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Framing Leadership during Campaign Period: An Appraisal System Analysis of Op-eds during the 2022 Philippine Elections

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Abstract

This study examines the framing of leadership qualities among the top two presidential candidates using Martin and White's (2005) and Martin and Rose's (2007) Appraisal System in the context of the 2022 Philippine elections. The study involved the collection of 78 op-eds gathered through purposive sampling based on the inclusion-exclusion criteria, which was then followed by the application of Fairclough's (2010, 2015) three steps of critical discourse analysis: textual, processing, and social. The findings indicate that by employing emotional language, assessing leadership qualities and appreciation, and utilizing graduation devices, op-eds can sway public opinion and electoral results. Diverse sources and voices can facilitate a comprehensive and balanced discussion, enabling readers to develop their assessment of the candidates. The media's important function in political candidate evaluation should include emotionally balanced reporting, credible assessments, nuanced analyses, and inclusion of a range of voices to limit diminishing trust in the media and reduce polarization. This paper demonstrates that the Appraisal System Framework can be an instrument for leadership evaluation, language assessment, and critical media consumption. Future studies should investigate the interaction of social media and traditional media influence in their evolving forms and platforms to shape voter opinions.

Keywords: Philippine Elections, Appraisal System Framework, Evaluative Language, Leadership Qualities, Voter Perceptions

Introduction

The 2022 Philippine elections were a significant event, with presidential candidates competing for the highest office. Media coverage may have played a crucial role in shaping public perception of the candidates for election. May 2022 marked notable political changes, with then President Ferdinand "Bongbong" or "BBM" Marcos Jr. winning the presidency and former Vice President Maria Leonor "Leni" Gerona Robredo finishing second. During the campaign period, it highlighted the evolving media landscape, with social media influencing candidate-voter engagements (Arugay & Baquisal, 2022). With over 90% of Filipinos

primarily getting news through social media (Newman et al., 2024), underscoring the media's impact on public discourse.

Op-eds may be particularly important during election seasons, offering diverse opinions and contributing significantly to political dialogues by suggesting reviews, endorsements, and evaluations of candidates and policies (Coppock et al., 2018). Credible newspapers like the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Manila Bulletin, and The Philippine Star have established influential columns and opinion sections that may guide public perception and foster informed civic engagement (Newman et al., 2024). Understanding the contemporary issues evident in the recent elections is essential for comprehending the impact of the Philippine media landscape's influence on political discourse.

Media framing, especially through evaluative language, can shape public perceptions of the leadership qualities of political candidates. The Appraisal System Framework by Martin and White (2005) provides a useful tool for analyzing this evaluative language. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) in Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), examines language in its social functions, concentrating on grammar, discourse, and social context. It features three key functions: enacting relationships, representing experiences, and organizing discourse (Martin & Rose, 2007). This study emphasizes how op-ed writers use language to position readers to have a positive or negative view of the presidential candidate, particularly focusing on "tenor," which relates to the interpersonal function and social positioning of individuals (White, 2021).

The purpose of this study was to analyze how the leadership qualities of presidential candidates were framed in op-eds during the 2022 Philippine elections using the Appraisal System Framework. This analysis aimed to uncover the evaluative language used and its impact on public perception by answering these research questions:

1. How are the leadership qualities of presidential candidates framed in op-eds during the 2022 Philippine elections using the Appraisal System Framework?

2. How does the framing of leadership qualities of presidential candidates, through the lens of the appraisal system framework, in op-eds impact voter perceptions?

This study contributes to the understanding of media framing in political communication, particularly in the context of leadership evaluation. By applying the Appraisal System Framework, the research provides insights into the linguistic strategies used in op-eds to shape public perceptions of presidential candidates (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005).

The findings can inform media practitioners, political analysts, and scholars about the role of evaluative language in influencing voter attitudes and engagement (Lecheler & de Vreese, 2018; Rajan & Murphy, 2024). Additionally, the study offers a methodological contribution by demonstrating the application of the Appraisal System Framework in political discourse analysis and evaluating the leadership qualities of political candidates.

Literature Review

Framework in Evaluative Language

By applying the Appraisal System Framework, this research provides insights into the linguistic strategies used in op-eds to shape public perceptions of presidential candidates. The Appraisal System provides a framework for evaluating how writers employ attitudinal elements (affect, judgment, and appreciation) to frame the leadership qualities of presidential candidates, assessing intensity, and examining sources of engagement, positioning readers (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). This study examined the influence of media language on political communication, particularly in assessing candidates for leadership during elections.

Media Framing in Political Communication

Lecheler and de Vreese (2018) emphasized the importance of news framing effects in influencing citizens' thinking about political, economic, and social issues. They suggested that framing has the power to highlight which elements of a topic are important, drive evaluations, support policies, and affect electoral behavior. Framing theory has focused on the essence of an issue, directing attention to specific events within a context of meaning, influencing individuals and organizations, and shaping how they process information (Magdin, 2024). Rajan and Murphy (2024) defined political framing as the process by which politicians, campaign strategists, and media outlets shape public perception of issues, policies, and candidates. Thus, the appraisal system facilitates a more intricate examination of interpersonal meanings in language, which can augment the frame analysis, which prioritizes the media's framing of events or topics.

