

Portrayal of Pak-US relations in Elite Press of Pakistan and United States during Raja Pervaiz Ashraf Regime (June 2012-December 2012)

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Abstract

The study Portrayal of Pak-US Relations in elite press of Pakistan and United States during Raja Pervaiz Ashraf Regime (June 2012-December 2012) is focused to study the relations between Pakistan and United States of America in the government of Pakistan's Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf who took charge as Prime Minister in June 2012. In this study the content analysis of the two newspapers is made where the editorials of elite press i.e. Daily Dawn from Pakistan and Washington Post from United States were analyzed. In this study the framing theory is used in the theoretical framework. There are total 82 editorials regarding Pak-US relations that were analyzed, 29 editorials of Washington Post whereas 53 editorials of Daily Dawn. The study has shown that the newspapers of both the countries has mostly shown the unsatisfied behavior towards the issues and has criticized the foreign policy of their respective countries.

Keywords: Pakistan; United States; Framing; Raja Pervaiz Ashraf; Elite Press; Editorials

Introduction

Media has got the prime importance at present in almost all the disciplines of life and people from all walks of life recognize its importance very well; particularly in constructing the social relations, not only at the national level but also at international level as media has converted the world into a global village at present [1]. Today Most of the people have become aware of the incidents and the happenings across the globe and this is only due to media.

Pak-US relations are of great importance since independence of Pakistan as a lot of tilt is seen between the relations of both the countries but after the September 11 (9/11) attacks on the United States the scenario of the world politics has been totally changed. US blamed Al Qaida for the attacks and US President George W. Bush declared war against terrorism and decided to attack Afghanistan where the master mind of these attacks Osama Bin Laden and his companions were hiding. In this entire scenario, Pakistan got the central importance being neighbor of Afghanistan and Pakistan's President General Pervaiz Musharraf decided to stand with US and her allies in the war against terrorism. After Musharraf the next President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari and Peoples Party government also decided to standby with US. The relations between both the countries faced many ups and downs all the time and especially during US's war on terrorism.

The current study is focused on finding the relations between Pakistan and United States of America in the media and foreign policy perspective during the government of Pakistan Peoples Party's Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf's government who became prime minister of Pakistan on 22 June 2012. This study is from June 2012 to December 2012 and it is tried to find out the foreign policy and the relations between Pakistan and US during the selected time period of seven months. Various major events were observed during the selected time period as the NATO supply blockade and its reopening as result of US attack on Pakistani troops on a military check post at Salala, Pakistan's demand US to apologize for the attack and US's silence on this demand, various US officials visit to Pakistan to normalize the conditions, US aid to Pakistan in various forms, Blasphemous movie made in US, attack on Malala Yousafzai and drone attacks in Pakistani territories are all the incidents that happened in the selected time

period that increases the importance of the Pak-US relations in the selected time and it is tried to find the relations and foreign policies of Pakistan and United States in the elite newspapers of Pakistan and US.

Research questions

Research Question 1

Does Pakistani Government have shown positive stance towards United States?

Research Question 2

Does United States Government have shown positive stance towards Pakistan?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

Terrorism issue is mostly covered by both Pakistani and US press.

Hypothesis 2

Pakistani press has shown negative stance mostly regarding Pak-US relations.

Hypothesis 3

Pakistani press has given more coverage to Pak-US relations than the US press.

Literature Review

The media and foreign policy is very interesting area for the study

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and the media and foreign policy relations have been studied by a number of well known researchers and scholars. Cohen's study, "The Press and Foreign Policy", is considered as the base for the media and foreign policy relationship as this is the pioneer study in the media and foreign policy perspective cited in [2]. A social scientist Lippmann [3] revealed his point of view saying that the people gather the information on the outer world through mass media which shows the importance and the high effects of the media more than nine decades ago.

Khalid [4] discussing about the US media said that the mass media in United States play a central and an important role in framing the public opinion and the framing of the people in the US interests. Khan and Irtaza [5] reveals the strong criticism of the US media towards Pakistan despite the sacrifices of Pakistan for US and being ally with the United States in war on terrorism. The studies of several researchers and scholars [6-8] were a medium in this area which forced the researcher to investigate deeply into the sphere of media and foreign policy and to find out whether US and Pakistani elite media support or oppose the official viewpoint of the policy makers of the respective countries on a particular issue.

Krishnaith [9] says that the media in the United States play a major role not only in shaping the public opinion but also in influencing the decision making of the executives particularly in the issues regarding the foreign policy making.

