

PAPER ID: 11A02T



FRAMING TERRORISM RELATED ISSUES IN PAKISTANI NEWSPAPERS: EXPLORING THE AGENDA ON TERRORISM IN PERSPECTIVE OF POST-UNITED STATES ATTACKS ON AFGHANISTAN SINCE 2009

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 20 June 2019
Received in revised form 23 October 2019
Accepted 05 November 2019
Available online 21 November 2019

Keywords:

Media Organizations;
Media Framing;
Terrorism; Internal
Displacement; Military
Operations; American
Interventions.

ABSTRACT

Media organizations are framing terrorist activities in it is media contents. These terror-based contents are written on the conflict zones like Pakistan and Afghanistan. In newspapers, major terrorism-related contents are highlighted in editorials as well as letter to editors carry feedback of readers. To influence audiences, terrorists manage attacks as a part of indirect strategy to get their political aims by influencing an audience. These terrorist groups get sympathies with various audiences when they try to influence audiences and prepare messages for their desired audiences. Keeping in mind the importance of media framing of terrorism, this study has investigated the framing style of the elite press of Pakistan in covering terrorism-related issues. This descriptive explanatory content analysis study has examined the Pakistani elite print media editorial framing techniques to inquire its agenda on Terrorism related matters since 2009 in perspective of post-US-attack on Afghanistan. The results show that media frames are independent of each other in rating the responses regarding agenda on terrorism-related matters since 2009 in perspective of post-US attack on Afghanistan. This study concludes that a relationship exists among terrorism-related issues examined in study. The study overall recommends for analytical screening of all terror-oriented media contents that are prone to create unrest among masses.

Disciplinary: Multidisciplinary (Journalism and Mass Communication Science (Information and Media Sciences), Political Sciences (International Affairs), Global Studies).

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1. INTRODUCTION

Media organizations are framing terrorist activities in it is media contents. These terror based contents are written on conflict zones (Boyle & Mower, 2018). Like, other international conflict

zones, Pakistan and Afghanistan are affected due to war in Afghanistan and subsequent terrorism for long. This intergroup conflicts and the local war has put negative effects on both sides of Durand Line. Pakistan, especially federally administered tribal areas and its other cities, has also faced severe terrorism (Shah, 2010). In newspapers, major terrorism-related contents are dyed in the editorials as well as letter to the editors carry feedback of readers. The framing pattern of the print media gives its tendency towards issue like terrorism (Yusof et al., 2013). It is prerogative of print media organizations to project public position issues in their editorials. If it is considered that the story is newsworthy, it is not necessary to be framed as an editorial by the editor (Al-Rawi, 2017). Thus, media frames depict explicit problems in society and provide identification to the parties, which are held responsible for their creation and media framing is considered as a power exercising practice (Edy & Meirick, 2007).

Actually, media frames and news provides simulated atmosphere on which we are dependent to understand and experience those events that we cannot directly observe. It is a split paradigm for communication scholars, as it incorporates influence from other disciplines (Kostadinova & Dimitrova, 2012). Couldry (2015) and Kellner (2003) considered influence factors showing that not only Americans are the audience of the prestigious press but also the major decision-makers and whole world pay attention to the elite media. The prestige press is normally termed as elite press which should not be confused with elitist press, discharging one perception over the other. While in the 21st century, this elite press concept is almost referred to those journalists of national level media organizations like radio, newspapers and TV, who have direct approach to government elites in United States capital city (Fico et al., 2013). If we talk about Pakistan then it should be noted that Pakistan being a democratic country gives freedom to the media and press for the dissemination of factual information to the target audiences (Ahmad et al., 2010).

Similar to the rest of world, press, and media in Pakistan have got vibrant changes during last few decades. The facts and figures regarding press and media development inside Pakistan are very encouraging. Facts and figures regarding press and media development inside Pakistan are very encouraging. As per Preger (2007) number of publications including daily, monthly and quarterly publications have gradually increased from 3242 to 4455. In present time, the terrorists have sense of the news values and they divert elite media attention to get maximum coverage in order to disseminate their agenda. Terrorists utilize media outlets for their projection although such coverage has brought severe criticism from various sectors. Terrorism can be considered as a tactic of forced pressure exerted for promoting ideological, sociological and political objectives of the self-interest individual or group (Entman, 2003). The terrorists' dramatic show is framed to convey message to dispersed audiences through diverse outlets of the media. Suicide attacks of terrorists occur in the current phase of terrorism to communicate a coercive message to world audiences (Metz, 2012).

