

**RESEARCH PAPER****Portrayal of Trump in Pakistani Newspapers: A Comparative Study of Dawn, The Nation and The News****<sup>1</sup>Muhammad Mubashar Ikram\*, Dr. Zahid Yousaf and <sup>3</sup>Dr. Faiza Bajwa**

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**\*Corresponding Author:** [capcaninternational@gmail.com](mailto:capcaninternational@gmail.com)**ABSTRACT**

The study aims to examine how Trump is portrayed in Pakistani English media. It assesses how positively or negatively Pakistani media depicts Trump and whether or not it holds America accountable for the country's problems as a result of war and terrorism. Using a quantitative content methodology, the editorial contents of three English newspapers published in Pakistan between July 1, 2017, and June 30, 2018, The Dawn, The News, and The Nation, were examined for this study. First, editorial content is qualitatively observed, and then data is added quantitatively to the sheet. The census approach is used, and all the editorials of one year of these newspapers are units of analysis. The findings explained that The News and The Nation presented the Trump image negatively overall in their coverage, whereas Dawn depicted a neutral picture. Furthermore, Dawn's editorial policy differs from the other two newspapers, which are on the same page during this issue at a selected time.

**KEYWORDS:** Framing, Historical Perspective of Pak-US Relations, Trump Image, U.S Image, War on Terror**Introduction**

America and Pakistan relations have different phases. It can be divided into initial stage, Soviet Union phase, Taliban phase, dictatorship and democratic phases and most importantly before and after 9/11 phases. The initial stage started on August 14, 1947, marking Pakistan's independence from British dominion and its appearance on the global map. British people arrived in India as traders in the early 17th century and eventually succeeded in becoming rulers in 1857. India's resistance movement against British control began in the nineteenth century. The independence struggle was successful in freeing India from British domination, and Pakistan arose as a separate, independent country with Muslim-majority areas in India (Riaz, 2017). The globe had been split into two blocks at that point. After World War II, the United States of America emerged as the world's most powerful nation, while the Soviet Union was another superpower. Most of the world's countries have been affiliated with either America or the Soviet Union. After extensive talks at the highest political level, Pakistan decided to join the American block. Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, the country's first prime minister, postponed the Soviet Union's invitation to make his first visit to the United States of America (Kux, 2001).

There have been many highs and lows in the history of ties between the US and Pakistan. After gaining independence, Pakistan needs military assistance to strengthen its defenses. Conversely, given Pakistan's geopolitical significance and geostrategic location, US policy planners were keen to cultivate positive relations with the country. Pakistan's reliance on the US has grown since then. In 1954, Pakistan joined the pro-

Western Central Asian Treaty Organization (CENTO) and the South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) after signing a cooperative defense agreement with the United States (Mahmud, 1991). Burki (1999) and Riaz (2017) explained the initial relations that from 1947 to 1952, President Harry Truman had a generally neutral attitude towards Pakistan. Following the election of the Eisenhower administration in 1953, Pakistan began to attract the attention of the US government, which was growing concerned about the expansion of communism throughout Asia. The 1954 Mutual Defense Agreement served as the pinnacle of this acknowledgement. Rashid (2006) added that Pakistan's Prime Minister Liaqat Ali rejected US President Harry S. Truman's request for a military base so that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) could monitor the Soviet Union, marking a turning point in the country's relationship with the US. According to Hussain (2002), as a counterbalance to the United States, Pakistani leadership strengthened its ties with Soviet leadership during this time.

Nevertheless, this decline was brief, and the two sides' relations quickly improved. The United States and Pakistan signed their first mutual defense treaty in May 1954, which led to extensive military cooperation between the two nations. For military training, hundreds of Pakistani military officers were dispatched to the US (Usama Butt & Schofield, 2012). Samad (2011) explained the relationship between Pakistan and the US, stating that during the Cold War between America and the Soviet Union, Pakistan gave the US many facilities, most notably the ability to launch US spy planes from Pakistan into Soviet territory. The United States, in return, stepped up its economic support for Pakistan, but when India declared war on Pakistan in 1965, things abruptly turned around once more. Nawaz (2020) further elucidated that President Ayub Khan of Pakistan was forced to resign in 1969 and give over the presidency to Army General Yahya Khan due to the robust and widespread opposition that had developed at that time. East Pakistan broke away from Pakistan to become Bangladesh during his brief tenure as president because Pakistan had to fight another war with India. Hussain (2002) claimed that Pakistan did not receive any assistance from the US during the 1971 war with India. However, during the war, the Soviet Union assisted and supported India.

