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Article:	Media Representation of Muslim Women in 'Time' & 'Newsweek': A Comparative Analysis within Feministic Perspective								
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Abstract

This research study patently aims to examine media representation of Muslim Women within Feministic perspective by analyzing its content published in 'Time' and 'Newsweek' during the selected time period of 2011 - 2013. One of the main objectives of this study is to dig out the prevailing differences within overall coverage of both news magazines regarding the Muslim women. These differences are further studied in four different dimensions i.e. categories, slants, tones and themes. Basically, this is a census study (as the collected data was limited) where content analysis has been used as research methodology. Whereas, Z-score statistical test is applied for the analysis. In results, study reveals that there are slight differences between the way both magazines present the Muslim women. Both news magazines mainly highlight 'Progressive women' favorably; discuss Islam negatively; and Social Status of the Muslim women has mainly been highlighted throughout the designated time interval.

Keywords: Progressive Women, Media Representation, Western print media, Oppressed Women, Victimization, and Status of Women in Islam.

Introduction

When it comes to the Western print media (Western media usually enjoys the supremacy across the world media as big media conglomerates are mostly belong to Western countries), majority of the world's population in general and West's own audience in particular believe it to be more objective (Lawrence, 1998).

Subsequently, it is widely perceived that Western news print media exploits this influential power while portraying Muslim women, specifically, in stereotypical frames which gives quite negative and detrimental image of the Muslim world to rest of the world (Said, 1979). Western media takes the social, cultural norms and values of Western society as the indicators of modernity and advancement and then compares it with rest of the world to measure their extent of modernity (Kaddour, 2002). Mohanty (1984) in this regard, stated that Western media frames Muslim women as traditionalist, indulged in domestic works, and non-progressive ones when compared them to more secular and modern women of the West. Karim (2003) also argued that hegemony of Western media is clear through the conspicuous framing of Muslim women.

All types of Western media either print or electronic present the distorted representation of the reality concerning Muslim world generally, Western print media is not the only one that does it (Kabir, 2006) however, the notion of Western media about Islam, Islamic teachings and Muslim world is itself wrong at the first place subsequently, the portrayal is totally opposite of the reality (Gerges, 2003). Majority of the world relies on coverage of the Western media to know about the religion Islam and Muslim society as they does not have any direct knowledge and access to it (Laird et al., 2007).

Then a question arises here what actually the Islamic teachings are and what exactly is the status of Muslim women in Islam. As Hekmat (1997) argued that according to Islamic teachings the status of a Muslim women is equal to that of a Muslim man but Western media depicts Muslim women as deprived of the rights and a disrespectful status in the society. If one reads and understands the Holy Quran properly he/she will come to know that the spirit, wisdom and expression Allah Almighty has used to mention Muslim women is exemplary. Badawi (1980) endorsed that woman who is Muslim enjoys the position of 'honorable and gracious woman' given by Islam.

Most importantly the Western media is deceiving the world and boosting the antagonism by propagating against the veil of Muslim women in the name of human rights and feminism (Scott, 2009). West itself and Western media perceive veil as the subjugation and oppression of Muslim women but in Islam it is meant to empower the Muslim women with a guarding shield against evils of the society and to enhance the spirituality i.e. inner beauty and not the physical body (El Guindi, 1999).

This study compares the content published in the two oldest news-magazines of the Western print media which are *Time* and *Newsweek*. These two news-magazines are selected because these are considered comparatively objective, unbiased and impartial. Some basic information about these two is given below: *Time* magazine enjoys being the first American news-magazine published on weekly basis. It started publishing in 1923 and the founders were *'Henry Luce'* and *'Briton Hadden'* whereas it was based in New York City. 1st issue of the news-magazine was published on 3rd March, 1923. Similarly, *News-week*, is a US-based news-magazine also published on weekly basis, was founded in 1933 by Thomas J. Martin. On 17th February, 1933, its first issue was published from New York City. It was termed as *Newsweek* by *Malcolm Muir* in 1937.

