

## Examining Print Media Agenda and Newspaper Readers' Agenda on International Relations' Issues of Pakistan

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### Abstract

*This study analyzes the relation between print media agenda and newspaper readers' agenda on International Relations issues of Pakistan of one year i.e. from June 2018 till June 2019. The objective is to examine the print media agenda and newspaper readers' agenda on International Relations issues of Pakistan with US. Purposive sampling method adopted for survey of 150 sample size and content analysis of two newspapers. Variables of this research were salience of issues and rank order. Statistical test, Spearman rank order correlation applied to find out the relation between print media and newspapers readers' agenda. Findings revealed that hypothesis is not supported.*

**Key Words:** International Relations Issues of Pakistan, Newspaper Readers' Agenda, Pak-US Relations, Print Media Agenda

### Introduction

The research article titled, "Examining print media agenda and newspaper readers' agenda on International relations' issues of Pakistan" found the relation of print media agenda and newspaper readers' agenda on International Relations of Pakistan with United States of America issue for the period of one year that is from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018 till 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019. As Anton and Yao reviewed in "Delay as Agenda Setting" (2012) mentioned 950 studies measuring the effect of media on audience regarding media's ability of making and breaking opinion of public at the same time (p.43). Abideen described that agenda setting studies are related with pre and post-election opinion of public and covering environmental issues whereas very few studies are available on International Relations related issues (Abideen, 2010, p. 14).

Walgrave and Aelst pointed out the political agenda setting power of media that how media focus on issues to increase the political attention of people (2004, p.1). Wolfe, Jones and Bumgartner (2013) exclaimed that there is a disconnect between media and audience in specialized issue like International Relations in the developing countries as International Relations is considered the central part of political science discipline. In Pakistan such issue is needed to be explored.

Therefore this article is produced to find if the relation exists between print media agenda and newspaper readers' agenda on Pak-US International Relations issues where survey is conducted to find the readers agenda and content analysis of two newspapers found the print media agenda for the period of one year (Jan 2018-Jan 2019).

**About the Newspapers of the Study:** 1941 DAWN as a weekly then daily newspaper in 1942, is published under the umbrella of Pakistan Herald Publications. Later in 1942 became a daily one. The political alignment is liberal, centrist and

progressive. Its weekly circulation was 139,999 copies in 2017 (DAWN Newspaper, 2018). The other newspaper is daily The News International of Jang group's publication. It follows moderate political alignment and weekly circulation of 140,000 in year 2017 (Media of Pakistan, 2018).

**Pak-US International Relations:** Pakistan had stable relations with US since its founded due to utmost financial support to Pak Military (Rahman,1982). Then turned into strained one after 9/11(Kux, 2001).The following three major issue needed to be discussed as Pakistan is combating war on terrorism since 9/11 (MoFA, 2015b).

**Aid-release Policy:** Aid-release policy means Pak-US collectively fighting terrorism to avoid suspension of all aids to Pakistan.Declan (2008)US Congress agreed to provide the military and economic aid of 18 billion dollars but received 8.647 billion dollars. Rohde claimed that more or less 70% of the aid used to cover the civilian deficit in the years of 2002 and 2007 (2007). President Barak Obama in October promised 5.7 billion US dollars from 2009 to 2014 to support terrorist or for nuclear proliferation or to pay for the attacks in the neighboring countries. Pakistan continued to fight against terrorism to avoid suspension of US aid (Timeline of U.S. Aid to Pakistan, 2009).

**Elimination of Terrorists' Organizations:**Elimination of Terrorists' Organizations is to abolish terrorists' organizations from Pakistan. Amin (2009) discussed the distrust existed between both countries but on war on terror both countries were on the same page. After 2011, Osama Bin Laden affected Pak-US relation. United States cut down aid to Pakistan of \$20 billion as assistance and military reimbursements since 2001. Amin viewed that the center of International Relations was badly affected the both countries when people of Pakistan developed anti American sentiments due to internal displacement of Waziristan operation and other operations and drone attacks as well.

