

COUNTER TERRORISM ACTIVITIES IN PAKISTAN: COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE EDITORIALS OF ELITE NEWSPAPERS

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ABSTRACT

This research paper focuses to discuss the coverage of terrorism activities in Pakistan. Islamic Republic of Pakistan has facing terrorism in different mode from last many decades. The war on terrorism has launched in reaction of the attacks of 9/11 by the Bush administration. Pakistan has played very essential role as US allies in counter terrorism. Mass media has strong power to influence on reshaping the opinion and polices about any issue. Editorials of two elite newspaper of Pakistani press were selected for this research. Method of content analysis was adopted to find out the coverage of terrorism in Pakistan. The study tries to investigate the media framing about the terrorism, whether it portrayed pro-Taliban or pro-US in the editorials of both newspapers. Time frame of the study was designed after the attacks of 9/11to its next anniversary. Categories of content were defined to cater the terrorism coverage. Findings of detailed analysis depict the pro-US coverage.

Key words: 9/11, Framing, Editorials, Terrorism activities, War on terror & Media framing.

INTRODUCTION

Media has dominant influence and can sway the perception of the audience. Basics of that influences are decision of considering to newsworthiness of any event. This way media process the information and present reality according to selection of events that considered unique and newsworthy. In fact, process of selecting news is based on depiction of events into words and illustration. The whole process of selecting the coverage or detail of any event or eradication of some information regarding any event is called the “role of gate keeping”.

Media persons have power to chose the mode of presentation of any complex issue whether it will be important through presenting with images, words and music. The process of selection is very complicated but also inevitable, as we have impossibility to replicate the reality (Nyheter, 2005) ^[1]. Thus, “the power of media, is the power to define our sense of the social reality of the society and the

world we live in; they achieve this through control over the information that they present us” (McCullagh, 2002) ^[2].

Mass media has its own agenda about coverage of any issue. The origin of the idea of agenda setting has its roots from an old book, Public Opinion written by Lippmann (1922) ^[3]. In this book Lippmann said that “The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads.” It is the media which inform us about the world according to his on perspective. Mass media present the picture of the world in the audience mind Lippmann (1922) and people not think that what they like to think. But what media feed them they start to thinking about that issue or the story.

In the news media people did not access to the reality. They can only see the reflection of the reality and subsequently they start thinking about the world on the basis of that reflection. That information or reality presented by the news media mostly deficient or distorted.

An empirical study was conducted by two researchers McCombs & Shaw (1972)^[4] to investigate the idea that news media organization influence the perception of the individuals. According to Tankard (1991)^[5] “Agenda-setting is one of the possible way that the mass media can have an effect on the public”. In the last decade media has raised its importance by reporting the crisis of the world. Entman (2000)^[6] point out that US media, “seem to provide the most consistently interventionist elite voices in post-Cold War America”.

Agenda setting research begin with paying attention on “the relationship between media coverage of issues and perceptions of issue importance among the general public” (Salmon, 2003)^[7]. Dunaway, et.al. (2007) explore it, “Agenda setting describes the process by which the news media shows the public what is important by giving more salience to certain events and issues more than other issues. Because of increased media attention, Specific issues are more salient in the minds of citizens. As a result, the public perceives those issues which receive the majority of media coverage to be the ones of greatest importance.”^[8]

The choice of presenting or rejecting of any issue is called role of gate keeping. However, decisions are made on the basis of depiction of what aspects to magnify or what aspects to shrink of any issue described the idea of Framing. It seemed similar to gate keeping but Entman (1993)^[9] states about media framing, media also “defines problems...diagnoses causes, makes moral judgments and suggests remedies”

Mass Media Framing of Terrorism

Most of our knowledge of different events or issues is driven from mediated messages. So it depends on how mass media depicts the issues and reports as

news. News media presents the interpretation of any news that is mere construction and reproduction of the reality. Every news item or article is seemed compositions of words to audience but it had millions of embedded messages. News media utilize the framing as a well-known instrument in reporting of any issue, “its use to decipher news reports is extensive” (Tuchman 1978).^[10]

President George W. Bush announced war on terrorism in revenge of horrible attacks of 9/11. Political leader tries to mould the public opinion through the help of media. When audience read or watch the incident of 9/11 or coverage of western media regarding the war against terrorism they experience that terrorism is threat to their entire modern lifestyle, values and democracy. The word 9/11 and terrorism made a perception of threat to audience in all over the times as they listen or read in their daily life (Ali, 2011)^[11]. It is due to media interpretations of the event of 9/11 as a threat of human life as terrorism never been threat before it.

