved a meticulous manual process in which various frames were identified and systematically recorded in an Excel spreadsheet.

The temporal distribution of the articles indicated that The Daily Star contributed the majority, with a total of 46 articles, while Dhaka Tribune provided a noteworthy count of 31 articles. The analysis revealed that the predominant genre within the dataset was conventional news reports, with only 17 (The Daily Star- 7, Dhaka Tribune- 10) articles categorized as features or opinion editorials (OP-ED). This finding highlighted the significant focus on straight news content in the selected articles.

Table 4. Quantity of News Frames Ascertained from the Codebook

Media Outlet	Number of Articles	Number of Frames	Average Frame for each Article
The Daily Star	46	538	11.7
Dhaka Tribune	31	267	8.6

Table 4 illustrates the presence of multiple frames within the news articles published by The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune. It is noteworthy that a single news article encompassed several frames, underscoring the complexity inherent in the process of news framing. In the temporal analysis of The Daily Star, a total of 538 frames were identified, indicating that each news item was framed an average of 11.7 times. In contrast, the Dhaka Tribune accounted for 267 frames, with each news article being framed an average of 8.6 times. This disparity suggested that several frames of interest, as identified by the researcher, were comparatively underrepresented in the articles of the Dhaka Tribune. The identified frames were systematically categorized, resulting in their classification into seven distinct categories.

The second research question of this study examined the specific news frames employed in articles from The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune concerning the Digital Security Act of 2018. This study utilized a framework of the seven distinct news frames (e.g., security, human interest, intimidation, ethical consideration, legal framework, social implication, and technological context) to analyze 46 articles related to the Act, the researcher explored how The Daily Star presented this legislation (detail in Appendix G). Given the timing of the Act's introduction in October, it is clear that The Daily Star began reporting on issues associated with the Digital Security Act from the very start of its implementation.

Over three months, The Daily Star extensively covered issues related to the DSA, particularly in October. During this month, the newspaper published a total of 33 articles across 20 days, among them 27 news pieces, and six comprised editorial and opinion pieces concerning the DSA. The coverage incorporated a range of perspectives from journalists, editorial councils, and human rights advocates, all of whom articulated their concerns regarding the implications of the legislation. Additionally, in-house editors and journalists expressed their apprehensions about the act. The outlet consistently critiqued the DSA throughout the month, notably publishing three articles each on the 5th, 12th, and 15th, which specifically addressed the perceived absurdities of the legislation.

However, the overall coverage of DSA-related news diminished significantly in November, with only 11 articles being published, of which merely one was an opinion piece. Notably, the arrest of renowned photojournalist Shahidul Islam under the DSA for alleged rabble-rousing received attention, with coverage of his arrest and subsequent bail appearing on the 14th, 16th, and 21st of November. In December, coverage further declined, with only two articles published, both focused on the arrest, and no opinion pieces or editorials were released during this month.

Table 5: Distribution of News Frames in The Daily Star's Coverage of the DSA

Frame	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Security	65	12.08
Human Interest	121	22.49
Intimidation	66	12.27
Ethical Consideration	101	18.77
Legal Framework	112	20.82
Social Implication	20	3.72
Technological Context	53	9.85
Total	538	100

Throughout the three months, as illustrated in Table 5, the themes of human interest, legal framework, ethical considerations, and intimidation were predominant, with respective frequencies of 121, 112, 101, and 66 in the coverage. These findings reflect the multidimensional discourse surrounding the DSA, with coverage balancing legal analysis, ethical concerns, and the human impact of the legislation.

