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Trump's Tariffs in the Media Frames: A Comparative Study of the Wall Street Journal and China Daily
through Entman's Framework
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Abstract

US tariff policy is one of the much-debated topic in international media from the start of 2025 concerning economic and geopolitical narratives. Media plays an important role in framing the issues and influencing the discussion around these topics in this heated environment. This research focuses on comparative framing analysis of WJS and Daily China with reference to Trump's tariff policy. This study employs a quantitative content analysis approach to examine how Trump's tariff policy was framed in China Daily and WJS. The focus is on identifying the types and frequency of frames in both newspapers to uncover differences in media representation between the U.S. and Chinese press. Endman's four framing function including problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and treatment has been employed. Finding shows that both the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) and China Daily mainly view the US tariff policy as harmful and blame Trump for its negative effects on American businesses and the global economy. The moral perspectives in WJS and Daily China show a Neo Liberal stance which depicts US tariffs as harmful to industries and global trade.

Keywords: *US Tariff, American Policy, Protectionism, Trade War, Global Economy.*

Introduction

The relationship between the United States and China is strategic as their strong ties have led to both economic collaboration and trade connection. In recent years, their trade disputes have caused significant conflicts (Alessandria et al., (2024). Tensions between the US and China grew before and during 2025. When US imposed high tariffs, China and other trading partners responded similarly. The global economy has become very uncertain due to this ongoing trade fight.

At the start of year 2025, U.S. President Trump had imposed tariffs through Executive Order 14298 which indicate a significant shift in how international trade is handled, perhaps starting a new phase of global economic rivalry and change. Among all countries, China faced the highest tariff rate under the International Emergency Economic Power Act (IEEPA). In April 2025, the average US tariff rate increased to 125% followed by the announcement of March 20 % on all Chinese imports which is the highest level since 1909 (US Federal Registrar, 2025). This is a big break from the global trade rules of WTO (World Trade Organization) which prohibits raising tariffs above agreed maximum level (GATT Article II) that have been followed for many years rather than a typical economic slowdown or a minor policy adjustment (Yale Budget Lab, 2025). The global economy has been thrown into considerable doubt by the return of strict US tariff measures such as the suggested "Trump Tariff 2025." Trade rules are now being used in a more aggressive approach known as Economic Statecraft which seems to be shifting international relations from fundamental economic rivalry. Experts also warn that it might have a severe impact on consumers, the American economy and trade. Media plays an important role in helping people understand the issues and influencing the discussion around these topics in this heated environment. As protectionism grows, nations may be seeking new trade links to safeguard their economies which could change global alliances and supply chains (Autor et al., 2023). Despite the major consequences of these policies and media's influence, we still don't have a clear understanding of how news outlets present

Trump trade policies 2025. It's crucial to analyze how the media show trade disputes to better understand power structure and agenda setting. Media framing is one of the fundamental concepts in communication research. Erving Goffman first used the concept of framing in 1974. He stated that people use "frames" in everyday life to comprehend their experiences. Highlighting certain aspects of a story is known as framing. This can affect how individuals see a problem, who they blame, how they feel about it and what measures they believe should be taken. In the same way, news organizations use particular frames to craft narratives that match specific political, social or ideological views. It shows the impact of news on how people perceive and understand events (Goffman, 1974). These frames don't just help people understand events, they also influence how they see the event's significance and how they connect it to broader social narratives (Wu, Liu & Yang, 2020). Media plays a powerful role in shaping how the public views global affairs. Media is one of the main sources of information during conflicts, covering both the conflict and the broader political developments. Media has a significant impact on public opinion because of this control over the information which is shared. The way an issue is framed by the media strongly affects how people react, make choices, and form opinions (Lecheler & Egelhofer, 2022). That's why it's crucial to study not just what the media covers about trade conflicts but also the way they present it, as this has a profound impact on public sentiment and judgments.

