

Image of India and Pakistan in Digital Age: A Comparative Study on Tweets of International News Agencies

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Abstract

Pakistan and India are two important South Asian neighboring countries equipped with nuclear capabilities. Unfortunately, the checkered bilateral foreign relations history is hostile and both countries have been fought four conventional wars since 1947. Mass media plays a significant role in shaping international relations and it is considered important to study the image of nations and states to assess international standing of a nation. In present study, we explored and compare the image of Pakistan and India in the representation of tweets of international news agencies. Methodologically, we used content analysis and network analysis techniques to find out the country-issue networks in news tweets. We have designated tweets of four major news agencies; Reuters, Agence France Press, Associated Press and Xinhua related to Pakistan and India for the duration of 7 years (from 2010-2016). We found that India and Pakistan are being covered negatively in news tweets of these news agencies. However, Pakistan's image seems more negative through lens of international news agencies as compare to India in terms of peace and conflict issues coverage. Both countries should take steps and formulate vibrant policy towards creation and dissemination of their positive image on digital media.

Keywords: *Image theory, India image, Pakistan Image, news tweets, international news agencies, social network analysis.*

1. Introduction

In this age of information and communication, digital media considered an alternative arena for international relations and nation image building across national to nation as well as people to people. The increasing importance of the digital image building and dissemination power of cyber media attracted huge attention from communication scholars. Study of perceived images of world nations remains a key area of research for international relations and international communication scholarship. The interest of images studies can be traced back to 1950s and 1960

where general interest in psycho-attitudinal investigation led to political psychology of international relations (Feklyunina, 2010). According to recent investigative report published by BBC from EU Disinfor Lab, a Brussels-based NGO, there are coordinated network of 265 pro-Indian websites operating across 65 countries. These websites are meant to propagate fake propaganda about Pakistan aiming at distorting international image as well as to target decision makers in Europe against Pakistan (Carmichael & Hussain, 2019). The political psychology of perceived images gained attention of international communication scholars and they worked to explore the relationships among the images of nations and their perceived importance in the mind of international audience (Herrmann & Fischerkeller, 1995). As Alexander, Levin, and Henry (2005) emphasized image of foreign nations influence by the individuals social identity and social dominance. Segbers, Dyllick-Brenzinger, Hoffmann, and Mauersberger (2006) also stated that interaction has a social dimension. The relations between social groups are considered as important as diplomatic relation among states and governments.

Image theory is aimed to comprehend and develop an insight into the international relations. It is a model of 'strategic decision making' in that ideas about global actors are shaped into collective schemas, or perceptions, with thoughts and principles regarding the other's purposes, leadership, and primary characteristics. Image scholarship is meant to interpret the cognitive perceptions, the relations, images, and planned responses linked with the perceptions, stereotypes associated to other nations, explains reaction of a nation to or treatment towards other nation (Erişen, 2012).

International relations theory provides a set of assumptions for this psychological theory that propose perceived strategic associations can be considered as a meaning of supposed virtual power, nation, and the risk or opening that a subject believes another actor has (Herrmann, Voss, Schooler, & Ciarrochi, 1997). Similarly, role of international media cannot be undermined in creating and shaping the images of global nations in this digital world. Media outlets are being consumed as major source of information and impression about politics across the globe (Williams, 2018). So the present paper aims to study and compare the images of India and Pakistan in international communication.

1.1 Indo-Pak Relations

The partition of subcontinent in 1947 resulted in the emergence of two nation states i.e., Pakistan and India. The partition was done based on religion as Indian were considered as a Hindu-majority nation while Pakistan was proposed by its father, Mr. Jinnah, to be the living paradise for Muslims to practice their lives according to the teachings of Islam (Tremblay, 2009). India and Pakistan are neighboring countries and both have many shared things including life style and geographical boundaries. At the same time, there is a dispute exist between both countries that is “Kashmir Dispute”.

Kashmir dispute is considered as a bone of contention between two countries. Pakistan holds that as the partition was done on the basis of Muslim and Hindu majority, hence, the Kashmir should legitimately be a part Pakistan while India considers Kashmir as its part. “Pakistan has dependably mentioned that India direct the UN-requested plebiscite, an interest that India won't. India say Kashmir is authentically a piece of its land on the plea that lord decided to agree with India after its parcel. Another note worthy inspiration behind why India won't surrender Kashmir is help to different areas in India that requirement to sever from the Indian federation (Cohen, 2003)

The world is considered Kashmir as a nuclear flash point among two independent nations as both have been fought three times over Kashmir. In the last two decades the world has seen a lot of political and borders conflicts between two countries and violence which has one of the focal points of tense relations between the two. It is of great concern that despite several efforts of settling Kashmir issue have been made but no concrete outcome is received in this regard. Kashmir issue lead to severe tension among both the countries and it is one the biggest issue that hinders the normalization of bilateral relations. “Three full-fledged wars 1947, 1965,1971 and1999 were fought between two countries(Schofield, 2010).

Other than Kashmir, both nations often alleged one another for cross border terrorism. They are also hostile in economic cooperation. Pakistan alleged India that he is trying to sabotage China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which is a game changer program for Pakistan. Moreover, both nations have also closed their borders for trade. After the recent movement of India on Kashmir, revocation of Article 370 and 57, the relations has become more critical. Continuous ceasefire violations are being observed between two countries.