The main purpose of the study is to assess the basic criteria under that both news-magazines identify and define the Muslim women by analyzing the content published in these magazines regarding Muslim women. Comprehensive and inclusive evaluation of the content published in these magazines is aimed to dig out the contemporary styles followed by 'Time'

and 'Newsweek' present Muslim women and what changes are occurring over the time period. Time and Newsweek are specifically selected for this analysis so that the results of the study could be generalized later. Both news magazines are however the oldest and popular news-weeklies of United States of America. Both news-mags have numerous corresponding editions for various regions and countries; moreover, conveniently available editions of both magazines in Pakistan are selected. Nearness is the main reason for selecting this time period of 3-years i.e. 2011-2013. Furthermore, the objectives of the study are developed as:

- i. To explore the differences in the treatment of Muslim women done by Time and Newsweek.
- ii. To find out the variations in quantity of coverage given to Muslim women.
- iii. To examine the differences if any, happening in the treatment over the certain time period.

Literature Review

Prevailing knowledge related to mediated representations of Muslim women within feminist framework of different dimensions is explored for the purpose to know how 'feminine' identities of Muslim women are created within Western media in general and Western Print media in particular on the basis of their veil particularly and other aspects of their lives generally.

Mediated representations of Muslim women in West have played vital role in the formation and endorsement of 'biased' and 'stereotypical' images of Muslim women in the world over substantial period of time (Ozcan, 2013; Siraj, 2012). To support this debate, Pichette (2012), Kabgani (2013) and many others have claimed that western media using the lens of own socio-cultural values for women, sees Muslim women as repressed and non-progressive, however, the Muslim-style of dressing (especially after 9/11) has become the identity and also the hate symbol for them.

Though the research dimension regarding Muslim women has been widened and intensified increasingly over the time period, but it lacks the understanding of Muslim women about their feminine identities (Siraj, 2012). Nashef (2012) however finds that physical appearance of the Muslim women is the prominent aspect in their portrayal irrespective of the attire i.e. either veiled women or women with negligible veiling whereas, Sotsky (2013) then argues that 'standpoint' of the Muslim women should be incorporated in the studies while exploring this dimension. As Siraj (2012) concluded that Muslim women perceive their veil as self-expression, identity, and positive image.

Perry (2013) explains that after the incident of 9/11 there found brutality and biasness against Muslims (generally) and Muslim women (particularly) gender-basis. Moreover, Al-Sudeary (2012) states that the knowledge presented in English literary works of West is not based on the true understandings of the veil rather it is the reflection of attitudes and opinions of the Western society about veil.

Furthermore, when the existing knowledge is explored, it is found that different researchers have utilized different methodologies based on the context of their research. For instance, content analysis is the best method to assess the extent of themes, attitudes, patterns and terms to draw fruitful conclusions from it (Ameri, 2012; Al-Sudeary, 2012; & Rahman, 2002). To explore the representation of Muslim women in different forms of media i.e. film, magazines, books, newspapers, cartoons etc. Kabgani (2013) and many others have used it as methodology. Whereas, 'visual analysis' is also used in wide range of researches (Nashef, 2012; & Ozcan, 2013).

Theoretical framework for this study utilizes Western Feminism and on the contrary Muslim Feminism to enhance the assessment of the content published in two different US-

based news magazines in terms of Muslim women, their lives, experiences, problems and issues etc.

Feminist theorists have always been playing the role of critiques regarding mediated representations of women in stereotypical and prejudiced manner (Hall, 1997). Therefore, Xingwana (2008) negates the idea that media is playing significant role in enhancing gender equality and development of women in society. However, contemporary feminism honors each and every woman on the basis of her distinct and distinguished life styles and experiences (Zoonen, 1994). Moreover, the Western perspective of feminism emphasizes the religious notion within this theoretical perspective i.e. it argues that Muslim women are enslaved in the chains of their religious and spiritual beliefs and they should liberate themselves from these clutches (Mernissi, 1987, p. 10).