Even if earlier studies have demonstrated that media framing affects public opinion. US and Chinese media present divergent narratives during trade disputes (Matingwina, 2020). There is still a need for a detailed and data-based study to understand how these stories are actually built. It is yet unknown how US tariff 2025 by President Trump is portrayed by the significant US outlets such as The Wall Street Journal and a government-run Chinese newspaper such as China Daily in terms of Entman's framing analysis. It is important to comprehend how public opinion is formed, how national interests are represented and how political views influence the conversation about this important global economic topic without knowing how each side frames the issue.

This study focuses on comparative framing analysis of leading news organizations in the United States and China to explore media framing during the time of economic confrontation that decodes media policy. By comparing the two newspapers using Entman's four framing functions and showing how media messages, national goals and political viewpoints come together in the context of the trump tariff 2025. By applying Entman's Framing analysis, the study explored dominant frames used by both newspapers. It also explores how each news outlet constructs narratives on trade disputes that influence public opinion and affect global relations. By combining academic research with current news coverage, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive and unbiased picture of the relationship between media, economics and international politics in this critical global issue. This research will also contribute to closing that gap. This study focuses on how news organizations portray the complex subject of trade policy especially the 2025 tariff plan. It compares how The Wall Street Journal and China Daily cover the topic by highlighting the main ways each one presents the policy. The research looks at how they view the problem, its root causes and its consequences as well as the solution they suggest. By showing how media shapes public opinion on global trade, this research aids in our comprehension of the significance of considering different media viewpoints when thinking about trade laws.

In order to explore this topic, it is important to build theoretical foundation and examine prior researches. Framing theory is a central concept in media and communication studies that explores how information is selected, organized, and presented by the media to influence audience interpretation. First popularized by Erving Goffman (1974) in his work *Frame Analysis*, the concept of "framing" was further developed within mass communication by scholars such as Robert Entman (1993), who provided one of the most widely cited definitions in the field. This research is based on Robert Entman's Framing Theory (1993) which posits that the media influences how people see the world by deciding what to highlight. According to Entman, framing is the process of choosing specific elements of a scenario and emphasizing them in news coverage. This helps audiences understand the issues like its problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and treatment recommendation (Entman, 1993). As Gitlin explained that media frames are similar to common patterns used by the media to determine what to include, highlight or exclude. This help to organize news content through both words and images. People use frames as

"mental shortcuts" or "schemas of interpretation" for comprehending new information. They have an impact on the subjects that people see as important (agenda-setting), how they make sense of those topics (framing) and which details they focus on when making decisions (Gitlin, 1980). This is especially important in economic reporting, where the same economic facts may be presented in different ways depending on political beliefs or psychological factors.

Entman's Four Functions of Framing

The framework of news and media is clearly explained by Entman's (1993) model. It includes four key parts:

Problem Definition: This identifies the primary problem and highlights what needs to be addressed (Entman, 1993).

Causal Interpretation: This reveals who or what is at fault for the issue. It answers questions like "Who caused this?" or "What is to blame?" (Entman, 1993).

Moral Evaluation: This provides an opinion on whether the actions or people involved are right or wrong, good or bad (Entman, 1993).

Solution/Treatment Recommendation: This implies that what should be done to fix the problem including possible actions or responses (Entman, 1993).

Political Economy of Media

Political Economy Theory (PET) helps to clarify how power, ideology and media coverage affect economic policies. This theory examines the influence of economic systems on politics and the media according to the ideas of thinkers like Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci and later scholars such as Herman and Chomsky. The focus of this literature review is on the relationship between PET and media framing with a focus on how newspapers reported on US President Donald Trump's tariffs. His use of tariffs on countries like China and the European Union was a major part of his presidency. According to PET, the manner in which media presents these policies is a reflection of underlying political and economic objectives.

