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| Article: | Violence & Conflict in Television News: A Content Analysis of The News Channels |
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ABSTRACT

News media has been a source of multifarious information and has developed to a varied extent in the recent past. There now appears to be an increasing surge of propagation and dialogue on violence-related issues. Media violence has remained a viable topic of past research because of its impact on society and many studies focused on entertainment content. This study is aimed at analyzing the proportion of violence in news broadcasts and exploring the role of news channels whether they cover all or focus on specific issues. A total of 2577 stories were collected from 93 news broadcasts at 9 p.m. on “top 3” news channels; Dunya News, Geo News, and PTV News covering one month in January 2014. Of them, 1132 news stories were identified as ‘violent,’ which were further analyzed for the extent and nature of violence and their inclusion in the news bulletin. The study concludes that selected news channels presented less proportion of violence in terms of the number of stories and total stories per hour, but allocated a large amount of broadcast time to the small number of violent stories as compared to other issues. They reported political violence-related issues more frequently and there is a large content of violence in the headlines, especially on private channels.

Keywords: Violence, Violence in News, Violent Content, Television News, Content Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Mass media have developed to a varied extent in the recent past in terms of their contents and role in society. Media has appeared to be affecting all segments of society in multiple ways. Effects on culture, individual perception, and construction of reality among the masses are some of the examples which have recently been studied in various parts of the world. It is not only that media has very positive effects in terms of educating and informing the masses on issues related to politics, culture, economy, etc. There have been noticeable studies highlighting the effects of mass media on the vulnerable segments of the societies for example; women, children, and youth on their behavior all at times unintended kind of effects on the behavior of these segments and in reality, intended effects on them. Out of them, violence available in various forms of mass media has been studied widely in the wide circles of mass communication and have found to be adversely affecting various segments of society. Recently, it has been considered one of the major areas of research in mass communication i.e. “effects of violence.”

Of course, violence is one of the very important features of movies and cartoon programmes, but scenes of violence in real life when depicted in the news contents of 24/7 news channels have also been found to be affecting their viewers low less than what usually we have observed in the case of violence in the movies and cartoons. Scholarly views that media is a mirror of society as it seemed to be the case of news channel because its content comes from the real world, which is full of violence. There have been many pieces of research underlining the significance of television as a key medium for violence or disaster marathon and some have shown the association between scenes of violence portrayed on television and real-life violent activities. Violence is a universal phenomenon and none of the society is left untouched by its horrible effects. Violence contained in media reaches homes, streets, and workplaces threatening the life, health, and happiness of the masses. Violence varies from one culture to another in terms of its nature and forms. For example, Pakistani society has been experiencing the worst ever violence for the last few years.

Pakistan has been facing multiple challenges such as economic crisis, political instability, and power shortage, but violence has reached an alarming level in recent years and became a major challenge to the country’s leadership. Violence has appeared in multifaceted scenarios and dimensions ranging from mere fighting between individuals or groups to large-scale violent conflicts. Intellectuals and policy-makers from all over the world are concerned over the growing violence in Pakistani society and there is a general perception that Pakistan has become an increasingly violent society over the years (Mesquita, Fair, Jordan, Rais, & Shapiro, 2013).

Television is one of the primary sources from which people receive information about the social environment that has now become a receive-only mechanism. The only control people can get over what they want to receive via television is the selection of news channels. Whereas, the amount and nature of information viewers receive is limited by news channels and their broadcast agendas. One way in which up-to-date information is received through television is

“news broadcast” (Bunn, 2010). The news on television has remained similar in its format since its inception however the recent technological development has made some remarkable additions. Today, television presents people with live shots of the events through satellite feeds that can also allow discussions between both news anchors and the reporters. The reporters from far-flung areas can reach to the television screen and also present a story either in action as it occurs that rarely happens in practice and generally such feeds are comprised of immediate shots of the incident (Tuggle & Huffman, 2001).

Though the format of news remained the same, its nature has considerably changed over time (Young, 2003). The mission of previous journalism was to provide a truthful and comprehensive account of every day’s events apart from any biasness. On the contrary, modern news media even do not often observe the core principles of journalism such as investigative and informative reporting in the rush of the latest news (Raza, Sultan, & Jan, 2012). Media managers have become businessmen whose motives are somehow different from the previous journalism. Some are working for financial gains while others pursue their vested interest even sometimes by negating the basic code of ethics of quality journalism. This approach of consumerism has encompassed the broadcast news media as well which now appears to be a money-making industry (Woods, 2007).

The market-driven journalism has adversely affected the nature of news broadcast that only serves the interests of media houses rather than serving society. News channels normally compete to increase viewership to survive in the competitive media market and do whatever they can to increase ratings. In this tough competitive media environment, the commercial interests of the media organizations became paramount that followed ethic-binding journalism gave way to distress-based reporting including sensationalism (Serani, 2008). For example, Geo News has been the most sensational channel in Pakistan therefore it holds the highest viewership than other channels (Raza, Sultan, & Jan, 2012). Such journalistic practices increased when news media found that inculcating the feelings of trauma and capitalizing on the vulnerabilities of individuals can be the best way to increase viewership (Altheid, 2002).