However, Muslim feminism negates this idea of Western feminism and states that Muslim women feel liberal and progressive having rights provided by Islamic teachings (Arebi, 1991). Moreover, Muslim women are currently voicing their issues and if one can see it can be analyzed that they are visibly participating in the society in active manner which directly depicts their revolution but media all over the world is not highlighting them (Ameri, 2012). Overview of noteworthy contribution of different feminist theorists improves the theoretical foundation of this study and makes it more concrete to assess the ways in which Muslim women are being formulated within the framework of Western feminism.

The developed research hypotheses and research questions for the study are as follows:

H1: It is more likely that Time creates Progressive woman identity for Muslim woman than Newsweek.

H2: Newsweek would negatively highlight Muslim women with reference to Islam.

H3: It is more likely that coverage of Muslim women in Newsweek change over the Time period.

- i. Are there any differences in the coverage of Muslim women done by Time and Newsweek?
- ii. Does which News-magazine give more coverage to Muslim women?

Research design is a complete and an organized scheme including all essential information, however, research design of this study is as followed: Methodology of data collection for this study is content analysis to compare and identify the differences in the treatment of Muslim women by both news-magazines i.e. 'Time' and 'Newsweek' within the context of time interval starting from January, 2011 to December, 2013 (3 - complete years). It is a census study as the total amount of data published in both news-magazines during the selected time period is comprised of small number of articles, so the whole extracted data from the magazines is used for analysis. Criteria for the extraction of data from magazines is developed as all the content published in these magazines about the Muslim women. Moreover, the rationale for the opted time period is the proximity and also that only Asian editions are easily available in Pakistan, whereas Newsweek Pakistan started its publication since September 2010.

A complete paragraph is selected as the unit of analysis or a boundary to measure within the developed variables. Exhaustive categories are classified taking religion in relation feminism as the basis, which are as follows:

1. Liberal Feminists:

- **Pro-Islamic:** This category of feminists orients those women who favorably look at the position or identification, Islam has given to them. Likewise, they put their demands forward by reforms in laws.
- **Anti-Islamic:** These are those women who are quite against the Islamic declarations. These primarily follow western women so demand rights of their patterns.

2. Secular Feminists

This category of women is based on those women who are against the religious influences over society. They are neither in favor of Islamic teachings nor western trends.

- **3. Traditionalist:** These are the women, who are perceived as extremists by westerns because they are quite conservative with regard to their inclination towards Islam.
- **4. Oppressed:** This category belongs to those women who, in accordance with western society, are not only victimized or oppressed by family members but society as well due to social norms or religious practices.
- **5. Progressive:** These are Muslim women who have made their recognition on the basis of their productive contribution towards society and are remembered having no concerns with religion or nation.
- **6. Others:** This category covers rest of the women who do not fall under above mentioned categories.

However, different slants for nominated categories are discussed below.

Negative: Overall theme of any paragraph would be considered as negative if it goes against a category. It may come up with criticism or presentation of certain category along negative manners.

Positive: Overall theme of the content would be taken as positive if it favorably looks at certain category. This may come up with endorsement or admiration of respective category.

Neutral: Overall theme of the paragraph would be taken as neutral if it is inclined not to be biased, prejudiced, partial or subjective.

Moreover, some of the different aspects of Muslim women identified as 'Main Themes of Articles' published in Time and Newsweek are selected i.e. Education, Health, Dress, Work, Family, Violence, Religion, Social Status, Achievement, Nationality, Others etc. to find out which aspect of Muslim women is more highlighted. Subsequently, Z-score statistical test is applied using SPSS (version 21) to make the comparisons between the categories and to make results valuable.