**Reconciliation Peace Process:**Reconciliation Peace Process is related with the Pakistan's role in the reconciliation process for establishing peace in Afghanistan.According to Sadiq (2010), after 9/11 as discussed before Pakistan has fought the war of US and enjoyed large amount of foreign aid as well. As the Russian troops withdrawn from Afghanistan, US lost interest in Afghanistan but new players entered into this conflict. Sial (2011) debated that after the Afghan Policy in 2015, Islamabad and Kabul agreed to stabilize the situation in both countries to manage the political, socio-economic and regional interests. Pakistan took serious action to halt the India's activities in Afghanistan and blame game was reverted.As a credible country, Pakistan gave priority to reconciliation with Afghanistan. Mahan (2003,p. 106) expressed that peace is the priority for Reconciliation Peace Process.

## **Literature Review**

Walter Lipmann's debate on "The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads" provided researchers an avenue to work on agenda setting theory. The behavior is a result of perceived reality that is created by media (1922, p. 29). Cohen's gate keeping that controlled the content concluded from what to think to how to think about an issue(1963, p.609).McCombs and Shaw formally called Cohen's

phenomenon as agenda setting theory (Aruguete, 2017, p.28). McCombs and Shaw's Panel study of interviewing Chapel Hill voters in 1968 elections times in New Hampshire, Indiana and Illinois voters nine times resulted that there is correlation between TV and voters +.63, whereas the relation between newspapers and the audience agenda was +.34 (1972, pp. 176,187). McCombs (2002) examined that heightened issue become important for the viewers that result in learning process (p. 1–18). McCombs and Shaw (1972) focused on transferring of an issue from media to the audience (pp.176-187). Coleman, McCombs, Shaw and Weaver (2009) revealed that important issues of media become important for viewers (p. 147). McCombs and Llamas (1997, p.703) found two tones that is substantive or ideological and second is affective tone i.e. positive, negative and neutral calling second level agenda. Causal relationship observed between attribute agenda and audience opinion about political candidature (1999, pp. 416-417). Kim and McCombs (2007, p.299) found that audience rank issues, the way they are covered. Coleman and Banning (2006) focused on the way characteristics of issue are described rather than what issue is described (p.313). Wu and Coleman (2009, p.775) discussed the characteristics have stronger effect on readers than giving importance to issues.

Funkhouser, (1973) substantial relationship exists between agenda of media and agenda of audience (p.533). Moreover, Palmgreen and Clark (1977) analyzed role of agenda setting of media about national and local problems. The research revealed that the influence on local level is very weak but impactful at the national level (p.435).

Ghanem and Wanta (2006, p.277) explored Hispanic Cable News that “exposure” is most effecting determining factor in setting the agenda than the reliance and credibility. McCombs, Lopez-Escobar and Llamas (2000) described that the agenda of attributes of “What to Think About” to “How to Think About an Object” (p.77).

Dunn (2009) argued about media has power to alter perception of people. This theory investigated the influence of media on opinion making of audience (p.635). According to Kim and McCombs (2007, p.299) agenda setting transferred important issue from news agenda to the audience. Simon (2010) revealed that there is strong relationship of media agenda i.e. election campaign and political partisanship and audience opinion. Golan and Wanta (2001) found affective characteristics of advertisement of Kerry's and audience opinion of issues. Moreover, positive negative or neutral tone shaped the opinions of the public about the news attributes.

Brubaker (2008) revealed that TV newspaper readers, Internet users, and audience have same agendas but that are different from the media agenda. Hence, media do not set the audience agenda. Coleman and Wu A in 2<sup>nd</sup> level agenda setting separating affective and substantive dimension (2010, p.327).

A research on media attribute agenda setting on political opinions of Iraq by Muddiman, Stroud and McCombs (2014) revealed that newspaper readers of are influenced by one news and have different perception than the two newspaper reader. Cohen in 1963 revealed in his book “The Press and Foreign Policy” that media might not succeed to tell the audience what issue to think about, but it succeed to tell the

audience how to think about an issue. A multi-national agenda-setting test" by Maetan, (2000) revealed that the international intermediary influence intermediary agenda setting and give new way to look into the issues. In the experimental research design, Wanta, Golan and Lee (2004, p.364) revealed coverage is more negative led to negative perception in Americans about other nations.

In longitudinal study on agenda setting by Harris, Fury and Lock (2006) on Greek European election in 1999, examined the relation between media and audience agenda is not substantiated.

### **Research Questions**

RQ1: To what extent relation exists between print media agenda and newspaper readers' agenda on International Relations issues of Pakistan with US.

RQ1a: To what extent relation exists between print media coverage and the newspaper readers' agenda on Aid-release policy

RQ1b: To what extent relation exists between print media agenda and the newspaper readers' agenda on Elimination of Terrorists' Organizations.