Anderson is of the view that the news media as one of the very lethal weapon by which a prevailing ideology is disseminated to and is also accepted by the various subordinate groups. While describing the western media the study of Said (1987) discloses that the tone of the Western media is against Islam and is anti Muslims which shows the western media is against the Islamic states. Mughees [10] explaining the ideology of the American media suggests that overall; The New York Times a leading US newspaper in its editorial coverage and the news reports took a stance that is against the US foreign policy towards Pakistan.

Ali and Qadir [11] analyzed the coverage of Islamic states in the American media by studying the coverage of six Islamic countries in the two major US magazines where six Muslim countries were put under the study and they were divided into two main categories in such a way that United States allies are (Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey) placed in one category and on the other end as the United States enemies (Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq) in the other category. The study was concludes as countries that are US's allies and have friendly relations with the United States got overall positive coverage in the selected magazines.

Zahid in the study Pak-US Relations in Elite Press of Pakistan and US during the Democratic Government of Pakistan People's Party concluded that the Pakistani newspaper has given more coverage to Pak-US relations than the American newspaper. In their study they revealed that the US newspaper The New York Times has shown greater percentage of unsatisfied behavior towards Pakistan while portraying Pak-US. They further said that the Pakistani newspaper Daily Dawn also showed an unsatisfied behavior mostly while portraying Pak-US relations, their study showed that the issues are mostly discussed on the reality base as the Pakistani newspaper put under the study has criticized the Peoples Party government's policies on Pak-US relations.

Mughees [6] are of the view that the media in particular do not necessarily support the official point of view of the government of any country because in pluralist societies media are free to make their own judgments and particularly in the case of United State's media. Zahid

further says that the media of Pakistan and United States are free to project the issues of national interest and nation's sovereignty of both Pakistan and Unites States.

Theoretical framework

Framing theory: The Framing theory supports the current study as framing is an important concept in media and communication studies, which helps us in understanding that how an incident is portrayed or framed in the media content that includes all the types of media that is electronic, print or the new media. This concept of framing has been used by some prominent media scholars during different times [6,12,13]. Zahid explaining the concept of framing is of the view that the term 'framing' is also engaged by different media critics, he point out that Noam Chomsky has used the term framing in an interview to refer the way the Washington Post an American prominent and national newspaper introduced a news story reporting.

For the study in hand the concept of framing would be beneficial in explaining the relationship between the policies of the two states under study i.e. US and Pakistan in their respective elite English press. It is tried to explore that how the elite press of the two selected countries frames Pak-US relations in their editorials treatment and the study would help to understand that what kind of relationship are there between elite press and the foreign offices of the respective countries and how media frames certain issues and incidents in front of the public and the policy makers of their countries.

Methodology

The employed methodology for this study is content analysis. Sarantakos [14] states content analysis as a method of social research explaining that content analysis is a documentary method that aims at a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the content of the texts, pictures, films and other forms of verbal, visual or written form of communication.

Universe

All the editorials of The Washington Post and Daily Dawn which are related to the above mentioned A, B, C and D categories with reference to Pak-US relations, during June 2012 to December 2012 will be selected as the Universe for study.

Sampling

In this research the entire universe is considered as sample, as the editorials of the selected newspapers Washington Post and Daily Dawn are to be analyzed from June 2012 to December 2012.

Unit of analysis

In this study the unit of analysis is considered to be the words, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole editorial, which indicates the presence of one of the mentioned categories in both newspapers.

Time period

All the editorials of the above mentioned newspapers from June 2012 to December 2012 are used in this study.

Categories of analysis

Categories of the analysis are considered as the heart of the content analysis. Through the categories the collection of data becomes possible and easy.

- A. Pakistan's stance towards US Government and Political matters.
- B. America's stance towards US Government and Political matters.
- C. War on terror and Pak-US relations.
- D. Religion as a factor in Pak-US relations.

Directions of contents

The following directions are used to measure the contents used for the above mentioned categories.

Favorable

Any editorial is considered "Favorable" if its stance is positive about Pak-US relations.

Unfavorable

Any editorial is considered as "Unfavorable", which is negative in tone or its stance is negative about Pak-US relations.

Neutral

Any editorial is considered as neutral if the content of the editorial portrays indistinguishable emphasis of an issue or shows balance between both positive and negative arguments regarding Pak-US relations.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1 indicates the total number of editorials of the two newspapers Daily Dawn and Washington Post regarding Pak-US relations are 82 in number from June 2012 to December 2012, out of these editorials 29 are published in Washington Post that is 35.37% of the total whereas 53 are published in Daily Dawn which are 64.63% of the total.