Findings

After applying Z-score test, to make comparisons between the content published in both magazines on yearly-basis within four different dimensions i.e. Categories, Slants, Tones and Themes, p-values are obtained to find out whether results are significant or not.

A. Table 1: Categories Comparison between Time & Newsweek: H_0 is developed as $P_1 = P_2$

	2011	2011			2012					Cumulative		
Categories	Time	N.W.	P- Value	Time	N.W.	P- Value	Time	N.W.	P- Value	Time	N.W.	P- Value
Liberal Pro- Islamic	2	14	0.666	2	7	0.581	2	17	0.441	6	38	0.724
Liberal Anti- Islamic	4	1	0.052	1	7	0.860	-	3	0.081	5	11	0.191
Secular	ı	15	0.000	1	14	0.239	-	10	0.001	1	39	0.000
Traditionalist	1	5	0.967	-	15	0.000	-	4	0.044	1	24	0.011
Oppressed	8	66	0.128	20	30	0.000	13	45	0.174	41	141	0.012
Progressive	14	175	0.000	13	133	0.008	11	48	0.543	38	356	0.000

Others	48	127	0.000	34	211	0.672	23	132	0.605	105	470	0.012
Total	77	403		71	417		49	259		197	1079	

Note: N.W. = Newsweek

Above table is the illustration of comparison done between both news-magazines on the basis of categories, where confidence interval has been set as 95% while level of significance as 0.05. The table shows comparison for the years 2011, 2012, 2013 and cumulative 3-years. While the obtained p-values reveal that for the year 2011, results are significant only for categories 'Secular', 'Progressive' and 'Others' where recorded p-values are absolutely less than level of significance. Moreover for the year 2012, p-values are below the significance level only for 'Traditionalist', 'Oppressed' and 'Progressive' i.e. 0.000, 0.000 and 0.008 respectively. However, for the year 2013, results are only significant for 'Secular' and 'Traditionalist' categories as p-values for all other categories are more than level of significance 0.05.

B. Table 2: Categories + Slants Comparison between Time & Newsweek: H_0 is developed as $P_1 = P_2$

		2011			2012			2013			Cumulative		
Categories	Slants	Time	N.W.	P- Value	Time	N.W.	P- Value	Time	N.W.	P- Value	Time	N.W.	P- Value
	Fav.	2	7	0.655	2	4	0.358	2	17	0.441	6	28	0.732
Liberal Pro- Islamic	Unfav.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Islanne	Neu.	-	7	0.008	-	3	0.082	-	-	-	-	10	0.001
- 4	Fav.	-	1	0.317	1	2	0.519	-	1	0.316	1	4	0.800
Liberal Anti- Islamic	Unfav.	-	-	-	-	_	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Islanne	Neu.	4	-	0.040	-	5	0.024	-	2	0.156	4	7	0.182
	Fav.	-	13	0.000	1	14	0.239	-	10	0.001	1	37	0.000
Secular	Unfav.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Neu.	-	2	0.156	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.157
	Fav.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Traditionalist	Unfav.	-	2	0.156	-	9	0.002	-	3	0.081	-	14	0.000
	Neu.	1	3	0.683	-	6	0.014	-	1	0.316	1	10	0.473
	Fav.	4	23	0.854	12	17	0.005	6	26	0.662	22	66	0.032
Oppressed	Unfav.	4	27	0.593	8	11	0.024	7	15	0.103	19	53	0.032
	Neu.	-	16	0.000	-	2	0.156	-	4	0.044	-	22	0.000
	Fav.	14	149	0.000	13	112	0.092	11	38	0.221	38	299	0.007
Progressive	Unfav.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Neu.	-	26	0.000	-	21	0.000	-	10	0.001	-	57	0.000
	Fav.	9	23	0.119	8	42	0.767	14	36	0.031	31	101	0.020
Others	Unfav.	8	31	0.469	13	58	0.368	6	30	0.896	27	119	0.309
	Neu.	31	73	0.000	13	111	0.102	3	66	0.000	47	250	0.835
Total		77	403		71	417		49	259		197	1079	

