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Towards an Exploration of Shifts in Country Reputation in Media Content. A Longitudinal Study of Arab Media

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Abstract

This study seeks to analyze how the reputations of selected four Asian countries (Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, and Philippines) have evolved in Arab media over a four-year period (2021 - 2024), particularly during significant events and crises. By conducting a longitudinal content analysis, this research explores shifts in media portrayal and the framing of these countries during specific political, economic, and social events, with a focus on examining patterns in reporting, key narratives, and the tone of coverage over time.

Results revealed that the media coverage centered on specific countries, with notable attention to the most developed countries than the less developed. The study found that media portrayals of country reputations are primarily event-driven, with political crises and conflicts receiving more negative coverage, while economic, cultural, and tourism-related events are framed more positively. Additionally, media ownership and editorial policies significantly shape country representation, with some outlets adopting more critical or government-aligned narratives. The findings underscore the role of economic performance and geopolitical interests in influencing media framing, ultimately shaping public perceptions of countries in Arab media.

This study could contribute to media studies and international relations by offering a new approach to analyzing media-driven reputation shifts for countries. It will also enable policymakers and media analysts to understand better the impact of media on international relations and public perception and predict and manage reputation-related outcomes in future cross-regional interactions.

Key words: Country Reputation, Longitudinal Research, Framing Analysis, Arab Media, Asian Countries

الملخص

في عالم معولم تلعب وسائل الإعلام دورًا محوريًا في تشكيل الرأي العام، حيث تؤثر سمعة الدول على العلاقات الدولية، والسياحة، والاستثمار الأجنبي، وثقة الجمهور. يمكن للصورة الإيجابية للدولة أن تعزز القوة الناعمة لها، وتكوّن تصورات إيجابية لدى الجمهور الدولي، بينما قد تؤدي السمعة السلبية إلى تحديات في مجالات الدبلوماسية، والانخراط الاقتصادي، والتبادل الثقافي.

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل كيفية تطور سمعة أربع دول آسيوية مختارة (اليابان، وكوريا الجنوبية، وإندونيسيا والفلبين) في وسائل الإعلام العربية على مدار أربع سنوات (2021-2024)، لا سيما خلال الأحداث الكبرى والأزمات. ومن خلال إجراء تحليل المحتوى التتبعي، تستكشف هذه الدراسة التحولات في تصوير وسائل الإعلام لهذه الدول واطر معالجتها لها خلال الأحداث السياسية والاقتصادية والاجتماعية المحددة، مع التركيز على أنماط التغطية

والسرديات الرئيسية ونبرة التناول الإعلامي عبر الزمن.

كشفت النتائج أن التغطية الإعلامية ركزت على دول بعينها دون أخرى، مع اهتمام ملحوظ بالدول الأكثر تطورًا مقارنة بالدول الأقل تطورًا. كما تبين أن تصوير وسائل الإعلام لسمعة الدول يعتمد في المقام الأول على الأحداث، حيث تحظى الأزمات السياسية والصراعات بتغطية أكثر سلبية، بينما تتم معالجة الأحداث الاقتصادية والثقافية والسياحية بشكل أكثر إيجابية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تلعب ملكية وسائل الإعلام والسياسات التحريرية دورًا مهمًا في تشكيل تمثيل الدول، حيث تتبنى بعض المنصات الإعلامية مواقف نقدية أكثر، بينما تميل أخرى إلى التوافق مع الرؤية الحكومية. أكدت النتائج كذلك الدور الذي تلعبه العوامل الاقتصادية والمصالح الجيوسياسية في التأثير على التغطية الإعلامية، مما يساهم في تشكيل تصورات الجمهور عن الدول في وسائل الإعلام العربية.

يمكن أن تسهم هذه الدراسة في مجالي دراسات الإعلام والعلاقات الدولية من خلال تقديم مقاربة جديدة لتحليل التحولات الإعلامية في سمعة الدول. كما تساعد صانعي السياسات والمحللين الإعلاميين على فهم تأثير وسائل الإعلام على العلاقات الدولية والتصورات العامة، إلى جانب التنبؤ بالنتائج المتعلقة بالسمعة وإدارتها في التفاعلات الإقليمية المستقبلية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: سمعة الدولة، البحوث التتبعية، تحليل الأطر، الإعلام العربي، الدول الآسيوية

Introduction

In a globalized world where media plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion, a country's reputation influences international relations, tourism, foreign investment, and public trust. A strong and positive national image can enhance a country's soft power and foster favorable perceptions among international audiences. At the same time, a negative reputation may lead to challenges in diplomacy, economic engagement, and cultural exchange (Zeineddine, 2017).

A country's reputation is a subject of increasing interest in the practice and research of public relations and public diplomacy (Yang et al., 2008). National reputation management emerged as a part of the globalization discourse (Angell & Mordhorst, 2015). Countries try to actively manage their reputations through public diplomacy, which includes strategic communication, media diplomacy, and cultural exchanges (Wang, 2020; Yang et al., 2008).

Country reputation is a multifaceted and dynamic aspect of international relations that requires careful management and strategic planning. By understanding and leveraging the factors that influence reputation, countries can enhance their global standing, foster positive international relations, and achieve their strategic objectives (Wang, 2020).

Despite its importance, there are notable gaps in the research on the country's reputation that must be addressed to advance the field. This study analyzes how countries' reputations have evolved in media

reporting over four years, especially during significant events and crises, by conducting a longitudinal content analysis. The study research explores shifts in media portrayal and the framing of countries during specific political, economic, and social events. This longitudinal content analysis helps identify the change over time and the key factors impacting the country's reputation.

Research Objective:

The primary objective of this research is to explore and analyze the shifts in a country's reputation as portrayed in Arab media content over a longitudinal period to explore how media coverage of different countries in the Arab world has evolved, considering the political, economic, and social changes that have occurred, as well as understanding how shifts in geopolitical, economic, and social contexts influence media narratives.

Research Questions:

RQ 1: How has the reputation of different countries been represented in Arab media over time?