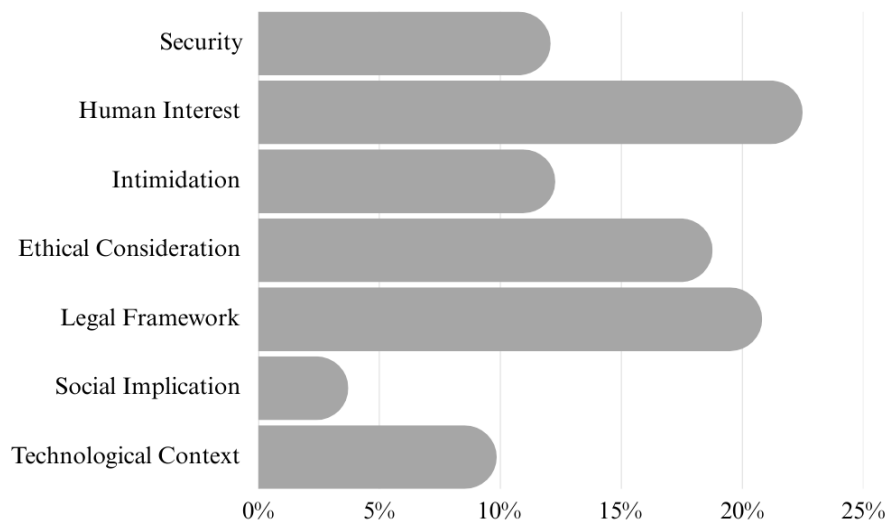


Figure 6. Percentage Distribution of News Frames in The Daily Star

The predominant frames in The Daily Star's coverage of the DSA were human interest (22.49 percent), legal framework (20.82 percent), and ethical considerations (18.77 percent). These frames reflect the multifaceted nature of the discourse surrounding the legislation, which encompassed its legal and ethical implications, its impact on individuals, and the concerns of various stakeholders. Articles using the human interest frame emphasized the personal and societal effects of the DSA, particularly on journalists and human rights advocates. For example, stories of people affected by the Act, such as Shahidul Islam, arrest of individuals highlighted the human cost of its implementation. The legal framework frame focused on the procedural aspects of the legislation, analyzing its provisions and their alignment with constitutional rights and international standards. Articles under the ethical considerations frame (such as Digital Security Act 2018: All that glitters is not gold/Free polls sans free media?) raised questions about the morality

and fairness of the Act, critiquing its potential misuse and its implications for democratic values. Other frames, such as intimidation (12.27 percent) underscored how the Act could be weaponized to intimidate individuals, particularly journalists and activists. Articles using this frame shed light on how fear of prosecution or arrest under the DSA influenced free speech and press freedom. The security frame (12.08 percent), was also significant but less dominant. The technological context (9.85 percent) and social implications (3.72 percent) frames appeared less frequently, indicating a narrower focus on these aspects of the legislation.

In stark contrast, aimed at answering research question two, over the course of three months, the Dhaka Tribune provided extensive coverage of issues related to the DSA (details in Appendix H). In October, the publication reported 21 articles pertaining to the DSA, of which six were editorial or opinion pieces. These opinion pieces presented a range of perspectives, incorporating viewpoints from both critics and proponents.

In November, however, the number of DSA-related articles significantly declined to eight, with five of these focusing specifically on the arrest of Shahidul Islam. One of the three opinion pieces published that month sought to normalize the DSA, utilizing five distinct technological frames to support its argument. By December, the trend continued, with the Dhaka Tribune publishing only two articles related to the DSA, one of which was an opinion piece advocating for the repeal of the Act. This pattern of diminishing coverage mirrors similar trends observed in The Daily Star during the same period.

Table 6: Distribution of News Frames in Dhaka Tribune's Coverage of the DSA

Frame	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Security	31	11.61
Human Interest	50	18.73
Intimidation	28	10.49
Ethical Consideration	35	13.11
Legal Framework	75	28.09
Social Implication	16	5.99
Technological Context	32	11.99
Total	267	100

As illustrated in Table 6, throughout the three months, the themes of legal framework, human interest, ethical considerations, and technological context were predominant, with respective frequencies of 75, 50, 35, and 32 in the coverage. These findings reflect the multidimensional discourse surrounding the DSA, with coverage balancing legal analysis, ethical concerns, and the technological aspects of the legislation.