In almost all parts of the world and for most of the audiences of the world and major incidents of terrorism in the world, those events do not happen to the audiences, which are not transmitted by news systems (Schmid, 2005). Special material resources of terrorism are personnel, funds, or territory under terrorist control to achieve their goals through justifiable political action or large scale organized violence (Combs, 2017). To influence audience, terrorists manage attacks as a part of indirect strategy to get their political aims by influencing an audience. These terrorist groups get sympathies with the various audiences when they try to influence audiences and prepare messages for their desired audiences. They also influence media organizations to portray their vested agenda

(Jongman, 2017). Keeping in mind the importance of media framing of terrorism, this study has investigated the framing style of the elite press of Pakistan in covering terrorism-related issues. By specifically examining the agenda of the elite newspapers on Terrorism related matters since 2009 in perspective of post-US-attack on Afghanistan.

This study has been chosen because the framing style of the elite press carries its agenda regarding its policy on specific issues like terrorism that can be evaluated through its editorial contents. This descriptive explanatory content analysis study has examined Pakistani elite print media editorial framing techniques to inquire its agenda on Terrorism related matters since 2009 in perspective of post-US-attack on Afghanistan. To understand framing terrorism and its related issues, study comparatively analyzes elite press editorial frames on terrorism, internal displacement, Military Operation, NATO role, American intervention and Afghanistan state of affairs with its readers' response expressed in letters to editor columns on terror-related issues. More Specifically, this current study will work on the following research questions:

1. What kind of coverage is given to the terror-oriented issues?
2. Are editorials and letters to the editor frames of the elite press independent to the levels of Military Operation?
3. Are editorials and letters to the editor frames of the elite press independent to the levels of Internal Displacement?
4. Are editorials and letters to the editor frames of the elite press independent to levels of American Intervention?
5. Are editorials and letters to the editor frames of the elite press independent to the levels of NATO Role?
6. Are editorials and letters to the editor frames of the elite press independent to the levels of Afghanistan Situation?

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section has discussed the research methodological details of the study which helped in reaching the conclusion of the current study.

2.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

A descriptive content analysis research design was adopted for this study. Content evaluation is a research technique for studying archives and communication artifacts, which may be texts of more than a few formats, pictures, audio or video (Krippendorff, 2013). The editorials of national-level dailies “The News”, “The Nation” & “Dawn”. Each editorial and readers’ feedback of the selected sample, in terms of characteristics as categorized in the coding categories, is a part of the analysis.

2.2 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

This research model provides that every variable of the study has a logical relationship with other variables. In the model, independent variables are placed at left side of Figure 1 which is conjoined to each other besides connection dependent variables. The frames of elite press i.e. Editorials and letters to editor, Years (2009-2014) and elite presses (The News, Dawn, The Nation) are considered independent variables. The right side has dependent categories like Terrorism, Military Operation, Internal Displacement, American Intervention, the NATO Role, and Afghanistan Situation. The analysis of the elite press newspapers, editorial, and letter to editor frames, year-wise coverage, and inter-relationship among terror-oriented issues is expressed in this research model.

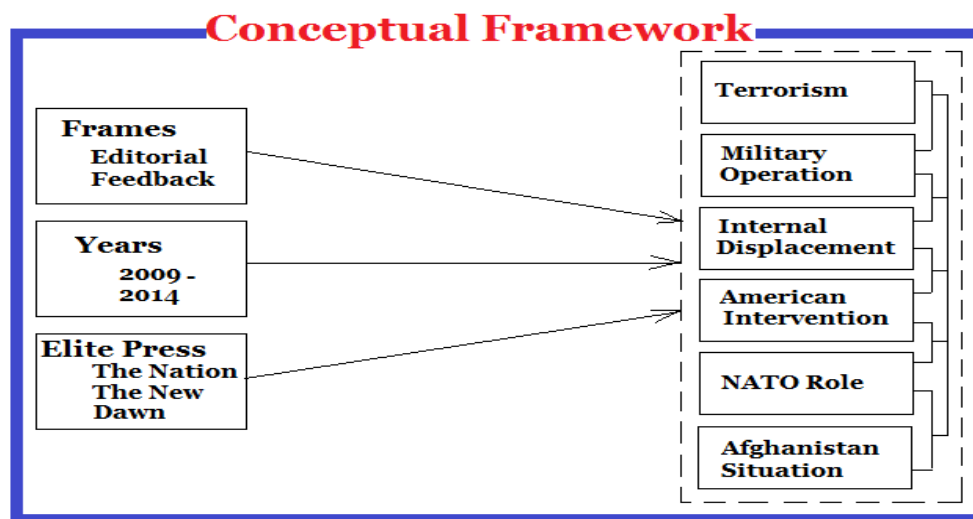


Figure 1: Research Framework of this study.