Schaffer and Schaffer (2011) highlighted several factors that contributed to this separation, such as the pro-Indian lobby in the US and the pressure from the American Council General in India. The divide between the two nations grew as a result of this mindset. However, as a sign of goodwill, the US accepted Bangladesh's formation, acknowledged it as an independent nation, and provided \$300 million in aid. A few Americans encouraged their government to back Bangladesh. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger (1979) acknowledged in his book "White House Years" that the powerful Indian lobby in Congress compelled the American administration to abstain from supporting Pakistan during the 1971 war with India, which led to the division of Pakistan's east wing and the creation of Bangladesh.

During these circumstances, the democratic socialist leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was elected President of Pakistan in 1970 as an outcome of the country's national elections. From 1971 to 1974, he served as President; in 1974, he was appointed Prime Minister. He began forming connections with the Soviet Union and supported left-wing ideas. He attempted to establish connections with the United States a few times, but the American government still needed to give him the go-ahead. He once said, "It is wiser for a small country to duck, detour, sidestep and try to enter from the back door when differences develop rather than taking on a great power head-on" (Hilali, 2017). Pakistan had next national elections in 1977, but the opposition alliance accused Mr. Bhutto of election manipulation, which rejected the results. On July 5, 1977, amid nationwide demonstrations, Army chief General Zia-ul-Haq seized power by imprisoning Mr. Bhutto. The ten-year Afghan war, which began with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and ended with its defeat in 1989, may have been the only factor contributing to the

improvement of US-Pakistan ties during the 11-year General Zia administration (Muzaffar, et. al., 2021; Muzaffar, et. al., 2019a; Hussain, 2021).

Pakistan gave the US government \$658 million in the 1980s to buy 28 F-16 jet fighters, but Congress of the US blocked the acquisition because of concerns over Pakistan's nuclear programs. Pakistani officials and citizens harbored animosity towards the United States due to the Americans' failure to return the money for F-16 jets (Benjamin & Simon, 2002). August 17, 1988, saw the assassination of General Zia-ul-Haq, the American ambassador to Pakistan, and seventeen of the highest-ranking Army officers in an aircraft crash. During the democratic governments that ruled Pakistan from 1988 until 1998, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif each held the position of prime minister twice. Pakistan's nuclear program remained the source of disagreement between the two nations during Pakistan's ten-year democratic transition. The Pressler Amendment, which the US passed during this time, posed a serious threat to Pakistan (Hilali, 2005).

Following General Zia's plane accident, Benazir Bhutto, the head of the Pakistan People's Party, was elected Pakistan's prime minister when her party won the 1988 national election. Despite her strong support for the West and the United States, she could not secure any benefits for her nation from the Western powers. She travelled to the US in 1989, and the following Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, did the same in 1990 (Markey, 2013). However, neither leader received any special treatment from the US administration; instead, they were requested to halt Pakistan's nuclear program by US authorities. The US administration imposed a more stringent economic boycott on Pakistan. According to NTI (1990), Assistant Secretary of State Teresita Schaffer requested that Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Sahibzada Yaqoob Khan, immediately halt the country's uranium enrichment program.

In the meantime, the Taliban issue was arising. According to (Armitage, Berger & Markey, 2010) Throughout a ten-year conflict between Afghan terrorist groups supported by Pakistan and the United States and the Soviet Army, which invaded Afghanistan in 1979 and retreated in 1989, the Taliban developed in Afghanistan as a fighting force against the Soviet Union. The Taliban insurgent group was primarily composed of students studying in Afghan seminaries and Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan. Burhanuddin Rabbani was proposed for president following the Soviet Union's 1989 withdrawal from Afghanistan. The various Mujahideen (militant groups) factions agreed on a power-sharing scheme. Nevertheless, he could not unite the nation's disparate groups and achieve political stability (Matinuddin, 1999). No one was able to properly stabilize the country politically after him, even though several other militant leaders were allowed to govern the nation. America stayed out of these advancements. The Taliban eventually gained strength and began to seize control of several regions of the country. In September 1996, they successfully overran Kabul, the nation's capital, and established their administration (Vatanka, 2017).