In process of framing of any issue there are many factors involved to pick to frame any certain aspect of any issue as associated with social value and specific time period. In fact a certain issue is frame differently through coverage of deferent media. This study focuses to find out the coverage of elite newspaper of Pakistan regarding counter terrorism.

Objectives of the Study

Following are the basic objectives of the study:

1. To find the coverage pattern of the Pakistani newspapers on war against terror in their opinion pages.
2. To find out the presentation pattern of counter terrorism activities in Pakistani's newspapers opinion pages.

3. To tap the contents of the newspapers qualitatively regarding counter terrorism activities

4. To find the relationship between the policies of elite press on the issue of counter terrorism.

Research Questions

RQ1: Whether and to what extent the elite newspapers of Pakistan favored the war on terror in their opinion pages?

RQ2: Whether the newspapers were pro, anti or neutral towards US war on terror in their opinion pages?

RQ3: Whether and to what extent the policies of the newspapers correlate the US government policy on the issue?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Before the understanding of war on terror, it is essential to understand the meaning of term terrorism. The word "terrorism" is derived from Latin word *terrere*, means "to frighten." The word terrorism was included in English dictionaries in 1798. It means "systematic use of terror as a policy. Now a day, it refers to the murder of innocent people by a self interested group in such a way as to create a media spectacle. UN jury defines terrorism as, "any act intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act" (Ali, 2011) ^[11].

US War Against Terrorism

On September 11, 2001, men of al-Qaeda, a terrorist organization, hijacked four commercial passenger jet airliners of USA and crashed two of them into the World Trade Center in New York City and one of them into the Pentagon, which was a symbols of USA economic and military power. Both of the WorldTradeCenter's TwinTowers completely distorted as a result of the attacks.

The President of USA, George W. Bush coined the term "war on terror" in response to September 9/ 11, 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States, which according to him were planned in Afghanistan by the terrorist group al Qaeda. The war on terror, George Bush declared, "will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated. In response to terrorist attacks, USA launched military operation against Al Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan with the help of Northern alliance and captured Kabul. A new government of Hamid Karazi was established in Afghanistan. Under the canopy of NATO the operation against "war on terror" was started.

Incident of 9/11 and Pakistan

The terrorist attacks on World Trade Centre have spectator that these incidents extremely affected Pakistan's national solidity and economic condition. After the attacks of 9/11 once again Pakistan has become the front-line state in the war against terrorism. US equipped for attack on Afghanistan, but Afghanistan was a landlocked country. US required airspaces and air bases for logistics support from neighbour countries. US started talk with Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan for support but its first priority was to Pakistan's support for invasion. Because most of the US supplies on ships route was possible through the Indian Ocean. Pakistan was a viable ally for America for assault.

On the war against terrorism Washington asked Pakistan to decide in the 24 hour, whether "it would be on America's side or not (Musharraf, 2007)".^[12] Collins (2008) explain it that US administration, "made it clear to Pakistan that it wanted intelligence support, the use of Pakistan's airspace, and logistical support. Although the U.S. never directly threatened the use of force,

U.S. officials threatened to add Pakistan to a State Department list of seven terrorist-sponsoring nations which would portend the possibility of U.S. force. According to one high-ranking official at U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, President Musharraf was told to either abandon support of Taliban or be prepared to be treated like the Taliban".^[13]

Next day on September 13, 2001, President General Pervaiz Musharraf showed green signal to US, to joining international coalition against terrorism (Dawn, 2001).^[14] On September 19, 2001, after the higher official meeting President of Pakistan General Pervaiz Musharraf addressed the nation on television and clarified, "We in Pakistan are facing a very critical situation. Perhaps it is as critical as the events in 1971. If we make the wrong decisions our vital interests will be harmed, our critical concerns are our sovereignty, second our economy, third our strategic assets, (nuclear, missiles) and fourth our Kashmir cause. All four will be harmed. If we make these decisions they must be according to Islam. It is not the question of bravery or cowardice. But bravery without thinking is stupidity. We have to save our interests. Pakistan comes first everything else is secondary."^[15]

Pakistan has cooperated with US through providing logistics facilities, capturing al-Qaida suspects and sharing of intelligence. Pakistan has closed up its western border. It also grants two naval bases and three air force basis to US military (9/11 Commission Report). United States has granted Pakistan equaling \$1 billion and exempt \$ 1 billion in debt. In 2003, United States also announced a five year aid package of \$3 billion for Pakistan. US provided \$2.63 billion direct aid between 2002 and 2005 (Kronstadt, 2006).^[16] Moreover both countries signed an agreement on trade and investment.