2.3 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

This study employs discursive analysis for analyzing texts in the form of editorials and letters to the editor to compare frames of editorials with those who read or consume them. Fairclough and Wodak (2005) explained that communicative events' dimension in broad process involves several facets of text production and their consumptions. In this phase, textual analysis turns into discursive analysis. Hence this procedure includes analysis of texts as they are set within news or editorials as related with environment of their production and consumption. Before beginning to working out on each newspaper, researchers have ensured that the complete record is available in the correct order. Each elite press newspaper "editorials and letters to editor framed on terrorism and its related issues" as a unit of analysis in this study. The coding team then counted and recorded the number of categories, as well as the number of editorials and letters to the editor on terrorism-related issues.

The researchers ensured the ultimate proper entries in code sheets. The double check rule was also carried out to ensure reliability of proper entries in the coding sheets. The related editorials and letters framed on terror-oriented issues were hence coded in 'Extremely Pro', 'Moderately Pro', 'Extremely Anti', 'Moderately Anti' or 'Neutral'. Moreover, the unit of the analysis may be a single word in written content like terrorism or maybe a single symbol of a research study. In this study unit of analysis was a single newspaper (editorial and letter to editor). To measure and investigate coverage and trend direction of the editorials and readership feedback of The News, The Nation, and Dawn, on terror-oriented issues, researchers have designed the following categories. The direction was analyzed on the said Likert scale towards the specified content categories as:

- ✓ Terrorism
- ✓ Military Operation
- ✓ NATO role
- ✓ American Intervention
- ✓ Internal Displacement
- ✓ Afghanistan situation

2.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The population of the research study was a total Number of the elite newspapers published in Pakistan. The research study is conducted in a period of five years from June 2009 to June 2014 in which editorials and letters to editor of three English dailies. The News, Dawn and The Nation included. The sampling formula is taken from Cochran (2007) giving a sample of 480.

3. RESULTS OF STUDY

The results of this study are given in accordance to the research questions. Starting from the first research question, which is “What kind of coverage is given to the terror-oriented issues?”

Table 1: Responses for the Media Coverage given to Terrorism

Terrorism Coverage						
Newspapers	Extremely Pro	Moderately Pro	Neutral	Moderately Anti	Extremely Anti	Total
The News	2	8	7	41	89	147
The Dawn	2	5	9	72	82	170
The Nation	1	8	14	38	101	162
Total	5	21	30	151	272	480

Results shown in Table 1 explains that total counts 147 of The News, Extremely Anti coverage frames were 89 in Editorials and letters to the editors. Similarly, 41 items were given Moderately Anti coverage. These presented the relevant issues and always tried to prove the valuable and accurate information to the audience to get them aware of the recent issues and eventualities resulted from these events in letter and spirit. This supported that major frames of the newspaper towards terrorism were anti. The other counts were Moderately Pro as 2, Moderately Anti as 8 and Neutral as 7.

Table 2: Responses regarding Media Frames (Military Operations)

Media Frames			
Responses	Editorial	Letters to the Editor	Total Numbers
Extremely Pro	101	93	194
Moderately Pro	133	93	226
Neutral	28	14	42
Moderately Anti	7	5	12
Extremely Anti	4	2	5
Total	273	207	480

The second research question of this study is “Are editorials and letters to editor frames of elite press independent to levels of Military Operation?”. The results regarding editorials and letters to the editor frames of elite press independent to levels (frequencies) of Military Operations are given in Table 2. The data show that there are more extremely and moderately pro responses as compared to moderately or extremely anti responses. However, it is not known that the responses about media frames are independent of each other or in the other words whether editorials and letters to the editor frames of the elite press are independent of the levels of Military Operation.

Table 3: Results for the Pearson Chi-Square Test

Description	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.000 ^a	12	.241
Likelihood Ratio	13.322	12	.346
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.833	1	.050

To check the independence of media frame a Pearson’s Chi-Square (χ^2) of relationship was used and its results are given in Table 3. Pearson’s χ^2 test result gave a non-significant result, i.e., $\chi^2 = 15.00$ with $df=12$ and $p\text{-value}= 0.241$, which means that there is no significant relationship between editorials and letters to editor, thus the editorial frames are independent of each other.