The stress-based broadcast news is supposed to achieve two basic goals. First, it is intended to grab the people’s attention by introducing an important issue and problem that the individuals want to know about. Secondly, it makes them believe that the next segment will follow the answer or solution to the problem. News broadcasts grab the attention of viewers by exposing them to a large number of reports of everyday violent activities about which people are always curious more than other kinds of coverage, suggesting to them that these events are the common occurrences in the society (Glassner, 2000). News about real-life violence often involves human suffering and pains which attracts people’s attention more and can make them feel that staying update on television news is their need to survive (Serani, 2008).

Poniewozik (2010) says that a sense of crisis (or emergency) is good business for television news. After the World Trade Centre’s attack on September 11, 2001, broadcast news found that news-tickers can give the people a sense that they are receiving sufficient and up-to-date information in a short time. The urgency that news-tickers create still prevails as almost

all the time our television screen remains filled with data regarding distress and suffering-based violent news, creating fear among the viewers. News tickers dominated the television screen after 9/11 which allowed the channels to shunt news headlines during normal broadcasting hours. Many channels continue to show news tickers on the screen in an attempt to boost ratings (Young, 2003). Participants of a survey believe that Pakistani news channels have been sensationalizing many issues including family conflicts, domestic violence, riots, crime, and terrorism sidelining other issues of societal interest. Such fear-based violent stories when depicted as “breaking news” can create more hype and produce an extreme state of fear among the population (Raza, Sultan, & Jan, 2012).

Report about the latest violence in society often becomes “breaking news” on many news broadcasts. This culture prevails on many news channels and they often present normal reports as breaking news just to enhance the importance of the story in the eyes of viewers for winning viewership. The media generally assume that breaking reports inspire the viewers to believe that the event has recently happened and this can attract large public attention. This type of news presentation incites the viewers to keep watching television news for an update on the issue. Many channels break news with verbal phrases like “we are following a developing story” or “breaking news” with the visuals of these phrases on the screen (Watson, 2005). For example, many news anchors in Pakistan present shots of a violent event by calling the viewers that “these scenes of violence are being exclusively shown by this channel”, “our channel is breaking this news”, “more details will be disclosed in the upcoming segment”, “stay keep watching this channel for more update” and other similar statements. The exposure to breaking reports more or less has a significant impact on the viewer’s assessment of the event. It makes the people believe that the event is more important to watch than other reports and also inspires future media use (Watson, 2005).

The previous discussion reveals that news broadcasts often present shocking and fear-based news stories (Serani, 2008) that are mostly about violence like violent crimes. The news about crimes grabs more public attention because they reflect societal conflicts between individuals and social groups (Jamieson & Campbell, 2001, p. 41). Frequent portrayals of such news also increase the frequency of violence in society, producing an unnecessary state of insecurity among the people (Cockburn, 2011). It has been observed by the researchers that violence has become a staple content on many local news broadcasts (Lipschultz & Hilt, 1999). Some argued that media frequently report incidents of societal violence including conflicts and crimes as well as natural incidents like accidents and natural disasters with the assumption that this type of coverage will always win increased viewership (Cockburn, 2011). Portrayals of violence in news programmes also have more or less negative effects on individuals as well as society, as suggested by many theorists. Of them, cultivation theorists provide a comprehensive account of the effects of watching media violence in terms of the extent and nature of violence.

So, the careful and extensive review of the available literature suggests that it is pertinent to explore the extent and nature of the violence reported on the leading TV news channels in Pakistan i.e. Dunya News, Geo News, and PTV News in January 2014. Hence, the researchers have attempted to address the following research questions;

- **RQ-1:** What is the extent and nature of violence in television news?
- **RQ-2:** Which kind of violence gets more frequent coverage in television news?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

One of the early remarkable theoretical accounts of the effects of television violence was the cultivation theory (1969) developed by George Gerbner and Larry Gross, University of Pennsylvania. The cultivation concept, initiated by Gerbner & Gross (1976), was developed into an investigation of how general television watching habits cultivate the perceptions of real-life aggression and violence. This Gerbner's exploration was originally started with the comparison of the rate of violence depicted on television with the frequency of violence in the actual world. They found that the rate of violence being shown on television was much higher than the actual occurrence of violence in the real world.

Gerbner and his colleagues were interested to know how different levels of viewership affect the individual's perception of violence. They then surveyed television audiences and found that general television watching cultivates the perception of real-life as more violent than the world is. Their survey further finds that viewers' perceptions were affected depending on how much quantity of television each watches (Gerbner G. , Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980).

