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Article:	National Security vs. Political Image: Framing of Operation Zarb-e-Azb in Pakistani Dailies
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Abstract

National security Vs. Political images in Pakistan are always in search of common ground. Military forces and civilian leadership in Pakistan struggle to find the right balance and the civilian leadership has hardly commanded the gun. Therefore, to find out to what extent the national security image influence more as compared to the national political image, this quantitative content analysis research identified the issue-specific frames of the military operation Zarb-e-Azb, measured their presence in editorials of three Pakistani English newspapers, Dawn, The Nation, and The News from June 2014 to June 2016. The results of the study revealed that the slant, style, themes used in the editorials of the selected newspapers almost remained the same, appreciating the military institutions positively, whereas condemning the civilian leadership. The study revealed that the media supported the national security image more as compared to the political image in the view of Operation Zarb-e-Azb (OZA) in the war against terrorism. The civil-military relationship was negatively framed by the Pakistani press under the context of the Zarb-e-Azb Operation.

Keywords: Print Media, Framing, Terrorism, Operation Zarb-e-Azb, Security

Introduction:

Media play a major role in information provision about global issues as by selecting certain words, symbols, repetition and leaves a heavy impact on people's perception (Entman, 1993). According to this concept, most scholars argue that the media is crucial in portraying national security issues. Journalists and media professionals expressed views about present-day media coverage has a basic concern portraying national security image and political image of any party. However, media resources are considered one of the most important basic rules of social protection of the country (Al-Emad, 2020) and any impact on it constitutes a direct influence on the national goal of the state, and thus it affects the strategies for achieving this goal, and then the media became a strategic partner of the countries in maintaining their national security and internal stability in order to achieve a comprehensive and sustainable development in various fields as a whole (Hamid,1982).

Muin (2011) stated that an image on a particular issue is built on the same line as the media framed. The media today is focused on violence, vested interest, and propagation (Lee & Maslog, 2005) but whilst it comes in the direction of portraying country wide picture they're extra wonderful and extra than patriotic once they accompanied the nationalistic technique and highlighted the famous and mass belief to assist the kingdom satisfy its country wide protection obligations (Hussain, 2008).

Likewise, Journalists in their reporting highlight the political issues because they are being sold (Aslam, 2010). Media through this process propagates and manipulates people's minds by portraying others as incapable (Terzis, 2008). Especially, in case of Pakistan government-media-military tripartite relationship has caused to mushroom many undemocratic forces to nurture. Moreover, it is observed that mostly media organizations i.e., newspapers and channels are owned by big conglomerates who cannot compromise their commercial and political interests. Therefore, media frames the news by selecting the conflicting issues and manipulating them in in order to create more drama and hype to gain the attention of audience (Jan, Raza, Siddiq & Saleem, 2013, pp. 120, 122-123).

Media policy is related to political, economic, social issues, security conditions and war conditions, in the sense that the media are connected with the comprehensive forces of the state and, therefore, indirectly seek to achieve national security through media coverage, and contribute to the creation of, protection and immunization of citizens from any media, intellectual invasion or hostile intelligence activities (Al-Emad & Nashwan, 2010)

However, in war situations journalists mostly becomes government mouthpiece (Ozguness & Terzis, 2000) as media coverage of OZA showed that the newspapers covered national security image more positively (Khan, 2018). Hence, Media takes a more propagandistic and nationalistic stance when the national security threats are high, whereas it adopts a more humanist stance if the national security threats are assumed to be on low level (Iqbal & Hussain, 2017). Although contrary viewpoint also exists that believes policies of mainstream media in Pakistan have been very immature and imbalanced regarding the portrayal of national security issues as on the name of freedom of expression, many terrorist and extremists elements have been given undue coverage (Javed, 2017). Still, dominant majority of the scholars believe that print media of Pakistan is very

patriotic and nationalistic whenever it comes to fulfilling obligations of national security (Hussain, 2008, p.1).

As framing states that, “frames are information-processing schemata” (Van Gorp, 2007, p. 7) and it functions by choosing and featuring a few highlights of the real world while discarding others. In most cases, Media frame national security image more positive as compared to national political image as Zulfiqar and Yousaf (2019) study showed that newspaper slants remain positive towards military institutions in covering Operation Zarb-e-Azb but contradict civilian leadership for their lack of concentration towards the National Action Plan and its implementation.