The third research question of this study is “Are editorials and letters to the editor frames of an elite press independent to the levels of Internal Displacement?”. The results regarding editorials and

letters to editor frames of elite press levels independent (frequencies) of internal displacement are given in Table 4. The data show that there are more extremely and moderately pro responses as compared to moderately or extremely anti responses. However, it is not known that the responses about media frames are independent of each other or in the other words, whether editorials and letters to the editor frames of elite press are independent of the levels of Internal Displacement.

Table 4: Responses regarding Media Frames (Internal Displacement)

Responses	Media Frames		
	Editorial	Letters to the Editor	Total Numbers
Extremely Pro	123	58	181
Moderately Pro	110	90	200
Neutral	23	35	58
Moderately Anti	15	17	32
Extremely Anti	2	7	9
Total	273	207	440

Table 5: Results for the Pearson Chi-Square Test

Description	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.000	16	.220
Likelihood Ratio	16.094	16	.416
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.178	1	.078

To check the independence of media frame a Pearson's Chi-Square (χ^2) of the relationship was used and its results are given in Table 5. Pearson's χ^2 test result gave a non-significant result, i.e., $\chi^2 = 20.00$ with $df=16$ and $p\text{-value}= .220$, which means that there is no significant relationship between editorials and letters to editor, thus the editorial frames are independent of each other.

Table 6: Responses regarding Media Frames (American Intervention)

Responses	Media Frames		
	Editorial	Letters to the Editor	Total Numbers
Extremely Pro	15	17	32
Moderately Pro	3	7	10
Neutral	12	6	18
Moderately Anti	101	93	194
Extremely Anti	133	93	226
Total	264	216	480

The fourth research question of this study is "Are editorials and letters to the editor frames of an elite press independent to the levels of American Intervention?". The results regarding editorials and letters to the editor frames of elite press independent to levels (frequencies) of the American Intervention are given in Table 6. The data show that there are more extremely and moderately anti responses as compared to moderately or extremely pro responses. However, it is not known that the responses about media frames are independent of each other or in the other words, whether editorials and letters to the editor frames of elite press are independent of the levels of American Intervention.

Table 7: Results for Pearson Chi-Square Test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.000	20	.242
Likelihood Ratio	18.723	20	.560
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.278	1	.015

To check the independence of the media frame a Pearson's Chi-Square (χ^2) of relationship was used and its results are given in Table 7. Pearson's χ^2 test result gave a non-significant result, i.e., $\chi^2 = 24.00$ with $df=20$ and $p\text{-value}= .242$, which means that there is no significant relationship between

editorials and letters to editor, thus the editorial frames are independent of each other.

Table 8: Responses regarding Media Frames (NATO role)

Media Frames			
Responses	Editorial	Letters to the Editor	Total Numbers
Extremely Pro	12	15	27
Moderately Pro	7	9	16
Neutral	10	5	15
Moderately Anti	106	95	201
Extremely Anti	130	91	221
Total	265	215	480

The fifth research question of this study is “Are editorials and letters to the editor frames of an elite press independent to the levels of NATO role?”. The results regarding editorials and letters to the editor frames of elite press independent to levels (frequencies) of NATO role are given in Table 8. The data show that there are more extremely and moderately anti responses as compared to moderately or extremely pro responses. However, it is not known that the responses about media frames are independent of each other or in the other words, whether editorials and letters to the editor frames of elite press are independent of the levels of NATO role.

Table 9: Results for Pearson Chi-Square Test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	30.000	25	.224
Likelihood Ratio	21.501	25	.640
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.278	1	.025

To check the independence of media frame a Pearson’s Chi-Square (χ^2) of relationship was used and its results are given in Table 9. Pearson’s χ^2 test result gave a non-significant result, i.e., $\chi^2 = 30.00$ with $df=25$ and the p -value= .224, which means that there is no significant relationship in between the editorials and letters to editor, thus the editorial frames are independent of each other.

Table 10: Responses regarding Media Frames (Afghanistan Situation)

Media Frames			
Responses	Editorial	Letters to the Editor	Total Numbers
Extremely Pro	117	55	172
Moderately Pro	98	88	186
Neutral	27	18	45
Moderately Anti	25	22	47
Extremely Anti	12	18	30
Total	279	201	480

The sixth and final research question of the current study is “Are editorials and letters to the editor frames of elite press independent to the levels of Afghanistan Situation?”. The results regarding editorials and letters to the editor frames of elite press independent to the levels (frequencies) of Afghanistan Situation are given in Table 10. The data show that there are more extremely and moderately anti responses as compared to moderately or extremely pro responses. However, it is not known that the responses about media frames are independent of each other or in the other words, whether editorials and letters to the editor frames of elite press are independent of the levels of Afghanistan Situation.