Cultivation theorists distinguished the television viewership by simply labeling the individuals either as heavy, moderate, or low viewers depending on how much amount of television one watches (Gerbner, 1998) and compared the perceptions across different viewership levels. They found that people's perceptions of social reality differ across different levels of viewership as heavy viewers of television perceived the world as more violent than low viewers (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). Later, Gerbner et al. (1994) explained that people watching a great deal of violence on television are more likely to perceive the world in the same way as it is reflected by media. Saleem and Anderson (2012) suggest that regular watching news about violence and conflict-related issues can create more adverse viewpoints in viewers' minds about the society and they face difficulty to distinguish between mediated world and the actual world (Gerbner, 1969).

Lately, the results of some other studies were also similar to the earlier findings of Gerbner and his colleagues. Out of them, a survey by Romer, Jamieson, & Aday (2003) finds that those participants who documented viewing a large quantity of television news reported more worrying about crimes especially violent criminal activities in the society. Another telephonic correlational survey suggests that viewing particular events on the screen can lead to negative mental responses and also affect the estimated frequency of incidents in society. It finds that 78% of the parents overestimated how frequently child kidnapping occurs due to the influence of newscasts. It is expected that news has produced an irrational belief among these people since the frequency of child abduction, in reality, is smaller comparatively (Wilson, Martins, & Marske, 2005). In this way, if an individual watches more news about bomb blasts at public places the viewers are likely to be avoiding visiting such places more frequently.

Cultivation theory asserts that exposure to a particular violent action or viewpoint on television will have a significant impact on the viewers' perceptions of that particular violence or viewpoint (Gerbner, 1998). Wilson et al. (2005) also noted that habitual watching narratives involving child abduction on television news were positively associated with the emotions of fear and worry in children as well as adults. In addition to this, the regular watching news about child kidnapping has more instances of availability of that crime in viewers' thoughts that eventually lead the people to become more scared.

Several researchers used cultivation theory to explore the effects of general television exposure on viewers' perceptions. However, Gerbner et al. (1994) suggest the researchers apply this theory to the most widely watched programmes on television, especially to those genres that show important and current social issues which is the normal business of television news. It generally reports reality-based latest public interest events of social life. If television can construct cultivation effects through the presentation of realities in fictional broadcasting, one can assume that news broadcasts can also produce cultivation effects from the portrayal of incidents of real-life violence and conflicts (Gerbner, 1969).

News channels normally present people with real-life stories of violence and conflicts such as terrorism and violent crimes whereas viewers are mostly concerned about those issues which the news media frequently reports and they may come to believe that violence is a common occurrence in the society. This may also create a negative affective state that people experience through watching the news channels (Coleman, 1993). In this way, these channels are cultivating the fear and harassment within people (Young, 2003). The cultivation theory has long been used by communication researchers to generally explain the effects of television violence. However, it also provides a theoretical basis for this type of study exploring the role of news channels through an assessment of the amount and forms of violence being reported in the news programme.

So, drawing on the theoretical underpinnings provided by the cultivation theory in this research endeavor the researchers have intended to explore the nature and extent of violence being reported by leading Pakistani TV news channels; Dunya News, Geo News, and PTV News in their news bulletins during January 2014.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data Collection and Sampling

For this study, the researchers collected data from different means including websites and media offices. The recording of news bulletins (09.00 p.m.) of the Dunya TV was obtained from the official website of the channel. However, the offices of the Geo News and the PTV News were formally approached for obtaining data, which the researchers observed was the more difficult task in this type of study.

There are several news channels in Pakistan and selecting all for this study was not feasible because of time and funds constraints, therefore only “top 03” channels (i.e. Dunya News, Geo News, and PTV News) have been selected based on their viewership. Overall programming of these channels was the population of the study, but the sample frame includes only the most widely watched primetime programme i.e. 9.00 p.m. news bulletin (Khabarnama) aired on selected channels between 1st January 2014 and 31st January 2014.

Freedom of media and the arrival of cable and satellite networks in Pakistan gave way to a variety of channels in the media market, out of the news channels have been specifically serving the purpose of providing people with firsthand information about the society. In addition, these channels have also seemed to be shaping public opinions on societal issues such as Yousaf (2012) found that Pakistani private news channels are altering the political perception of the people. Owing to this, news channels were selected for this study based on their viewership.

Medialogic Pakistan (2014) database shows that Geo News dominated the viewership of news and current affairs programmes in December 2013 followed by Dunya TV. However, Gallup Pakistan’s database ranked PTV News as the highest-rated channel whereas Geo News was the second in terms of viewership.¹ This one-month rating data from both databases confirmed that PTV News, Geo News, and Dunya TV are the “top-rated” channels in Pakistan.

The unit of analysis for this study is a single “story” that refers to an incident being reported on television. A single story may include multiple elements for example; event coverage, report about victims or perpetrators, discussions or opinions, etc.