The Taliban government received assistance from Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Osama Bin Laden eventually relocated to Afghanistan, where the Taliban welcomed him. The US State Department has previously listed Osama Bin Laden as one of its most wanted individuals following the bombings of US embassies in Africa. More than 4000 people were injured, and 224 people died when the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were bombed in August 1998. The United States consequently launched attacks on a few Afghani targets. It marked the start of the US and Taliban's never-ending rivalry (Hussain, 2021). Bin Laden began conducting training exercises throughout various parts of Afghanistan. The US requested that Osama be turned over following the Nine-Eleven attack, but the Taliban leadership refused. In the end, American military action in Afghanistan led to the Taliban government's fall in 2001. After the US bombings, the majority of Taliban leaders who were still alive fled to Pakistan's tribal regions and took

charge of their insurgent activities there. From 1996 until 2001, the Taliban dominated the nation, but they were not recognized or even supported internationally. The Afghan government led by the Taliban was never acknowledged by the US (Riaz, 2017).

The Nine-Eleven tragedy altered the global political landscape, particularly in Pakistan. The most important topic on everyone's agenda, particularly in the US, is the fight against terrorism. As a result of the Taliban government's unwillingness to turn over Osama bin Laden, the fight against terrorism has been ongoing and will never stop. The United States led the military troops that attacked Afghanistan (Vatanka, 2017). In this context, Pakistan's official support for the American-led international forces in Afghanistan was announced by President General Pervez Musharraf in a speech to the people of Pakistan. He also stopped endorsing the Taliban regime. It was often referred to as Musharraf's U-turn policy in Pakistan. Many Pakistanis, including members of certain political parties and religious organisations, strongly condemned General Musharraf for lending support to foreign soldiers. However, this marked a substantial shift in Pakistan's foreign policy, and the nation joined the US as one of its most vital partners in the fight against terrorism (Riaz, 2017).

However, it is imperative to note that the alliance idea significantly shapes American foreign policy. Pakistan's position on the global map is distinct from that of other countries. Its border with Afghanistan stretches for about 2400 km. In light of these considerations, Pakistan's participation in the US campaign against terrorism was imperative. Being a part of the US alliance in the fight against terrorism helped Pakistan as well Hussain (2021). In his book, President Musharraf (2006) acknowledged that the Pakistani government made a sizable profit by supplying the US military with hundreds of terrorists. In 2003, the United States government granted Pakistan a one-billion-dollar debt forgiveness in exchange for Pakistan becoming an ally. Nancy Powell, the US ambassador to Pakistan, announced the decision during a ceremony dedicated to the occasion. She said that the United States and Pakistan would have a durable relationship again due to this action.

Nonetheless, a large portion of the Pakistani population rejected this form of favoritism from foreign powers at the expense of their country's sovereignty. In his autobiography, General Musharraf (2006a) acknowledged that he had received a menacing phone from US State Secretary Collin Powell: "There was no way for him to support the United States in the war against terrorism." He ultimately had to give in to all of the US's requests to help them, including granting the US Army access to several vital airports so they could begin flying operations and launch attacks on Afghanistan from Pakistan. American President George W. Bush called General Musharraf and told him that Pakistan should be prepared to be bombed if it did not cooperate (Musharraf, 2006b).