RQ2: What key themes and narratives characterize the shifts in the country's reputation in Arab media content?

RQ3: How do political, economic, and social changes impact the media coverage of countries in the Arab world?

RQ4: How do variations in media ownership, editorial policies, and geopolitical contexts impact the representation of a country's reputation in Arab media?

This study could contribute to media studies and international relations by offering a new approach to analyzing media-driven reputation shifts for countries. It will also enable policymakers and media analysts to understand better the impact of media on international relations and public perception and predict and manage reputation-related outcomes in future cross-regional interactions.

Literature Review

The growing international focus on a country's reputation stems from dynamic shifts across social, political, cultural, and technological domains. Various stakeholders—including media, NGOs, and regulatory institutions—play a crucial role in shaping a nation's image. At the same time, advancements in communication technologies and globalization have heightened the need for ethical standards and

uniform practices in global markets (Szwajca, 2017).

Media representation is a key driver of national reputation, influencing public perception and international relations. Studies show that national interests, political ideologies, and media systems affect how foreign news is framed (Lee et al., 2023). For instance, media portrayals of China varied significantly in U.S., Taiwanese, and Hong Kong newspapers due to differences in political contexts and press freedom. Similarly, geopolitical events like terror attacks can immediately shift a country's reputation, often impacting foreign relations and economic stability (Canayaz & Darendeli, 2023).

Beyond geopolitical factors, economic performance also influences a country's reputation. Positive media portrayals often correlate with strong economic indicators, such as GDP growth (Leiva & Kimber, 2019), while economic downturns contribute to more critical coverage. Additionally, leadership representation plays a role in shaping national images. Research on China's top leaders revealed that their public appearances led to a decline in China's perceived reputation among South Korean audiences (Yoo & Jin, 2015). Other scholarly research found the decisive mediating role of public awareness in shaping a country's reputation, demonstrating that individual experiences with a country influence perception primarily through the level of public awareness (Yang et al., 2008).

Strategic communication and media framing further influence national reputation. How the media frames news topics significantly affects public perception (Murali et al., 2021). Governments and organizations employ public relations strategies to shape narratives and mitigate reputation risks. However, while strategic media engagement can enhance a country's global standing, overly aggressive media control or propagandistic messaging can diminish credibility (Hirsch, 2019).

Within the Arab world, nation branding has emerged as a crucial strategy for enhancing global reputation and economic prospects (Zeineddine, 2017). Countries like the UAE and Qatar have actively invested in branding initiatives to project an image of modernization, economic diversification, and global influence. Dubai, for instance, has leveraged strategic marketing, tourism, and infrastructure development to position itself as a global hub. At the same time, Qatar has used media influence, international sports events, and cultural initiatives to bolster its soft power. These nation-branding efforts have contributed to economic growth, increased tourism, and strengthened international credibility (Al-Hajri & Al-Marri, 2021; Allagui & Al-Najjar, 2018; Zeineddine, 2017).

Both domestic political culture and external media narratives shape public perception of Arab countries. A study on Iraq found a contrast between how Iraqis perceive themselves versus how they view their state. While the Iraqi individual is often perceived positively, the state itself suffers from a negative

image due to political instability and governance challenges. The study also identified various political and cultural patterns—authoritarian, fatalistic, individualistic, and egalitarian—influencing these perceptions (Eidi, 2019).

Major cultural and sporting events have also played a role in shaping national images in the Arab region. Qatar's FIFA World Cup 2022 hosting was an example of how cultural diplomacy can strengthen reputation. However, while international events positively influenced Qatar's global standing, internal debates persisted regarding the role of government institutions, such as the Ministry of Culture and Sports, in defining national identity (Al-Hajri & Al-Marri, 2021).

Public relations efforts by Arab states further highlight the strategic use of media for reputation management. The UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs has employed media-driven strategies, using emotional and rational appeals to enhance the country's global standing (Abdul Rahman & Al-Azzawi, 2022). Similarly, the UAE has strategically framed women's empowerment as part of its nation-branding efforts, positioning itself as a progressive force in the Middle East to counter prevailing stereotypes about gender inequality (Allagui & Al-Najjar, 2018).

The literature highlighted the multifaceted nature of a country's reputation, shaped by media narratives, geopolitical events, economic performance, and strategic branding efforts. While media portrayal is decisive in influencing perceptions, the interaction between political culture, economic policies, and public diplomacy further determines how nations are perceived globally. In the Arab world, governments have increasingly leveraged nation branding, cultural diplomacy, and strategic media campaigns to enhance their international reputation, with varying degrees of success.

Country Reputation Concept

Country Reputation in the modern global system is related directly to political, social, and economic changes within countries. Country Image has rapidly become one of the central concepts in political communication and Diplomacy; this field aims to measure, build, and manage country image (sometimes called "Nation Branding").

Country Reputation is defined as an aggregate image of a country over time. (Yousaf & Li, 2015). According to Mariutti (2017), Country Reputation is a part of public Diplomacy. Public Diplomacy is that kind of Diplomacy that targets the public in foreign societies instead of relationships between the leaders and representatives of nations. Public Diplomacy is a key instrument of "Soft Power," which is the ability of a country to get what it wants through attraction rather than coercion. It arises from the attrac-

tiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies closely related to its image and reputation. The Country Reputation also refers to perceptions of a country shared by domestic and international publics based on personal experience and information received. (Yoo, Lee & Jin, 2018). Scholars have identified multiple factors that shape a country's reputation, including media representation, political stability, economic policies, and cultural Diplomacy. A country's reputation is key to attracting investment, increasing exports, and drawing tourists and skilled professionals (Zeineddine, 2017).

The Country Reputation concept shares similarities with "Nation Branding" and is often related to "Country Image," but these concepts are distinguishable. The perception at one point in time is called an "Image," and the perception lasting over time is known as a "Reputation." The term "Country Image" is defined as most representations of the nation in the mind of individuals. Social and historical factors, geographical position, weather, and the media contribute to the definition of this image. Image and reputation are a matter of perception and are not synonyms for reality. Researchers argue that the overall reputation of a nation is a function of its reputation among various stakeholders and multiple categories (Yousaf & Samreen, 2016).