On the contrary, political image is portrayed by media as necessarily negative, corrupt and dishonest. Because when we talk about a threat to national security, of course, talk about it economically, socially and politically (Al-Emad, 2010). Mostly statements of politicians are undermined by media persons who try to highlight conflicting things during the discussion to pump the opponents or adversaries against each other. Hence, anchorpersons and reporters become a party in political debates. According to Thomas E. Patterson, news men hijack the role of politicians in debates and there is very little justification for portraying this arrogant political image. Media should strengthen democracy by being humble while portraying any political party in a democratic system (as cited in DAWN, 2010).

The power of media in making mainstream/mass image was utilized hence by states to counterbalance their foes and enemies, inside and outside. In any case, paying little heed to the level of freedom and unprejudiced nature accessible to the media, it has been widely seen that in matters of national security and interests, media follows the nationalistic lines. As in the context of Indo- Pakistan security relations, media has taken a nationalistic approach forwarding and pushing the national interests. Be it wars (1965, 1971), crisis (1990 nuclear alert), border skirmishes (Kargil) or the low-intensity war (LIW) in Kashmir, Pakistan's national media has advanced the official view (Hussain, 2008). However, Media and politics/government have also a strong connection in the contemporary strategic environment but it is widely seen in literature and news coverage that media give positive coverage to national issues as compared to political stance.

Whereas, communication in framing commands to shape the realities (Entman, 1993). The media's framing of war typically comes from the viewpoint of its nation of source. The media and the overall population will in general receive an enthusiastic/patriot position, supporting the nation's military and their activities and diminishing space for genuine analysis of the official strategy. History is full with literature where media support national security image during wars as the study of Hallin (1986) and Hallin (1991) states that “*Media coverage often goes back to history, referring to earlier wars and their role in shaping national identity. The U.S. media, for example, covered the Vietnam War largely as a ‘national endeavour’, 11 especially in its early stages, and news anchors frequently referred to it as ‘our’ war. The media representations sometimes evoked the memory of the Second World War. The same themes applied in the coverage of the 1991 Iraq War, probably to an even greater extent than in the Vietnam War’s early years*” (Hallin, 1986, p.142; Hallin, 1994, p.53). Likewise, Hussain (2008) study analyzes the news coverage Pakistani print media in nuclearization of South Asia in May 1998 and explained that the media was more patriotic when they followed the nationalistic approach and mass perception to help the state fulfill its national security obligations.

When framing the political or government point of view media mostly remain negative. For instance the opinion published in ‘Pakistan Today’ Khawaja (2014) states, “Pakistan is in a

state of war. Political parties and the government of Pakistan should understand the gravity of the situation and push themselves towards the elimination of terrorism rather than their political agendas. The army alone is not enough to fight with a terrorist.” Likewise, Khan and Akhtar (2016) also discerned, “the military operation in Pakistan is just based on the military actions while the government and civil administration are busy in educational reforms, investments on roads, etc”. Findings in the same manner shows that the editorial published in ‘*Dawn*’ that comprehended that “Start with the army — if only because it seems keen on action against some militants, where the government is not” (“Absent leadership,” 2014, para. 2). Similarly, the findings are also in line with another editorial published in ‘*The Nation*’ that deduced: “If words alone were the criteria to judge a government’s performance, the PM’s speech would secure him full marks” (“PM’s Address,” 2014, para. 2). By reading these statements it is clear that how negative inclination of Pakistan’s print media is towards government stance regarding operation ‘Zarb-e-Azb’ and how they converged towards the same platform for publishing mostly negative directions.

The study focuses on Pakistan’s print media coverage of three newspapers, ‘*The News*’, ‘*Dawn*’, and ‘*The Nation*’. Khan (2018) discusses the importance of media during a conflict, “The role of media is very critical in intrastate conflict because the public gets the information directly from the news media” (p. 53).