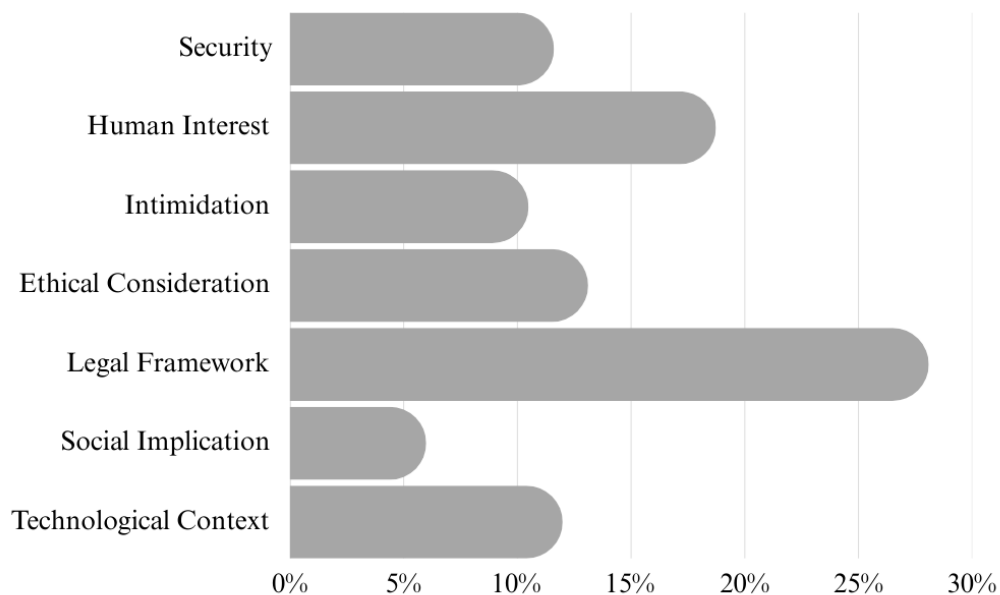


Figure 7. Percentage Distribution of News Frames in Dhaka Tribune

The predominant frames in Dhaka Tribune's coverage of the DSA were legal framework (28.09 percent), human interest (18.73 percent), ethical considerations (13.11 percent), and technological context (11.99 percent). These frames reflect the publication's focus on balancing legal analysis, ethical concerns, human impact, and the technological context of the legislation. Articles in the legal framework category delved into the legislative aspects, with detailed analyses of its provisions and their implications for digital rights. The human interest frame highlighted the personal stories and societal impact of the DSA, including the arrest of Shahidul Islam and its broader implications for journalists and activists. However, during the time, the arrests of other individuals were mentioned in The Daily Star, which was missing from Dhaka Tribune's coverage. Meanwhile, articles employing the ethical consideration frame critiqued the Act's morality and fairness, questioning its alignment with democratic values. The frames of technological context focused on the technological aspects of the DSA, including its relevance cybersecurity, and online regulation. It likely explored how the Act intersects with the growing digital landscape in Bangladesh, providing a modern, tech-savvy angle on the issue. The security frame (11.61 percent) was also significant, reflecting Dhaka Tribune's emphasis on the security dimensions of the legislation. Frames such as intimidation (10.49 percent) and social implications (5.99 percent) appeared less frequently but still contributed to the multidimensional discourse.

The findings on portrayal and framing directly address research question three. Both newspapers showed a surge in reporting after the Act's enactment in October 2018, with The Daily Star publishing 46 articles and Dhaka Tribune 31 articles within three months. However, their coverage diverged in framing. The Daily Star focused heavily on the human interest angle, emphasizing the Act's potential threats to freedom of expression, while Dhaka Tribune leaned toward a legal framework approach, offering a more measured critique that considered legislative and technological, and security aspect.

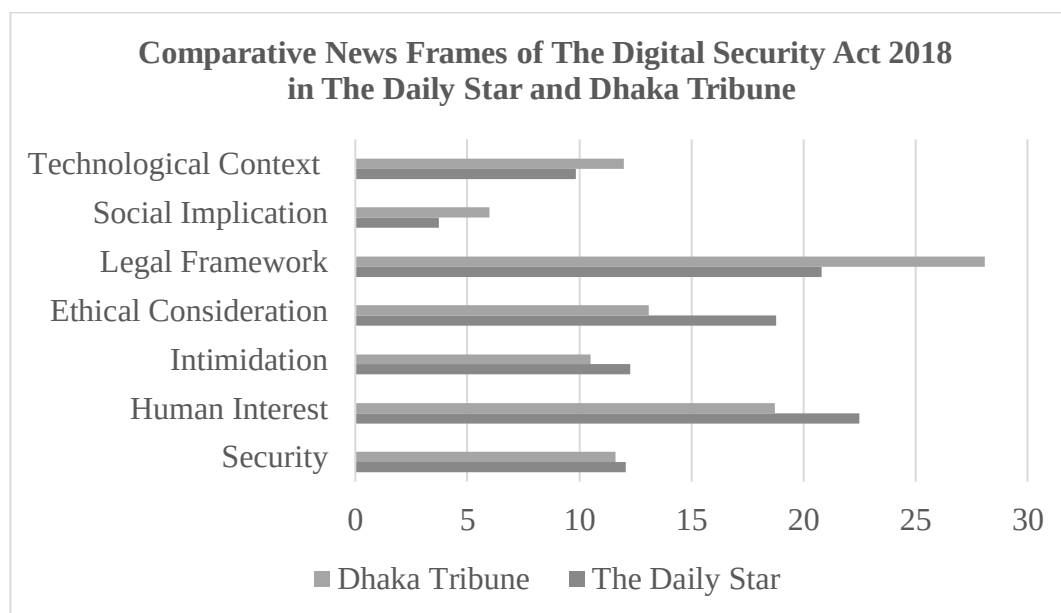


Figure 8. News Framing Difference between The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune.

These differences, illustrated in Figure 4.4, reflect the newspapers' editorial perspectives. The Daily Star consistently framed the DSA as a danger to democracy, prioritizing ethical concerns and the impact of free speech over legislative or technological discussions. In contrast, the Dhaka Tribune took a more centrist stance, weighing both the risks and potential benefits of the Act in regulating the digital sphere and addressing security issues. This contrast in framing not only shaped public discourse but also revealed the broader ideological orientations of the two publications: The Daily Star adopting an advocacy-driven approach and Dhaka Tribune emphasizing balance and nuance.

4.2 Discussion

In media and journalism, Coverage refers to the extent and manner in which the media reports a news event, issue, or topic. It encompasses aspects such as frequency, prominence, depth, and scope of reporting. Shoemaker and Reese (2013) argue that coverage plays a crucial role in shaping public understanding of events by determining what information is highlighted and what is omitted.