Data Analysis

Content analysis methodology has been employed to study the news broadcasts, which presents a clear and tangible description of the textual and visual contents that provides the basis for comparing the contents between different mediums to identify gaps and the lacking elements. It offers insight that can make decisions more easily for example, what to prioritize and how? However, Fox (2005) noted that in content analysis text (including spoken) is coded into categories at different levels including words, ideas, themes, etc.

Key Variables and Operational Definitions

Violence appears in its multiple forms and dimensions in the real life. The daily business of news broadcast is to report everyday social events as well as events of violence and victims. To determine the amount and nature of violence in television news the researchers considered it appropriate to choose some specific forms of violence as “variables” for this

¹According to Medialogic and Gallup Pakistan, overall primetime viewership of Geo News in December 2013 was 1.02% followed by Dunya TV with 0.51%, whereas for 09.00 p.m. news bulletin it was 1.47% Geo News and 0.44% Dunya TV.

study. These variables allowed assessment of quantity as well as the nature of violence in television news. The key variables and operational definitions are as under;

Political Violence (PV): Mesquita et al. (2013) define political violence as “any publically reported act that: (1) is aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal; (2) entails some levels of violence or threat of violence including violence against people or property; and (3) is intentional, that is the result of the conscious calculation on the part of the perpetrator.” (p. 4) This may include but is not limited to, riots, terrorist attacks, assassinations, military operations, and other violent activities.

The same definition provided by Mesquita et al. (2013) was employed as an operational definition in this study. However, the researcher further classified this general definition of political violence into three sub-categories to calculate all the events of this kind of violence in a broader spectrum. These categories include;

Verbal Threat: The operational definition of verbal threat includes all publicly reported statements by the politicians or other activists against political parties or the State/government functionaries that may involve some level of threat of violence. This also includes condemnations and statements by political leaders about violence and perpetrators.

This category was used to code all publicly reported aggressive statements by the political, religious, or social activists, for example, MQM Chief in a statement (see 3rd January’s bulletin of Dunya News) demanded a separate province for Urdu speaking people and his statement sparked a lot of controversy as many counter statements by the politicians remained the focus of many private news channels for days. Similarly, all aggressive statements by the State/government functionaries against politicians or others were also recorded in this category, for example, Power Minister (Abid Sher Ali) in a statement termed PTI’s Ministers in KPK Province as “Bijlee Chor” (see 8th January’s bulletin of Dunya News), which resulted in a war of words between government and political parties and protests in different parts of the country. This issue received more broadcast time on many channels. Another example is the high treason trial case of former President Musharraf which also sparked a lot of criticism and debate over the media. All such statements were coded in the category of verbal threat. In addition, reports about trials of political leaders such as Musharraf’s case were also recorded in this category of verbal threat. However, all statements regarding normal politics were not included in this category.

Physical Threat: It was operationally defined as any collective activity carried out by a set of individuals or a group of people for achieving any of their political, religious, economic, or social goals that may or may not involve violence or threat thereof against the people or the property.

This category was added to record all publicly reported collective activities such as protests, sit-ins, rallies, long marches, or strikes over any social, political, economic, or religious issue for any purpose like against government that may or may not involve violence

or threat of physical violence. News reports containing aftermaths or outcomes of this type of violence were also coded in this category.

Collective Violence: This category refers to violence committed by a larger group of people or a set of individuals for achieving religious, political, economic, or social goals that may result in injuries or killings to the people or damage to inanimate objects.

The category was used to record all broadcast stories about violent conflicts between groups including political, religious, or social, and attacks on civilians or objects such as group firing, clashes/conflicts, state violence, terrorist attacks (i.e. bomb blasts, suicide blast or any other blast), firing/killing, hostage situations and all other collective violent activities resulting in injuries or killings or damages to property or other objects. Furthermore, condemnation, condolence, compensation, and tributes to victims of such types of violence were also recorded in this category. In addition, this category also included the portrayal of victims or aftermaths of violence, reports about the families of victims or martyred or funerals, or reports about any explosive material found.

This category also included reports about State operations against the militants like targeted operations in Karachi and military operations in North Waziristan. However, the State operation was divided into two categories; (1) core reporting operation which includes stories about attacks on militants, etc., and (2) peripheral reporting operation that include reports about discussions, debates, or criticism on the operation against militants (e.g. meetings or statements regarding operation/dialogue with Taliban) at different forums. This category included publicly reported contradictory statements by the political, social, or religious activists or by the militant organizations about State operations against militants or any other activity in this regard such as dialogue with the Taliban. For example, many religious scholars and political leaders opposed the government's decision to conduct an operation against terrorists in North Waziristan Maulana Fazal ur Rehman (JUI) in a statement on 22nd January 2014 (see Dunya TV) opposed a military operation against militants and demanded of the government to resolve the issue with militants through dialogue.

Interpersonal Violence (IV): World Health Organization defines interpersonal violence as violence between individuals, it is considered one of the worst forms of violence. It was divided into two sub-categories: (1) domestic violence; that refers to aggression between family members including violence against inanimate partners; and (2) community violence; which is violence between individuals in the society who may or may not know each other (WHO, 2002).