Methodology

The current paper is intended to address National Security vs. Political Image (i.e civil-military relations) by identifying the frames with reference to Operation Zarb-e-Azb through the narrative of print media, especially the editorials from three daily English elite newspapers ‘*Dawn*’, ‘*The Nation*’ and ‘*The News*’. The selection of the three daily English newspapers was based on the following reasons: (1) these newspapers signify the dominance of print media throughout Pakistan and they are considered as major media giants as compared to others. (2) These Newspapers have large distribution networks and have a huge audience. The main reason of choosing this particular operation is to understand that how military for the very first time got its permanent position in the cabinet committee, especially on the issue of Pakistan security as already General Head Quarter (GHQ) was in complete control over the national/foreign policy of Pakistan during the Sharif government from 2013-2017. Moreover, the selected time period is significant due to the fact that the military was interfering not only in the security issues but also in terms of economic management and good governance. Therefore, the content analysis of the newspaper (*The News, Dawn & the Nation*) was carried out from June 2014 to June 2016 with the application of a consensus sampling technique, which observed the launch of Operation Zarb-e-Azb in Pakistan. The total number of editorials examined was 807, ‘*The News*’ (170), ‘*Dawn*’ (231) and ‘*The Nation*’ (406). The material has been contained in the electronic versions of the relevant newspapers. One full editorial was the empirical unit.

Hypothesis

H1: *It is more likely that Media frame national security image more positive as compared to national political image.*

Results

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Civil Military Relationship	807	.22	.636	0	3
Military Operation	807	.78	1.507	0	6
World Stance	807	.60	1.275	0	6
Outcome Analysis	807	.85	1.285	0	4
Framing	807	2.95	1.071	1	5

Table 2: Kruskal-Wallis Test**Ranks**

	Framing	N	Mean Rank
Civil Military Relationship	Highly Negative	61	468.41
	Negative	236	431.32
	Neutral	255	382.60
	Positive	191	383.98
	Highly Positive	64	386.86
	Total	807	
Military Operation	Highly Negative	61	406.96
	Negative	236	445.93
	Neutral	255	412.52
	Positive	191	360.71
	Highly Positive	64	341.77
	Total	807	
World Stance	Highly Negative	61	353.43
	Negative	236	367.03
	Neutral	255	414.23

	Positive	191	447.94
	Highly Positive	64	416.63
	Total	807	
	Highly Negative	61	392.78
	Negative	236	374.90
	Neutral	255	391.49
Outcome Analysis	Positive	191	435.45
	Highly Positive	64	477.96
	Total	807	

Table 3: Test Statistics ^{a,b}

	Civil Relationship	Military Relationship	Military Operation	World Stance	Outcome Analysis
Chi-Square	32.735		33.001	29.252	19.309
Df	4		4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000		.000	.000	.001

a. Kruskal Wallis Test; b. Grouping Variable: Framing

Table 4: Median Test**Frequencies**

		Framing				
		Highly Negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Highly Positive
Civil Relationship	Military > Median	19	50	21	16	6

	<=					
	Median	42	186	234	175	58
	>					
	Median	15	81	74	27	6
Military Operation	<=					
	Median	46	155	181	164	58
	>					
	Median	7	37	69	63	16
World Stance	<=					
	Median	54	199	186	128	48
	>					
	Median	20	69	91	85	36
Outcome Analysis	<=					
	Median	41	167	164	106	28

Table 5: Test Statistics^a

	Civil Relationship	Military	Military Operation	World Stance	Outcome Analysis
N	807		807	807	807
Median	.00		.00	.00	.00
Chi-Square	38.482^b		33.349^c	24.127^d	21.439^e
Df	4		4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000		.000	.000	.000

a. Grouping Variable: Framing; b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 8.5; c. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 15.3; d. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 14.5; e. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 22.8.

Interpretation

A Kruskal-Wallis Test revealed a statistically significant difference in framing of civil military relationship across five different categories (Ct1, $n = 61$: highly negative, Ct2, $n = 236$:

negative, Ct3, $n = 255$: neutral, Ct4, $n = 191$: positive, Ct5, $n = 64$: highly positive), $X^2 (4, n = 807) = 32.735, p = .000$. The negative category recorded a higher median score ($Md = 50$) than the other four categories. The civil military relationship was negatively framed by Pakistani press under the context of Zarb-e-Azb Operation, $X^2 (4, n = 807) = 38.482, p = .000$. In the framing of military operation, the negative category recorded a higher median score ($Md = 81$) than the other four categories. The military operation was negatively framed by Pakistani press under the context of Zarb-e-Azb Operation, $X^2 (4, n = 807) = 33.349, p = .000$. In the portraying of world stance, the neutral category recorded a higher median score ($Md = 69$) and positive category recorded a higher median score ($Md = 63$) than the other four categories. The world stance was overall positively framed by Pakistani press under the context of Zarb-e-Azb Operation, $X^2 (4, n = 807) = 24.127, p = .000$. To frame the outcomes of military operation, the neutral category recorded a higher median score ($Md = 91$) and positive category recorded a higher median score ($Md = 85$) than the other four categories. The outcome of military operation was positively framed by Pakistani press under the context of Zarb-e-Azb Operation, $X^2 (4, n = 807) = 21.439, p = .000$.