Smith, Marx and Weber developed classical political economy which examined the growth of capitalism and how social institutions and relationships shaped economic activities (Szyliowicz, 2004). These early concepts emphasized the value and exchange of various forms of capital such as human, social and cultural as well as the impact of society on economic choices (Kumekawa, 2023). The study of how laws, policies and institutions impact economic outcomes to become modern political economy. It clarifies which interests are reflected in trade policies. At the same time, media framing plays a key role in revealing how these interests and policies are conveyed to the public which shapes opinions and possibly influencing future decisions. The media environment is not neutral. Political power and economic interests determine its form. In order to fully comprehend it we must examine who controls the media, how it is supported and the regulations it abides by. Big media organizations often serve the interests of elites and their reporting may support either free trade or protectionist measures depending on what benefits them financially (McChesney, 2008).

Media framing and political economy theory both help to shape how people view and respond to trade policy discussions. According to political economy theory, trade policy debates are shaped by the actions of interest groups, politicians and institutional objectives influence trade policy discussions. The media plays a key role in this process by determining how issues are presented to the public. It uses specific narratives such as focusing on job losses, threats to national security or economic rivalry to highlight some policy options while downplaying others (Liu, Boukes, & De, 2022).

Studies have shown that the way trade is portrayed can significantly affect public opinion. When news reports associate trade with job losses (negative perspective) then people are less likely to support it. Conversely, the impact is less when the media emphasizes benefits such as lower rates (positive perspective). These framing effects are especially strong among individuals with less education or limited knowledge because media messages are a potent tool for interest groups and politicians to sway public opinion (Chatruc, Stein, & Vlaicu, 2020). Different methods of media framing are used to influence how people view trade policies such as deciding which details to highlight or ignore and using particular wording or tone. For instance, liberal newspapers such as The New York Times and The Washington Post often

criticized tariffs claiming that they harm global trade, increase costs for consumers and hurt long-term economic expansion (Krugman, 2018).

BBC and Al Jazeera are examples of media organizations that tailor their news reporting to their ownership, organizational structure and editorial principles. The BBC which is supported by being publicly funded, often critiques China's domestic issues on topics that reflect Western ideals like human rights and free speech. On the other hand, Al Jazeera English which is owned by Qatar frequently presents news in a manner that supports Qatar's stance and its influence in Middle Eastern affairs (Arif & Hayat, 2018). Corporate Interests: Newspapers controlled by major corporations with global business interests such as The Washington Post which is owned by Amazon's Jeff Bezos, often oppose tariffs because such policies could disrupt free-market operations. The way stories are framed in media outlets that are owned by the same parent company is frequently similar as their common business goals shape editorial choices. This influences the public that views and responds to international affairs and politics (Jenkins, Hayes, & Guardino, 2013).

Influence of Framing on Public Perception and Attitudes

The manner in which information is presented can influence people's thoughts or behavior is known as the framing effect. Public opinion can be greatly impacted by even minor changes in the way news is reported. Some researchers doubt the applicability of these results in real-life situations where people face a constant flow of different messages. Individuals who have previously taken in a lot of information are less likely to change their views in response to new messages (Johnson and John III, 2025). Occasionally, a "backfire effect" might occur where a message meant to create a positive impression instead triggers a negative reaction especially if it contradicts negative coverage that people are already familiar with (Fair and Hamza 2016).

This literature review examines how the media has covered tariff policy by analyzing studies published between 2018 and 2024. The majority of its coverage is on the United States and China with the focus on how newspapers in both countries present economic and political stories related to tariffs. This subject benefits from a thematic approach. The main trends and variations in the way tariffs are addressed are revealed in this analysis by grouping the research into main topic. By comparing American and Chinese media, it identifies three main themes: (1) Media framing and policy influence (2) Economic Framing of Trade Wars. (3) Geopolitical framing of trade war.

Media Framing and Policy Influence

The media plays an important role in assisting the public understand complicated topics particularly those related to economy. According to media framing theory, news outlets do more than just reporting facts. They influence public perception of reality. They do this by concentrating certain aspects of a story while omitting others which affects how public perceive and evaluate events. When studying about how the media reports on global matters such as trade disputes, framing theory is very helpful. It tells how newspapers with different histories and objectives such as the Wall Street Journal which takes a western, market focused approach and China Daily which reflects Chinese government influence, report on issues such as Trump's tariff policies in US and China relations. Instead of just reporting the news, these newspapers create such narratives that have a potential to influence public opinion and possibly influence international relations too (Fiveable, 2024). In the US, the way media frames tariff policies significantly influence how people understand them and what policy decisions are made. The media not only reflects current events but plays a role in forming the public's opinion about trade.