Moreover, country image is conceived as a halo construct, evaluating the general characteristics of a country, i.e., economic situation, political stability, governance, tourism, geographical location, leadership style, and culture, among others. Another developing field related to country reputation is "Nation Branding." The final aim of a policy of nation branding is to create an ideal positioning that is clear, simple, and above all, differentiated, construed around the emotional features and quality of the country, symbolized both verbally and visually, interpreted by different audiences in various contexts. This complex process could be achieved by applying branding, communication, and marketing techniques to promote the country's image. (Marino & Mainolfi, 2011). "Country Branding" is the deliberate efforts of countries to create favorable perceptions of various country associations, e.g., tourist attractions, natural resources, history, culture, language, political and economic systems, social institutions, infrastructures, and most importantly, people (Yousaf & Li, 2015).

Country reputation is a dynamic and multifaceted construct shaped by various socio-cognitive factors through top-down and bottom-up processes. Rather than being a fixed entity, reputation emerges from an ongoing diffusion of social assessments that influence individual cognitive perceptions. This process evolves, driven by a country's interactions with stakeholders across different contexts. As a result, reputation functions as a dependent variable shaped by a complex system of interrelations spanning social, political, and economic dimensions (Marino & Mainolfi, 2011).

In this context, a country's reputation is shaped by institutional actions, official communication, and public perceptions. It is crucial to acknowledge that a country's reputation is closely linked to popular opinion and emerges from the diverse communication channels through which a nation engages with both domestic and international audiences (Yousaf & Samreen, 2016).

Media's Role in Shaping Country Reputation

The relationship between media and a country's reputation is multifaceted, involving various dynamics and influences. Media plays a critical role in shaping and disseminating a country's reputation. Studies have shown that media content often serves as the primary source of information about foreign nations, influencing public perceptions and diplomatic relations (Golan & Himelboim, 2015).

Media coverage significantly impacts public perception of countries. The more media coverage a nation receives, the more likely the public considers it important. Negative media coverage tends to lead to negative public perceptions, while positive coverage does not significantly improve perceptions (Wanta et al., 2004). According to Yousaf and Samreen (2016), the perceptions constituted through media strongly influence the country's reputation.

Media often exhibit an in-group/out-group bias, presenting their nation more favorably than foreign nations. This bias can influence national identity and public perception of other countries (Müller, 2013). The rise of digital media has significantly amplified the role of online discourse in shaping and maintaining national reputation. The growing reliance on digital sources, such as online news archives and search engines, underscores the necessity of systematic media monitoring to assess and enhance a country's global image (Zeineddine, 2017).

A well-managed national reputation can strengthen diplomatic relations, stimulate economic growth, and attract foreign investment. Conversely, negative media narratives may erode credibility and deter international engagement (Zeineddine, 2017).

Studies also emphasize the critical role of public relations in fostering a positive national image, mainly through media engagement and strategic communication (Abdul Rahman & Al-Azzawi, 2022). During crises, strategic media communication is crucial in shaping public perceptions. Effective crisis communication strategies, such as enhancing and diminishing, can improve public perceptions, while denial strategies are less effective (Sun & Li, 2024). This is particularly relevant during prolonged crises like pandemics, where media analysis can help manage public perceptions across different countries (Mykkänen et al., 2024).

Furthermore, studies have found that the relationship between media trust and political trust varies

across countries, depending on media autonomy, journalistic professionalism, and party-press parallelism. Countries with higher media autonomy and professionalism show a weaker link between media trust and political trust, indicating that a free and professional media environment allows for more independent public perceptions (Ariely, 2015).

The impact of media on a country's reputation also depends on the cultural and political contexts. For example, the reputation of South Korea among Americans is influenced by individual experiences and awareness, which are mediated by public awareness and strategic communication channels. Similarly, the use of social media in China and Korea shows different impacts on a country's image due to varying state systems and cultural contexts (Li et al., 2015).

Methodology

This study employs a longitudinal content analysis of selected Arab media outlets, both print and online, over four years (from January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2024) to analyze how the reputations of selected four Asian countries (Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, and Philippines) have evolved in Arab media over the four years, particularly during significant events and crises. By conducting a longitudinal content analysis, this research explores shifts in media portrayal and the reputation of these countries during specific political, economic, and social events, focusing on examining patterns in reporting, key narratives, and the tone of coverage over time.

Longitudinal studies are a robust research design used to observe and measure outcomes over extended periods. These studies are essential for understanding long-term effects, changes, and developments in various fields. Longitudinal studies involve collecting data from the same subjects at multiple times, allowing researchers to track changes and developments over time (Sadighian et al., 2024; Shah et al., 2023; Laird, 2022).

Longitudinal studies can be observational or experimental and either retrospective (using past data) or prospective (collecting new data over time) (Sadighian et al., 2024). These studies often span several years or even decades, making them suitable for studying long-term outcomes and trends and examining how variables change over time (Laird, 2022; Shah et al., 2023). The current study utilized the retrospective type, using past data published in media outlets in the specified countries.

Research Variables

The study investigates how a country's reputation is portrayed in Arab media over time. The key re-

search variables are classified into independent, dependent, and mediated.

1. Independent Variable

•Publication Date: A categorical variable representing the year in which the media content was published (2021, 2022, 2023, 2024).

2. Dependent Variable

•Country Reputation: A key measure that captures how an event influences a country's reputation, as portrayed in media content. The coding distinguishes between positive, negative, or neutral impacts.

3. Mediated Variables

•Country Represented: (Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Philippines).

•Media Outlet: (Al-Ahram, Al Jazeera Online, Al-Nahar).

•Media Format: Categorizes the type of media content (e.g., news story, report, opinion piece, other).

•Geopolitical Focus: Identifies the scope of coverage—domestic, regional, or international.

•Event Theme: Classifies the nature of the event covered in the.

•The tone of Coverage: Captures the sentiment of the media portrayal—positive, negative, or neutral.