US assistance to Pakistan has not focus on strengthen Pakistan's internal stability. Its primary objective was to achieve a specific goal in counter terrorism in the country western border and in Afghanistan. It was a political stipulated assistance, and a reward of Mushraf's regime cooperation to US on counter terrorism. The 9/11 commissioners have figured out that U.S. assistance had not, "moved sufficiently beyond in this security assistance to include significant funding for education efforts" (Thomas, 2005).^[17] Cohen, (2007) explain it as, "In this way, very little is unique about the current U.S.-Pakistani relationship. It is history repeating itself, resembling the relationship in the 1980s when the United States established a quid pro quo with General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq to help fight the Soviets."^[18]

Impact of War on Terror on Pakistan

War on terror greatly affected not only the people of Pakistan from social and psychological point of view but also have adverse effect on the economy of Pakistan. A lot of bomb blasts and suicide attacks took place in different parts of the country, resulting in loss of human lives, and infrastructure, destruction of property, and curtailment of short-term economic activity.

Institute for conflict management (2011)^[19] generated a table showing annual fatalities in terrorist violence in Pakistan totaling of 25,329 people including military personnel's and civilians. Terrorist attacks created uncertainty and reduced the rate of investment and greatly influenced growth rate. According to Federal Bureau of statistics the contribution of agriculture and industrial sector to GDP saw significant decline from 2004 to 2009.^[20]

Media Framing of Issues

The researchers of mass media scrutinized news framing as a theory at length (Entman, 1993),^[21] creation with Tuchman's (1978)^[22] first introduction about this idea. Goffman's (1974)^[23] has described the general definition of framing as, "the principles of organization, which govern social events" (p. 232). According of this concept all issues are framed when they reported in mass media.

Norris (1995)^[24] expresses news frames as cognitive image, which reporters use to abridge, prioritize and structure the narrative stream of issues. Thus, framing is inescapable in process of news production (Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad, 2000).^[25] When journalist tries to find out the moral judgment of any issue, identified the solution of any problem framing has occurred at every stage. This way framing required prejudiced involvement in any issue (Tuchman, 1978).^[22]

After reviewing the literature the following hypothesis were posed:-

H1: The Pakistani newspapers favored the war on terror by giving much Pro-US opinions about the issue.

H2: The Pakistani newspapers were anti towards US war on terror.

H3: The Pakistani newspapers remained neutral in opinion pages about US government policy.

METHOD

Universe of this study is elite newspaper of Pakistan. Opinion pages of The News and The Nation were selected for this study. An "opinion page" means pages containing editorials, columns and letter to editor in newspaper. Comparative study of the content of both newspapers is conducted in the selected time period. These newspapers had wide circulation in

the country and are well-liked newspaper in the elite class of Pakistan. Both newspapers are owned by two different organizations as The News by Jang group and The Nation by Nawa e Waqat group. Each group has its distinctive ideology.

Editorials related to terrorism were selected for this study. Time period of the study is divided into four phases from September, 2001 to September, 2002. First phase of the study contained the coverage of September, October and November, 2001, second phase of research comprises the coverage of December, 2001, January, 2002 and February, 2002 and third phase based on coverage of June, July and August, 2002. Contents of each phase were analyzed separately through tables and graphs. Findings of each phase were presented separately.

Formation of Categories

Combination of qualitative and quantitative method of analysis was adopted for the best consideration of research questions. Findings of qualitative data were analyzed through quantitative data. Categories of the contents were established for accurate findings. Editorials related to terrorism were categorized in basic three categories as;

Editorials Related To US Military Operations

All the editorials based on US military operations and NATO Forces role on war against terrorism. All the attainment of US's military like capturing the terrorist and destroying their network and other military forces related activities in Afghanistan were categorized in this category.