Social Media's Influence during Elections

Analysts called the 2022 national elections in the Philippines the "most significant election in the Southeast Asian nation's recent history" (Cruz, 2024, para. 1). Cruz (2024) stated that since 1987, the May 2022 election was the most polarized and also the most participated in, with a high registered voter turnout of 83%. The main consequence of influence operations in 2022 is the creation of parallel public spheres or simply having two separate information ecosystems aligned with hardened political identities (Ong et al., 2022). In the United States, the 2024 presidential debates evolved to reflect broader changes in the political landscape, particularly in media influence, political polarization, and narrative framing (Rajan & Murphy, 2024).

Ong et al. (2022) revealed that the influence of legacy media as gatekeepers has declined as individuals interact with news materials that reinforce their political identity, resulting in political conflicts and social media initiatives. Accordingly, votes determine elections, and the strategies of framing and reframing are essential for resonating with voters' sentiments, highlighting the need to comprehend the interactions between media and voters (Lecheler & de Vreese, 2018). During the US 2016 presidential election political campaign period, Sahly et al. (2019) examined cross-platform differences in social media, and their study

showed that conflict and morality frames attracted retweeting behaviors on Twitter, and emotional frames attracted favoriting behaviors. In contrast, Facebook engagement did not show significant data between Trump and Clinton's supporters (Sahly et al., 2019). This provides a gap to be filled in bridging social media and traditional media in discourses during the Philippine elections.

Framing Narrative in Modern Media

The study conducted by Ampon and Salathong (2024) enhanced the expanding literature on message and platform studies, concentrating on transmedia and political messaging techniques. Recently, Rajan and Murphy (2024) highlighted that framing in political storytelling connects candidates with voters emotionally, using different narratives like Trump's fear and insecurity or Harris' unity and healing. This expands to Cruz's (2024) review of present-day social media use that fostered moral polarization by creating echo chambers reinforcing existing beliefs, leading to self-righteousness and demonizing opposing views and sacrificing nuance and critical thinking. These studies emphasize the importance of understanding and addressing political messaging in today's world, especially through media framing.

Mayo and Taboada's (2017) study on Cosmopolitan's online coverage of the 2014 US midterm elections found high intensification in readers' opinions and strong negative judgments, while the magazine's pieces on political issues were more nuanced. This underscored the assessment of attitudes and the representation of ideological stances in discourse. Ross and Caldwell's (2020) research on Donald Trump's Twitter language employed the appraisal analytical framework to examine his tweets preceding and following his inauguration. They found that by employing an analytical framework, Trump tended to attack and undermine Hillary Clinton's persona using emotional expressions and grammatical constructs. The current study explored multiple op-eds, offering a broader, more nuanced framing through evaluative language.

Bridging Gaps through the Lens of the Appraisal System Framework

These studies emphasize the importance of understanding and addressing political messaging in today's world, especially through the lens of media framing. Frames play a critical role in how news is perceived and acted upon, highlighting the necessity of mastering framing techniques (Magdin, 2024). Rajan and Murphy (2024) examined the development of presidential debates and how media influences political narratives. Magdin (2024) emphasized the significance of framing in elections and its impact on voters' perspectives; however, it did not provide data, which this present study aimed to uncover. In the analytical framework of the appraisal system, positive, negative, and amplification evaluations of US presidential candidates were revealed (Mayo & Taboada, 2017; Ross & Caldwell, 2020). Cruz (2024) proposed solutions such as moral reframing, empathy, education, and media literacy to bridge the moral divide, underlining media's influence on public perception.

Despite extensive research on news framing and political communication, several gaps remain. Firstly, the framing of leadership qualities during election campaigns lacked detailed analysis. Second, most of the research is conducted in Western contexts, with little emphasis on non-Western environments such as the Philippines, underscoring the necessity for context-specific insights. Third, the Appraisal System Framework could be an effective tool for analyzing evaluative language and is underutilized in political communication research, especially in evaluating op-eds.

Moreover, although there is considerable study about social media's role, like Ong et al.'s (2022), understanding of its impact on traditional media framing can be explored. To address these gaps, this study aimed to validate theoretical models through empirical research during electoral campaigns. This study analyzed leadership framing in op-eds during the 2022 Philippine elections, illustrated the applicability of the Appraisal System Framework, and emphasized the role of traditional media in shaping perceptions of leadership qualities to better navigate the demands of the current media landscape.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative content analysis approach, utilizing the Appraisal System Framework by Martin and White (2005) to analyze the evaluative language in op-eds. The focus is on how the leadership qualities of presidential candidates are framed during the 2022 Philippine elections. Grounded in Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and the Appraisal System Framework, this study examined media positioning during campaign seasons. With the help of Fairclough's (2010, 2015) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with SFL, the research studied how language affects social practices, power, and ideology from employing different perspectives. Collectively, by utilizing these approaches, the study analyzed the evaluative language used by op-ed writers, focusing on how language expresses attitude, negotiates relationships, and positions readers. The integration of the Appraisal System Framework may enable a nuanced analysis of how writers construct arguments and position themselves to a grounded, informed opinion.