Research Sample

Sample of countries

To neutralize the impact of political and historical influences, the study selected four Asian countries for analysis. The selection of Asian countries is based on their politically and diplomatically neutral relationships with Arab nations, free from tensions or crises, ensuring that the media content more accurately reflects indicators of state reputation.

Sample of countries included two developed countries ranked highest on the Human Development Index (HDI) for 2022, as reported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): South Korea (HDI rank: 19 globally) and Japan (HDI rank: 24). Additionally, two developing countries, which are comparatively lower in human development based on the same index, were included: Indonesia (HDI rank: 112) and Philippines (HDI rank: 113).

Sample of Media Materials

This study employed a purposive sampling method to ensure a diverse and representative selection of Arab media outlets that cover international affairs, particularly country reputation. The sampling strategy was designed to capture variations in media perspectives across different geographical regions, political orientations, and journalistic styles within the Arab world.

The study focused on three prominent Arab media outlets with wide readership and influence, ensuring **geographical and ideological diversity:**

•Al-Ahram (Egypt): One of the oldest and most influential newspapers in Egypt and the Arab world, known for its historical significance and semi-official stance.

•Al Jazeera Online (Qatar): A globally recognized digital news platform providing extensive political and international affairs coverage with a unique editorial perspective.

•An-Nahar (Lebanon): Founded in 1933, this leading Lebanese daily newspaper is known for its independent editorial stance and in-depth political analysis.

Including these outlets ensures regional diversity (North Africa, the Gulf, and the Levant), different ownership structures (state-affiliated, privately owned, and internationally recognized platforms), and varied editorial policies, enhancing the comprehensiveness of the dataset.

Timeframe and Data Collection

The study examined media coverage published from January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2024, allowing for a longitudinal analysis of shifts in the country's reputation over four years. Media materials were collected from two primary sources: Google News Archive and the official websites of the selected media outlets. To ensure comprehensive coverage, the archives of each media outlet were searched for reports, opinion pieces, and news stories.

Inclusion Criteria:

The content must discuss at least one of the four selected Asian countries (Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, and the Philippines). The articles must explicitly address the country's reputation, whether in the context of diplomacy, economy, culture, or geopolitical events. The selected content includes news stories, reports, and opinion articles, ensuring a mix of factual reporting and interpretative analysis.

Sample Size

A total of 560 media items were collected and analyzed. The sample size was determined based on the availability of relevant media coverage and the need for a manageable yet representative dataset for content analysis. This ensured that the study could capture patterns, trends, and shifts in the country's reputation while maintaining analytical rigor.

Content Analysis and Coding sheet

The study adopts a systematic approach to content analysis. A coding sheet was created to categorize and analyze media coverage. The coding sheet was systematically developed to ensure the accurate and

consistent analysis of reputation scores across different publication dates. The design process of the coding sheet involved several key stages: variable selection, operationalization, category definition, and coder training to enhance reliability.

The coding sheet was structured to capture key variables relevant to the study, including publication date and country reputation score. Each variable was operationalized based on existing literature and previous studies to maintain consistency and validity in the measurement process. Clear coding categories and definitions were established for each variable to ensure objectivity. The reputation score variable. <u>The coding sheet included the following categories:</u>

•Media Outlet: Identifies the source of the news item.

•Format: Specifies whether the content is a news story, report, or opinion piece format.

•Publication Date: Records the date when the content was published.

•Country Represented: Identifies the country that is the primary subject of the coverage.

•Event/Issue: Captures the key event or issue being covered.

•Geopolitical Focus: Determines the scope of the event or issue, categorized as Domestic, Regional, and International.

•Event Type: Categorized into Crime/Accident, Crisis/Disasters, Culture, entertainment, diplomatic/political\military, economic, and other categories.

•   Event Impact on Country Reputation: Evaluated based on whether the event had a positive, negative, or neutral effect on the country's reputation.

•Tone of Coverage: Determined whether the media portrayal of the event was positive, negative, or neutral.

Validity and Reliability

Validity

Validity was maintained by designing the coding sheet based on well-established frameworks and previous research, ensuring that the variables accurately captured the intended constructs. Two subject-matter experts reviewed the coding scheme's face validity and assessed whether the operational definitions effectively measured the intended variables.

Reliability

Before implementation, the coding sheet underwent pretesting with a subset of the dataset. Coders independently applied the coding scheme to a sample of data entries, and inter-coder reliability was

assessed. Any ambiguities or inconsistencies identified during this phase were addressed by refining category definitions and modifying the coding instructions as necessary.

Inter-coder reliability was assessed using Cohen's kappa (κ) to ensure coding consistency. The analysis yielded a kappa value of $\kappa=0.78$, indicating substantial agreement among coders. Any discrepancies were discussed and resolved through consensus to finalize the coding sheet. The final coding sheet was thus designed to ensure a systematic and reproducible approach to data collection.

Results

1 - Distribution of media coverage across countries

Table 1 shows the distribution of media coverage across three Arab media outlets—Al Jazeera Online, Al-Ahram, and Al-Nahar—for four countries: Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, and South Korea.

Table 1: Distribution of media coverage across countries

			Media			Total
			Al Jazeera Online	Al-Ahram	AL-Nahar	
Country Represented	Indonesia	F	38	18	27	83
		%	6.8%	3.2%	4.8%	14.8%
	Japan	F	77	75	22	174
		%	13.8%	13.4%	3.9%	31.1%
	Philippines	F	20	42	7	69
		%	3.6%	7.5%	1.3%	12.3%
	South Korea	F	91	81	62	234
			16.3%	14.5%	11.1%	41.8%
Total		F	226	216	118	560
		%	40.4%	38.6%	21.1%	100.0%

The highest coverage was observed for South Korea (41.8%), followed by Japan (31.1%), Indonesia (14.8%), and the Philippines (12.3%). It was obvious that South Korea received the highest attention, particularly across all media outlets, while the Philippines had the least coverage.