In Pakistan, there has been a democratic transition since 2008. Benazir Bhutto was assassinated, and the Pakistan People's Party emerged victorious in the elections. Since then, geopolitical, military, and economic considerations have considerably impacted the relations between the two countries. The US viewed democratic governments as helpful allies in the fight against terrorism. To target Taliban and al-Qaeda insurgents, the US escalated drone strikes in Pakistan's tribal areas. It resulted in civilian losses and anti-American sentiments in Pakistan, which kept tensions between the two countries high despite their collaboration. In 2011, Raymond Davis, a CIA contractor, was arrested in Lahore after killing two Pakistani men, causing strained ties. In the same year, Outrage in Pakistan resulted from the US Navy SEALs' covert operation in Abbottabad, Pakistan, that killed Osama bin Laden without telling the Pakistani authorities (Yousafzai, 2022)

Another event that soured ties during the same period was a NATO attack that claimed 24 Pakistani lives and forced Pakistan to block NATO supply lines to Afghanistan for several months. After taking office as prime minister in 2013, Nawaz Sharif aimed to strengthen economic relations with the United States and lessen reliance on military assistance. With US help and encouragement, he began Operation Zarb-e-Azb against insurgent organisations in North Waziristan. In 2017, Donald Trump became President of the United States (Vatanka, 2017). The US adopted a more stringent approach towards Pakistan, with President Trump accusing Pakistan of providing safe havens to terrorists. The US withheld \$255 million in military aid to Pakistan.

In 2018, Imran Khan became the Prime Minister of Pakistan. The US suspended nearly all security aid to Pakistan, citing insufficient action against terrorist groups. Relations began to improve slightly after a meeting between Imran Khan and President Trump, focusing on peace talks with the Taliban—continued engagement on the Afghan peace process. President Trump and Prime Minister Khan met again to discuss trade, investment, and regional security. Pakistan greatly aided the negotiations between the US and the Taliban, and a peace accord was struck in Doha. The Afghan peace process and regional stability occupied most of the conversation (Muzaffar, et.al., 2019; Yousafzai, 2022).

### **Literature Review**

Several scholarly investigations have also yielded significant findings about how the US is depicted in other countries. Wolfe (1964) studied the image of the US in the Latin American press and found that the press provided a dichotomous picture of the US, portraying it as kind and imperialist. Lee (1980) examined how the US was portrayed in the Chinese "People's Daily" publication. According to him, the degree to which US policies served China's internal, regional, and global interests determined how the US was perceived in the Chinese press. Khalifa (1982) analyzed US representations in Egyptian media. His study portrayed the US in two dimensions: first, as seen by the Egyptian business community and government, and then as seen by the Egyptian media. He found that the US was portrayed unfavorably in the Egyptian press from the late 1950s to the 1960s because of the strained diplomatic ties between Egypt and the US. Furthermore, the Egyptian government and media adopted a pro-Soviet stance at this tense time.

Becker (1996) looked at how the US was portrayed in Soviet political cartoons between April 1985 and August 1990, and the results showed that the Soviet press reflected the decisions made by the party and leadership regarding policy. Becker stated that Gorbachov's policies, which had a significant influence on media policies and persuaded these newspapers to alter their coverage of the US, caused the Soviet press's image to change from negative to neutral and positive at the end of the 1990s. Mahmood & Ahmad (2009) analyzed the image of the US in the Pakistani English press. The study explained how Pakistani newspapers frame the US in their news stories. The findings showed that newspapers presented the US image negatively. He further explored that whenever the US shielded Pakistan's interests, the Pakistani press framed the US image positively, whereas whenever the US adopted unfriendly policies towards Pakistan, at that time, the newspapers depicted the US image negatively.

According to Noshina Saleem's (2010) conducted study on the US image in Pakistani newspapers, Pakistan became a "front line state" following the Soviet Union's military intervention in Afghanistan. She discovered that "The Pakistan Times" and "The Daily Dawn" presented an unfavorable picture of the United States. According to her, the Pakistani government should not sign a mutual defense pact with the United States, as it did in 1959. Both newspapers, she claimed, still held the opinion that Pakistan should not allow military bases to be established on its soil to oppose the Soviet Union, as this would