Research Sampling

The study analyzed op-eds from major Philippine newspapers with online news platforms published during the campaign period of the 2022 elections. The inclusion criteria are op-eds that specifically and extensively discuss the leadership qualities of presidential candidates. The study focuses on op-eds about the two main presidential candidates, with titles consisting of names (BBM and Leni) and campaign keywords during the May 2022 elections. All collected data consists of published op-eds from the campaign period, which ran from February 8, 2022, to May 7, 2022. Given data limitations and exclusion criteria, the articles without keywords related to the presidential candidates and the op-eds selected for text analysis are only those published opinion pieces written in English. The researcher accessed online archives of four major Philippine newspapers: Inquirer.net (Philippine Daily Inquirer), Manila

Bulletin, Philstar.com (The Philippine Star), and The Manila Times. A purposive sample of 78 op-eds was selected to ensure a comprehensive analysis (see Figure 1).

Data Collection

Op-eds, opinions, or published columns are the primary data sources in this study, collected from the top four Philippine newspapers with online versions: Inquirer.net, Manila Bulletin, Philstar.com, and The Manila Times. The op-eds were retrieved from the archives of these newspapers, focusing on the period from the start of the official campaign season to the day before the election.
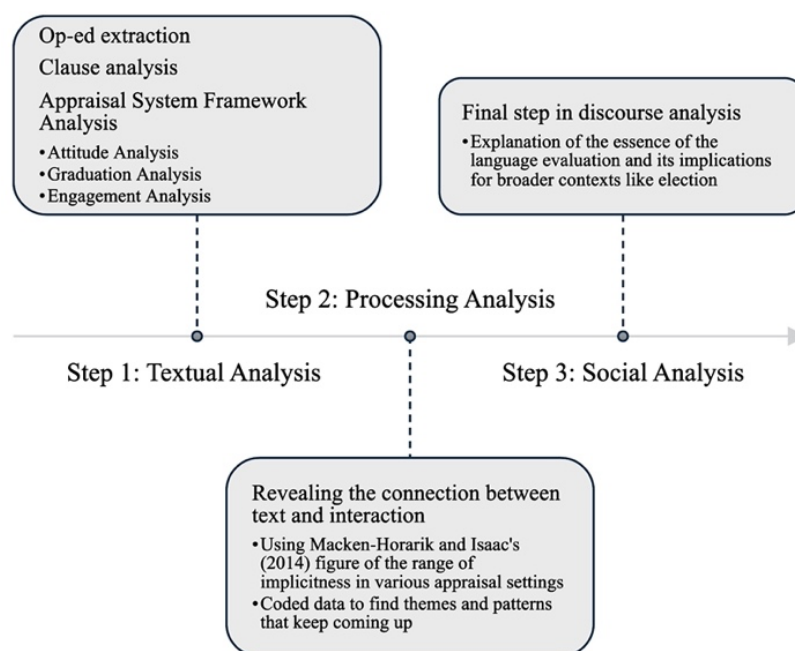
Figure 1

Op-eds Published by the newspaper about the candidates
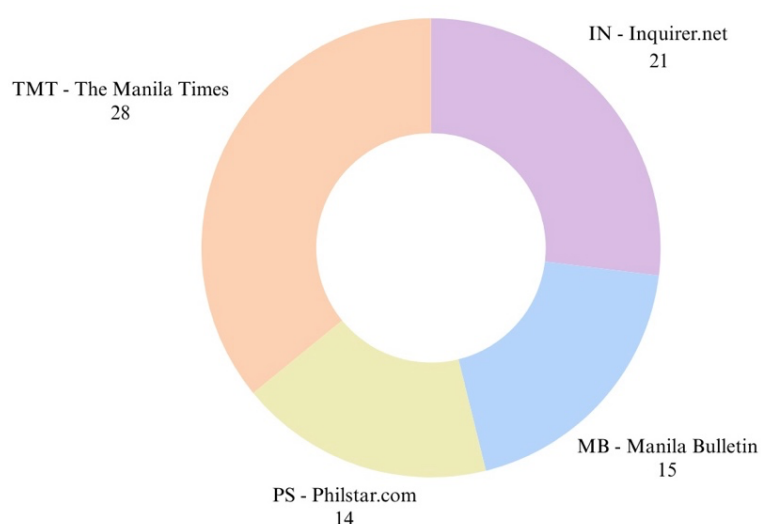
Note: The illustration above was made by the researcher to show the number of op-eds gathered from each of the online websites of the stated newspapers.

Data Processing Analysis

The data analysis process for Fairclough's (2010, 2015) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) involves several key steps (see Figure 2). The Appraisal System Framework was used to categorize and analyze the evaluative language in the op-eds, including three main subsystems: attitude, graduation, and engagement. A coding scheme based on the Appraisal System Framework was adapted to analyze the op-eds systematically (see Figure 3).

Figure 2

Key Steps in Critical Discourse Analysis

Note: This figure outlines the data analysis process followed in this study.

Macken-Horarik and Isaac's (2014) illustrated the processing analysis within the continuum of attitudes, highlighting the interplay between explicit and implicit attitudes and how text patterns shape lexical evaluation choices. These methodological frameworks facilitate both deductive and inductive analysis, allowing for a comprehensive examination of data while remaining open to emerging patterns and insights.

