

**RESEARCH PAPER****Framing of Counter-Terrorism Activities in the Leading Pakistani English and Urdu Newspapers: Post Army Public School Peshawar Attack (2014-2019)****¹Ehtisham Ali* ²Prof. Dr. Noshina Saleem ³Prof. Dr. Hanan Ahmad**

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***Corresponding Author** ehtisham.ali@uon.edu.pk**ABSTRACT**

The study "Framing of Counter-Terrorism activities in the leading Pakistani English and Urdu newspapers: Post Army Public School Peshawar Attack (2014-2019)" is focused on the editorials and columns of the English and Urdu newspapers of Pakistan from December 2014 right after APS Peshawar attacks to December 2019. Two English newspapers' *daily Dawn* and *daily The News* whereas Urdu newspapers' including *daily Jang* and *daily Nawa-i-Waqt* were selected during the aforementioned time period. The categories Military Operations; National Action Plan, National Security, Cutting Terror Financing and Funding were analyzed in three point scale from Unfavorable, Neutral to Favorable. The study gets the support of agenda setting and framing theories. The results show that overall positive stance to all selected categories was given followed by neutral stance whereas least negative stance was observed in the study. The study approved all the hypotheses and confirmed that Pakistani print media supported the government and militarily operations in the country to curb terrorism activities to protect the lives of its nation.

KEYWORDS Counter-Terrorism, Military Operations, National Action Plan, National Security, Terror Financing, Terror Funding**Introduction**

Media is considered as the fourth pillar of the state in contemporary age of media and information technology, at present information sharing has become so important that the timely information sharing and gathering has become a top priority not only for the governments and key stakeholders but for the general public too. Media has been considered as the reflection of any society because it highlights the events and the happenings in the society; media has got a key position beyond information, entertainment and education and is now considered as a source for framing or constructing the minds of the people. Media has become a source to cover all the happenings across the world (Ali & Shahid, 2012, Sultan, 2013 and Landry, 2017). Media highlights and frames the issues from foreign policy to economy as well as the war and peace related issues. After the September 11th 2001 (commonly known as 9/11) bombing incidents in the United States, a global war against terrorism was started by the United States, resultantly a massive scale war to eliminate terrorism and extremism started and its centre point was Afghanistan where the allegedly master minds of terrorists were hiding themselves. Pakistan being the immediate neighbor to Afghanistan was approached by the United States to seek help in the global war against terrorism led by the United States. Pakistan, considering the ground realities and the pressure by the super power decided to support the United States in the war against terrorism (Musharraf, 2008; Ali & Shahid, 2012 and Hanan, Saleem & Qusan, 2013).

Subsequently, Pakistan started facing the terrorist attacks as result Pakistan faced loss of thousands of its armed forces personals and civilians, Pakistan have faced the infrastructural loss worth billions of dollars. The decision to support the United States led

war against terrorism started a new episode of bombings, suicide attacks and terrorism across the country as result hundreds of major and thousands of minor terrorist attacks were witnessed in Pakistan (Ali & Shahid, 2012; Khan, 2013; Iqbal, 2014; Ali, 2014; Javaid, 2015; Javaid, 2016 and Saleem, Yousaf & Ali, 2021). The barbarism by terrorists reached to the extent that it targeted all the places including mosques, churches, playgrounds, sensitive installments, educational institutions and markets etc. Terrorism and extremism became part of daily news in Pakistan that there was hardly any day free from the news of any terror attack in the country. Security forces in Pakistan started a number of counter-terrorism operations to curb the terrorists and extremists (Walsh, 2008; Wilkinson, 2008; Javaid, 2015; Javaid, 2016; Shaukat et al., 2015; Saifi, 2016; Yousafzai, 2016; Chaudhry, 2017; Saleem, Yousaf & Ali, 2021).

As result of the counter-terrorism operations started by the armed forces in Pakistan peace was restored to greater extent but suddenly on 16th December 2014, terrorists attacked a school named Army Public School (APS) in the provincial capital of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) which resulted in the martyrdom of more than 140 children, teachers and staff. This attack shook the foundations of the country's political and military leadership because the terrorists reached to the school in one of the most sensitive and secured areas (Kaphle, 2014; Salahuddin, 2015; Javaid, 2015; Ramay, 2016; Javaid, 2016; Rehman, 2018; Abbas, 2017). After the Army Public School (APS) attacks the top political and military leadership united and decided to deal terrorists with iron hands, Pakistan made a National Action Plan comprising of twenty points which were focused to take strict and comprehensive measures to eliminate terrorism and extremism from its roots. The National Action Plan was aimed on the death sentence to the terrorists and extremists who were convicted; trial courts establishment for speedy trials of the terrorists through the military courts; ban on the glorification of terrorists through the media; ban on hate literature, to strengthen the national counter terrorism authority (NACTA); strict measures to stop the terror financing; effective measures to register religious centers; establishment of a force to counter terrorism activities; reforms in federally administrated tribal areas of Pakistan; eliminating the terror networks; political reconciliation in Baluchistan; a logical end to Karachi operation; to deal sectarianism firmly, reforming criminal and justice system and a comprehensive Afghan refugees policy.