Al Jazeera Online accounted for the largest share of total coverage (40.4%) and provided the most coverage for South Korea (16.3%) and Japan (13.8%), followed by Indonesia (6.8%) and the Philippines (3.6%). Al-Ahram contributed 38.6% of the total coverage, with remarkable attention given to South Korea (14.5%) and Japan (13.4%), whereas Indonesia and the Philippines received comparatively less

coverage. Al-Nahar, the least frequent contributor, covered 21.1% of the total items, with its highest focus on South Korea (11.1%), followed by Indonesia, Japan, and the Philippines.

The results highlight South Korea and Japan as the dominant countries in Arab media coverage, with significantly higher representation in Al Jazeera Online and Al-Ahram. Al-Nahar provided the least coverage overall, with a particularly limited focus on Japan and the Philippines. The variation in media attention across outlets suggests differing editorial priorities, possibly influenced by political, economic, or cultural factors.

Moreover, Arab media, under normal circumstances, tends to prioritize coverage of countries that rank higher on the Human Development Index (HDI) over those with lower rankings. This pattern reflects a broader media focus on advanced economies and their global influence. Additionally, the heightened coverage of South Korea over Japan may be attributed to the political crisis that shook South Korea in 2024, drawing significant media attention and shaping the narrative in Arab news outlets.

2- Impact of Media Coverage on Country Reputation by Country Representation

A Chi-Square test of independence was conducted to examine the relationship between country representation and coverage tone and its impact on a country's reputation. The test was statistically significant, $\chi^2(6) = 40.001$, $p < .001$, indicating that the distribution of coverage tone varies significantly by country.

Table 2: Impact of Media Coverage on Country Reputation by Country Representation

		Impact of Media Coverage on Country Reputation						Total	
		Negative		Neutral		Positive			
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Country Represented	South Korea	125	48.8%	23	26.7%	86	39.4%	234	41.8%
	Japan	57	22.3%	31	36.0%	86	39.4%	174	31.1%
	Indonesia	31	12.1%	16	18.6%	36	16.5%	83	14.8%
	Philippines	43	16.8%	16	18.6%	10	4.6%	69	12.3%
Total		256	100.0%	86	100.0%	218	100.0%	560	100.0%

The Chi-Square test revealed that negative, neutral, and favorable coverage distribution significantly differs across countries, suggesting that media outlets portray some countries more favorably. A percentage of 45.7% of the coverage was negative, 38.9% was positive, and 15.4% was neutral. South Korea received the highest volume of coverage (234 items, 41.8% of the total), with a notable dominance of

negative coverage (22.3%), followed by positive coverage (15.4%). Japan had 174 items (31.1%), with a relatively higher share of positive coverage (15.4%) compared to its negative portrayal (10.2%). Indonesia received 83 items (14.8%), with a more balanced distribution of negative (5.5%) and positive (6.4%) coverage. The Philippines had the lowest positive coverage (1.8%), while negative coverage accounted for 7.7% of the total, suggesting a generally unfavorable portrayal. South Korea received the highest proportion of negative coverage, possibly linked to political crises in 2024, which shaped media narratives. Japan had a more balanced reputation, with positive coverage slightly higher than negative, indicating a more stable perception in Arab media. The Philippines had the lowest positive representation, suggesting a weaker or more critical portrayal in media discussions.

3- Impact of Media Coverage on Country Reputation by media outlet

Table 3: Impact of Media Coverage on Country Reputation by Media Outlet

		Impact of Media Coverage on Country Reputation						Total	
		Negative		Neutral		Positive			
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Media	Al Jazeera Online	123	48.0%	21	24.4%	82	37.6%	226	40.4%
	Al-Ahram	69	27.0%	45	52.3%	102	46.8%	216	38.6%
	AL-Nahar	64	25.0%	20	23.3%	34	15.6%	118	21.1%
Total		256	100.0%	86	100.0%	218	100.0%	560	100.0%

A Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted to examine the relationship between media outlets and the impact of media coverage on a country's reputation. The crosstab analysis revealed a significant difference in how various media outlets framed the impact of events on a country's reputation ($\chi^2(4)$ = 31.735, p < .001).

The distribution of coverage impact on the country's reputation across three major Arab media outlets, Al Jazeera Online, Al-Ahram, and Al-Nahar, demonstrated that most of the coverage was negative (45.7%), followed by positive (38.9%), while neutral coverage accounted for only 15.4%.

Al Jazeera Online had the highest proportion of coverage (40.4% of total items), with notably more negative coverage (22.0%) than positive (14.6%). Al-Ahram accounted for 38.6% of total coverage and had the highest share of positive coverage (18.2%), indicating a more balanced portrayal of the country's reputation. Al-Nahar, which contributed the least overall coverage (21.1%), had a higher proportion of negative coverage (11.4%) compared to its positive coverage (6.1%).

4- Impact of Media Coverage on Country Reputation by Media Format

A chi-square test of independence showed how different media formats significantly impact media coverage on a country's reputation. The data revealed notable variations in how different media formats were associated with the impact of media coverage on a country's reputation ($\chi^2(4) = 31.943$, $p < .001$). This suggests that the format in which an event is reported influences how it affects the country's reputation.

Table 4: Impact of Media Coverage on Country Reputation by Media Format

		Impact of Media Coverage on Country Reputation						Total	
		Negative		Neutral		Positive			
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Format	News story	177	69.1%	76	88.4%	121	55.5%	374	66.8%
	Reports	77	30.1%	9	10.5%	93	42.7%	179	32.0%
	Opinion piece	2	0.8%	1	1.2%	4	1.8%	7	1.3%
Total		256	100.0%	86	100.0%	218	100.0%	560	100.0%

The percentage distribution indicated that news stories dominate coverage but show varied impacts. 69.1% of news stories were associated with a negative impact on the country's reputation, the highest among all formats. 88.4% of news stories were linked to a neutral impact, showing that this format is often perceived as objective or balanced. 55.5% of news stories contributed to a positive impact, indicating that this format also enhances reputation. Overall, news stories accounted for 66.8% of the total media coverage.