The media significantly influences public discourse through the process of agenda-setting, a theory first articulated by McCombs and Shaw (1972) . Although the media does not dictate opinions, it plays a key role in shaping what topics the public considers important by prioritizing certain issues over others. An analysis by Oso and Pate (2011) of Nigerian newspapers found that editorial priorities often align with what is deemed most urgent for their audience. Similarly, (Reese, 2019) hierarchical model of media influence illustrates how organizational goals and societal factors shape content.

In this context, the analysis reveals that The Daily Star devoted more attention to the Digital Security Act 2018 compared to the Dhaka Tribune, focusing predominantly on issues of press freedom, more specifically, the amendment of the Act. High-coverage articles in The Daily Star included front-page lead stories, OP-ED pieces, and back-page lead stories with photographs, underscoring its editorial emphasis on safeguarding journalistic rights. Conversely, the Dhaka Tribune's attention, while comparatively limited. Its broader but less frequent coverage reflects its attempt to provide a more holistic view of the Act's implications.

Among these seven frames (e.g., security, human interest, intimidation, ethical consideration, legal framework, social implication, and technological context), certain frames deserve more priority in analyzing the Digital Security Act 2018. Entman (1993) highlights that those framing decisions significantly influence how audiences perceive issues. For instance, the security frame is crucial in addressing the cybersecurity implications of the Act. In contrast, the frames of ethical consideration and legal framework are vital for evaluating its impact on press freedom and adherence to democratic principles. The social implication frame also holds importance, as it assesses the broader societal consequences of implementing such legislation. In this analysis, The Daily Star predominantly relied on the human interest, intimidation, and ethical consideration frames, consistently highlighting threats to press freedom and democratic accountability. While these frames underscored critical aspects of the Act, they overlooked the technological context and security frames, which are essential for

addressing the digital governance challenges posed by the Act. Conversely, the Dhaka Tribune adopted a broader framing strategy that included the security and legal framework frames alongside limited coverage of press freedom. This approach provided a more nuanced perspective, contextualizing the Act within discussions of cybersecurity and its legal implications, though its emphasis on press freedom was comparatively weaker.

Tankard (2001) indicates that framing decisions often reflect editorial priorities and institutional goals. The Daily Star's framing aligns with its advocacy-oriented stance, emphasizing journalistic integrity and freedom of expression. However, its omission of critical frames like technological context limited its coverage's comprehensiveness. On the other hand, the Dhaka Tribune's inclusion of diverse frames reflects a more balanced approach, though its reduced focus on press freedom could dilute its advocacy for democratic values. Both newspapers could enhance their framing strategies by integrating neglected but essential frames. For instance, The Daily Star could incorporate the security and technological context frames to provide a more holistic view of the Act's implications. Similarly, the Dhaka Tribune could strengthen its emphasis on ethical consideration and intimidation frames to address press freedom concerns better.

The editorial positions of The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune on DSA illustrate their contrasting priorities and institutional roles. The Daily Star's editorials consistently championed press freedom, advocating for amendments to the Act to safeguard journalists and protect freedom of expression. In contrast, Dhaka Tribune adopted a more measured editorial stance, addressing both press freedom and cybersecurity. While its coverage of press freedom was less extensive than that of The Daily Star, it maintained journalistic ethics by presenting balanced viewpoints and exploring the DSA's multifaceted impacts.

Globally, similar patterns are evident. In India, media responses to the Information Technology Rules are divided between concerns over free speech and the need to counter fake news (KM Team, 2024). The U.S. Patriot Act post-9/11 triggered contrasting narratives on national security versus civil liberties (Doherty, 2013). Estonia's Cybersecurity Act, by focusing on critical infrastructure and transparency, provides a

model for balanced legislation (Republic of Estonia Information System Authority, 2022) These examples highlight the media's role in shaping public debate by selectively emphasizing certain aspects of legislation. These differences reflect broader trends in editorial decision-making. Hanitzsch et al. (2019) argue that a publication's editorial policies often mirror its societal role, whether as an advocate, neutral observer, or informer.

In summary, The Daily Star's editorial approach underscores its commitment to press freedom, emphasizing democratic accountability while giving less attention to the broader implications of the Digital Security Act. In contrast, Dhaka Tribune adopted a more balanced perspective, considering both cybersecurity and press freedom, though with comparatively limited coverage. These differing editorial strategies illustrate how institutional priorities and audience expectations shape media framing, ultimately influencing public discourse on key legislative matters like the Digital Security Act 2018. Such editorial choices will remain critical in shaping the media's role as a driver of informed debate in Bangladesh's evolving digital landscape.



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CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the summary, conclusion, and recommendations based on the analysis of media coverage and framing of the Digital Security Act in The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune from October 1 to December 31, 2018.