The National Action Plan (NAP) became important to eliminate terrorism and extremism and this became a part of the comprehensive plan to deal with the terrorism and extremism from the country. This plan became part of the routine news stories in the print and electronic media of Pakistan and outside the territorial boundaries as well (Kaphle, 2014; Salahuddin, 2015; Ramay, 2016; Abbas, 2017; Javaid, 2016; Rehman, 2018). The attack on the Army Public School (APS) Peshawar was termed as turning point in the Pakistan's policy against terrorism and was termed as Pakistan's 9/11. Earlier, Pakistan started the operation Zarb-e-Azb in Mid-2014 as result of the terror attacks on the sensitive public places. After the APS Peshawar attacks the operation Zarb-e-Azb was expedite and now the operation extended across the country, the attack on the school became a turning point in the history of Pakistan to expedite the counter-terrorism operation and to eliminate terrorists and extremists from the country (Javaid, 2015 and Javaid, 2016). Operation Zarb-e-Azb secured successes and after that in 2017 operation Rad-UI-Fasaad was started to eliminate the menace of terrorism from all over the country targeting the hide outs of terrorists (Johnsrud & Kagan, 2017 and Afzal, 2021). The military operations started by Pakistan to eliminate terrorism and extremism received successes and played a key role to eliminate terrorism and extremism from the country.

Pakistan faced terrorism for more than two decades after the 9/11 attacks in the United States. Pakistan became a prime target of the terrorists which challenged the national security of the country, Pakistan to ensure its national security started a number of counter terrorism operations including some key operations named as Zarb-e-Azab; Rad-UI-Fasaad;

Rah-e Rast, Rah-e-Nijaat; Khyber and Swat operations to counter terrorism activities in Pakistan (Javed, 2017; Khayyam, Shah, Tahir, 2018 and Khokhar, 2015).

Literature Review

Media plays vital role in informing the people regarding the events and happenings around them. The print, electronic and social media all are performing a key role to cover the issues and incidents related to terrorism and extremism. Terrorism has become an important topic of the twenty first century as at start of the current century one of the most powerful country in the world United States faced terrorist attacks which resulted the beginning of the global war against terrorism (Ali & Shahid, 2001; Yousaf & Ali, 2012; Ali, 2014; Saleem, Yousaf & Ali, 2021 and Gillani, 2021). As the terrorism has become a global phenomenon as almost the entire world has faced this issue directly or indirectly but its definition is still a question mark as there has been no clear definition of terrorism which may be accepted globally, there has been a number of definitions of the term and is acceptable by everyone as per their own convenience (Satatr, 2021 and Gillani, 2021). According to the researcher and scholar Schmid as cited in Gillani, 2021 the word *terror* is a Latin derived word meaning *to frighten*.

After 9/11 incidents terrorism and extremism became talk of almost all the global discussions and a comprehensive war against terrorism was started by the United States along with its allies, United States asked Pakistan for its support in this war whose centre point was going to be in Afghanistan, the neighbouring country of Pakistan and Pakistan agreed to extend its support in the war against terrorism (Yousaf, Ali & Ahmed, 2013 and Zaman, Bano & Shafiq, 2020).

After this decision Pakistan faced a series of terrorist and extremist attacks across the country as the Taliban leadership who was the target of the United States and its allies in Afghanistan used to think that Pakistan has played a role to make them a direct target of the United States led war in Afghanistan. Resultantly, Taliban leadership started extending their access to the tribal areas of Pakistan which were adjacent to Afghanistan on one end and was having an easy movement due to a porous border. They enhanced their influence in the Pakistani territory and started targeting the civilians in Pakistan at start which later extended to the important military installments, political and military leadership and the religious as well as educational centers across the country (Hussain, 2005; Ahmad, 2010; Ali & Shahid, 2012; Crawford, 2018, Javed, 2017 and Zaman, Bano & Shafiq, 2020).