For this study, interpersonal violence was operationalized as the intentional use of violence against a family or inanimate partner, or other individuals in the community resulting in harm or killings, or loss of inanimate objects.

This variable was used to record all news stories about violence or victims of violence by inanimate partners, violence against the family, child abuse, abduction or kidnapping, youth

violence, rape cases, sexual assault, workplaces violence, violence over property, or any other dispute, assault on servants, and random acts of violence including robberies, theft, dacoities, vehicle or mobile snatching, and other criminal activities that resulted in injuries, deaths, or loss of any object. Reports about the deceased's family and funeral were also coded as violence. All reports about outcomes of interpersonal violence or reports about victims or families of victims including funeral coverage were also recorded in this category.

Accidental Violence (AV): Broadcasting Standards Corporation defines accidental violence as “where violence is unintentional or caused by accidents or natural disasters” (BSC, 2002, p.4), and the earlier Cultural Indicator researchers also include violence that occurs as a result of “accidents or acts of nature” (Signorielli, 1980, p. 13).

In this study, accidental violence refers to the violence which is unintentional and caused by an act of nature such as accidents or natural disasters, or an outbreak of disease. This variable was employed to record all news reports of accidents like traffic accidents or other incidents that happened accidentally and the natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and hurricanes resulting in injuries, deaths, or damages to an inanimate object. The portrayal of victims and aftermaths of this violence including reports about the family of victims and funerals were also included. Reports about natural deaths, and the outbreak of disease were also coded under this variable.

Self-directed Violence (SV): It refers to violence in which the perpetrator and victim are the same people and is sub-divided into suicide and self-abuse (WHO, 2002, p. 5). The operational definition of self-directed violence includes any intentional use of violence against oneself by the same individual resulting in or not harm or death of life.

All publicly reported cases of perpetrators or victims of self-abuse, suicide, or attempt to suicide were coded under this separate variable.

Coding & Analysis

All the news stories in the sample frame were assessed for violent content. To count a story as violent, the researcher looked for at least one of the pre-defined variables (forms of violence) as the main theme of the story. If a story contained one or more scenes of violence or consequences of violence or threat of violence, the coders regarded it as a violent story. When a single story had multiple elements it was coded once and categorized following the primary thrust of the story. If a story contained no depictions that qualified as violence according to the already defined variables, it was recorded in the separate category of “Others”. This analysis does not include business, entertainment, sports, and weather reports including promotional features.

An independent analysis from videotapes of news bulletins was performed by the researcher himself with the help of a trained coder having vast exposure to news media using a stopwatch to time each news story to the nearest second. To estimate the total broadcast

timing of each story the coders strictly observed the time, when a story started, and when it ended. The treatment of each story identified as violent was also observed to determine the importance given to each story by the respective news channel. For this purpose, the researcher considered the placement of each story either at the beginning or later part of the bulletin and its placement in the headlines segment. Regardless of technical difficulty in the coding procedure majority of the stories were easily coded.

Indicators

The researchers by borrowing the concept from Paquette (2004) have used two indicators in this analysis; the gross number of violent stories (n) and the number of violent stories per broadcast hour (n/h). The first indicator (n) estimates the amount of violence in a news broadcast that may be the result of the selection of violent stories by the news channel. The second indicator (n/h) allows for more subtle analysis as it takes into account the number of hours of the violent news broadcast. In this way, the three selected channels could present a very distinct profile regardless of an even number of violent stories.

FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

This study is based on a survey of television news coverage based on one month's data obtained from the “top 3” Pakistani news channels i.e., PTV News, Geo News, and Dunya News. This study covered the period 1st January 2014 to 31st January 2014. Overall, 2,577 news stories of a total 53.0 hours broadcast duration from three selected channels were studied for violent content. The study was further narrowed down to the violent news stories appearing in the headlines and the main bulletin of 09:00 p.m. (Khabarnama) on selected news channels. Two main variables assessed include; the number of broadcast news stories and the amount of broadcast time given by each news channel to the news on violence-related issues in one month period of the study. The following sections present the major findings of the study question-by-question:

RQ.1: What is the extent and nature of violence in television news?

This question tackles the results in two major parameters: the number of overall stories and the time allocated to headline and detailed news. Based on the main research question of the study stated above, aggregated data has been provided in the form of various tables and charts and was analyzed accordingly.

| Table 1: Gross number of violence and other stories (n) and number of broadcast stories per hour (h) in January 2014 | | | |
|--|----------|--------|-------|
| | Violence | Others | Total |
| Gross number of stories (n) | 1132 | 1445 | 2577 |
| Number of stories/h | 21.3 | 27.3 | 48.6 |

Table 1 shows that the studied news channels (i.e., PTV News, Geo News, and Dunya News) transmitted 1,132 stories about violence on their 9 p.m. news bulletins in January 2014, whereas 1,445 other news stories did not contain violence. These results revealed that all the channels transmitted an overall 44% of news stories containing violence-related topics, which is 12% less than other stories that were 56%. The above table further shows that all the news channels earmarked 21.3 stories per hour containing violence, which is 6 stories per hour less than those that did not contain violence. These findings imply that the three news channels aired a reduced level of violence in terms of the gross number of stories and total stories per hour as compared to other stories.