The coding process has used the appraisal system framework (see Figure 3) in the execution of the coding process within the textual analysis. **Attitude** assessments are in bold, *graduation* devices are in italics, and engagement sources are underlined.

Figure 3

Appraisal System Analysis Framework
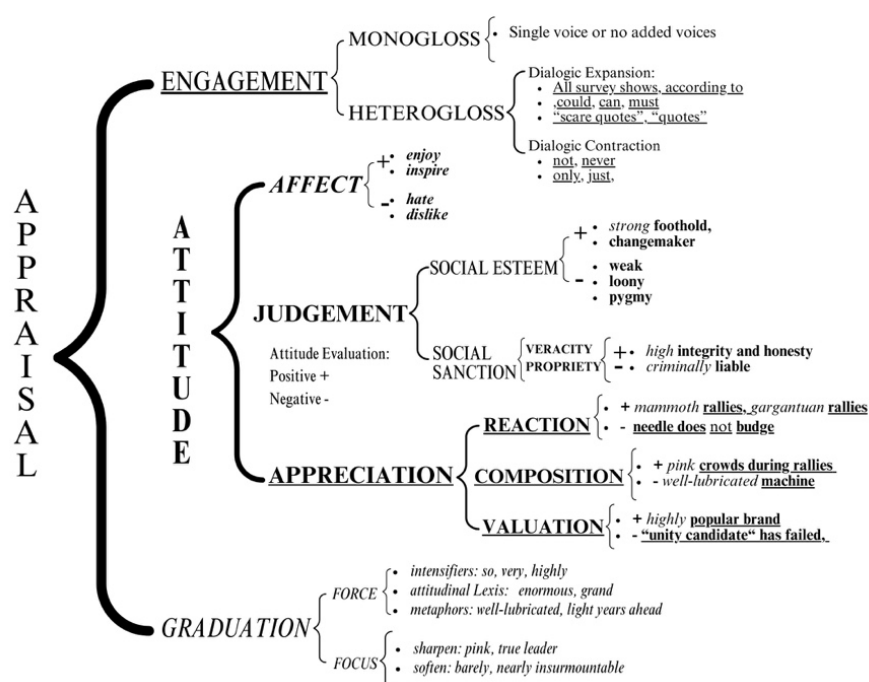
Note: The above illustration presents the study's coding and processing of data using the Appraisal System Framework.

To ensure inter-coder reliability, three experts in the English language, SFL, and the appraisal system framework were engaged in these key steps. An expert validation checklist containing 25% of the analyzed data was used to evaluate and cross-check the codes for consistency and validity. Fleiss' Kappa was employed to determine the agreement among the raters, resulting in a value of 0.763, indicating substantial agreement. Discrepancies in the data were addressed to ensure accuracy and reliability based on the analytical framework. Coding definitions were revised to achieve consistency in the analysis. To protect anonymity and to prevent potential bias, the identities of op-ed writers were not disclosed to ensure ethical objectivity.

A practical approach to the Appraisal System Framework was employed to guide and analyze the data to assess the different leadership traits and evaluative language in the op-eds. The analysis was facilitated by a researcher-made guide (see Table 1).

Table 1

Evaluative Dimensions of Political Messaging in Op-eds

Affect: Emotional Connection	
Positive Emotions	Does the candidate make you feel happy?
	Do you feel a sense of trust when you think about this candidate?

Affect: Emotional Connection	
	Do you feel inspired when considering the candidate's actions or statements?
Negative Emotions	Does the candidate make you feel unhappy?
	Does the candidate evoke feelings of insecurity?
	Do you feel displeased when considering the candidate's actions or statements?
Judgment: Evaluation of Behaviors and Leadership Qualities	
Social Esteem	
Normality	Do you think that the candidate's personality is pleasing?
Competence	Do you believe this candidate has the necessary skills and experience to lead effectively?
Reliability	Do you consider this candidate to be dependable and consistent in their actions?
Social Sanction	
Integrity	Do you trust this candidate to act with honesty and transparency?
Ethical	Do you observe that the candidate possesses desirable moral values?
Appreciation: Value and Impact of Campaigns	
Positive Appreciation	Do you see this candidate's campaign as having a positive impact on the community and the country?
	Do their campaigns exude a balanced composition?
	Are their campaign platforms and promises significant and meaningful to you?
Negative Appreciation	Do their campaigns give a feeling of revolt?
	Are there aspects of this candidate's campaign that concern you or seem puzzling?
	Do you feel that their actions or policies could have negative consequences?
Graduation: Force and Focus	
Force	How strongly do you feel about the positive or negative aspects of this candidate's leadership qualities?
	Are there specific words or phrases that amplify your perception of their strengths or weaknesses?
Focus	Are there specific details or statistics that make you more confident in your evaluation of this candidate?
	Are there aspects of this candidate's leadership that you feel are being downplayed or overlooked?
Engagement: Monoglossic or Heteroglossic	
Author and Sources	Who is the author of the op-ed? What is the background of the author?
	Did the author add other voices to avoid biased claims?
	Who are the added voices in the op-eds? Are they credible sources?
Dialogic Contraction and Expansion	Did the author use dialogic contraction to control the narrative?
	Did the author provide more voices to guide the reader in formulating their own opinion?