jeopardize Pakistan's sovereignty and reputation among Muslims. So, considering the above-discussed studies, this research focuses on framing the Trump administration in elite Pakistani newspapers.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study centers on the framing theory, which assumes that noteworthy occurrences will be the center of mainstream media attention and will be situated within a specific meaning context. When "a speaker's emphasis on a subset of potentially relevant considerations causes individuals to focus on these considerations when constructing their opinions," this is known as a framing effect (Druckman, 2001, p. 1041). According to specific definitions, it is related to the agenda-setting idea of the media. Every circumstance in which prominent media figures deem an event or piece of information deserving of dissemination gives rise to framing. One can trace the origins of the Framing theory back to Walter Lippman's *Public Opinion* (1922). Lippmann, a newspaper writer, was the first to voice concerns over the impact of the media on public opinion. "Before we see the world, we are told about it. Most things are imagined before they are experienced, and unless education has made us acutely aware of them, such assumptions profoundly influence the entire perception process," (p. 55). The first chapter he wrote was titled "The World Outside and the Pictures in our Heads." He explained that mass media, particularly newspapers and magazines, shape our perceptions of the world.

In support of Lippmann's agenda-setting theory, McComb & Shaw (1972) assert that "how the news media presents the world to its viewers shapes their perception of it". Both studies looked into the possibility that people's opinions on global issues are influenced by the subjects that are reported in the media. According to them, determining the agenda is a dynamic and ever-changing process whereby shifts in media coverage either directly or indirectly affect how people perceive problems and topics. The links between media content and societal meaning were first identified by Tuchman (1989), who stated, "Journalists are constructing reality for their audiences when they choose content and frame it" (p. 147). Tuchman's studies gave the framing theory some strong foundations. When Entman (1993) joined the Tuchman and Goffman team as a pioneer of framing research, further advancements were made in the field. He explained framing; in a communicative text, to frame is to highlight specific characteristics of a seen reality to support a particular description of a problem, causal interpretation, moral assessment, and recommended course of action (p. 52).

He attempted to bring Goffman's initial ideas about frames, framework, and framing into a cohesive whole to strengthen a fragmented model of framing research. After more research, D. Angelo (2002) defined frame as an intentional effort to angle potent discursive indicators. Going one step further, Tankard (2001) contends that journalists occasionally employ frames to deceive the intended audience, going beyond the conscious effort to choose frames. Reese (2001) says that media framing is invariably an active process that involves picking, emphasizing, and presenting a topic in a specific way to accomplish predetermined objectives. In Goffmanian framing, such a question is nonsensical. He argues that it is an intrinsic feature of global social processes and a benefit for those who intentionally create it. McCombs (1997) looks at how specific parts of situations are emphasized in the media. He states, "framing is the process of choosing a small set of thematically connected characteristics to be included in the media agenda". He connects agenda-setting theory to the framing notion in this way.

As previously indicated, the research process for the necessary study entails analyzing the material that has been published in the newspapers. This approach is frequently used when analyzing the content of the mass media. Analyzing the media messages' content is a quick and easy procedure. According to Berelson (1952), "Content

analysis is a research technique that is objective, systematic, and quantitative in description,". There are four unique features in the content analysis. These qualities include manifest content, objectivity, systematics, and quantitateness. Understanding the definitions of these qualities is essential to doing competent content analysis. The researcher can more easily anticipate the communication process using content analysis.

When combined with other inquiry techniques, it lines message content with various aspects of the communication environment. The content analysis enables the researcher to address more critical queries regarding the course and the impact of communication. This study employs the Quantitative content analysis methodology. The content's number, frequency, and length are to be ascertained. The researcher interprets the study's findings using a qualitative methodology. The researcher reviews the entire examined material to satisfy his requirement to conclude the study's findings. The unit of analysis is the editorials published in Pakistan's three most well-known English newspapers: Dawn, The News, and The Nation. The study lasts one year, from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018. The reason for the selection of time is the Trump government. Trump took over America and has a strict stance against Pakistan. The researcher wants to explore how he has been portrayed in Pakistani newspapers.

Those three English newspapers selected have a large circulation and have many readerships in Pakistan and other countries of the world as well. All three newspapers cover approximately all critical national and international issues of the day. The editorial page is the unit of analysis as it indicates the newspaper policy, and the census approach is used to examine the data, which means all the editorials related to Trump and US are selected as analysis.