The media is crucial in shaping public opinion on trade issues and also the perspectives of policymakers and interest groups. By choosing how to present stories (a process known as framing), the media has the ability to influence which problems get prioritized and which solutions are considered. This leads to more support for protectionist trade policies like tariffs and import restrictions especially when media relies on conflict-based narrative that focuses on international competitors. A study of the New York Times reported prior to the 2002 US steel tariffs found that media framing helped build public support for tariffs. Policymakers were more likely to choose tariffs over other kinds of help for affected industries or workers because they saw that the public favored protectionism based on this coverage. According to trade policy uncertainty (TPU) measurements taken from news stories, company reports and actual tariff data, the

increased media attention on trade can hurt the economy. In the United States, when the media raises concerns about future tariffs the companies often reduce their investments and slow down their economic activity. Media coverage that highlights global competition and trade conflicts also make it easier for special interest groups to get their voices heard. These groups are more likely to influence policymakers to choose tariffs instead of more practical economic solutions if their demand align with the media's narrative on conflict (Svensson, 2003).

Economic Framing of Trade Wars

Media not only report on events but also influences thoughts and discourse on topics like trade regulations, especially tariffs. When economic concerns are viewed through the prism of trade policies, media coverage significantly influences public's perceptions and understandings. The public's narrative is highly impacted by the way media presents them. Khan et al. (2024) claim that the United States and China are engaged in a form of cold war due to their intense competition in both economic and technological domains. This conflict has resulted in lack of trust, tensions in different regions, and two different ideas about how the world should be run.

Hollihan, Liang, Zou, and Nguyen (2021) examined various forms of media, such as newspaper, television and social media posts by public figures. They used both number-based data and a deep look at how the content was written or shown from 2018-2020. Their results showed that U.S newspapers had different opinions. Liberal outlets like The New York Times and CNN were against the tariffs. They said that the tariffs could negatively impact the U.S economy and cause people to lose jobs. These sources also critiqued Trump's methods and suggested that the U.S might be violating regulations. On the other hand, conservative outlets such as Fox News and The Wall Street Journal supported the tariffs, claiming that they were necessary to protect the country. Additionally, Feng (2020) points out that Chinese media frequently attempts to justify itself, portraying the tariffs as a component of a larger strategy by the U.S to restrain China's economic development.

This differs from the way it is presented in the U.S. In the U.S tariffs are viewed as a smart approach to address China's increasing economic influence. However, in China, tariffs are depicted as political assaults. Chinese media also discusses how these measures impact global trade and relations with other nations, particularly in Europe and other trade partners. On the contrary, Chinese media such as Caixin portrays Trump's trade war as a political strategy to stop China from emerging as a dominant global power. Unlike American media, Chinese media emphasizes on U.S as a danger and uses assertive language about China's freedom and pride. This perspective coincides with the message of the Chinese Communist Party, which supports economic nationalism. It means that fighting back through economic actions is seen as okay if it helps protect the country's interests. The information regarding China-US trade dispute indicates that democratic nations are more engaged in the matter and discuss the tactics behind it more frequently on the other hand, nations with single party governance mention strategy less in their news reporting.