Media in Pakistan and abroad focused on the issues and incidents related to terrorism and extremism as one of the most important issues framing the issues in order to inform the people on one end and to open a debate to counter the terrorism and extremism at other end to ensure the national security (Jetter, 2017). Pakistan was attacked more brutally by terrorists that resulted in a huge loss of the lives and infrastructure of billions of dollars and media gave an extraordinary coverage to the issue.

Media covered the issue of terrorism and extremism to larger extent but according to the policies of the respective media houses and the national / foreign policies, the western media covered the terrorism and related issues but according to their own interests rather presenting a boarder perspective as the terrorism related incidents for instance the incidents and happenings in Iraq, Afghanistan and rest of the Muslim countries were not presented by the western media as they had to be framed (Ali & Shahid, 2012; Graber, 2005; Calabrese, 2005). Saleem, Yousaf & Ali (2021) presented that the western media framed the incidents of terrorism where target were Muslims were presented differently than the incidents where the targets were non-Muslims which depicted the biasness of the media as well. Similarly, the studies by Ali & Shahid; Yousaf & Ali, 2012; Yousaf, Ali & Ahmed, 2013 and Ali, 2014 presented that the media coverage to different incidents of terrorism was given differently and media framed the incidents of terrorism and extremism paying worth to the affected people or community as the incidents where the affected people were

western residents were treated differently by the international media than the victims belonging to non-western states like Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq etc. It is further studied that more incidents are observed where the victims are non-western residents and they were given prominent media coverage by the native media houses rather the international media particularly where the victims are non-western. War on terrorism and its coverage and framing by the media has been a key issue of the studies by different researchers and scholars after 9/11 incidents and they have presented a fair analysis that the issue has been presented differently by the western media as compared to the media by the non-western states (Ali & Yousaf, 2012; Sultan, 2013; Hanan & Saleem, 2014; Iqbal, 2014; Farooq & Yousaf, 2022 and Saleem, Yousaf & Ali, 2021).

Terrorism and media have strong linkage as the media houses always pay importance to the issues and incidents related to terrorism and extremism across the world. As terrorism is not only linked to create terror and killings of the people but also to destabilize the countries' national security, media always plays a role to apprise the ground realities and the exact situations as well. The study in hand is focused to study the framing of the Counter-Terrorism measures in the Print Media (Urdu & English) of Pakistan after the Army Public School (APS) Peshawar attacks on 16th December 2014 where the Editorials and Columns are focused to analyze from 16th December 2014 to 15th December 2019. The key objectives of the study are as follows:

The hypotheses are as follows:

- H1:** English newspapers have given an overall supportive framing of all the selected issues related to Counter-terrorism activities in Pakistan.
- H2:** Urdu newspapers have given an overall supportive framing of all the selected issues related to counter- terrorism activities in Pakistan.
- H3:** Columns have given more coverage than the editorials in the selected newspapers.

Theoretical Framework

For the study in hand *the Agenda Setting Theory* and *the Framing Theory* are used as theoretical framework. *Agenda Setting* is defined as a process whereby the media finalize that what the audience have to think and for which audience have to worry about. How Media give hype, makes a salient issue as most important issue of the society and how the agenda of media become audience agenda (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Saleem, 1998; Ali & Yousaf, 2012 and Kim, Kim, & Zhou, 2017). *Agenda setting* is appropriate for the study as the study focused on what were the agendas of selected print media for highlighting counter terrorism activities and regarding national security. *Media Agenda* is focused in the current study. Second level of agenda setting theory is *Framing Theory* which refers how media represent the subject in specific frame. Media use different frames to highlight the material to the public. *Framing* of thoughts in which opinions, mental frames, interpretation and perception are included (Saleem, 2000; Arowolo, 2017; Entman, 1993; Saleem, 2007; Fahmy, 2004; Ali & Shahid, 2012; Yousaf, Ali & Ahmed, 2013; Ali, 2014; Iqbal, 2014; Hanan & Saleem, 2014; Saleem, Yousaf & Ali, 2021 and Farooq & Yousaf, 2022). *Framing theory* provided fundamental base to analyze the frames of print media that were used to represent the terrorism issues and counter terrorism activities after APS (Army Public school) attacks in Peshawar.

Material and Methods

Analysis method has been used for the study in hand, this method allows the *qualitative* as well as *quantitative* analysis (Berelson, 1952; Farooq & Yousaf, 2022; Saleem, 2000 & 2007; Ali & Shahid, 2012, Saleem, Yousaf & Ali, 2021). The universe is the print media including English and Urdu newspapers of Pakistan where the editorials and columns were

focused from December 2014 right after APS Peshawar attacks to December 2019. Two English newspapers' including *daily Dawn* and *The News* whereas Urdu newspapers' including *daily Jang* and *daily Nawa-i-Waqt* were analyzed during the aforementioned time period.