RQ1c: To what extent relation exists between print media agenda and newspaper readers' agenda on Reconciliation Peace Process.

### **Hypotheses**

H1: More print media coverage of International Relations issues of Pakistan with US, more it becomes important for the newspaper readers.

H1a. More print media coverage given to Aid-release policy, more it becomes important for the newspaper readers.

H1b. More print media coverage given to Elimination of Terrorists' Organizations, more it becomes important for the newspaper readers.

H1c. More print media coverage given to Reconciliation peace process, more it becomes important for the newspaper readers.

### **Material and Methods**

This study titled, "Examining print media agenda and newspaper readers' agenda on International relations' issues of Pakistan" found the relation of the print media agenda and the newspaper readers' agenda on International Relations of Pakistan with United States of America in respect of International Relations issues for the period of one year that is from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018 till 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019. In this study, content analysis of two leading newspapers and survey of professionals were conducted.

## Research Design

Quantitative content analysis and Survey carried out on categorized issues.

## Content Analysis of Newspapers

Two newspapers of highest circulation were selected of period from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018 till 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019 purposively related to Pak-US issues.

## Sampling and Sample Size

Sample of content analysis of the newspaper comprised of the columns and editorials of DAWN and The News International on categorized issues of Pak-US relations from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018 till 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019. For Survey, of 150 respondents selected purposively. The detail of sample is given below;

Respondents from each newspaper readers that are DAWN and The News International were selected for survey. Associate, Assistant professors, PhD Scholars of Departments of Mass Communication Department of four public / HEC recognized universities that were, International Islamic University and Allama Iqbal Open University.

## Data Collection

Editorials and columns of DAWN and The News International selected from Lexis-nexus. For survey, structured questionnaire administered through telephonic contact and by in person visits.

## Results and Discussion

### Salience and Rank Order of International Relations' Issues of Pakistan with US in Newspapers Content

In total 160 (N=160) editorials and Columns published in both newspapers. Rank order of the issues related to Pak-US relations. Whereas for salience of issues with the rating scale of 1 to 5 was signed with percentage was assigned 50% Urgent and Important ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, 20%-49% Important and ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>, 10%-19% least important and ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Table 1**  
**Salience and Rank Order of International Relations Issues in Both Newspaper**

Pak-US Issues	Newspapers		Number of Words	Frequency	Salience of Issue of Scale	Rank Order
	Editorials	Columns				
Elimination of Terrorists'	46	49	101670	95 (59.4%)	5	1 <sup>st</sup>
Reconciliation Peace Process Organizations	17	18	36110	35 (21.8%)	3	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Aid-release policy	10	20	28460	30 (18.8%)	1	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Total	7387		166240	160(100%)		

## **Salience and Rank Order of International Relations Issues of Pakistan of Both Newspaper**

Both The newspaper DAWN and The News International comprised of total number of words 166240. Total 95 editorial and columns written on Elimination of Terrorists' Organizations comprising of 101670 words. It is ranked at 1<sup>st</sup>. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ranked issue is Reconciliation Peace Process comprised of words 36110 and coverage given by both newspapers were 35 editorials and columns. Aid-release policy comprised of 28460 words and ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> due to less coverage of 30(18.8%).

### **Analysis of Survey**

Questionnaire was developed and 150 respondent of DAWN and The NEWS International and Both readers were selected to rank the issues.

**Table 2**  
**Rank Order of newspaper readers on International Relations Issues of Pakistan with US**

<b>Pak-US Issues</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Rank Order</b>
Reconciliation Peace Process	(59%)	1 <sup>st</sup>
Aid-release policy	(39%)	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Elimination of Terrorists' Organizations	(2%)	3 <sup>rd</sup>

According to data collected from respondents the ranking of issues showed that Reconciliation Peace Process is urgent and important that is 59% of the total respondents and ranked 1<sup>st</sup>. Aid-release policy is considered as important only that is 39% and ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>. Elimination of Terrorists' Organizations is an issue which is least concerned of respondents comprised of 2% only and ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> as least important.