Although the number of violence-related stories is comparatively less, they were given a greater amount of broadcast time as compared to others. Further analysis demonstrates that, despite the relatively small number of stories involving violence, they receive more airtime than other stories.

| Table 2: Gross number of headline stories (h) and total headlines per hour (h) in January 2014 on violence and other issues | | | |
|---|----------|--------|-------|
| | Violence | Others | Total |
| Gross number of headline stories (n) | 596 | 451 | 1047 |
| Number of headline stories/h | 11 | 9 | 20 |
| Gross number of stories without headlines | 536 | 994 | 1530 |
| Number of stories without headlines/h | 10 | 19 | 29 |

Results presented in table 2 show that all the selected channels reported 596 stories with headline news about violence in January 2014, whereas on the other hand, 451 headline stories did not contain violence. These results show that 145 more headline stories reported violence as compared to other headline news.

Reading the above table vertically reveals that on average 11 violence-related broadcast stories per hour were presented with headlines, whereas nine headline stories per hour were reported on other issues. These results indicate that on average, two more stories per hour containing violence were presented with headlines as compared to other headline stories.

Table 2 further contains per hour broadcasting of headlines. Television news contained a higher proportion of violence in headlines in terms of the gross number of stories as compared to other stories per hour in the headline coverage.

Results on Types of Violence Reported

| Table 3: Gross number of violent news stories (n) and number of stories per hour (h) aired by all channels in January 2014 | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|----|----|-------|
| | PV | AV | IV | SV | Total |
| Gross number of violent stories (n) | 929 | 102 | 87 | 14 | 1132 |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Number of stories/h | 17.5 | 1.9 | 1.6 | 0.3 | 21.3 |
|---------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|------|

Results presented in table 3 indicate that all news channels' understudy reported 929 stories about political violence (PV) in January 2014, whereas 102 stories about accidental violence (AV) followed by interpersonal violence (IV) and self-directed violence (SV) were aired in the same month. These results reveal that a large number of stories on all the channels reported political violence, whereas 203 stories presented other forms of violence; interpersonal violence, accidental violence, and self-directed violence.

The above table shows that the selected news channels portrayed 17.5 stories per hour regarding political violence whereas less number of stories per hour were reported on other violence. These results reveal that 04 more stories per hour were reported on political violence as compared to all other forms of violence.

The results presented in the above table and chart reveal that all the news channels showed a large proportion of political violence on the 9 p.m. news bulletin in terms of the gross number of stories and total stories per hour in January 2014.

| Table 4: Gross number of headline stories reporting different forms of violence (h) and number of headline stories per hour (h) in January 2014 | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|
| | PV | AV | IV | SV | Total |
| Gross number of headline stories | 508 | 39 | 44 | 5 | 596 |
| Number of headline stories/h | 9.6 | 0.7 | 0.8 | 0.09 | 11.2 |
| Gross number of stories without headline | 421 | 63 | 43 | 9 | 536 |
| Number of stories without headline/h | 8 | 1.2 | 0.8 | 0.1 | 10.1 |

Results presented in table 4 indicate that all the news channels of the study reported 508 stories with headlines about political violence (PV) in January 2014, whereas 44 headline stories regarding interpersonal violence (IV), 39 stories about accidental violence (AV), and 5 stories about self-directed violence (SV). These results confirm that the number of stories about political violence was 508 against the total of 88 others. This is a quite significant proportion of the total violence stories and this reflects a situation of the intense hostile political climate in the country.

Results presented in table 4 indicate that all the news channels reported 9.6 stories per hour about political violence with headlines against 1.29 stories per hour on other forms of violence. These results reveal that all channels reported a large number of stories per hour about political violence.

Based on the results presented in the tables above, the first research question of the study is addressed and the study concluded that all the news channels understudy presented a large amount of violence in the headlines news in terms of the number of stories and total

stories per hour as compared to other issues. While the quantum of violence in the remaining parts of the news bulletin was less political violence than the other issues in terms of the number of stories and total broadcast hours. It was also found that a small number of stories containing violence received more broadcast time as compared to other stories on all channels during the period of study.

As far as the nature of violence in television news is concerned, the study concludes based on previous results that more than 80% of the news related to total violence on all channels highlighted issues of political violence in terms of the number of stories and total stories per hour. It was also found that a large amount of political violence was reflected in the headlines in terms of the number of stories and total stories per hour as compared to other forms of violence such as accidental violence, interpersonal violence, and self-directed violent.