Reports show a more balanced impact. Only 30.1% of reports were associated with a negative impact, significantly lower than news stories. 10.5% of reports had a neutral impact, suggesting that reports are less frequently perceived as neutral compared to news stories. Notably, 42.7% of reports were linked to a positive impact, making this format the most influential in enhancing the country's reputation. Reports made up 32.0% of the total media coverage.

Opinion pieces had the lowest representation in the dataset (only 1.3% of total coverage). Only 0.8% of opinion pieces were linked to a negative impact, and 1.2% were perceived as neutral. A small proportion (1.8%) contributed to a positive reputation impact, suggesting that opinion pieces, while fewer in number, can still play a role in shaping perceptions.

5- Relationship Between Geopolitical Focus and the Impact of Events on Country's Reputation

A Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted to examine whether geopolitical focus (domestic, international, regional) significantly influences the impact of media coverage on a country's reputation (negative, neutral, positive). The Chi-Square test was statistically significant ($\chi^2(4) = 71.506$, $p < .001$), confirming that geopolitical focus significantly impacts how events influence a country's reputation.

Table 5: Distribution of Impact of Media Coverage on Country Reputation by Geopolitical Focus

		Impact of Media Coverage on Country Reputation						Total	
		Negative		Neutral		Positive			
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Geopolitical Focus	Domestic	180	70.3%	39	45.3%	84	38.5%	303	54.1%
	International	30	11.7%	30	34.9%	98	45.0%	158	28.2%
	Regional	46	18.0%	17	19.8%	36	16.5%	99	17.7%
Total		256	100.0%	86	100.0%	218	100.0%	560	100.0%

Domestic-focused coverage accounted for the majority (54.1%) of all media coverage, with a significant portion being negative (70.3%). Internationally focused coverage had the highest share of positive reporting (45.0%), indicating a more favorable portrayal of global events. Regional coverage was the least frequent (17.7%) and showed a more balanced negative, neutral, and favorable distribution.

The significant Chi-Square results confirm that geopolitical focus is crucial in shaping media portrayals of a country's reputation. Domestic events received overwhelmingly negative coverage (70.3%), revealing that national issues are framed more critically in Arab media. International events had the most positive representation (45.0%), likely reflecting a focus on diplomacy, global achievements, and economic partnerships. Regional events had a more balanced representation, with a mix of negative, neutral, and positive coverage, indicating that Arab media tends to present regional developments with more nuance.

6- Impact of Event Themes on Country Reputation in Media Coverage

A Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted to examine whether event themes significantly influence the impact of media coverage on a country's reputation. The analysis revealed significant differences in how various types of events were framed in the identified Arab media ($\chi^2(22) = 173.081$, $p < .001$), indicating that the impact of media coverage on a country's reputation varies significantly across

different event themes.

Table 6: Relationship Between Event Themes and Country Reputation

| | | Impact on Country Reputationn | | | | | | Total | |
| | | Negative | | Neutral | | Positive | | | |
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Event themes	Crime/Accident	24	9.4%	2	2.3%	0	0.0%	26	4.6%
	Crisis/Disasters	37	14.5%	9	10.5%	3	1.4%	49	8.8%
	Cultural and entertainment	4	1.6%	2	2.3%	29	13.3%	35	6.3%
	Diplomatic/Political\Military	120	46.9%	32	37.2%	84	38.5%	236	42.1%
	Economic	14	5.5%	5	5.8%	31	14.2%	50	8.9%
	Education	1	0.4%	0	0.0%	10	4.6%	11	2.0%
	Environment	13	5.1%	7	8.1%	5	2.3%	25	4.5%
	Health	15	5.9%	3	3.5%	2	0.9%	20	3.6%
	Social or humanitarian	12	4.7%	2	2.3%	8	3.7%	22	3.9%
	Sports	8	3.1%	20	23.3%	14	6.4%	42	7.5%
	Technology	3	1.2%	1	1.2%	15	6.9%	19	3.4%
	Travel and Tourism	5	2.0%	3	3.5%	17	7.8%	25	4.5%
Total		256	100.0%	86	100.0%	218	100.0%	560	100.0%

The most frequently covered theme was diplomatic, political, or military events (42.1%), with nearly half of the negative coverage (46.9%) and 38.5% of positive coverage falling under this category. Crisis or disasters (8.8%) and crime or accidents (4.6%) were primarily associated with negative coverage, reinforcing the media's tendency to highlight crises as damaging to a country's reputation.

Economic events (8.9%) received a relatively balanced distribution, with a notable 14.2% of positive coverage, indicating that economic achievements positively contribute to the country's reputation. Cultural and entertainment news (6.3%) was predominantly positive (13.3%), while topics related to sports (7.5%), technology (3.4%), and travel and tourism (4.5%) also leaned more positively. Education (2.0%) and health (3.6%) received minimal coverage, with education showing the highest percentage of positive coverage (4.6%) in its category.

The dominance of negative framing in political and military coverage further underscores how media prioritizes geopolitical tensions and power struggles, often portraying such events through a con-

flict-oriented lens. In contrast, countries investing in cultural influence and economic partnerships benefit from more positive and constructive media representation.

Crises, disasters, and crime-related events are predominantly associated with negative coverage, highlighting a media tendency to focus on instability and conflict. In contrast, economic achievements, cultural diplomacy, and tourism-related events are more likely to generate positive portrayals, reflecting the role of soft power and economic success in enhancing a country's reputation.

To answer RQ 3, analyzing how political, economic, and social changes impact media coverage tone, we conducted One-Way ANOVA to test the effect of event type on coverage tone. A Multiple Regression analysis was performed to examine how event type and country predict coverage tone.

7 - The Effect of Event Type on Coverage Tone

One-way ANOVA was conducted to determine whether different event types (political, economic, social, etc.) result in significantly different media tones (negative, neutral, positive).