**Table 3**  
**Rank Order of Newspapers and Newspaper Readers**

<b>S.No</b>	<b>Content Categorization</b>	<b>Rank Oder Respondents (Survey)</b>	<b>Rank Order Newspapers Content</b>
1	Aid-release policy	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
2	Elimination of Terrorists' Organizations	3 <sup>rd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>
3	Reconciliation Peace Process	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>

Respondents of the survey revealed that Reconciliation Peace Process is the most urgent and important of all and ranked 1<sup>st</sup>. The analysis of newspaper content revealed that Elimination of Terrorists' Organizations is urgent and important issue and ranked 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Findings of Hypotheses of the Study**

Hypothesis tested by applying Spearman's Rank Order Correlation.

RQ1: To what extent relation exists between print media agenda and newspaper readers' agenda on International Relations issues of Pakistan with US.

H1: More print media coverage of International Relations issues of Pakistan with US, more it becomes important for the newspaper readers.

Researcher examined the H1 by applying Spearman rank order correlation through SPSS to find out the correlation between media agenda on International Relations of Pakistan with audience agenda on the same issues. It has been analyzed that hypothesis is not supported.

RQ1a: To what extent relation exists between print media coverage and the newspaper readers' agenda on Aid-release policy

H1a. More print media coverage given to Aid-release policy, more it becomes important for the newspaper readers.

Correlation between print media agenda and newspaper readers' agenda on Aid-release policy issue is  $r_s = .251$ ;  $P = .571$  which is not significant. So, hypothesis of setting the agenda by the print media on International Relations of Pakistan related issues and its influence on the newspaper readers, is not supported.

RQ1b: To what extent relation exists between print media agenda and the newspaper readers' agenda on Elimination of Terrorists' Organizations.

H1b. More print media coverage given to Elimination of Terrorists' Organizations, more it becomes important for the newspaper readers.

The strength of relationship is weak negative in H1b. Correlation between media agenda and audience agenda on Elimination of Terrorists' Organizations issues is  $r_s = .171$ ;  $P = .671$  which is not significant. Hence, hypothesis of setting the agenda by the print media on Elimination of Terrorists' Organizations issues and its influence on the newspaper readers' agenda, is not supported.

RQ1c: To what extent relation exists between print media agenda and newspaper readers' agenda on Reconciliation Peace Process.

H1c. More print media coverage given to Reconciliation peace process, more it becomes important for the newspaper readers.

The strength of relationship is strong positive in H1c. Correlation between media agenda and audience agenda on Reconciliation Peace Process is  $r_s = .431$ ;  $P = .505$ , which is not significant. Hence, hypothesis of setting the agenda by the print media on International Relations issue of Pakistan and its influence on the intellectual audience, is not supported.

**Table 4**  
**Spearman's Rank Order Correlation**

Sub-Hypotheses	Spearman's Rho ( $r_s$ ) Correlation Coefficient ( $r_s$ )	Sig. (2-tailed) (P)	Hypothesis Supported/Not Supported
H1b: More print media coverage given to Elimination of Terrorists' Organizations, more it becomes important for the newspaper readers.	rs= .171	P=.671	Correlation is not Significant.  Hypothesis not Supported
H1c: More print media coverage given to Reconciliation peace process, more it becomes important for the newspaper readers.	rs=.431	P=.505	Correlation is Significant. Hypothesis not Supported

## Discussion

Hypothesis H1 strengthens the hypothesis of Harris, Fury and Lock revealed that strength of association is moderate and relation between media agenda and audience agenda is not substantiated (2006, p.4).

It has been revealed from the findings of H1 of this study, that print media agenda and newspaper readers' agenda hypothesis is not supported. In H1a, H1b and H1c of the study strengthen Muddiman, Stroud and McCombs, 2014 hypothesis of inconsistent effect of media and audience.

The reason for not being significant is that respondents of survey are Academicians having sound opinion about the issues and the influence of print media agenda was had no effect. It is an important finding of the study that Academicians are not significantly influenced by media agenda in Pakistan. Media of Pakistan is considered as propagandist version so academicians find their way towards the other sources of information. These sources of information are not only print, electronic or socialization. They have theoretical and practical knowledge and critically analyze the information given by the media. Therefore, they prefer and are convinced whatever they process in their mind as a separate entity.

## Conclusion

It has been concluded that print media agenda and newspaper readers' agenda on International Relations issues of Pakistan are not influencing each other. Media has limited effect on audience. Issue ranked by both are different. In present era, where number of sources of information are available for the respondents to seek and authenticate information. Readers of newspapers are not print media dependent anymore.



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