Note: This table provides guide questions to help voters critically evaluate presidential candidates' leadership qualities based on the Appraisal System Framework.

Results and Discussion

This study revealed how the leadership qualities of Bongbong Marcos Jr. (BBM) and Leni Robredo (Leni) were framed in op-eds during the 2022 Philippine elections using the Appraisal System Framework, which includes Attitude (Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation), Graduation, and Engagement.

RQ1: How are the leadership qualities of presidential candidates framed in op-eds during the 2022 Philippine elections using the Appraisal System Framework?
Evaluative Entity: Bongbong Marcos Jr. (BBM)

Positive Affect. Marcos Jr. was depicted as enjoying strong support and celebrating his advantages. He and his camp were in high spirits:

Example 1: The Bongbong camp must *be uncorking the champagne and celebrating tonight, even rolling over their stomachs in laughter* (Manila Times, 2022g).

Negative Affect. There was an insinuation of seeing a more self-assured side of him, indicating a sense of insecurity:

Example 2: I won't *be surprised* to see a different and more self-assured side of him (Inquirer, 2022).

Positive Judgment. Marcos Jr. was appraised positively for his capacity in examples 3 and 4. These word groups highlighted his powerful position in the electoral race for the presidency:

Example 3: which explains why he was lording it over the surveys (Philippine Star, 2022a).

Example 4: with 60 percent of respondents nationwide choosing him as the country's next chief executive (Manila Bulletin, 2022a).

Indirectly, some op-ed writers have framed him apart from his powerful abilities; he was also noted for his influence in both the north and south of the Philippines:

Example 5: As the *former* governor of Ilocos Norte province, Marcos has a *strong* foothold in the north (Manila Times, 2022j).

Example 6: why the ex-dictator's son, having rallied both the loyalist "Solid North," as well as pro-Duterte "Solid South" votes behind him (Inquirer, 2022h).

While some descriptions were explicitly stated, like "majority win" and "frontrunner," emphasize his strong leadership and dominance. Having been identified as the "country's next chief executive," these evaluations may have been from his "exemplary career in public service," "feats are equally notable," and "outstanding credentials" underscoring his competence and readiness for a higher position.

Negative Judgment. He was negatively evaluated with accusations supported by government records, court decisions, and laws passed by Congress (see examples 7 & 8).

Example 7: and therefore, *criminally* liable with a conviction meted out by the courts (Manila Times, 2022e).

Example 8: Ferdinand Jr. did not file his income tax return or pay taxes (Philippine Star, 2022).

Additional word groups like "did not file his income tax return or pay taxes" and "was tried and convicted of violating" have emphasized his alleged immoral actions. Implicitly, one op-ed writer drew a contrast between his previously positively evaluated career and his "spotty track record," highlighting his and also his family's wealth and unpaid taxes. The negative

moral judgments of BBM raised issues of corruption, human rights violations, and dishonesty, underscoring significant concerns.

On an implicit note, he was also portrayed as avoiding important events where he could campaign and lay out his platforms, but the data suggest he was being reticent with the media. The underlying judgment suggested that he may lack courage and commitment; see the following examples:

Example 9: by *largely* avoiding contentious issues, detailed policy discussions, and public debates (Inquirer, 2022e).

Example 10: For some reasons, Marcos Jr. excused himself from a number of important national presidential debates and fora (Manila Bulletin, 2022).

Positive Appreciation. His candidacy was seen as significant, with a "commanding and possibly insurmountable lead," "staggering lead," and being a "clear winner." Accordingly, the Commission on Elections ruled that he is "qualified to be elected" and run for the highest position in the land. The statistics were appraised with historic high numbers, with overwhelming support, and received vital regional endorsements from different leaders around the country:

Example 11: She said Marcos' *consistently high* numbers are historic (Manila Times, 2022n).

Example 12: The *tidal* wave of endorsements for Marcos has swept clean the political playground (Manila Times, 2022f).

His candidacy has gathered numbers of endorsements for Marcos Jr. Whereas, implicitly, the evaluations manifest a different view. The "Marcos Brand" and "Unity Theme" have a profound effect on the Filipino voters:

Example 13: his "unity" theme has resonated with Filipino voters in sharp contrast with the negative campaign against him by opponents (Manila Times, 2022c).

Example 14: The Pulse Asia report the other day was another confirmation of the certainty that Ferdinand Marcos Jr. will win the presidency in May, with his *formidable 60 percent* preference, *in politics light years ahead* (Manila Times, 2022a).

Overall, these appreciations framed BBM's campaign and leadership qualities in a highly positive light, emphasizing his significant support base, "historic high numbers," and strong position as a "frontrunner" in the presidential race.

Negative Appreciation. In contrast, his campaign was described as a "droopy" campaign and unremarkable for having a small number of attendees (see examples 15 & 16).

Example 15: we have seen *limited* support in traditional or social media to the Marcos son (Manila Bulletin, 2022).