The study concludes that political violence has therefore been the major preoccupation of violence-related news in electronic media in primetime broadcasts in Pakistan.

RQ.2: Which kind of violence gets more frequent coverage in television news?

The results presented in the preceding lines concluded that all the news channels substantially covered political violence as compared to other forms of violence and non-violent issues in headlines and the main news bulletin. This analysis further explores the issues of political violence that were given more emphatic coverage as compared to other types of violence on the selected channels in one month period of the study.

The section below now tackles the quantum as to what kind of violence gets more frequent coverage in television news after having established that in aggregate terms, political violence was the major type of violence which constituted nearly 85% of total violence news broadcasted.

Table 5: Categories of political violence news broadcast in January 2014

| Political Violence/Cases | PTV News | Geo News | Dunya News | Total |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-------|
| Musharraf Case | 28 | 81 | 62 | 171 |
| Political Statements/Criticism | 9 | 23 | 32 | 64 |
| Verbal Threat | (37) | (104) | (94) | (235) |
| Social Strikes/Protests | 1 | 2 | 6 | 9 |
| Kashmir Strike/Protests | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Political Strikes/Protests | 0 | 12 | 17 | 29 |
| Anti-Terrorism strikes | 4 | 19 | 10 | 33 |
| Other strikes/protests | 1 | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| Physical Threat | (10) | (36) | (37) | (83) |
| Group firing | 2 | 1 | 2 | 5 |

| | | | | |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Clashes/Conflicts | 1 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| State Violence | 5 | 0 | 2 | 7 |
| Terrorists Attack | 25 | 23 | 48 | 96 |
| Firing/Killing | 17 | 23 | 21 | 61 |
| Condemnation, condolence, etc. | 32 | 14 | 23 | 69 |
| Tribute to victims | 0 | 8 | 6 | 14 |
| Funeral | 5 | 6 | 7 | 18 |
| Investigation | 2 | 11 | 13 | 26 |
| Victim's Report | 2 | 8 | 14 | 24 |
| Core reporting state operation/dialogue | 44 | 19 | 33 | 96 |
| Peripheral reporting operation/dialogue | 41 | 78 | 71 | 190 |
| Collective Violence | (176) | (192) | (243) | (611) |
| Total | 223 | 332 | 374 | 929 |

Results contained in table 5 show that all the news channels reported 190 stories showing criticism regarding operations against lawbreakers and dialogue with the Taliban as part of collective violence, whereas 96 stories contained core operation activities such as raids and attacks on hideouts of militants and arrests and killings of militants as part of collective violence.

Reading vertically the above table reveals that 96 stories showed terrorist attacks that include bomb blasts, suicide attacks, and other violent incidents, whereas 69 stories showed condemnation, condolence, and compensation announcement for the victims of terrorist violence and 61 stories reported incidents of firing or killing including target killing. The above table further shows that all the channels in the category of verbal threats presented 171 stories regarding the high treason case against Musharraf, whereas 64 stories depicted political criticism involving some level of violence as part of verbal threats. Results further confirm that 33 stories represented anti-terrorism strikes.

Based on the above results, the second research question of the study is addressed and concluded that all the news channels of the study frequently and significantly reported collective violence. In collective violence, the channels covered political criticisms regarding operation and dialogue with militants, whereas comparatively less coverage was given to the core operation against militants by the State agencies and military, for example, targeted operations in Waziristan and Karachi.

In the category of a verbal threat, Musharraf's issue was given an inordinate space and time in one-month news broadcasts. The study found that the news bulletins of private channels are often overloaded with additional reports about this issue. Normally, these channels presented rudimentary reports about Musharraf's health, treatment available in Pakistan, and diverse expert opinions and also depicted debate over this issue. This issue was given more importance as compared to the other issues by both the private channels. All the channels reported core incidents of violence such as terrorist attacks, killings, and blasts with less

number of stories as compared to political criticisms regarding operations and dialogue with militants.

This analysis concludes that issues about collective violence were more frequently telecasted and highlighted on television news in January 2014 followed by news related to verbal threats.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Discussion

The main focus of the current study was dedicated to analyzing the coverage of violent content in the 09:00 p.m. news bulletin (Khabarnama) televised on three selected channels; viz. PTV News, Geo News, and Dunya News. The study also conducted a comparative analysis of various forms of violence in the context of television broadcasts as well as news channels.

The section below has been dedicated to presenting a critical discussion on the results previously analyzed based on the objectives of the study and the parameters of interest as outlined in the previous paragraphs.

The researchers collected overall 2577 stories and analyzed them for violent content based on predefined variables. Of them, a total of 1132 stories from all channels depicted some kind of violence, whereas 1445 other stories did not show violence and were coded in the category of others. Channel-wise break-up shows that PTV News reported 265 (21%) stories containing violence, Geo News reported 399 (66%) stories on violence-related stories and Dunya News covered 468 (66%) stories showing violence. In broadcast time allocation, PTV News allocated 4.15 hours out of a total of 20.55 hours to violence depiction, Geo News consumed 11.8 for violence out of the total 16 hours, and Dunya News showed violence in 12.1 hours out of a total of 16.9 hours.