Table 11: Results for Pearson Chi-Square Test

Test	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.000	18	.244
Likelihood Ratio	18.521	20	.440
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.278	1	.029

To check the independence of media frame a Pearson's Chi-Square (χ^2) of relationship was used and its results are given in Table 11. Pearson's χ^2 test result gave a non-significant result, i.e., $\chi^2 = 23.00$ with the $df=18$ and the $p\text{-value}= .244$, which means that there is no significant relationship in between editorials and letters to editor, thus the editorial frames are independent of the each other.

4. DISCUSSION

Laqueur (1986) has explained, "symbiotic relationship" between media outlets and terrorists. The peril and violence based communication between terrorists and the endangered victimized persons are aimed at to use major targets to have access to the main audiences to turn them into target of the terror, which is their demand. According to Bingham and Wallace (2012), the American citizens have termed terrorism 'critical threat' for the country's crucial interests was due to terrorism on international level. The core of the framing is giving priority to some aspects or issues over the others. This unintentionally promotes one specific interpretation of issues. Mass media according to Edelstein, Itō, Kepplinger (1989) regularly give their judgments regarding salience of issues through impressive sorts' production like in a newspaper whose sorts may be of headlines length or articles size as well as the placement of articles. On the other side, the elite press reports observed, in discussion on military operations, that all the three newspapers were pro-military operation.

The frequencies of elite press and readers were almost on the same side and military action has been given favorable coverage by three newspapers. Hence there is interdependence among military, government and elite press on military operation in FATA. This provided that the agenda of the elite press of Pakistan towards the framing military operation was nearly same as pro-military operation. The readers also favored military action against terrorists in FATA and considered it inevitable for survival of Pakistan. The results of current study regarding internal displacement are in concurrence with the previous literature. A study conducted by Hussain (2016) on Media coverage of the Internally Displaced Persons in Swat, Pakistan found that newspapers like Daily Nation, Daily News, and Daily Dawn gave sufficient coverage to stories related to Internally Displaced Persons in Swat. These news stories had highlighted problems of Internally Displaced Persons in Swat and it stressed the government to provide necessary resources to the Internally Displaced Persons in Swat. The previous literature also supports results of current study about the American interventions in Pakistan.

The story can be traced back to the tragic incident of 9/11, where mainstream media assisted America in mobilizing support to launch a war on terror. It featured the American government and its military high ups projected pro-US themes (Hutchinson et al., 2004). The previous literature is supporting the findings of present study. According to Ahmad (2010) Pakistan has suffered a lot in war of terrorism and for supporting American and Allied forces in war against terrorism. That is why NATO incursions in Pakistan are reflected in elite press of Pakistan. The existing literature shows that several studies have been published on the unfavorable coverage of NATO invasion in Pakistan. Finally, the results of current study are in concurrence with existing literature on situation in Afghanistan. According to Walter (2016) there is insecurity and the backwardness in Afghanistan due

to Soviet assault 30 years ago and American Intervention 10 years through US-led coalition forces. The new great game is going to be developed in Afghanistan if America decides to set up military camps there on permanent basis in that country then new tussle could be forecast among rival countries.

5. CONCLUSION

The content analysis of terror-oriented issues in the elite press of Pakistan is of important nature. The media outlets' interactions with terrorists are analysed in the study, which adopted a careful observatory and systematic approach to analyse different categories of terror-oriented issues overutilization of several aspects ascertained from review of literature. This research analysed the agenda of the elite press of Pakistan's editorial and letters to editor frames on terrorism, military operation, internal displacement, American intervention, NATO role, and Afghanistan situation through newspapers-wise, year-wise and issue-wise frequencies and means comparisons. The results show that the media frames are independent of each other in rating the responses regarding the agenda on Terrorism related matters since 2009 in perspective of post-US attack on Afghanistan. This study concludes that a relationship exists among terrorism-related issues examined in study. The study overall recommends for analytical screening of all terror-oriented media contents that are prone to create unrest among masses.

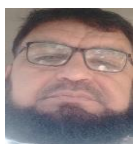
6. AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIAL

The data used is included in this article. No data is generated from this study.

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