Example 16: what can only be described as *surprisingly small* turnouts and *shockingly low energy* attendees (Manila Times, 2022e).

His bid for the presidency was surrounded by unfavorable accusations (see examples 17, 18, & 19). Efforts to keep him from winning were intense, with negatively skewed accusations attempting to impact his support base:

Example 17: Moreover, enough people remember and what they stand for: cronyism, corruption, torture, and other unspeakable human rights violations (Inquirer, 2022d).

Example 18: The Marcos dictatorship was our country's *golden age* (Inquirer, 2022g).

Example 19: Guinigundo continues: Marcos Jr. and his spokesman's reasoning that the tax obligation could not be settled all these years (Inquirer, 2022a).

The portrayal of Marcos Jr. implied his insecure side while he enjoyed and celebrated strong support. Positive appraisals highlighted his capacity, powerful position, and strong influence, portraying him as possessing a strong leadership background and dominance. Despite being accused in government records and court decisions as "criminally liable," he was implicitly portrayed as avoidant during important events, suggesting a lack of courage and commitment. He has prohibited professional journalists from attending his rallies, disregarded media-organized debates, and favored friendly social media personalities (Newman et al., 2022). Historic high numbers and overwhelming support for his campaign underscored his strong position as the leader in the presidential race. His bid for the presidency is surrounded by accusations of dictatorship, unresolved tax obligations, and biased actions (Arugay & Baquisal, 2022; Mendoza et al., 2024; Ong et al., 2022). Despite controversies, he remained a frontrunner in the elections.

Evaluative Entity: Leni Robredo (Leni)

Positive Affect. Her supporters, in the extracts below, were happy to see her, a signifier of a high level of trust and confidence:

Example 20: but the people were *more than inspired to see* (Manila Bulletin, 2022a).

Example 21: with *spirited crowds gravitating toward* Robredo (Philippine Star, 2022b).

Negative Affect. However, explicitly, she was portrayed as being "disliked" by some, with negative implicit emotions of frustration and displeasure surrounding her campaign efforts:

Example 22: Robredo must *be pulling hair* and (Manila Times, 2022g).

Example 23: The phrase "move the needle" *captures perfectly the frustration* (Manila Times, 2022b).

However, it also depicted her campaign as being in a state of facing significant challenges (see examples 24 & 25):

Example 24: and *despair* of Robredo's campaign (Manila Times, 2022b).

Example 25: Robredo will be actually *bringing squarely down on her head* after her landslide defeat in May (Manila Times, 2022a).

Positive Judgment. Similar to the evaluations toward BBM, she was also framed to be powerful in terms of their personal and political capacity. She was a leader who "inspires and motivates," "communicates powerfully," and "is formally endorsed":

Example 26: that she is a leader that inspires (Philippine Star, 2022c).

Example 27: that she can discuss in *great* detail (Manila Bulletin, 2022a).

She was recognized for her integrity, accomplishments, and leadership capabilities (see examples 28 & 29).

Example 28: She has the *utmost* integrity, *unblemished* track record, *strongest* political will, *well-documented* accomplishments and capability (Manila Times, 2022).

Example 29: But this election campaign has shown us that only a President Robredo has the trait of a transformational leader who can inspire a huge base of our people (Inquirer, 2022f).

Veracity framed her as the "kind and noble face of the legal profession," "the most capable candidate for the presidency," and "dignified." Her degrees in economics and law reaffirmed her virtues, character, and capacity. Her reputation for integrity, honesty, participatory governance, and transparency has earned her the highest audit rating:

Example 30: While at this, the Commission on Audit has given her office the *highest* audit rating for three successive years now (Manila Times, 2022k).

Example 31: Vice President Leni Robredo, on her integrity and honesty (Inquirer, 2022c).

Negative Judgment. She was also framed negatively, indicating perceived weaknesses in experience, reliability, and intellectual capacity (see examples 32, 33, & 34).

Example 32: In comparison to these, she is an intellectual and political pygmy (Manila Times, 2022d).

Example 33: Can Leni, a perennial underdog (Inquirer, 2022b).

Example 34: an ideal one as she has demonstrated an alarming dearth of intellectual capacity — (Manila Times, 2022i).

In addition to the above statements, she was also labeled as a "US puppet" and by some voters for having limited experience:

Example 35: AND obviously, incontrovertibly, it is who has been and will be the US puppet (Manila Times, 2022m).

Example 36: Robredo is mimicking her adviser (Manila Times, 2022l).

Example 37: This election boils down to electing a US puppet as president — (Manila Times, 2022i).

Positive Appreciation. Her campaign was appraised as engaging, with "spontaneous acts and bursts of enthusiasm," a strong volunteer-driven movement, and a campaign that can run without traditional leaders' help:

Example 38: a *spontaneous, unrehearsed* act —the *burst* of enthusiasm, the coming together of hundreds of thousands of our people from all walks of life and all age groups, but primarily from the youth (Manila Bulletin, 2022b).

Example 39: that a political campaign can run without any help from the traditional leaders (Philippine Star, 2022c).