Article Related To Terrorism Attacks

All Editorials based on terrorism, bomb blast, suicide bombing, activities of terrorist organizations, terrorist training camps, and support to terrorism were categorized in terrorism.

Editorials related to Al-Qaida or Taliban

All the editorials based on Al-Qaida or Taliban role on war against terrorism. All the attainment of Al-Qaida or Taliban like capturing the soldiers of US militia and destroying their network and other military forces related counter activities in Afghanistan were categorized in this category.

Framing of the Contents

Every paragraph of the editorial, column and letter to editor was coded in term of slant paragraph which point out three directions of the categories. These directions labeled as pro-US or Anti-Taliban, pro-Taliban or Anti-US and neutral. The contents present counter terrorism activity framing US positively, argue against Taliban and Al-Qaida and consider them a threat for world peace and support the Anti-Taliban activities were slant as Pro-US. Paragraphs' presenting war on terror negatively, criticize on US Policies, support Taliban and Usama Bin Laden were slant as Pro Taliban. The other

which not favors US or Taliban were slant as neutral.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This part of the study is based on qualitative and quantitative findings. Editorials related on terrorism activities are analyzed to find out the coverage of elite news papers of Pakistani press. The study has divided into four phases to inquire the research questions more effectively. Every phase is comprises on the contents of three month coverage. Total number of terrorism related editorials were 207.

In first phase 47 editorials were published in both newspapers as 22 editorials were published in The News and 25 in The Nation. According to the categories 18 editorials were published in Category A, in Category B 15 and in category C 14 editorials. These three Categories express the direction and coverage of elite newspaper that is, Pro-US 15(31.9%), Pro-Taliban 22(46.8%) and Neutral 10(21.3%) as showed in Table 1.

Table 1: Coverage of Newspapers in study Phase I

Months	Newspaper	C. A ¹	C. B ²	C.C ³	Direction of Contents		
					Pro-US	Pro- Taliban	Neutral
September	The News	4	2	3	3	5	1
	The Nation	3	3	4	3	5	2
October	The News	3	2	1	2	3	1
	The Nation	4	2	1	2	4	1
November	The News	2	2	3	2	3	2
	The Nation	2	4	2	3	2	3
Total	47	18	15	14	15(31.9%)	22(46.8%)	10(21.3%)

1. Category A. Editorials Related To Us Military Operations
2. Category B. Editorials Related to Terrorism Attacks
3. Category C. Editorials related to Al-Qaida or Taliban

When researcher analyzed the categories of the content it is observed that in the month of September slant of the editorials is Pro-Taliban. Both newspapers polices

were seemed same and equal coverage is given to the issue of counter terrorism. In the next month of October direction of contents remains equal in Pro-US while in

Pro- Taliban the slant of The News show decline. In the third month of the study phase I slant of issue again altered. Overall coverage at this phase depicts that both

news paper were pro-Taliban as 22 (47%), Pro-US 15(32%) and 10(21%) were neutral as showed in Fig. 1.

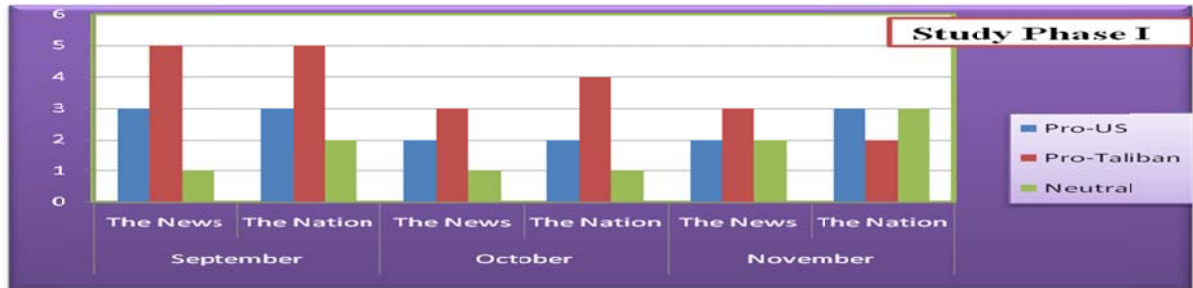


Figure -1

In second phase 38 editorials were published in both newspapers as 20 editorials were published in The News and 18 in The Nation. According to the categories 14 editorials were published in Category A, in Category B 14 and in

category C 10 editorials. These three Categories express the direction and coverage of elite newspaper that is, Pro-US16(42 %), Pro- Taliban 14(36.9%) and Neutral 8(21%) as showed in Table, 2.