5.1 Summary

This study aimed to provide a comparative analysis of the media coverage and framing of the Digital Security Act (DSA), 2018, in two prominent Bangladeshi dailies: The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune. The study analyzes the attention, emphasis, and prominence given to the Act, evaluates the framing strategies adopted by both newspapers, and assesses their editorial positions on this contentious issue.

The findings reveal that The Daily Star prioritized press freedom, dedicating significant coverage to the Act's implications for journalistic rights and democratic accountability. High-visibility articles, such as front-page lead stories and OP-EDs, reflected its advocacy-oriented editorial stance. However, this focus led to the neglect of other dimensions of the Act, such as its cybersecurity implications and technological context. Conversely, Dhaka Tribune adopted a more balanced but less extensive approach, addressing both press freedom and cybersecurity. Its coverage included discussions on the Act's legal framework and security aspects, offering a broader perspective but with a comparatively weaker emphasis on press freedom. This balance aligns with the Tribune's editorial standards, reflecting a commitment to journalistic ethics and comprehensive reporting.

Drawing on agenda-setting theory and framing analysis, the paper highlights how institutional goals and societal roles influence media coverage. In conclusion, this research highlights the distinct editorial priorities and framing approaches of the two newspapers, underscoring the media's broader influence in shaping public discourse on democratic and technological challenges.

5.2 Conclusion

This study has examined the contrasting coverage of the Digital Security Act by The Daily Star and Dhaka Tribune, shedding light on how editorial priorities, institutional frameworks, and resource allocation shape media narratives. Through an analysis of attention, emphasis, and prominence, it is evident that the two outlets adopted distinct strategies in framing the DSA, reflecting their respective editorial philosophies and audience engagement approaches.

The Daily Star emphasized human interest, ethical considerations, and legal frameworks, portraying the DSA's impact on civil liberties, press freedom, and individual rights. By leveraging personal narratives and critical perspectives, it effectively humanized the implications of the law, fostering public discourse on its broader ramifications. However, a deeper integration of technological context and social implication frames could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between digital governance, policy, and societal dynamics.

In contrast, Dhaka Tribune prioritized human interest, legal frameworks, and technological contexts, offering an analytical lens on the DSA's constitutionality, judicial interpretations, and implications for digital rights. While this approach highlighted critical issues within the realm of governance and cybersecurity, a stronger focus on intimidation and social implication frames could have enriched its narrative, particularly by addressing the law's societal effects on marginalized voices, public discourse, and civic engagement.

Ultimately, the divergence in framing strategies underscores the diversity of perspectives within Bangladesh's media landscape. The Daily Star's narrative reflected a commitment to ethical and societal dimensions, while Dhaka Tribune focused on legal and technological aspects, illustrating complementary approaches to the same issue. This duality highlights the evolving priorities of Bangladeshi media as it navigates the challenges of digital transformation and underscores the need for comprehensive framing to foster informed and critical public dialogue on issues as complex as the DSA.

5.3 Recommendations

Both newspapers should adopt a more comprehensive framing strategy to address neglected dimensions of the Digital Security Act 2018. The Daily Star should incorporate the security and technological context frames to balance its advocacy for press freedom with discussions of digital governance. Conversely, Dhaka Tribune should strengthen its coverage of ethical consideration and intimidation frames to better highlight press freedom concerns.

Media outlets across Bangladesh should adopt a multifaceted approach to legislative reporting, balancing coverage of press freedom, cybersecurity, social implications, and technological governance. They should invest in training journalists to report on complex issues like cybersecurity, ensuring accurate and informed coverage. Media organizations must safeguard their editorial independence to avoid self-censorship and external pressures, particularly on issues involving press freedom, and establish industry-wide guidelines for covering sensitive legislative issues like the Digital Security Act to maintain journalistic integrity and consistency.

Policymakers should promote digital literacy programs to educate citizens about cybersecurity and their digital rights. They should also create mechanisms for regular dialogue between policymakers, journalists, and civil society to foster trust and transparency in legislative processes. Independent watchdogs should actively monitor the implementation of the Act, ensuring it is not misused to target journalists or stifle dissent.

Future research should examine how other countries in similar socio-political contexts have addressed issues like press freedom and cybersecurity under legislative frameworks. Conduct longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of the Digital Security Act on journalism, public discourse, and democratic processes in Bangladesh.

To facilitate a comprehensive analysis of DSA-related news coverage and the framing employed by various media, it is essential to examine a broad spectrum of English-language newspapers. This should include notable publications such as The Daily Sun, The Independent, The New Age, and The Daily Observer. Furthermore, it is crucial to integrate major Bangladeshi newspapers into the research framework, including The Daily Prothom Alo, The Daily Samakal, The Dainik Aamader Shomoy, The Dainik Bangladesh Protidin, The Daily Kaler Kantho, The Daily Janakantha, and The Daily Ittefaq.