Categories for Analysis

- A. Military Operations** (All the military operation during the selected time period started to curtail terrorism and extremism from Pakistan)
- B. National Action Plan** (A twenty point National Action Plan which was given by the military and political leadership of Pakistan to limit terrorism and extremism from Pakistan)
- C. National Security** (A key issue in Pakistan after the 9/11 incidents when terrorism and extremism challenged the National Security of Pakistan)
- D. Cutting Terror Financing and Funding** (Terror financing and funding has been a key issue for Pakistan as terrorists and extremists were funded from foreign forces in Pakistan to create unrest in the country)

Directions

Favorable (Articles in favor / showing a positive dimension / in support of the selected categories i.e. Military Operations, National Action Plan, National Security and Cutting Terror Financing and funding falls under the positive direction)

Unfavorable (Articles opposing / negative dimension / against the selected categories from Military Operations, National Action Plan, National Security and Cutting Terror Financing and Funding falls under the negative direction)

Neutral (Articles having a mixed / balanced stance in the selected categories from Military Operations, National Action Plan, National Security and Cutting Terror Financing and Funding falls under the neutral direction)

Data Analysis

Table 1
Language / Newspaper wise observations / coverage to the selected issues

Language	Newspaper	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Urdu	<i>daily Jang</i>	508	27.2	27.2	27.2
	<i>daily Nawa-i-Waqt</i>	675	36.2	36.2	63.4
English	<i>daily Dawn</i>	359	19.2	19.2	82.7
	<i>daily The News</i>	323	17.3	17.3	100.0
Total		1865	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 presents the language and newspaper wise coverage to the selected categories which shows that the Urdu language newspapers *daily Nawa-i-Waqt* and *daily Jang* have given more coverage than the English language newspapers *daily Dawn* and *daily The News*.

Table 2
Content (Editorial / Column) wise observations / coverage to the selected issues

Content	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Editorial	491	26.3	26.3	26.3
Column	1374	73.7	73.7	100.0
Total	1865	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 presents the Editorial and Column wise coverage to the selected categories which presents that more Columns are published than the Editorials by the selected newspapers.

Table 3
Editorial and Column wise Coverage to Military Operations (Category-A)

Content	Stance	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Editorial	Supportive	160	32.6	85.1	85.1
	Non-Supportive	1	.2	.5	85.6
	Balanced	27	5.5	14.4	100.0
	Total	188	38.3	100.0	
Column	Supportive	345	25.1	70.4	70.4
	Non-Supportive	47	3.4	9.6	80.0
	Balanced	98	7.1	20.0	100.0
	Total	490	35.7	100.0	

Table 03 presents the editorial and column wise coverage to Military Operations presents that more supportive and least non-supportive coverage is given to the selected category in both editorials and columns.

Table 4
Editorial and Column wise Coverage to National Action Plan (Category-B)

Content	Stance	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Editorial	Supportive	131	26.7	81.9	81.9
	Non-Supportive	5	1.0	3.1	85.0
	Balanced	24	4.9	15.0	100.0
	Total	160	32.6	100.0	
Column	Supportive	296	21.5	65.5	65.5
	Non-Supportive	58	4.2	12.8	78.3
	Balanced	98	7.1	21.7	100.0
	Total	452	32.9	100.0	

Table 04 presents the editorial and column wise coverage to National Action Plan presents that more supportive and least non-supportive coverage is given to the selected category in both editorials and columns.

Table 5
Editorial and Column wise Coverage to National Security (Category-C)

Content	Stance	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Editorial	Supportive	78	15.9	77.2	77.2
	Non-Supportive	6	1.2	5.9	83.2
	Balanced	17	3.5	16.8	100.0
	Total	101	20.6	100.0	
Column	Supportive	191	13.9	62.0	62.0
	Non-Supportive	49	3.6	15.9	77.9
	Balanced	68	4.9	22.1	100.0
	Total	308	22.4	100.0	

Table 05 presents the editorial and column wise coverage to National Security presents that more supportive and least non-supportive coverage is given to the selected category in both editorials and columns.

Table 6
Editorial and Column wise Coverage to Cutting Terror Financing & Funding (Category-D)

Content	Stance	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Editorial	Supportive	30	6.1	71.4	71.4
	Non-Supportive	2	.4	4.8	76.2
	Balanced	10	2.0	23.8	100.0
	Total	42	8.6	100.0	
Column	Supportive	67	4.9	55.8	55.8
	Non-Supportive	21	1.5	17.5	73.3
	Balanced	32	2.3	26.7	100.0
	Total	120	8.7	100.0	

Table 06 presents the editorial and column wise coverage to Cutting Terror Financing & Funding presents that more supportive and least non-supportive coverage is given to the selected category in both editorials and columns.