Geopolitical Framing of Trade Wars

Researchers are paying more attention to the US-China trade war especially how media in various nations portray the economic and political consequences of US trade policies. The tariffs introduced by former President Donald Trump, notably those aimed at China, are not seen just as economic policies but also as having global impact as the global trade becomes more connected. Scholars have looked at how different national media cover these policies and how their coverage reflects larger global views and perspectives. Trump's tariff policies have had major effect on the world economy as shown in numerous studies. The extent to which global trade is interconnected was found by Robinson, S., & Thierfelder, K. (2024). They examined how protectionist trade actions like tariffs can have wide reaching effects on global trade not just on US and China. (Ha & Willnat, 2022) also studied how newspapers in the United States and China reported on the trade war. They found that US newspapers focused on the trade through "economic consequences" lens. This included issues like unstable markets, supply chain problems and challenges faced by global businesses. Their research which used surveys and content analysis revealed that how newspapers framed what people think of its worldwide implications. The trade war was more likely to be viewed by the people who read articles using conflict or economic frameworks as a serious global issue impacting international affairs and economic stability. Additionally, Blyth (2016) also pointed out that U.S.

media often presents trade protectionism as a way to deal with domestic economic difficulties while also showing tariffs as a tool to stay powerful globally especially in response to China's rising influence. For instance, The Wall Street Journal, which caters a business focused audience, usually shows a pro-business perspective. It often highlights how tariffs help US industries and create jobs while paying less attention to global concerns. Conversely, Chinese media outlets often focus on national interests and show how the tariffs can harm the country.

In contrast, European and Chinese media outlets reports on the tariffs with a more global perspective. They concentrate on how Trump's economic policies can affect the entire world, not just United States and China. For instance, Chinese media outlets like Caixin often describe the tariffs as a part of a larger political strategy. They propose that the US is using tariffs in order to advance its overall geopolitical aims, not just for trade reasons.

The trade war was described in US newspapers as creating uncertainty in global financial markets. The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal featured front-page stories showing how tariff announcements caused Dow Jones to drop and how the businesses were forced to cut their profit because of the increased expenses from tariffs.

This research explores how The Wall Street Journal and Caixin framed Trump's tariff policy by comparing two main perspectives that are economic and geopolitical. These well-known newspapers represent opposite sides of the trade war and provide different view on the world. The Wall Street Journal which typically supports business interests focuses on how trade policies affect financial markets and investor confidence. Caixin, one of China's top financial news outlets, is impacted by the government but also has an international audience. For this reason, it tries to balance viewpoints with global economic concerns. Economic Expert Commentary Reporters backed up their reports by including interviews with economists and research from think tanks. For example, predictions from organizations like the Brookings Institution and the IMF were used to show potential losses in global GDP. These experts helped to clarify that the trade war had worldwide effects, not just between the US and China.

The language used in news articles was often strong and urgent. Words like "economic blowback," "global slowdown," and "unintended ripple effects" were commonly used. Reporters used powerful matters such as "economic battlefield," "shockwaves," and "supply chain chaos" to highlight the far-reaching effects of trade war on global economy.

The researcher deigned following question to investigate present study 1) Which of Entman's framing functions is used most often in editorials coverage of President Trump trade policy 2025? 2) What are the key ideas or messages emerging in editorials of WJS and China daily about US tariffs?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses quantitative content analysis as its method which counts and compares the frequency with specific themes or frames occur in news articles. It examines how Trump's tariff policy was covered by The Wall Street Journal and China Daily. The aim is to identify how frequently different viewpoints or various kinds of messages were used in each article and to determine whether the American and Chinese media presented different perspective on the same subject.

Sampling Technique

The study uses a purposive sampling technique which means intentionally selecting news articles from both the newspaper that are exclusively about Trump's tariff policy. All relevant editorial articles to the subject are selected.

Data Collection

The editorial articles were chosen from March 2 to May 11, 2025 covering all major events of the US China trade conflict during that time were included.

Population

Each and every editorial related to the US China trade war, Trump's tariff policy or any trade related discussion published on the websites of The Wall Street Journal and China Daily is included.