Discussion

The findings of the current study indicate that daily 'Dawn', 'The Nation' and 'The News' have positively framed military and security image of Pakistan in regard of 'Operation Zarb-e-Azb', but slightly framed negative about the political and civilian institutions that they are unable to take actions. 'The Nation' in an editorial stated that *"Therefore, it is important to view the ongoing military operation and its fallout in the larger context of civil-military relations. The valiant efforts of our soldiers are certainly not restricted to the battlefield. They can be seen setting up camps for the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), providing them with food and shelter, digging holes in the ground in the blistering heat. Our heroes. The civilian government, on the other hand, is hopeless as ever. The perception is: Incompetent civilians, unable to get their act together even during a severe crisis. The PM doesn't have to take up arms and fight the terrorists himself. All that is required of him and his government is to facilitate the armed forces and deal with the fallout"* ("Changing Perceptions", July 11, 2014, The Nation). Likewise an editorial in daily 'Dawn' also criticize the government by saying that *"And yet again, the government has been nowhere in sight, while the army has swooped in to finish the job and win over the public in the process"* ("Attack on Karachi airport", June 10, 2014, Dawn). In the same manner 'The Nation' supported the actions of Pakistan military by saying that *"In a telling comment, the Sectary of state termed the Pakistan Army – not the Pakistani government – a 'truly binding force'. Contrast this with the Prime Minister's track record with the US; a largely anonymous visit, a few diplomatic meetings in the sideshow of the UN conference, and a miserly phone call from President Obama"* ("Balance Of Power", December 03, 2014, The Nation). These findings indicate the competence of the military institutions towards the peace and promote national security image and criticize the political image. This particular result indicates that the way media has narrated the operation positively and negatively, the perception of civilian (political image) and military actions (National Image) shall be made accordingly. This finding is similar to the study of Weaver, McCombs, & Shaw (2004) in which it was clearly mentioned that the way media make the choice for the projection of any issue and the way the media cover the issue by telling the attributes, properties and its characteristics affect the perception of the general public on that issue. Consequently, people build up their opinion on the issue based on the basis of the narrative built by the media. Further, the editorials of 'The Nation', daily 'Dawn' and 'The News' give the idea of diversity, but nevertheless the selected newspapers focused on the same frames that were based

on the factual information. The frames covered by the newspapers again showed that military actions (National Image) lead to peace at home, moreover, they emphasized that the task of the military institutions is to protect the state and its citizens. The most significant frame construed from the editorials of the newspapers in the context of OZA are rehabilitation of “IDP’s and the ‘*The Nation*’ stated in one of its editorial that “*It is a welcome announcement that nearly 40 per cent of the internally displaced persons in North Waziristan Agency have so far returned to their homes. The Inter-Services Public Relations has said that around 291,827 families were internally displaced due to the OZA. So far, nearly 108,503 families have returned to their homes following the successful culmination of the military operation. Though the army has done its job well and must be congratulated*” (“IDPs Return Home”, Dec 20, 2015, *The Nation*). However in criticizing the political stance (Political Image) in regards of IDP’s, ‘*The Nation*’ stated in its editorial that “*The federal government, too, has failed to offer sufficient assistance, in the form of monetary and logistical support, despite repeatedly assuring that it understands its responsibility towards the IDPs.*” (“Forgetting The IDPs”, Jan 13, 2015, *The Nation*). The findings of the study remained consistent with the previous literature as Travis (2017) stated that the military forces should have the strength to win the wars and work for the protection of their citizens, simultaneously their actions should not be concerned with wiping out the society which they have the intent to protect. Further, the findings of the current paper examined the style of the narrative utilized by print media during the coverage of OZA. The newspapers followed different styles when narrating the editorials. They converged on few aspects of OZA with respect to national image vs. political image while show divergence on few aspects. The newspapers' policies differ as far as OZA is concerned. There was a difference in the way the operation was covered. The findings indicated that all the newspapers converged by giving negative coverage to government stance (Political Image). Like, “*Times have changed. The PM hasn’t. He still seems to believe that merely moving things from his plate to the military’s is a job well done, when it is really a job not done at all*” (“Power and Responsibility”, Jan 04, 2015, para. 2, *The Nation*). Likewise, “*Nawaz Sharif promised to no longer distinguish between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ militants but his Punjab-centric government is still ignoring the scale of the problem in their province*” (“Blast in Pindi”, Jan 11, 2015, para. 1, *The News*). Evenly, ‘*Dawn*’ stated that, “*Start with the army — if only because it seems keen on action against some militants, where the government is not*” (“Absent Leadership”, Jun 12, 2014, para. 2, *Dawn*). By reading these statements and from results it has proved that how negative inclination of Pakistan’s print media is towards government stance (Political Image) regarding operation ‘Zarb-e-Azb’ and how they converged towards the same platform for publishing mostly negative directions. However, all the selected newspaper belongs to three different schools of thoughts. Whereas, ‘*The Nation*’ diverged in publishing more editorials regarding government stance as compared to daily *Dawn* and ‘*The News*’. ‘*The News*’ diverged in covering the military stance more as compared to ‘*Dawn*’ and ‘*The Nation*’.