Table 2: Coverage of Newspapers in study Phase II

Months	Newspaper	C. A*	C. B*	C. C*	Direction of Contents		
					Pro-US	Pro- Taliban	Neutral
December	The News	3	2	3	3	3	2
	The Nation	2	1	1	2	1	1
January	The News	2	3	1	3	3	0
	The Nation	3	2	2	2	2	3
February	The News	2	3	1	3	3	0
	The Nation	2	3	2	3	2	2
Total	38	14	14	10	16(42.10%)	14(36.9%)	8(21%)

1. Category A. Editorials Related To Us Military Operations.
2. Category B. Editorials Related to Terrorism Attacks
3. Category C. Editorials related to Al-Qaida or Taliban

In second phase of the study it is analyzed that categories of the content in the month of December slant of the editorials is Pro-US. Both newspapers polices were seemed same and equal coverage is given to the issue of counter terrorism. In the next month of January direction of contents

remains equal in Pro-US and Pro- Taliban. In the third month of the study phase II slant of issue remained same. Overall coverage at this phase depicts that both newspaper were Pro-US as 16(42%), Pro-Taliban 14(36%) and 8(21%) were neutral as showed in Fig.2.

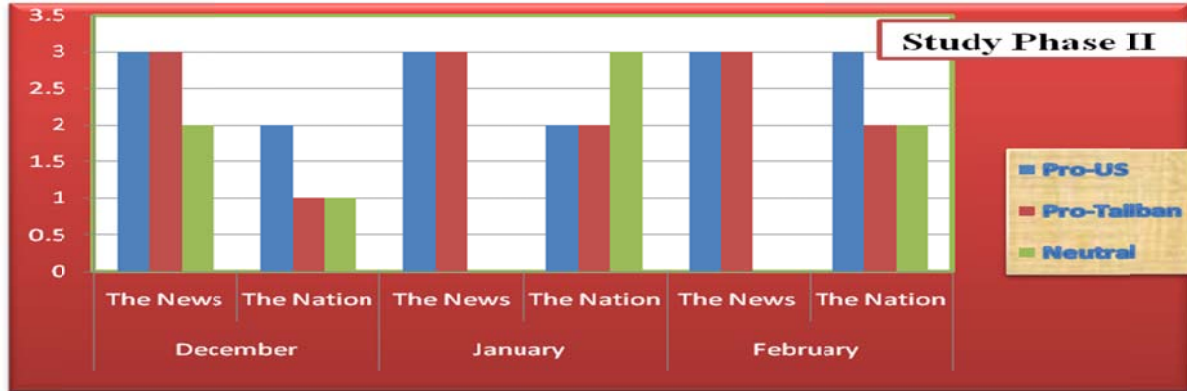


Figure -2

In third phase 64 editorials were published in both newspapers as 34 editorials were published in The News and 30 in The Nation. According to the categories 22 editorials were published in Category A, in Category B 25 and in category C 17

editorials. These three Categories express the direction and coverage of elite newspaper that is, Pro-US27(42.2%), Pro-Taliban22(34.3%) and Neutral 15(23.5%) as showed in Table, 3.

Table 3: Coverage of Newspapers in study Phase III

Months	Newspaper	C. A*	C. B*	C. C*	Direction of Contents		
					Pro-US	Pro-Taliban	Neutral
March	The News	4	5	3	5	4	3
	The Nation	6	3	1	5	4	1
April	The News	3	4	4	4	3	4
	The Nation	2	5	4	4	4	3
May	The News	3	5	3	5	3	3
	The Nation	4	3	2	4	4	1
Total	64	22	25	17	27(42.2%)	22(34.3%)	15(23.5%)

1. Category A. Editorials Related To Us Military Operations
2. Category B. Editorials Related to Terrorism Attacks
3. Category C. Editorials related to Al-Qaida or Taliban

When researcher analyzed the categories of the content it is observed that in the month of March slant of the editorials is Pro-US. Both newspapers polices were appear same and equal coverage is given to the issue of counter terrorism. In the next month of April direction of contents remains equal in Pro-US while in Pro-

Taliban the slant of The News show decline. In the third month of the study phase III, slant of issue changed as The News showed increase in Pro-US frame. Overall coverage at this phase depicts that both newspaper were Pro-US as 27(42%), Pro-Taliban 22(34%) and 15(23%) were neutral as showed in Fig. 4.