Tools. Coding and operationalization

Researcher have developed coding sheet based on Entman's elements. Further Explicit textual evidence was used for

Frames and Codes

1. How is the issue of Trump's tariff policy constructed as a problem? (U.S. Tariffs are the problem 01, China's trade policies are the problem 02, Global economic disruption 03, No clear problem defined 04)
2. Who or what is blamed for the problem? (Blame on U.S. (e.g., Trump/Navarro 01, Blame on China 02, blame on global economic system 03, Shared or neutral cause 04)
3. What judgment is placed on the actors and their actions? U.S. policy is wrong/aggressive 01, China is cooperative/responsible 02, Both are acting in self-interest 03, Morally neutral tone 03)
4. What solutions are proposed or implied? Negotiate/mutual cooperation 01, Maintain or increase tariffs 02, No clear solution offered 03, De-escalate through diplomacy 04)

Frame 1 Problem Definition

Conceptual

"The act of identifying the core issue or root cause of a situation." (Entman, 1993)

Operational Definition of frames

Researcher assigned each article a code based on how it addressed the main cause of the trade dispute. The search for clear or hidden clues in the wording, phrases such as "root cause," "core problem" or "originated from" was used to accomplish this

Code 1: U.S. tariffs framed as central problem (e.g., "Trump's tariffs triggered this crisis")

Code 2: China's policies as central problem (e.g., "China's IP theft is the issue")

Code 3: Global systemic factors as problem (e.g., "WTO failures caused the dispute")

Code 4: No causal attribution (e.g., "Trade tensions escalated")

Frame 2 Causal Interpretation

Conceptual

"Attributing responsibility or blame for the problem." (Entman, 1993)

Operational Definition

Researcher gave each article a code based on who was held responsible for the trade war. We searched for signs in the language such as action words like "provoked" or "ignited" and blame words like "fault" or "responsibility."

Code 1: Blame on U.S. actors (e.g., "Navarro recklessly escalated tensions")

Code 2: Blame on China (e.g., "Beijing violated trade rules")

Code 3: Blame on systemic forces (e.g., "Global capitalism failed")

Code 4: Shared/neutral attribution (e.g., "Both sides miscalculated")

Frame 3 Moral Evaluation

Researcher assigned each article a code based on how it described the actions of the US and China. Researcher searched for powerful and emotional words especially adjectives and adverbs that indicated if something was correct or incorrect, fair or unfair. We excluded neutral or factual statements.

Conceptual

"Making ethical judgments about actors/actions." (Entman, 1993)

Operational Definition

Code 1: U.S. actions criticized (e.g., "Aggressive U.S. tariffs")

Code 2: China praised (e.g., "China responded reasonably")

Code 3: Mutual self-interest noted (e.g., "Both pursued national interests")

Code 4: Neutral tone (e.g., "Tariffs increased by 10%")

Frame 4 Treatment Recommendation

Conceptual

"Proposing solutions or responses to the problem." (Entman, 1993)

Operational Definition

Researcher assigned each article a code based on whether it suggested a course of action or solution. Researcher searched for words that recommend or imply something like “should,” “must” or “we suggest.”

Code 1: Negotiation/cooperation (e.g., "Dialogue is essential")

Code 2: Pro-tariff stance (e.g., "Maintain tariffs to pressure China")

Code 3: No solution offered (e.g., "The deadlock continues")

Code 4: Diplomatic de-escalation (e.g., "Resume talks immediately")

Results

Table 1 Frequency of editorials related to tariff in WJS and Daily China Newspaper

| Newspaper | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------|-----------|------------|
| WJS | 53 | 58.9 |
| Daily China | 37 | 41.1 |

Note. Table shows total 53 articles were published in WJS between 2 March to 11 May. However, China published less editorials related to recent Trump tariff policy.

Table 2 Frequency of frame Problem Definition

| Valid | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|
| YES | 90 | 100.0 |

Note. Table shows all editorial articles describe Tariff as problem.

Table 3 Frequency of frame Moral Evaluation

| Valid | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|
| YES | 90 | 100.0 |

Note. Table shows all editorials contain frame of Causal Interpretation.