### **Analysis Procedure**

The researcher went through and counted every editorial line on the US in the newspapers that were mentioned. Based on these lines, the researcher concluded that the news report was positive, negative, and neutral. For example, the editorial content was deemed favorable (+) if it backed Trump's standpoint and included more positive lines. Stories that praise the US image and highlight the US position as necessary for Pakistan have been categorized as positive. It was deemed unfavorable if the content was more critical of Trump and opposed him (-). Stories critical of the United States' participation in Pakistan and the war on terror have been labelled as unfavorable. Assume the editorial had equal positive and negative lines and provided a blurred image of Trump or the United States. The researcher regarded the story as neutral in that scenario (0). The blurry editorials highlighting or presenting both sides of an issue have been considered neutral.

### **Results and Discussion**

**Table 1**  
**Shows the coverage of Newspapers**

|            | Total Number of Stories | Positive | Negative | Neutral |
|------------|-------------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Dawn       | 59                      | 15       | 20       | 24      |
| The Nation | 48                      | 12       | 23       | 13      |
| The News   | 41                      | 8        | 21       | 12      |
| Total      | 148                     | 35       | 64       | 49      |

The above table shows the overall coverage of the editorials of the selected newspapers. One hundred forty-eight stories are published in Dawn, the Nation and The News, among which Dawn gives the most attention, with 59 editorials, The Nation with 48, and The News with 41. The result indicates that Trump and US policies got sufficient coverage in elite Pakistani newspapers. Furthermore, the table shows that these selected newspapers gave an overall high negative coverage. Only Dawn gave the most neutral

coverage compared to The News and The Nation, which negatively framed Trump and the US in their stories. The Nation, with 23, and The News, with 21 stories, depicted Trump as Unfavorable, whereas Dawn had the lowest number of stories, with 20. It is also evident from the table that Dawn gives the most favorable coverage compared to The Nation and News. The Dawn gives 15 stories favoring Trump and the US, whereas the Nation and the News give 12 and 8, respectively.

The findings indicated that Trump received highly negative coverage in selected newspapers overall. However, their coverage is different. The Nation and The News pictured Trump's unfavorable image more prominently, whereas Dawn portrayed Trump's more neutral image in its stories. The findings also support the previous findings of Mahmood & Ahmad (2009), who analyzed the image of the US in the Pakistani English press. The study explained how Pakistani newspapers frame the US in their news stories. The findings showed that newspapers presented the US image negatively. He further explored that the Pakistani press framed the US image positively whenever the US shielded Pakistan's interests. In contrast, when the US adopted unfriendly policies towards Pakistan, the newspapers depicted the US image negatively at that time. Similarly, this study selected a period when Trump took over the US, and his stance towards Pakistan was strict. His tweets and press answers are against the policies of Pakistan. Pakistani newspapers projected an unfavorable image of Trump and his policies in that scenario.

Furthermore, there is a difference between the stance of the newspapers. Dawn has a more neutral view of Trump and his policies, whereas The News and The Nation painted a negative picture of the Trump administration. Moreover, Dawn gave more positive stories than The News and The Nation. So, findings showed that Dawn's editorial policy differs from The Nation and The News. However, the news and The Nation have the same editorial policy on the trump administration at selected times.

### **Conclusion:**

The study investigates the portrayal of Trump in the Elite press of Pakistan. It evaluates how Trump is portrayed in Pakistani media, both favourably and unfavourably, and if it holds the United States responsible for the nation's issues stemming from terrorism and war. The editorial contents of The Dawn, The News, and The Nation—three English newspapers published in Pakistan between July 1, 2017, and June 30, 2018—were analysed for this study using a quantitative content methodology. Data is added to the sheet quantitatively after editorial material has been qualitatively observed. These newspapers' editorials throughout the year are utilised as analysis units. According to the results, Dawn painted a neutral view of Trump, while The News and The Nation generally portrayed him critically. Moreover, Dawn has a different editorial stance than the other two newspapers, which are on the same page during this issue at a selected time.

### **Recommendations**

- This analysis is limited to one year only; further study should be conducted to complete the tenure of Trump to get a more visible picture.
- This study revolves around only English newspapers; more studies should be done on Urdu and regional newspapers to check whether there is a difference between the coverage.
- The research is restricted to the trump administration only; Further studies should be examined on the Jobiden government to check the difference between both government policies.



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