Table 2 indicates the monthly and over all editorials of Washington Post and also show that how much editorials falls in each category A, B, C and D.

Washington Post has not published any editorial editorials regarding A category i.e. Pakistan's stance towards US Government and Political matters., 13 editorials are published relating to category B i.e. America's stance towards US Government and Political matters, 9 editorials are published regarding category C i.e. War on terror and

Pak-US relations. Whereas 7 editorials are published on category D that represents Religion as a factor in Pak-US relations.

In Table 3 there is 0% editorials in category "A", 44.83% in "B", 31.03% in "C" and 24.13% in "D". These categories are further divided into three directions positive, negative and neutral. In "A" there is 0% editorial in all directions. In "B" 30.76% editorials are positive, 46.15% in negative and 23.07% neutral directions. In category "C" 22.22% is positive, 55.55% negative and 22.22% neutral directions and in category "D" there is 28.57% in positive, 28.57% in negative direction and 42.85% in neutral direction.

Table 4 shows that Daily dawn has published 21 editorials regarding A category i.e. Pakistan's stance towards US Government and Political matters., no editorial is published relating to category B i.e. America's stance towards US Government and Political matters, 19 editorials are published regarding category C i.e. War on terror and Pak-US relations. Whereas 13 editorials are published on category D that represents Religion as a factor in Pak-US relations.

In Table 5 there is 39.62% editorials in category "A", 0% in "B", 35.84% in "C" and 24.52% in "D". These categories are further divided into three directions positive, negative and neutral. In "A" there is 23.80% editorial in positive, 47.61 in negative and 28.57% editorial in neutral direction. In "B" no editorial is given. In category "C" 21.05% is positive, 47.36% negative and 31.57% neutral directions and in category "D" there is 15.38% in positive, 61.53% in negative direction and 23.07% in neutral direction.

In Table 6 by comparing the editorials of both the selected newspapers following mentioned findings are observed.

The coverage of Washington Post from June 2012 to December 2012 indicates that there are 0% editorials in category "A", 13(44.83%) editorials in category "B", 9(31.03%) editorials in category "C" and 7(24.13%) editorials in category "D". these categories are further divided into three directions positive, negative and neutral. In "A" there are 0% editorials, In "B" 4(30.76%) editorials are positive, 6(46.15%) in negative and 3(23.07%) in neutral directions. In category "C" 2(22.22%) editorials are positive, 5(55.55%) is negative and 2(22.22%) in neutral directions in category "D" there are 2(28.57%) editorials are positive, 2(28.57%) is negative and 3(42.85%) editorials in neutral directions whereas Daily Dawn's coverage shows that there are 39.62% editorials in category "A", 0% editorials in category "B", 9(35.84%) editorials in category "C" these categories are further divided into three directions positive, negative and neutral. In "A" there are 5(23.80%) editorials in positive, 10(47.61%) in negative and 6(28.57%) in neutral directions. In "B" there is no editorial. In category "C" 4(21.05%) editorial is positive, 9(47.36%) is negative and 6(31.57%) in neutral directions where as in category "D" 2(15.38%) editorial is positive, 8(61.53%) is negative and 3(23.07%) in neutral direction.

The overall results shows that there are 21(25.60%) editorials in category "A", 13(15.85%) editorials in category "B", 28(34.14%) editorials in category "C" and 20(24.39%) in category "D" these categories are further divided into three directions positive, negative and neutral. In "A" there are 5(23.80%) editorials in positive, 10(47.61%) in negative and 6(28.57%) in neutral directions. In "B" 4(30.76%) editorials are positive, 6(46.15%) in negative and 3(23.07%) in neutral directions. In category "C" 6(21.42%) editorial is positive, 14(50%) is negative and 8(28.57%) in neutral directions. In category "D" there are 4(20%) editorial is positive, 10(50%) is negative and 6(30%) in neutral directions.

Newspaper	Daily Dawn	Washington Post
Percentage	64.63%	35.37%
Number of Editorials	53	29

Table 1: Percentage of Total Editorials of Washington Post and Daily Dawn June 2012-December 2012.

Month	Category			
	A	B	C	D
June	0	2	1	1
July	0	1	2	0
August	0	2	1	0
September	0	1	2	1
October	0	3	1	2
November	0	2	1	2
December	0	2	1	1
Total	0	13	9	7

Table 2: Editorials of Washington Post from June 2012-December 2012.