Table 4 Frequency of frame Moral Evaluation

| Valid | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|
| YES | 90 | 100.0 |

Note. Table shows all editorials contains frame of Moral Evaluation

Table 5 Frequency of frame Problem Solution

| Newspaper | Problem Definition | | | Total |
|--------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| | U.S. Tariff is the problem | Global Economic Disruption | No Clear Problem Defined | |
| WSJ | 49 | 3 | 1 | 53 |
| Daily China | 25 | 12 | 0 | 37 |
| Total | 74 | 15 | 1 | 90 |

| Valid | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|
| No | 36 | 40 |
| Yes | 54 | 60 |
| Total | 90 | 100 |

Note. Table 5 shows that all 54 editorial suggested solution of problem

Table 6 Comparison of themes of Problem Definition between WJS and Daily China

Note. Table shows that 54 editorials recommended Solution of tariff. Note table shows that 49 editorials from WJS shows U.S tariff is problem. However, 12 editorials from Daily China highlights that global economic disruption is problem. And no newspaper showing that China policies are problems.

Chi Square

| Test | χ^2 / Value | df | p-value |
|------|------------------|----|---------|
|------|------------------|----|---------|

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|---|-------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 0.706 | 1 | 0.401 |
|---------------------------|-------|---|-------|

Note. The Reacher did not find a significant p-value against Pearson Chi/square.

Table 7 Comparison of themes of frame Causal Interpretation between WJS and Daily China

| | | Causal Interpretation | | Total |
|-----------|-------------|-------------------------------------|--|-------|
| | | Blame on U.S. (e.g., Trump/Navarro) | | |
| Newspaper | WSJ | 53 | | 53 |
| | Daily China | 37 | | 37 |
| Total | | 90 | | 90 |

Note. Table shows that both editorials blame bad policy of Trump and Navarro

Chi-Square Tests

| | Value |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | . ^a |
| N of Valid Cases | 90 |

Note. No statistics are computed because Causal interpretation is a constant.

Table 8 Comparison of themes of frame Moral Evaluation frame between WJS and China Daily

| | | Moral Evaluation | | Total |
|-----------|-------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|
| | | U.S. policy is wrong/aggressive | Both are acting in self-interest | |
| Newspaper | WSJ | 52 | 1 | 53 |
| | Daily China | 37 | 0 | 37 |
| Total | | 89 | 1 | 90 |

Note. Table shows 52 articles blames U.S policy while only one article shows that both are working in their self-interest.

Chi Square

| | Value | Df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|--------------------|-------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | .706 ^a | 1 | .401 |

Note. Chi square value suggests there is not strong difference between between variables

Table 9 Comparison of themes of frame Problem Solution between WJS and China Daily

| | | Problem Solution | | | | Total |
|-----------|-------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|
| | | Negotiate/mutual cooperation | Maintain or increase/decrease tariffs | No clear solution offered | De-escalate through diplomacy | |
| Newspaper | WSJ | 13 | 1 | 32 | 7 | 53 |
| | Daily China | 32 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 37 |
| Total | | 45 | 1 | 36 | 8 | 90 |

Note. Results show 13 editorial articles from WJS shows that negotiation is solution of this problem. However, in 32 editorials offers n clear solution of the issue.

Chi Square

| | Value | df |
|-------------------------|---------------------|----|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 33.515 ^a | 3 |
| N of Valid Cases | 90 | |

Note. Chi square value is not significant which shows all frames are not used equally

Discussion

This study explores how The Wall Street Journal and China Daily portrayed Trump’s tariff policy in their editorials. It highlighted the differing narratives based on their country and beliefs.

Daily China framed China as a victim of American aggression and promoted national resistance while WJS offered a more critical stance that highlighted the necessity of free markets. The conclusions align closely with the political economy of media theory. Owned by News Corp, the WSJ's views tariff policy as a danger to the stability of the market and the expansion of business. WSJ emphasizes on the ideology of free market capitalism reflecting economic interests and editorial independence. In contrast, China Daily framed the issue as a strategic communication tool for the government. The editorial in China Daily encourages national unity, support for Chinese government leadership and global leadership to counter US policy.