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Appendix -A

Attention Given by The Daily Star Under Digital Security Act

Date	News	OP-ED
01.10.2018	1	1
02.10.2018	1	1
03.10.2018	2	-
04.10.2018	1	-
05.10.2018	2	1
07.10.2018	1	1
09.10.2018	1	-
10.10.2018	1	1
12.10.2018	3	-
13.10.2018	1	-
14.10.2018	1	-
15.10.2018	3	-
16.10.2018	2	-
17.10.2018	1	-
21.10.2018	1	-
22.10.2018	1	-
24.10.2018	1	-
25.10.2018	1	-
28.10.2018	1	1
01.11.2018	1	-
02.11.2018	1	-
04.11.2018	1	-
12.11.2018	1	-
14.11.2018	1	-
16.11.2018	2	-
21.11.2018	2	-
26.11.2018	-	1
30.11.2018	1	-
15.12.2018	1	-
22.12.2018	1	-

Appendix – B
Attention Given by Dhaka Tribune Under Digital Security Act

Date	News	OP-ED
01.10.2018	2	-
02.10.2018	2	1
03.10.2018	-	1
04.10.2018	1	-
05.10.2018	-	1
07.10.2018	2	-
08.10.2018	-	1
09.10.2018	2	-
12.10.2018	1	-
14.10.2018	1	1
15.10.2018	1	-
16.10.2018	1	-
17.10.2018	1	1
22.10.2018	1	-
25.10.2018	1	-
02.11.2018	-	1
10.11.2018	-	1
13.11.2018	1	-
14.11.2018	1	-
16.11.2018	1	-
21.11.2018	2	-
26.11.2018	-	1
16.12.2018	1	-
27.12.2018	-	1

Appendix - C

Emphasis Given by The Daily Star Under Digital Security Act

Date	Article Type	Length (in)	Width (in)	Jump Page L	Jump Page W
01.10.2018	News 1	5	4.8	11	4.5
01.10.2018	Editorial	9.7	9.8	-	-
02.10.2018	News 1	10.5	12.6	-	-
02.10.2018	Editorial	9.5	9.9	-	-
03.10.2018	News 1	5.3	2.5	8	2.2
03.10.2018	News 2	5.4	4.4	2.3	3.6
04.10.2018	News 1	6.5	13.5	5	13.6
05.10.2018	News 1	4.4	2.4	9.5	2.2
05.10.2018	Editorial	10	9.5	-	-
05.10.2018	News 2	5	5.1	-	-
07.10.2018	News 1	5.10	2.4	3.10	4.6
07.10.2018	Opinion	9.8	13.2	-	-
09.10.2018	News 1	7.1	11.5	7.5	4.5
10.10.2018	News 1	4.5	4.5	4.7	7
10.10.2018	Opinion	21.5	13.5	-	-
12.10.2018	News 1	3	2.5	7.4	6.9
12.10.2018	News 2	5.8	10	5.8	1.6
12.10.2018	News 3	6.4	1.6	6.3	4.4
13.10.2018	News 1	5.2	1.6	6.5	2.3
14.10.2018	News 1	3.7	3.2	9.8	11.4
14.10.2018	News 2	4.8	1.7	7.7	2.2
15.10.2018	News 1	5.3	2	-	-
15.10.2018	News 2	5.1	4	3.5	5
15.10.2018	News 3	7.5	6.3	-	-
16.10.2018	News 1	6.8	10.1	5	13.6
16.10.2018	News 2	5.9	1.5	4.5	4.5
17.10.2018	News 1	6.5	1.5	6	2
21.10.2018	News 1	5.8	5.3	5.2	1.7
22.10.2018	News 1	5.5	2.5	9.1	2.1
24.10.2018	News 1	4.5	4.4	-	-
25.10.2018	News 1	4.8	1.5	3.1	7
28.10.2018	News 1	5.6	2.5	5.4	4.5
28.10.2018	Opinion	16	13.3	-	-
01.11.2018	News 1	5.7	3.3	2.7	2.2
02.11.2018	News 1	5.3	3.3	-	-

04.11.2018	News 1	6.9	3.3	-	-
12.11.2018	News 1	6	1.6	9.4	4.5
14.11.2018	News 1	6.3	8.4	7.3	4.4
16.11.2018	News 1	6	1.5	8.3	4.5
16.11.2018	News 2	6.2	2.5	6.6	2.2
21.11.2018	News 1	5.5	1.5	7.5	4.6
21.11.2018	News 2	8.5	6.3	11.5	2.2
26.11.2018	Opinion	13.5	11.5	-	-
30.11.2018	News 1	5.3	1.8	5.4	4.4
15.12.2018	News 1	4.5	4.1	-	-
22.12.2018	News 1	7.5	2.5	-	-