Table 7: One-Way ANOVA Results for Event Type and Coverage Tone

Event Type	Coverage Tone		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Diplomatic/Political\Military	236	1.8347	.93753
Crisis/Disasters	49	1.1020	.42056
Crime/Accident	26	1.0385	.19612
Sports	42	2.2381	.72615
Environment	25	1.6400	.81035
Social or humanitarian	22	1.8636	.99021
Education	11	2.8182	.60302
Technology	19	2.5789	.83771
Economic	50	2.4000	.90351
Health	20	1.4000	.75394
Travel and tourism	25	2.4800	.82260
Culture and entertainment	35	2.7143	.71007
Total	560	1.9196	.94517

Note: Coverage Tone is coded as 1 = Negative, 2 = Neutral, 3 = Positive.

ANOVA Results

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	124.96	11	11.36	16.63	<.001
Within Groups	374.43	548	0.68		
Total	499.38	559			

The previous tables summarize the ANOVA results, showing that event type significantly influences media coverage tone, which in turn affects the country's reputation. The ANOVA test was statistically significant ($F(11, 548) = 16.63$, $p < .001$), indicating that event type has a significant effect on coverage tone. A Tukey post hoc test was conducted to compare differences between event types. Crisis/Disasters and Crime/Accidents had significantly more negative coverage than all other event types ($p < .001$). Economic, cultural, and tourism events received significantly more positive coverage than political, crisis, and crime events ($p < .001$). Education-related events had the highest mean positive coverage (2.81), followed by Culture and entertainment events (2.71). Political and military events (Mean = 1.83) had more balanced but slightly negative coverage than softer topics.

These findings reveal that negative coverage was most prevalent for crises, crime, and political/military topics, aligning with the media's focus on instability and conflict. Economic, Cultural, and tourism-related events were more positively framed, reinforcing the role of soft power and economic success in enhancing the country's reputation. The significant ANOVA results confirm that media framing of a country's reputation is event-driven, with specific event types leading to distinct variations in coverage tone and, consequently, the country's reputation.

8- Regression Analysis of Event Type and Country on Coverage Tone

A multiple linear regression analysis examined whether event type and country representation significantly predict coverage tone and, consequently, the country's reputation. The dependent variable was coverage tone (negative, neutral, positive), while the independent variables were event type and country representation. The following tables present the regression results.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Regression Analysis of Event Type and Country on Coverage Tone

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. Coverage Tone	1.92	0.95	1.00	.301	-.072
2. Event Type	4.31	3.84	.301	1.00	-.063

3. Country Rep-resentation	1.98	1.03	-.072	-.063	1.00

Note: p < .05 for significant correlations.

Table 9: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R²	Adjusted R²	SE of Estimate	F (df1, df2)	p-value
1	.306	.094	.090	.90143	28.79 (2, 557)	< .001

Table 10: ANOVA Results

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Regression	46.78	2	23.39	28.79	< .001
Residual	452.60	557	0.813		
Total	499.38	559			

Table 11: Regression Coefficients

Predictor	B (Unstandard-ized)	SE	β (Standardized)	t	p-value	95% CI (Lower - Upper)
Constant	1.700	.095	--	17.86	< .001	1.51 - 1.89
Event Type	0.073	.010	.298	7.38	< .001	0.054 - 0.093
Country	-0.049	.037	-0.053	-1.31	0.191	-0.121 - 0.024

The mean coverage tone was 1.92 (SD = 0.95), indicating that media coverage leans toward a slightly negative tone overall. The event type variable had a mean of 4.31 (SD = 3.84), while country representation had a mean of 1.98 (SD = 1.03).

The correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive correlation between event type and coverage tone (r = .301, p < .001), suggesting that certain event types are more likely to receive favorable coverage. A weak negative correlation between country representation and coverage tone (r = -0.072, p = .045) indicates that coverage tone varies slightly by country but not strongly or consistently.

The model was statistically significant (F(2, 557) = 28.79, p < .001), indicating that event type and country representation together significantly predict coverage tone. However, the model explains only 9.4% of the variance (R² = .094), suggesting other unmeasured factors influence media coverage tone. The ANOVA test confirms that the regression model significantly predicts coverage tone, reinforcing the role of event type and country representation in shaping media narratives. Event type was a significant predictor of coverage tone (B = .073, p < .001), meaning as event type increases (e.g., from crisis to cultural/economic events), coverage tone becomes more positive. Country representation was not a

significant predictor (B = -0.049, p = .191), indicating that variation in country representation does not significantly influence coverage tone when controlling for event type.

The residual statistics indicate that the predicted values ranged from 1.58 to 2.53, showing that the model predicts coverage tone within a reasonable range. The standardized residuals were normally distributed, with no extreme outliers.

These findings show that Event type is the strongest predictor of coverage tone, confirming that certain event types (e.g., cultural, economic, and tourism) receive more favorable coverage. In contrast, others (e.g., crises, crime, and political issues) are framed negatively. Additionally, country representation does not significantly influence coverage tone, indicating that media coverage tone is shaped more by the nature of the event than the country itself. The low R^2 (9.4%) indicates that while event type plays a role, other unexamined factors (e.g., media ownership, geopolitical context, editorial policies) contribute to media framing.

To examine if the country's reputation shifts over time, a correlation Analysis was conducted between time (publication year) and the impact of coverage on the country's reputation. Then a Trend Analysis was conducted to track shifts in the country's reputation over time and how the country's reputation changes from 2021 to 2024s

9 - Correlation Between Time (Publication Year) and Impact of Coverage on Country Reputation
A Pearson correlation analysis examined the relationship between the publication date and the Impact of Coverage on Country Reputation. The results indicate a significant negative correlation between the two variables, r(558) = -0.159, p < .001. This indicates that as the publication date progresses, the impact of coverage on a country's reputation tends to become less favorable. However, the correlation is weak, highlighting that while there is a statistically significant relationship, the strength of the association is relatively low.