Two major theories i.e. Political Economy Theory and Agenda Setting Theory are used in this research to examine how the media has covered Trump's tariff policies. Both these theories help us understand how media outlets shape public mind around the topic. The study reveals that China Daily emphasized themes of national solidarity and sovereignty and portrayed the tariffs as unlawful trade violations while WSJ used harsh terms like "dumbest tariff" and "trade war" to highlight the policy's financial risk rather than political dimensions.

The findings support the Political Economy of Media theory illustrating how both newspapers selectively highlight different elements of the tariff policy according to their institutional affiliations and national interests. As a privately owned commercial media organization, The Wall Street Journal provides diverse viewpoints and open debate particularly targeting corporate leaders and policy influencers. On the other hand, China Daily being a state-run media arm of the Chinese Communist Party's publicity department consistently frames the issue within the government's official narrative promoting state policies and ideas.

In this context, both Political Economy and Agenda Setting theories provide a deep understanding of media framing. Agenda Setting Theory shows how these media outlets affect the public perception and how people understand those topics while Political Economy helps us see how money and ownership influence what media organizations choose to show. When combined together, these theories show that media framing does two main things. It shows the power dynamics within the media companies and also shapes how public sees and talks about important issues.

Past studies have demonstrated the way news is presented by media outlets like WJS has strong impact on how public form their opinions. For example, Shoemaker & Reese (2014) claim that what is written in editorials is shaped by the media structure, its values and the interests of the country. In the same way, D'Angelo's (2002) notion that the media and powerful organizations use framing to support and defend national policies is confirmed by the discrepancies seen in how the newspapers report the news.

Although WJS often criticizes leaders, this is not an unbiased action rather it is influenced by power dynamics and ideologies that support business interests (Entman, 2007). In contrast, China Daily is run by the government and typically shares news that aligns with the stance and objective of Chinese government (Matingwina, 2020).

Since editorials are just one type of opinion writing, this research might not show each and every way how news is presented across other media platforms. Additionally, the study looked at only two newspapers and covered a short time period which makes it more difficult to generalize its findings to other situations. Even though the researchers made an effort to remain unbiased, the differences in language and culture might have affected how the content was understood.

Limitation

Our findings indicate that both the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) and China Daily mainly view the US tariff policy as harmful and blame Trump for its negative effects on American businesses and the global economy.

The Wall Street Journal doesn't often connect its views on tariff policy to Trump's protectionism but it holds Trump and his trade advisor accountable for negative effects. On the other hand, China Daily attributes these issues to US imperialism and protectionism. The moral perspectives in WJS and Daily China show a Neo Liberal stance which depicts US tariffs as harmful to industries and global trade. China Daily portrays China as a responsible partner advocating for cooperation and reflecting influence of state media on its narrative of sovereignty while WJS highlights self-interests from both sides. This study adds

some useful contributions to the field of media and communication studies. It helps us to see how the different newspapers like The Wall Street Journal which is a western business newspaper and China Daily which is influenced by the Chinese government covers the same global issue. And it also examines how these newspaper talks about the trade war using Entman's Framing Theory. This means it studies how they explain the problem, who they hold responsible, what opinions or values they use to evaluate it and what solutions they suggest. The research demonstrates how the news is often shaped based on the interests of the nation.

The news coverage that this research examined was only restricted to a short period around the time the 2025 tariff policy was announced and implemented. It might not reflect how the media coverage changes over a longer time as politics or the economy change. Additionally, this research also uses Entman's four framing functions as a coding framework. Although this approach is commonly used, it may overlook small details or unique style of reporting that are found in Chinese media which is controlled by the government.

Future research should look at different types of media like news stories, opinion articles and TV or radio news to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how news is framed. As the relations between US and China evolve, longer studies might reveal how media framing shifts. In order to comprehend the impact of media framing on public opinion, it would also help to study how people react to these messages. Lastly, looking at how social media spreads or challenges these messages may give important insights into how today's media works.

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