Table 7
Language wise Statistical Analysis

Language of Newspaper		Military Operations	National Action Plan	National Security	Cutting Terror Financing and Funding
Urdu	Chi-Square	249.611 ^a	206.727 ^b	129.841 ^c	22.857 ^d
	df	2	2	2	2
	Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000
English	Chi-Square	292.209 ^c	173.361 ^e	72.864 ^f	41.789 ^g
	df	2	2	2	2
	Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 07 presents the language wise statistical analysis for all selected categories including the Military Operations, National Action Plan, National Security and Cutting Terror

Financing and Funding, the results shows that in all the selected categories p-value is less than 0.05, so the results show significance of the results in all selected categories.

Table 8
Newspaper wise Statistical Analysis

Name of Newspaper		Military Operations	National Action Plan	National Security	Cutting Terror Financing and Funding
Daily Jang	Chi-Square	129.924 ^a	77.148 ^b	50.389 ^c	14.115 ^d
	Df	2	2	2	2
	Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.001
Daily Nawa-i-Waqt	Chi-Square	121.005 ^e	130.179 ^f	79.893 ^g	9.321 ^h
	Df	2	2	2	2
	Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.009
Daily Dawn	Chi-Square	66.019 ⁱ	66.205 ^j	36.813 ^k	25.574 ^l
	Df	2	2	2	2
	Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000
Daily The News	Chi-Square	236.717 ^m	113.636 ⁿ	41.171 ^o	
	Df	2	2	2	
	Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	

Table 08 presents the newspaper wise statistical analysis for all selected categories including the Military Operations, National Action Plan, National Security and Cutting Terror Financing and Funding, the results shows that in all the selected categories p-value is less than 0.05, so the results show significance of the results in all selected categories.

Table 9
Newspaper Content (Editorials and Columns) wise Statistical Analysis

Newspaper Content		Military Operations	National Action Plan	National Security	Cutting Terror Financing and Funding
Editorial	Chi-Square	232.160 ^a	173.037 ^b	89.366 ^c	29.714 ^d
	df	2	2	2	2
	Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000
Column	Chi-Square	311.049 ^e	215.593 ^f	115.760 ^g	28.850 ^h
	df	2	2	2	2
	Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 9 presents the content (Editorials and Columns) wise statistical analysis for all selected categories including the Military Operations, National Action Plan, National Security and Cutting Terror Financing and Funding, the results shows that in all the selected categories p-value is less than 0.05, so the results show significance of the results in all selected categories.

Conclusion

The study "Framing of Counter-Terrorism activities in the leading Pakistani English and Urdu newspapers: Post Army Public School Peshawar Attack (2014-2019)" analyzed the editorials and columns of the leading English and Urdu daily newspapers of Pakistan from December 2014 right after APS Peshawar attacks to December 2019. Two English newspapers' including daily Dawn and daily The News whereas Urdu newspapers' including daily Jang and daily Nawa-i-Waqt were analyzed during the aforementioned time period. The categories Military Operations; National Action Plan; National Security and Cutting Terror Financing & Funding were analyzed in three directions including favorable (Articles in favor / in support of the selected categories i.e. Military Operations; National Action Plan; National Security and Cutting Terror Financing & Funding falls under the positive direction);

Unfavorable (Articles opposing / against the selected categories i.e. Military Operations; National Action Plan; National Security and Cutting Terror Financing & Funding falls under the negative direction) and Neutral (Articles having a mixed / balanced stance in the selected categories i.e. Military Operations; National Action Plan; National Security and Cutting Terror Financing & Funding falls under the neutral direction) were analyzed. The agenda setting and framing theories were employed in the study focusing on the media agenda setting. The study shows that overall favorable stance to all selected categories was given followed by neutral stance whereas least unfavorable stance was observed in the study. The study also shows that the hypotheses of the study have also been proved statistically (Table 7 to 9).

The study concluded that the leading newspapers in Pakistan presented an overwhelming support to the counter-terrorism activities started by Pakistan to eliminate terrorism and extremism from Pakistan. Overall a favorable stance in support to the military operations, actions taken under National Action Plan in order to ensure national security and cutting terror financing and Funding was given. Media played a key role not only to inform but to support the counter terrorism activities in order to ensure the national security after the APS Peshawar attacks. It is also observed that media in Pakistan fully supported the counter terrorism operations and activities.

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