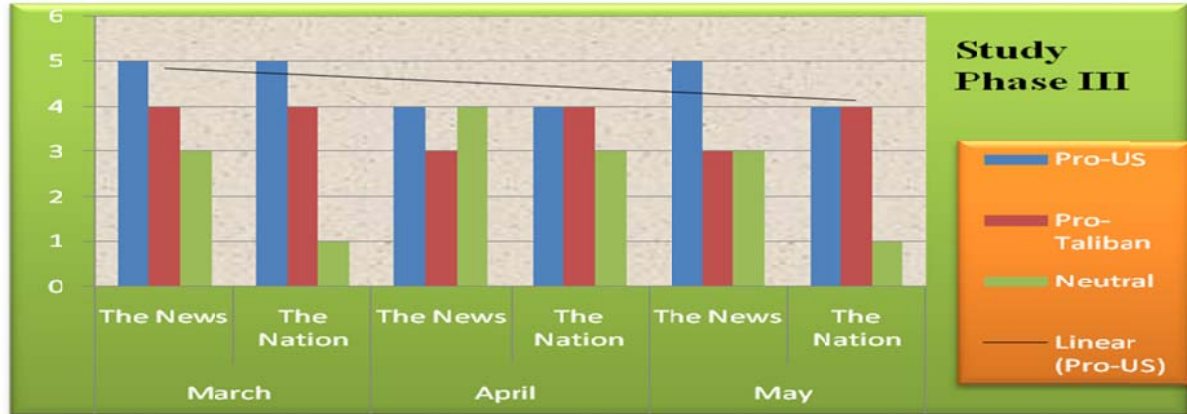


Figure -3

In fourth phase 58 editorials were published in both newspapers as 29 editorials were published in The News and 29 in The Nation. According to the categories 18 editorials were published in Category A, in Category B 21 and in

category C 19 editorials. These three Categories express the direction and coverage of elite newspaper that is, Pro-US 29 (50%), Pro-Taliban 7 (12%) and Neutral 22 (38%) as showed in Table, 1.

Table 4: Coverage of Newspapers in study Phase IV

Months	Newspaper	C. A*	C. B*	C. C*	Direction of Contents		
					Pro-US	Pro-Taliban	Neutral
June	The News	3	4	2	5	1	3
	The Nation	2	3	3	4	1	3
July	The News	3	4	3	6	1	3
	The Nation	3	4	4	4	2	6
August	The News	3	3	4	5	1	3
	The Nation	4	3	3	5	1	4
Total	58	18	21	19	29(50%)	7(12%)	22(38%)

1. Category A Editorials Related To Us Military Operations
2. Category B Editorials Related to Terrorism Attacks
3. Category C Editorials related to Al-Qaida or Taliban

When researcher analyzed the categories of the content it is observed that in the month of September slant of the editorials is Pro-Taliban. Both newspapers polices were seemed same and equal coverage is given to the issue of counter terrorism. In the next month of October direction of contents remains equal in Pro-US while in

Pro-Taliban the slant of The News show decline. In the third month of the study phase IV slant of issue again altered. Overall coverage at this phase depicts that both news paper were pro-Taliban as 22 (47%), Pro-US 15(32%) and 10(21%) were neutral as showed in Fig. 1.