The aggregated datum was analyzed taking into account the research questions of the study. The consolidated results of all the channels show that there were 313 fewer stories containing violence in the same month, but stories about violence were given a large quantum of broadcast duration as compared to other issues. The study pointed out that there was a difference in the average number of stories in the 9 p.m. news bulletin on all channels under the study. On average, PTV News reported over 50 stories in a single news bulletin, whereas the private channels presented comparatively fewer stories. Similarly, both the private channels allocated more time to each story than PTV News which covered stories with comparatively small broadcast durations. Regarding the extent of violence in television news, the study used two indicators as mentioned in the previous section and concluded that television news contained a small amount of violence as compared to other issues in January 2014.

The extent of violence in the headlines was also analyzed and all the channels presented at the start of the bulletin are meant to show the importance of the news. In addition, the private channels also presented headlines in the middle of the news bulletin. This analysis using the same indicators concludes that television news transmitted a large amount of violence in

headlines as compared to violence being reported in the regular bulletin as well as other issues. Here, the study pointed out that both the private channels more frequently treated news about violence as the lead in headlines and the main bulletin, whereas rarely this was observed on the news bulletin of PTV News. Furthermore, the bulletins of private channels frequently started with repeated scenes of violence or its aftermaths.

Regarding the nature of violence, the study analyzed different forms of violence shown on all the selected channels in January 2014 and also compared various forms of violence. The study concludes that there is a remarkable difference in the coverage of various forms of violence and all the channels more frequently covered issues about political violence as compared to other violence. Similarly, these forms of violence were also explored in the headlines and the study concludes that headlines on all the selected channels contained a large extent of political violence (i.e. 80% of overall violence) as compared to other forms of violence, whereas the remaining part of the news bulletin also depicted less amount of violence as compared to violence in headlines. The study pointed out that both the private channels frequently covered stories about political violence-related issues in the main bulletin as well as in the headlines.

For the second research question of the study, the researchers further analyzed the sub-categories of political violence in the same month under the study. The study concludes that all the channels more frequently covered collective violence-related issues and verbal threats in January 2014. In collective violence, more frequently covered issues were criticisms regarding operation and dialogue with militants (i.e. 25% of total coverage of political violence). It is pointed out that the core operations against militants such as targeted operations in Waziristan and Karachi were given only 13% coverage. Whereas, in the category of a verbal threat, Musharraf's issue was given more coverage (i.e. 23%), and private channels often overloaded the news bulletin with additional reports about this issue. Normally, these channels presented reports about Musharraf's health, treatment available in Pakistan, diverse expert opinions, and also advanced debate over this issue. This issue was given more importance as compared to other issues by both the private channels.

Conclusion

Based on the above discussion and the results and findings provided in chapter IV, all the selected news channels (i.e. PTV News, Geo News, and Dunya News) transmitted less proportion of violence on 9 p.m. news broadcasts (i.e. 21.3 stories per hour) during the period 1st January to 31st January 2014 as compared to other issues (i.e. 27.3 stories per hour). The findings also show that television news portrays a large amount of violence in the headlines as compared to other issues as well as violence in the main bulletin. Whereas, the results also show that in aggregate violence on television news was given 6% more broadcast time as compared to other issues.

The findings also show that all the news channels more frequently cover political violence-related issues; however, coverage of accidental violence and interpersonal violence

in all channels is higher than self-directed violence. The results also show that television news covers a large extent of political violence (i.e. 9.6 stories per hour) in the headlines as compared to other forms of violence as well as political violence in the main bulletin.

The results also show that in political violence all the news channels more frequently cover collective violence-related issues; however, coverage of verbal threats is higher than the physical threat. The results show that political criticisms regarding operation and dialogue with militants are higher than the core operation activities by the military or other security agencies as well as terrorist violence such as attacks and killing.

Based on the findings, the study concludes that the news channels in Pakistan broadcast less amount of violence in the bulletin but more violence in the headlines and allocate more broadcast time to violence while other issues of public concern are given the least priority.

The study shows that all the news channels i.e. PTV News, Geo News, and Dunya News covered political violence-related issues very frequently as compared to other issues. However, the overall results of television news coverage reveal that Dunya News presented a greater proportion of violence particularly political violence as compared with Geo News and PTV News. On the other hand, Geo News shows a great proportion of violence in the news bulletin as compared to PTV News.

The overall results of this study show that both the private channels, Geo News and Dunya News, during the study period broadcast a high frequency of stories and total stories per hour covering political violence as compared to other issues. The overall result of news coverage on PTV News shows that it is not highly focused on violence-related issues because its coverage of economic and other issues is higher than the private channels.

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