Similarly, the selected newspapers had converged by giving positive inclination towards successful operation and admiration of the Pakistan army. However, they diverged portraying enhanced security situation as ‘*The Nation*’ has given more positive coverage in regarding better security situation after operation ‘Zarb-e-Azb’ as compared to ‘*Dawn*’ and ‘*The News*’. In the coverage of “OZA” ‘*The News*’ was different from each other due to their diverged organization policies and ideology. The findings also revealed that ‘*The Nation*’ showed 50% divergent policies in all aspects related to “OZA” as compared to ‘*Dawn*’ and ‘*The News*’. ‘*The News*’ is pro-govt. (Hayat & Juliana, 2016) but in this specific study, it portrayed govt. stance on “OZA” (that is against operation) and supported military stance as well as if govt. endorses “OZA” positively.

Inversely, *'The Nation'* is a pro-Muslim League (Hayat & Juliana, 2016) but in this specific study, it portrayed govt. stance on "OZA" (that is against operation) and supported military stance as well as if govt. endorses "OZA" positively along with the military. *'Dawn'* is neutral according to the previous study (Hayat & Juliana, 2016) and in this study; it maintained its policy-neutral towards the alliance of civil-military relationship but criticized the individual stance of military and govt. on the issue of "OZA". Framing states highlighting some parts of the issue positively while negatively presenting other aspects will transform the public opinion on the issue respectively. Hence, support this study states that coverage of specific newspapers on "OZA" molds public opinion. This finding is line with the view of Afzal, Iqbal and Inayat (2012) that they belong to three different schools of thought like *'The News'* is a biased newspaper, *'The Nation'* is an ideological newspaper and *Dawn* is a neutral newspaper. Media coverage of OZA in editorials of *'Dawn'*, *'The Nation'* and *'The News'* was different from each other due to their diverged organization policies and ideology. The results are in accordance with previous research conducted by Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000 in which they also stated that the diversity in communication frames lies in the language discourse. It was examined that frames constructed have diversity because the different news outlets use different frames and ultimately they provide the reader a different meaning to the frame constructed. In this specific study, coverage of different newspapers regarding "OZA" is analyzed to find out what exactly specific newspapers wanted to build public opinion regarding "OZA" and stances of different stakeholders on it. Explaining the implications of the study in the theoretical perspective of framing, is that all the selected newspapers in this particular study changed their policy as they criticize the political image and promote military and national security.

Conclusion

It is concluded that media has the power to maximize or minimize the coverage related to issues, the role of media in creating an impact on the people is vital. The media should not misguide, misinterpret and overemphasize any issue which can create some serious threats to the sovereignty of the state. In this regard, there is a need for journalistic standards determined by the government and the information ministry of Pakistan so that the passage of fruitful information could be streamlined with high standard of freedom of expression. Most of the three newspapers published positive editorials which indicate that foreign countries had a positive attitude towards Pakistan during Operation Zarb-e-Azb. The government stance (Political Image) during Operation Zarb-e-Azb had been more negatively portrayed by all chosen publications. The success of the operation was portrayed favorably by all three newspapers (National Security Image). Such newspapers were primarily impartial in terms of a nation's defense against terrorism. With respect to Pakistan army appreciation, present study indicated a favorable inclination to the policies of these newspapers. The study concludes that these papers provide a constructive agenda that strengthens the security environment after Operation Zarb-e-Azb.

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