Appendix – D

Emphasis Given by Dhaka Tribune Under Digital Security Act

Date	Article Type	Length (in)	Width (in)
01.10.2018	News 1	7	10
01.10.2018	News 2	5.9	3.9
02.10.2018	News 1	9	4
02.10.2018	News 2	2	6
02.10.2018	Opinion	12.6	10
03.10.2018	Opinion	12.6	10
04.10.2018	News 1	7.5	10
05.10.2018	Opinion	12.6	10
07.10.2018	News 1	4.2	10
07.10.2018	News 2	8.3	3.4
08.10.2018	Editorial	12.6	7.2
09.10.2018	News 1	12.6	10
09.10.2018	News 2	4.2	2.3
12.10.2018	News 1	5.7	6.1
14.10.2018	Opinion	12.6	10
15.10.2018	News 1	8	4
16.10.2018	News 1	12.6	8
17.10.2018	News 1	5.5	6.1
17.10.2018	Editorial	12.6	8
22.10.2018	News 1	12.6	1.5
25.10.2018	News 1	5.1	6.2
02.11.2018	Opinion	12.5	10

10.11.2018	Editorial	11.9	7.6
13.11.2018	News 1	12.5	10
14.11.2018	News 1	8.2	6
16.11.2018	News 1	5	6
21.11.2018	News 1	7	6
21.11.2018	News 2	7	4
26.11.2018	Opinion	12.5	10
16.12.2018	News 1	5.4	10
27.12.2018	Opinion	5	10

Appendix – E

Prominence Given by The Daily Star Under the Digital Security Act

Date	Article Type	Prominence
01.10.2018	News 1	High
01.10.2018	Editorial	High
02.10.2018	News 1	High
02.10.2018	Editorial	High
03.10.2018	News 1	Medium
03.10.2018	News 2	Medium
04.10.2018	News 1	High
05.10.2018	News 1	Medium
05.10.2018	Editorial	High
05.10.2018	News 2	Medium
07.10.2018	News 1	Medium
07.10.2018	Opinion	High
09.10.2018	News 1	High
10.10.2018	News 1	High
10.10.2018	Opinion	High
12.10.2018	News 1	Medium
12.10.2018	News 2	Medium
12.10.2018	News 3	Medium
13.10.2018	News 1	Medium
14.10.2018	News 1	High
14.10.2018	News 2	Medium
15.10.2018	News 1	Low
15.10.2018	News 2	Medium
15.10.2018	News 3	Medium
16.10.2018	News 1	High
16.10.2018	News 2	Medium
17.10.2018	News 1	Medium
21.10.2018	News 1	Medium
22.10.2018	News 1	Medium
24.10.2018	News 1	Low
25.10.2018	News 1	Medium
28.10.2018	News 1	Medium
28.10.2018	Opinion	High
01.11.2018	News 1	High
02.11.2018	News 1	Low
04.11.2018	News 1	Low

12.11.2018	News 1	Medium
14.11.2018	News 1	High
16.11.2018	News 1	Medium
16.11.2018	News 2	Medium
21.11.2018	News 1	Medium
21.11.2018	News 2	High
26.11.2018	Opinion	High
30.11.2018	News 1	Medium
15.12.2018	News 1	Low
22.12.2018	News 1	Low

Appendix - F

Prominence Given by Dhaka Tribune Under the Digital Security Act

Date	Article Type	Prominence
01.10.2018	News 1	Medium
01.10.2018	News 2	Low
02.10.2018	News 1	Medium
02.10.2018	News 2	Medium
02.10.2018	Opinion	High
03.10.2018	Opinion	High
04.10.2018	News 1	Medium
05.10.2018	Opinion	High
07.10.2018	News 1	Medium
07.10.2018	News 2	Low
08.10.2018	Editorial	High
09.10.2018	News 1	Medium
09.10.2018	News 2	Low
12.10.2018	News 1	Medium
14.10.2018	Opinion	High
15.10.2018	News 1	Medium
16.10.2018	News 1	High
17.10.2018	News 1	Medium
17.10.2018	Editorial	High
22.10.2018	News 1	Low
25.10.2018	News 1	Medium
02.11.2018	Opinion	High
10.11.2018	Editorial	High
13.11.2018	News 1	High
14.11.2018	News 1	Medium
16.11.2018	News 1	Low
21.11.2018	News 1	Medium
21.11.2018	News 2	Low
26.11.2018	Opinion	High
16.12.2018	News 1	Medium
27.12.2018	Opinion	Medium

Appendix - G

Quantity of News Frames Ascertained from the Codebook

Newspapers	Dates	Number of Articles	Number of Frames
Dhaka Tribune	Oct 2018 - Dec 2018		
The Daily Star			