Her electoral event has even provoked the spirit of volunteerism as a key aspect of her campaign, suggesting it to be "a moral statement." Accordingly, the pink movement she inspired has momentum and power, mobilizing nationwide support and grand rallies. Creating enormous volunteerism and a historic candidacy:

Example 40: It is just that the existing superlatives seem unable to capture the nuances of "Campaign Rosas" which had won the hearts of the nation (Manila Bulletin, 2022b).

Example 41: that her candidacy has birthed volunteerism, and is now in high gear (Manila Bulletin, 2022a).

Example 42: Her campaign team scheduled *more* campaign rallies by her pink army in the countryside (Manila Times, 2022f).

Example 43: that has been coloring the sky pink and shaking the ground (Philippine Star, 2022b).

Negative Appreciation. Her support was described as unchanged, indicating a flat evaluation, with her campaign framed as a propaganda machine funded by US CIA-linked entities and local oligarchs:

Example 44: The news website Rappler, Robredo's propaganda machine which is funded by US CIA-linked entities, has never published a single critical article on the vice president (Manila Times, 2022m).

Example 45: by CNN Philippines, Philippine Star, Philippine Daily Inquirer and other media, owned by local oligarchs or family dynasties (Manila Times, 2022j).

Although these excerpts indicate a strong sense of admiration and high trust in Leni Robredo, she was also depicted as disliked. Implicit emotions of despair highlight her campaign challenges. She was seen as a powerful leader who inspires and motivates with integrity,

honesty, and transparency, following the highest audit ratings. On the other hand, her perceived weaknesses in experience, reliability, and intellectual capacity negatively frame her.

Chua (2022) noted that disinformation inundated the country before the elections, prompting media, academics, and civil society to fact-check misleading narratives that glorified BBM and vilified Leni. An evaluation of her campaign as engaging, with the "Campaign Rosas" playing a crucial role in winning hearts. Despite massive rallies, her message did not resonate with Filipinos' hearts, and her campaign was described as an unprecedented campaign of disinformation and denigration.

The intensity of evaluations in op-eds, such as "*consistently high* numbers are historic," amplified the impact of BBM's campaign. Conversely, phrases like "*surprisingly small* turnouts" tone down the assessment. The focus then shifted to evaluations that either sharpen or soften depending on the context. Sharpening was used for specific preferences, while softening was used mostly on Leni, portraying her as a "*false* idol" with easily swayed supporters or "*soft* voters."

Ross and Caldwell (2020) revealed that, using the appraisal system, evaluations of Hillary Clinton's character through emotional expressions and grammar were present to attack and undermine her. These appreciations frame campaign and leadership qualities in both positive and negative lights. Similarly, grading devices are strategically used to elevate or diminish evaluations of candidates.

Op-ed authors use different sources to frame the leadership qualities of BBM and Leni. Apart from a monoglossic voice, they use heteroglossic voices to engage readers. Dialogic contraction through negations and concessions limits alternative viewpoints, reinforcing specific stances on Leni's leadership. For example:

Example 46: The Leni Robredo campaign has not moved the needle in the pre-election surveys (Manila Times, 2022b).

Example 47: that the poll results did not reflect the "massive record-breaking rallies" for his boss (Manila Times, 2022a).

Example 48: "Leni," "Isko," "Manny," "Ping" just won't resonate in Filipinos' hearts (Manila Times, 2022h).

Overall, implicit attitudes may not inherently be lexically attitudinal; they can suggest or elicit an attitudinal evaluation based on cultural contexts (Macken-Horarik & Isaac, 2014; White, 2024).

This approach can portray subjects in an extremely negative light. Mumford (2021) established that negation operates as a function from truth values to truth values, while denial is categorized as a speech act. Consequently, dialogic expansion acknowledges multiple perspectives by using reports, quotes, scare quotes, and modals. Reports often include survey data and quotes from influential figures, which provide additional viewpoints. Scare quotes emphasize certain leadership qualities, and modals suggest alternative views. This broader discussion may help frame the candidates' leadership qualities more comprehensively.

RQ2: How does the framing of leadership qualities of presidential candidates, through the lens of the appraisal system framework, in op-eds impact voter perceptions?

The first step involved framing leadership qualities using attitude analysis. Op-eds use emotional language to shape readers' perceptions of candidates. Positive evaluations suggest happiness for BBM and trust for Leni, whereas negative terminologies highlight BBM's insecurity and Leni's "frustration and despair," as with media amplifying specific messages that heighten feelings of insecurity (Rajan & Murphy, 2024).

Data showed that op-eds framed candidates' behaviors and leadership qualities, focusing on competence, reliability, and integrity. BBM was assessed as influential. However, he was also implying low dependability. It turned out that Leni possessed high integrity; as morality frames attracted Twitter users (Sahly et al., 2019), media can foster moral polarization (Cruz, 2024). However, they evaluated her as an "underdog and a puppet."

Campaign evaluation involved "historic numbers" associated with positive appreciations; accusations and propaganda are associated with negative ones. These appreciations framed Leni Robredo's campaign and leadership qualities in both positive and negative lights. Mayo and Taboada (2017) argued that there was high intensification in readers' opinions and strong negative judgments, but the magazine's pieces on political issues were more nuanced.