Category	A			B			C			D		
Percentage	0			44.83			31.03			24.13		
Direction	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral
No. of Editorials	0	0	0	4	6	3	2	5	2	2	2	3
Percentage	0	0	0	30.76	46.15	23.07	22.22	55.55	22.22	28.57	28.57	42.85

Table 3: Categories and Directions of Editorials of Washington Post from June 2012-December 2012.

Month	Category			
	A	B	C	D
June	2	0	3	1
July	4	0	3	0
August	3	0	2	1
September	2	0	4	2
October	3	0	2	4
November	2	0	2	3
December	5	0	3	2
Total	21	0	19	13

Table 4: Editorials of Daily Dawn from June 2012-December 2012.

Category	A			B			C			D		
Percentage	39.62			0			35.84			24.52		
Direction	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral
No. of Editorials	5	10	6	0	0	0	4	9	6	2	8	3
Percentage	23.80	47.61	28.57	0	0	0	21.05	47.36	31.57	15.38	61.53	23.07

Table 5: Categories and directions of editorials of Daily Dawn from June 2012-December 2012.

Category	A			B			C			D		
Directions	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Editorials in Washington Post	0	0	0	4	6	3	2	5	2	2	2	3
Editorials in Daily Dawn	5	10	6	0	0	0	4	9	6	2	8	3
Editorials in a Direction	5	10	6	4	6	3	6	14	8	4	10	6
Editorials in a Category	21			13			28			20		

Table 6: Comparison between the categories and Directions of both Washington Post and Daily Dawn from June 2012 to December 2012.

The table shows that issue “C” i.e. War on terror and Pak-US relations is mostly discussed the issue “A” i.e. Pakistan’s stance towards US Government and Political matters is given coverage after issue “C” then issue “D” i.e. Religion as a factor in Pak-US relations is given and at the end issue “B” i.e. America’s stance towards US Government and Political matters is covered. The study also shows that that Daily Dawn has shown a greater concern regarding the issues mentioned than the Washington Post. The study of the editorials of Daily Dawn shows that it has mostly shown unsatisfied behavior while covering Pakistan’s foreign policy regarding Pak-Afghan relations, here the neutral and positive coverage is also given but that is not more than the unsatisfied behavior. The whole study shows that the US press has also shown unsatisfied regarding the issues discussed.

Findings of hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

Terrorism issue is mostly covered by both Pakistani and US press.

Finding:

Yes, terrorism issue is mostly covered by both Pakistani and US press so the study proves hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2

Pakistani press has shown negative stance mostly regarding Pak-

US relations.

Finding:

Yes, Pakistani press has shown negative stance mostly regarding Pak-US relations so hypothesis 2 is proved.

Hypothesis 3

Pakistani press has given more coverage to Pak-US relations than the US press.

Finding:

Yes, Pakistani press has given more coverage to Pak-US relations than the US press so hypothesis 3 is proved by the study.

Discussion

This study shows that the Pak-US relation during Raja Pervaiz Ashraf’s regime is well covered by the national press of both the countries from June 2012 to December 2012. This study is actually an effort to know about the foreign policy relationships of Pakistan and the United States of America as the Prime Minister of Pakistan was changed in June 2012 and the US presidential elections where President Barack Obama secured second term in office in US are the major incidents that occurred during the selected time period so it was necessary to study the portrayal of Pak-US relations during the selected

time period. In this study two elite English newspapers Washington Post and Daily Dawn were used for the study, one from US and other from Pakistan are selected respectively from June 2012 to December 2012 during which a number of important events occurred in Pakistan and America's relations. The study conclude that Washington Post and Daily Dawn both the newspapers has shown greater percentage of unsatisfied behavior and the study reveals that media of both the countries has portrayed the issues by covering the concerns of the people of their respective states. Daily Dawn has highly criticized the government's policies towards the United States and has addressed the issues such as terrorism, drone attacks in Pakistan and US's invasion in Pakistani territories and Blasphemous movie that was made in United States were having greater concerns. The Washington Post also criticized the US government policies towards Pakistan on various issues such as aid to Pakistan, blockage of NATO Supply by Pakistan and was also critical on the attacks on Malala Yousafzai a Pakistani girl targeted by the extremists in Pakistan. Overall study shows that media of both the countries have not shown satisfied behavior towards their respective governments and their foreign policies as well. So, the study concludes that media of both Pakistan and US freely criticized the governmental policies of their respective country regarding Pak-US relations.

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