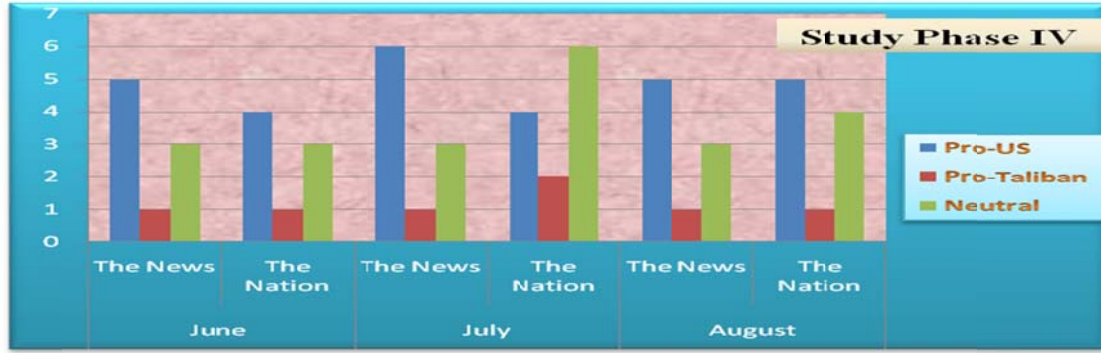


Figure -4

The study intended to investigate media coverage of counter terrorism activities in Pakistan. Editorials related to “Us Military Operations”, “Terrorism Attacks” and related to “Al-Qaida or Taliban” were analyzed for the study. Characteristically results of mainstream English newspapers were not different. Both newspapers approximately show similar coverage while there was minor difference between

The News and The Nation as The Nation provides more coverage to Pro-Taliban than The News. But generally both newspapers portray Pro-Taliban image in their slant after the occurring of 9/11. But with the passage of time both newspapers policies seemed alter as pro-US at the fourth stage of the study as shown in (Figure 4). Consequently newspapers Slant Pro-US 42% coverage as seemed in Fig. 5.

Table 5: Overall Coverage of Newspapers

Study Phases	Numbers of Contents	Pro-US	Pro-Taliban	Neutral
Study Phase I	47	15(31.9%)	22(46.8%)	10(21.3%)
Study Phase II	38	16(42.10%)	14(36.9%)	8(21%)
Study Phase III	64	27(42.2%)	22(34.3%)	15(23.5%)
Study Phase IV	58	29(50%)	7(12%)	22(38%)
Total	207	87 (42 %)	65 (31 %)	55 (27 %)

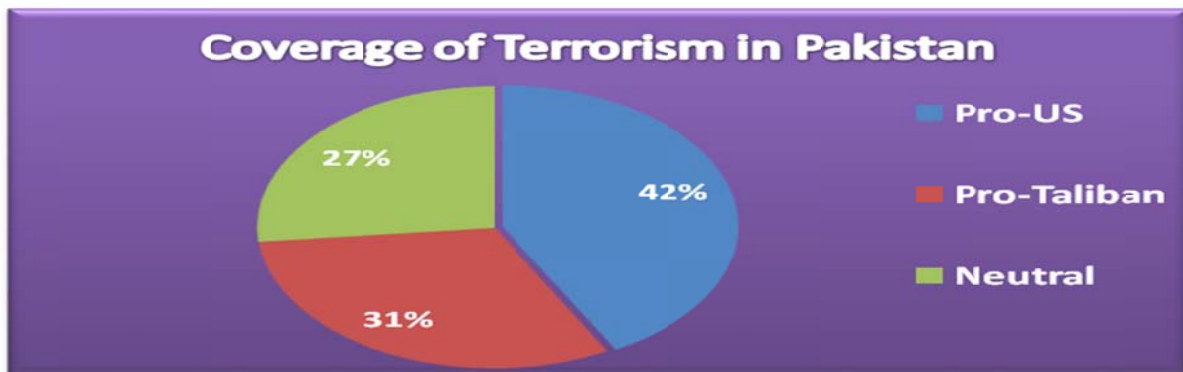


Figure -4

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

In general editorial pages of any newspapers depict the policy of newspaper. Several researchers proved

that editorial pages had everlasting influence on public opinion. Present study tries to find out the role of press in reshaping opinion on the issue of counter

terrorism through editorials. Overall results of study cater the needs of research questions and hypothesis. The findings of this study support the RQ 1 regarding the extent of coverage the issue of terrorism. There were 207 editorials recognized having slanted pro-US, pro-Taliban and neutral during the whole study period.

The research proved H_1 that Pakistani newspapers favored the war on terror by giving much Pro-US opinions about the issue. Findings accomplished the RQ 2 regarding the coverage was pro-US, pro-Taliban or neutral. The H_2 rejected as coverage of both newspapers was not anti US. Findings regarding RQ 3 have showed that newspapers were following US policies regarding war against terror with some extent. Thus H_3 is rejected as both newspaper criticize the policies of US and given coverage of Taliban is close to US as depicted in (fig. v).

In conclusion it is observed that at the time of US attacks on Afghanistan newspapers have soft corner towards Taliban but with the passage of time it turned towards the US policies. After one year of the incident of 9/11 voices of many media men and public changed against Taliban and seemed to supporting US policies toward war on terror.

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