The graduation analysis found that the use of language techniques—intensifiers, lexical items, and metaphors—can make evaluations more impactful. Sharpening, employing percentages and specific terms, makes evaluations precise. Softening was used to downplay Leni, to reduce her and her campaign's perceived affirmative impression. Dialogic contraction limited alternative viewpoints by reinforcing specific stances. On the other hand, dialogic expansion recognizes various viewpoints and employs quotes, scare quotes, and modals to present a more comprehensive discussion. Consequently, these techniques can engage readers by providing a more nuanced view of the candidates' leadership qualities (Cruz, 2024; Mayo & Taboada, 2017).

These techniques in op-eds shape voter perceptions by intensifying or diminishing the perceived strengths and weaknesses of presidential candidates, ultimately influencing public opinion and electoral outcomes. Incorporating attitudinally charged language is essential for engaging audiences amid changing information consumption patterns and the rise of disinformation narratives (Arugay & Baquisal, 2022).

Engagement analysis examined how op-ed authors use their voices and various sources to frame the leadership qualities of both BBM and Leni. The prevalent use of monoglossic voices indicated a significant gap in perspective, contributing to perceptions of bias and diminishing trust in media (Robertson, 2023). In contrast, social media platforms have amplified alternative voices, indicating that traditional media must adapt to more diverse and credible storytelling methods (Newman et al., 2024). This approach allows for a more comprehensive and balanced discussion, acknowledging different viewpoints while reinforcing specific stances; thus, limiting polarization is crucial, as divisive political moments tend to increase polarization (Cruz, 2024; Fletcher, 2022; Rajan & Murphy, 2024).

Based on the results of the study, some guide questions based on the Appraisal System Framework can be used to evaluate the leadership qualities of candidates as shown in table 1. The questions can help voters critically evaluate the leadership qualities of presidential candidates, considering both emotional and rational aspects, and make more informed decisions during elections.

Building on the gaps in literature, this study endeavored to provide a detailed analysis of how leadership qualities are framed during Philippine election seasons and the underutilization of the Appraisal System Framework in political communication, such as op-eds. The findings revealed that emotional language in op-eds can significantly influence readers' feelings toward the candidates.

The findings of this study aligned with Fletcher's (2022) findings, which highlighted that divisive political moments increase polarization. Op-ed writers frequently target audiences inclined to their perspectives, employing language that reinforces established beliefs. Writers

tend to inadvertently reinforce these divides by strategically using evaluative language, which the appraisal system deemed to inform readers to respond according to their political inclinations.

In today's context, the emergence of diverse voices through social media has transformed the information landscape. Newman et al. (2024) observed that platforms emphasizing creator-driven content can enhance alternative viewpoints, posing challenges to traditional news organizations. This shift demonstrated the necessity for op-ed writers to integrate diverse perspectives to maintain relevance and credibility in a competitive media environment. The findings suggested that incorporating multiple perspectives into arguments can improve writers' credibility and promote critical engagement from readers with the text or information consumers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings indicated that the Appraisal System Framework framed the leadership qualities of presidential candidates during the 2022 Philippine elections. Through the understanding of emotional language, assessment of leadership qualities, valuing campaign events, and using graduation devices, op-ed authors can influence public opinion and electoral outcomes. The use of various sources and voices, such as dialogic contraction and expansion, can help engage readers in a comprehensive and balanced discussion while reinforcing specific stances for them to form their evaluation of the candidates.

The elevated emotional content of the text influences reader sentiment, consistent with Newman et al.'s (2022) work that associated perceived political biases with diminishing media trust. These framing techniques in op-eds have the potential to influence voter perceptions by amplifying or diminishing the strengths and weaknesses associated with the leadership qualities of a presidential candidate. In the recent election cycles, the reliability of information is crucial as voters contend with manipulation and misinformation on digital platforms (Newman et al., 2024; Ong et al., 2022).

The study underscored the significant role of media framing in shaping voter perceptions and highlighted the need for responsible journalism, emphasizing the need to limit media bias by ensuring the inclusion of a wider range of diverse voices (Rajan & Murphy, 2024). The study emphasized the crucial impact of media framing in political discourse by promoting responsible, emotionally balanced reporting, credible judgments, nuanced evaluations, and engaging multiple voices. The rise of diverse voices through social media challenges traditional news organizations to adapt and integrate diverse perspectives to maintain relevance and credibility (Mendoza et al., 2024; Ong et al., 2022). This study demonstrated that op-ed writers navigate the media landscape with evaluative language that could reflect their positions and engage with the wider discourse.

Consequently, this analysis only included op-eds from a limited number of newspapers, potentially ignoring other significant media sources and platforms. The study examined a specific election period, which may not capture long-term trends in media framing and voter perceptions. Although the study acknowledged the role of social media, it did not extensively analyze its direct impact on traditional media framing and voter perceptions.

Thus, future research directions should explore the interplay between social media and traditional media influence and amplification strategies in their evolving forms and platforms as tools for shaping voter perceptions. Researchers can also examine the role of disinformation and misinformation in media framing and its impact on voter behavior and media reliability. Recent literature has explored media and elections, and the findings of this study suggest that the Appraisal System Framework could be a powerful tool in critical media consumption, language evaluation, and leadership assessment.

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