Note: N.W. = Newsweek

This table shows results for the comparison between the categories along with their slants discussed in both Newsweek and Time regarding Muslim women where results for the year 2011 reveal that results are significant only for 'Liberal pro-Islamic' as neutral; 'Liberal anti-Islamic' as neutral; 'Secular' as favorable; 'Oppressed' as neutral; 'Progressive' as

favorable and neutral both; and lastly 'Others' as neutral. While for the year 2012, p-values are below the level of significance for 'Liberal anti-Islamic' as neutral; 'Traditionalist' as unfavorable and neutral both; 'Oppressed' as favorable and unfavorable too; and 'Progressive' as neutral. For 2013, p-values make results significant for 'Secular' as favorable; 'Oppressed' as neutral; 'Progressive' as neutral; 'Others' as favorable and neutral both. Subsequently, on the basis of less p-values than 0.05, results are significant for 'Liberal pro-Islamic' as neutral; 'Secular' as favorable; 'Traditionalist' as unfavorable; 'Oppressed' category for all three slants i.e. positive, negative and neutral; 'Progressive' as favorable and neutral; and 'Others' as favorable.

C. Table 3: Comparing Time & Newsweek for Tones: H_0 is developed as $P_1 = P_2$

Tone	2011	1		2012			2013			Cum	Cumulative		
	Tim e	N. W.	P- Valu e	Tim e	N. W.	P- Valu e	Tim e	N. W.	P- Valu e	Tim e	N. W.	P- Valu e	
Positiv e	-	11	0.00	3	-	0.07 7	1	2	0.54 4	4	13	0.43 5	
Negati ve	52	138	0.00	51	162	0.00	27	198	0.00 5	130	498	0.00	
Neutra 1	9	6	0.00 6	3	2	0.12	-	1	0.31 6	12	9	0.00	
None	16	248	0.00	14	253	0.00	21	58	0.00 7	51	559	0.00	
Total	77	403		71	417		49	259		197	107 9		

Note: N.W. = Newsweek

Comparison between the tones used by both news-magazines to discuss Muslim women are displayed in above table for individual years and as cumulative too. As mentioned in the table, all p-values are significant for the year 2011 as all are below 0.05. However, results are significant for 'Negative' and 'None' tone for both years 2012 and 2013. Whereas, results are not significant for 'Positive' tone in cumulative column while all other three values are less than 0.05.

D. Table 4: Differences in Themes highlighted by both News-magazines: H_0 is developed as $P_1 = P_2$

Themes	2011	-		2012			2013			Cumulative		
	Tim e	N. W.	P- Val ue	Tim e	N. W.	P- Val ue	Tim e	N. W.	P- Val ue	Tim e	N. W.	P- Val ue
Education	-	-	-	1	-	0.29 6	4	4	0.18 5	5	4	0.06 8
Health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.31	-	1	0.31 6
Dress	1	2	0.65	-	3	0.07 6	-	1	0.31	1	6	0.61 8
Work	3	19	0.26	2	11	0.94 6	2	6	0.83	7	36	0.36 8
Family	1	1	0.46 5	-	1	0.31	1	-	0.29 9	2	2	0.30
Violence	2	5	0.64	3	6	0.23	3	3	0.27	8	14	0.11

			4			5			1			3
Religion	1	3	0.85	-	1	0.31	-	-	-	1	4	0.96 0
Social Status	2	17	0.11 7	3	15	0.93	1	5	0.45	6	37	0.15 7
Achievem ent	-	-	-	1	5	0.96 4	2	6	0.83	3	11	0.96 0
Nationalit y	1	4	0.95	-	2	0.15	-	4	0.03	1	10	0.19 9
Others	5	9	0.19	2	19	0.26 9	1	6	0.30	8	34	0.73
Total	16	60		12	63		14	36		42	159	

Note: N.W. = Newsweek

This table demonstrates for which themes coverage of Time and Newsweek differ regarding Muslim women, for instance, no results are significant for any of the year i.e. 2011, 2012, 2013 and even for cumulative 3-years as all the obtained p-values are more than the selected level of significance i.e. 0.05 so that means no difference has been found in the coverage of Muslim women by both magazines in terms of issues.