Framing Policy of The Daily Star Under the Digital Security Act 2018

Date of Publication	Article Types	Security	Human Interest	Intimidation	Ethical Consideration	Legal Framework	Social Implication	Technological Context
01.10.2018	News 1	4	2	4	0	5	2	1
01.10.2018	Editorial	1	4	3	1	2	1	0
02.10.2018	News 1	3	0	3	5	2	0	2
02.10.2018	Editorial	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
03.10.2018	News 1	2		2	2	0	0	1
03.10.2018	News 2	1	2	0	2	0	0	1
04.10.2018	News 1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
05.10.2018	News 1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
05.10.2018	Editorial	0	0	0	0	5	0	0
05.10.2018	News 2	0	2	0	1	1	0	1
07.10.2018	News 1	2	3	3	5	1	1	0

07.10.2018	Opinion	2	5	3	4	5	0	0
09.10.2018	News 1	5	8	3	11	5	1	1
10.10.2018	News 1	3	1	2	5	1	1	0
10.10.2018	Opinion	3	13	5	14	15	2	2
12.10.2018	News 1	1	4	0	1	2	1	7
12.10.2018	News 2	1	5	1	3	0	0	0
12.10.2018	News 3	1	4	0	6	1	0	0
13.10.2018	News 1	1	2	1	3	3	0	1
14.10.2018	News 1	4	5	1	4	5	0	2
14.10.2018	News 2	0	2	1	0	1	0	1
15.10.2018	News 1	0	3	0	1	0	0	0
15.10.2018	News 2	0	1	0	0	2	0	2
15.10.2018	News 3	1	3	2	2	1	0	0
16.10.2018	News 1	2	1	1	2	3	0	0
16.10.2018	News 2	0	4	1	0	2	0	1
17.10.2018	News 1	2	1	2	2	4	1	0
21.10.2018	News 1	1	2	0	1	1	0	0
22.10.2018	News 1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
24.10.2018	News 1	1	3	1	0	1	0	1
25.10.2018	News 1		3	1	0	2	0	3
28.10.2018	News 1	9	1	12	8	9	1	3

28.10.2018	Opinion	1	2	2	2	5	1	1
01.11.2018	News 1	2	1	1	1	1	0	1
02.11.2018	News 1	0	1	0	1	2	1	0
04.11.2018	News 1	1	0	0	0	1	0	3
12.11.2018	News 1	1	2	1	2	4	2	2
14.11.2018	News 1	1	3	0	1	1	2	0
16.11.2018	News 1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1
16.11.2018	News 2	1	0	1	1	2	0	1
21.11.2018	News 1	1	3	2	2	3	1	1
21.11.2018	News 2	0	1	0	1	1	0	0
26.11.2018	Opinion	3	6	1	3	6	1	0
30.11.2018	News 1	1	1	1	1	1	0	2
15.12.2018	News 1	1	2	1	1	1	0	3
22.12.2018	News 1	1	2	2	1	1	0	0

Appendix - H

Framing Policy of Dhaka Tribune Under the Digital Security Act 2018

Date of Publication	Article Types	Security	Human Interest	Intimidation	Ethical Consideration	Legal Framework	Social Implication	Technological Context
01.10.2018	News 1	3	0	2	1	0	0	0
01.10.2018	News 2	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
02.10.2018	News 1	0	1	0	0	1	0	4
02.10.2018	News 2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
02.10.2018	Opinion	0	0	0	0	1	0	4
03.10.2018	Opinion	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
04.10.2018	News 1	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
05.10.2018	Opinion	0	0	1	0	5	1	2
07.10.2018	News 1	2	1	1	1	7	1	1
07.10.2018	News 2	1	2	1	1	3	1	0
08.10.2018	Editorial	0	0	0	2	1	1	0
09.10.2018	News 1	2	7	2	3	3	1	1
09.10.2018	News 2	2	3	0	2	3	0	1
12.10.2018	News 1	2	3	1	3	4	2	0
14.10.2018	Opinion	0	7	1	2	0	0	2

15.10.2018	News 1	1	2	1	0	2	0	1
16.10.2018	News 1	2	4	4	2	6	0	0
17.10.2018	News 1	0	1	0	0	1	0	3
17.10.2018	Editorial	3	1	2	5	4	0	1
22.10.2018	News 1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
25.10.2018	News 1	1	3	3	1	1	0	2
02.11.2018	Opinion	3	4	3	3	1	1	0
10.11.2018	Editorial	0	1	1	1	1	1	0
13.11.2018	News	2	5	0	0	2	0	0
14.11.2018	News 1	0	2	0	1	1	1	0
16.11.2018	News 1	0	0	2	0	5	0	0
21.11.2018	News 1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0
21.11.2018	News 2	1	1	0	2	3	1	0
26.11.2018	Opinion	0	0	0	0	1	0	5
16.12.2018	News 1	3	0	0	1	0	0	0
27.12.2018	Opinion	0	1	1	2	10	2	2

Framing Codebook

Article ID:	
Coder Name:	
Headline of the article:	
Placement of the article:	Front Page, Back Page, Opinion, Editorial, News
Security Frame	
Human Interest Frame	
Intimidation Frame	
Ethical Consideration	
Legal Framework Frame	
Social Implication Frame	
Technological Context	