Table 12: Correlation Between Publication Date and Impact of Coverage on Country Reputation

Correlations			
		Publication Date	Impact of Coverage on Country Reputation
Publication Date	Pearson Correlation	1	-.159**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	560	560

Impact of Coverage on Country Reputation	Pearson Correlation	-.159**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
		560	560

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure 1. Mean Reputation Scores by Publication Date
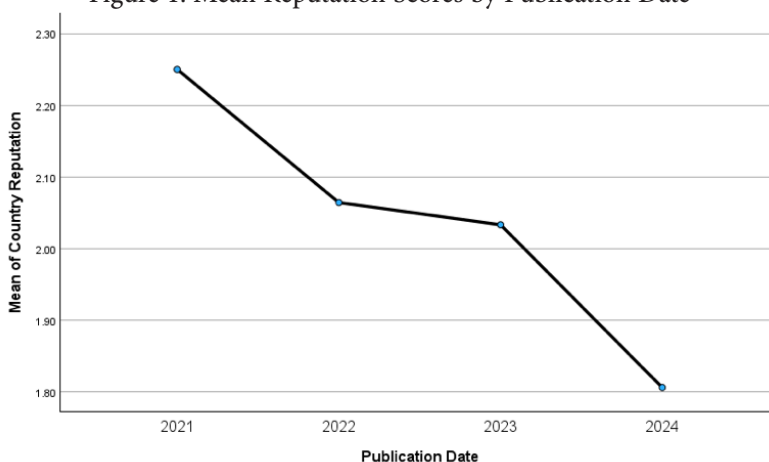
The Means Plot resulting from the One-Way ANOVA visually represents the average "country reputation" scores across different publication dates. By examining this plot, we can observe trends and differences in the reputation scores over time. The chart displays the means of "country reputation" for each publication date group, and any significant differences between groups should be visually noticeable.

Discussion

The primary aim of this study was to explore how media portrayals of countries shift over time and how geopolitical events and editorial priorities influence these shifts. The findings reveal that both country representation and the type of events reported significantly shape the impact of media coverage on a country's reputation. Political and economic factors contribute to variations in media portrayal, with South Korea experiencing considerable negative attention, particularly during political and military tensions. Moreover, the study affirms that Arab media often prioritize certain countries, reflecting geopolitical interests and economic status.

Media Representation and Country Development

One of the key findings of this study is that a country's level of development, economic indicators, and global reputation strongly influence the tone of coverage it receives. More developed countries generally receive extensive coverage emphasizing their technological achievements, strong economies, tourism, and social life, which builds their positive international reputation. In contrast, less developed countries often receive coverage limited to specific events—such as crises, natural disasters, or accidents—that dominate the news agenda. This suggests that media portrayals of these countries may lack a broader, more multifaceted perspective.

The study further found that editorial policies and media ownership significantly shape how countries are portrayed. For example, Al Jazeera Online exhibited a stronger tendency toward negative coverage, with over 22% of its articles categorized as hurting a country's reputation. On the other hand, Al-Ahram balanced its coverage more neutrally, with 18.2% of its articles showing a positive impact, the highest among the outlets analyzed. Al-Nahar, with the least positive coverage (6.1%), appeared to adopt a more critical approach.

The Role of Event Type

Event type plays a crucial role in shaping the tone of media coverage and, consequently, a country's reputation. The findings confirm that media coverage is event-driven, with political crises and conflicts typically receiving negative framing. For instance, coverage of South Korea's internal political turmoil in 2023 and 2024, including tensions with North Korea and the impeachment of the South Korean president, led to negative portrayals of the country. This shows how political crises can impact a country's global standing and reputation in the media, often overshadowing positive aspects such as cultural or economic achievements.

In contrast, positive coverage is more likely for economic achievements and cultural or entertainment events. For example, South Korea's entertainment industry, particularly K-drama, has played a significant role in promoting the country's image internationally, showcasing the power of soft diplomacy in enhancing national reputation. This finding highlights the importance of both economic and cultural diplomacy in shaping a country's media portrayal.

Geopolitical Influence and Regional Coverage

Geopolitical context also influences how countries are portrayed in the media. The study observed that international events typically receive more favorable coverage, especially when linked to economic di-

plomacy or global cooperation. Conversely, domestic events, particularly political or economic crises, tend to be framed more negatively, signaling a tendency toward critical reporting on national affairs. Regional events, such as conflicts or natural disasters, are covered with various perspectives, reflecting the complex and multifaceted nature of geopolitical relations in the Arab world.

The findings also suggest that the Arab media landscape is more inclined to frame countries through a crisis-oriented lens, often emphasizing instability, political tension, and economic struggles. This lens may result in a skewed understanding of the countries concerned, as media outlets focus more on crises than other aspects of national development or cultural contributions.

Impact of Media Ownership and Editorial Policies

The study found that editorial policies and ownership structures significantly impact the tone of media coverage. With its higher negative coverage, Al Jazeera Online seems to prioritize reporting on conflicts, crises, or controversial issues, which aligns with its editorial stance. As a government-affiliated outlet, Al-Ahram leaned more toward positive and neutral reporting, reflecting its role in promoting the country's official narrative. The selective and often critical approach of Al-Nahar, with the lowest proportion of positive coverage, further emphasizes how media outlets, depending on their ownership and editorial policies, can shape the portrayal of countries' reputations.

The Role of Economic and Political Events

In terms of economic and political events, the study found that economic crises, natural disasters, and political instability are often framed negatively in the media, contributing to the deterioration of a country's image. However, positive portrayals were associated with economic achievements and successful international collaborations, particularly those related to trade, tourism, and investment. This aligns with the notion that media portrayals are often influenced by economic and geopolitical interests, with economic performance serving as a key driver for positive media framing.

Conclusion and Future Research Directions

The findings underscore the role of media coverage in constructing national images, confirming that media portrayals of country reputations are primarily event-driven. Political crises and conflicts receive more negative coverage, while economic, cultural, and tourism-related events are framed positively. These variations in coverage tone ultimately shape public perceptions of countries in Arab media. The

study also suggests that media outlets with different ownership structures and editorial policies may have distinct approaches to framing a country's reputation.

Future research could explore the role of news production processes, organizational variables, and media ownership in shaping narratives about a country's reputation. Additionally, further studies are needed to investigate the interplay between soft power, economic performance, political stability, and media representation in order to better understand how these factors contribute to shaping international perceptions of countries.

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Appendix:

Samples of Published Media Materials