Results

Results of the analysis are when compiled according to the research questions and with their respective research hypotheses and then identified in the light of previous studies that whether these findings endorsed or dejected previous findings. For example, when it was envisioned to investigate 'which news magazine is more Islamophobic regarding Muslim women', simply cumulative coverage of Muslim women by both magazines concerning Muslim women within the selected time period was calculated and Newsweek was found to be more Islamophobic than Time i.e. Newsweek content was comprised of 88-articles, 23-interviews, 9-news stories, 32-news statements and 5-pictures while contribution of Time content in the collected data was composed of 25-articles, 1-interview, 3-news stories, 9-news statements and 4-pictures. Moreover, when it was further divided to unit of analysis level, total number of paragraphs published in Newsweek regarding Muslim women were 1079 while in Time were 197. However, aggregate words about Muslim women published in Newsweek and Time were 86,335 and 22,353 correspondingly. So that, the previously developed hypothesis 'Newsweek is more Islamophobic about Muslim women than Time' got accepted.

Moreover, when the research question 'are there any differences in the treatment of Muslim women by both magazines' was analyzed, findings were classified into different dimensions to answer this this question i.e. at first, cumulative coverage of both magazines was explored and compared and it was found that Newsweek was more Islamophobic than Time. Therefore, it was also revealed that Time magazine gave more coverage to the opinions and views of the Muslim women while Newsweek gave more coverage to the constructive and creative works practically done by Muslim women for the development of society. Additionally, when the comparison was made by applying Z-score test for the dimensions of categories, slants, tone and the themes on yearly-basis, results concluded that differences were found for the categories titled as 'Secular', 'Traditionalist', 'Oppressed', 'Progressive' and 'Others'. Also, Progressive and Oppressed Muslim women were mostly treated as neutral in Newsweek and Traditionalist were treated in unfavorable way. Tone mainly used by Time magazine to discuss Muslim women was negative whereas Newsweek also used negative tone but none tone i.e. no reference to religion, was high. Furthermore, no differences in the treatment were found for the theme dimension. Hence, the hypotheses developed earlier as 'treatment of Muslim women in terms of religion Islam is more positive in Time than in

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Newsweek' and 'Newsweek depicts progressive Muslim women unfavorably' were negated by the results.

Conclusion

After the comprehensive analysis of the data along different dimensions of the portrayal of Muslim women in two US-based news-weeklies, it is concluded that although Western print media in general and these two magazines i.e. Time and Newsweek in particular are perceived to be more objective and unbiased in term of their working style and policy but it is a fact that complete objectivity is not possible, as no one can detach him/herself from their background either social, cultural, political, ethnic, and religious etc. As the results show that overall both magazines treated Progressive Muslim women favorably that are doing practically some constructive work for the society but when it is tested in relation with their religion in the tone dimension, it is found that both magazines treated them negatively. As far as the differences in the treatment of Muslim women are concerned, for the dimension of themes or the issues that are highlighted by both magazines, no variation in the coverage is found as both magazines mainly pointed out Social Status, Education and Violence against the Muslim women. A slight difference is found in the tone used with which Muslim women are being mentioned as Time mainly used negative while the ratio in Newsweek is high for both negative and none. Lastly, slight variations are revealed for the categories' treatment for Secular, Traditionalist, Oppressed, Progressive and Others, while no changes for Liber pro-Islamic and Liberal anti-Islamic both.

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