1.2 Twitter and International News Agencies

Social and digital media has altogether changed the journalism creating and consuming patterns of the people (Griessner, 2012; Kulshmanov & Ishanova, 2014). The world news agencies always keen and at their toes to report and disseminate of information (Ambrogi-Yanson, 2010; Bielsa, 2008; Dergisi, 1996; MacGregor, 2013; Ray & Dutta, 2014; Stover & Anawalt, 1983). With the inception of digital communication and sophisticated information technologies, the business of global news agencies like propagation and opinion making has been modified. Now, these agencies have an opportunity of direct contact with the audience as well as including features like multilingual texts, online news, multimediality, multi-channel availability. The increasing number of subscribers have changed qualitative characteristics significantly of these news agencies (Kulshmanov & Ishanova, 2014). Present study will explore the activities of international news agencies about the coverage of Pakistan and India on interactive platform of Twitter.

Present study aimed to highlight the global news agencies coverage pattern of Pakistan and India on twitter. The study examined the sharing and liking of news tweets by their followers as well. As media's content is considered as the major part of Media's policy and they are playing a vital role in making and restructuring the public opinions, hence, it seems important to highlight and compare the media's coverage related to Pakistan and India especially under changing world political order and emergence of South Asia as hub of world trade. Moreover, the study also aimed to comparatively analyze the coverage of four international news agencies about India and Pakistan.

1.3 Objectives

Followings are the major objectives of this research project:

- 1) To study the coverage of India and Pakistan in tweets of global news agencies.
- 2) To compare the portrayal of India and Pakistan in tweets of international news agencies.
- 3) To highlight the significant issues of India and Pakistan which are being discussed by International news agencies.
- 4) To compare the image of India and Pakistan in tweets of global news agencies.
- 5) To highlight the liking and sharing of India and Pakistan through the tweets.

1.4 Research Questions

Following research questions were formulated.

RQ1: To what extent India and Pakistan are being covered in tweets international news agencies?

RQ2: How are India and Pakistan being covered in the given tweets of these news agencies?

RQ3: Which issues are being associated with Pakistan and India in tweets of news agencies?

RQ4: Is there any difference in image construction of India and Pakistan by global news agencies on Twitter?

RQ5: Is there any difference in liking and sharing of India and Pakistan by the users of these news agencies?

2. Methodology

We used social network analysis to study images of India and Pakistan. There are several studies found social network analysis as an effective methodology in international communication research (Barberá et al., 2015; Kick, McKinney, McDonald, & Jorgenson, 2011; Kim & Barnett, 1996). We have conducted content analysis and then data was prepared to matrix data. Descriptive and parametric tests were used to study and compare the image of India and Pakistan.

2.1. Social Network Analysis

Interpersonal organization investigation depends on a suspicion of the significance of connections among communicating units (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Socially applicable nodes associated by single or supplementary relations can be called as a social network. "Network members , are the components that are connected by the relations whose patterns we analyze"(Marin & Wellman, 2011). These units are most commonly persons, organizations, and in international context, states, nations etc. We are living in the age of highly interconnected network society. Network studies are important to understand power of networks. Therefore, social network analysis approaches seem helpful for identifying and comparing the images of India and Pakistan.

2.2. Content Analysis

Population of study was tweets of news agencies. Sample includes twitter accounts of four global news agencies; the Associated Press, Reuters, Agence France Presse and Xinhua of China. These news agencies completely dominate the international news industry (MacGregor, 2013; Stover & Anawalt, 1983). Furthermore, it is argued that a message (tweet) and social interaction (retweet) among users placed Twitter better of other so news sources. The tweets were coded for the period

of seven years from 1-1-2010 to 31-12-2016. Unit of analysis was the Tweet mentioning the name of India or Pakistan.

2.3. Issues

Based on previous literature, we selected and categorized news issues in 10 categories. These are; peace & conflict, Human Rights, democracy & politics, environment & disasters, foreign relations, trade & economy, science & technology, sports & culture, entertainment & human interest, and defense & strategic (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Kim & Barnett, 1996; Ottosen, 2010; Sacco & Bossio, 2015). (See annexure -1 for coding instructions and definitions).

2.4. Replies, Favorites, Re-tweets and Shared Portrayal

Due to quantitative analysis, we only calculated several retweets, responses, and preferences. We also calculated the shared portrayal of tweets. As it is noted that retweet amplify the information of world news agencies. This is claimed that positive tweet for a country by news agencies and subsequently the information is retweeted further by the followers then shared impression and shared representation will also add-on in positive course. On the other hand, if an international news organization investigation depends on a suspicion of the significance of connections among communicating units, so we have designed a method to map shared representation as follows:

Shared representation = Valence x (# of Replies + # of Retweets + # of favorites)

Valence means the depiction of country-issue organization. Which is esteemed as (+1, 0, and- 1). Common depiction was determined by utilizing SPSS and putting factors above characterized equation.

3. Findings

Findings revealed significant variances in reporting of India and Pakistan in tweets of news organizations. India was tweeted more as compared to the Pakistan by international news agencies (Table 1). Moreover, AFP and Xinhua gave more coverage to India as compare to the AP and Reuters (Table 1). In this equation, we can shape an argument that Chinese news agency is covering India more, although China and Pakistan are considered as economic allies. On the other side, American and British news agencies are considering Pakistan more important as compare to the Francis and Chinese news agencies on twitter. Hence, findings support to answer RQ1 of study that India is being covered more in tweets of news organizations, however, AP and Reuters are giving more reporting to Pakistan.

Table 1 *Coverage of India and Pakistan 2010-16*

		Country Name		Total
		Pakistan	India	
News-Agency	AFP	723	813	1536
	AP	415	400	815
	Reuters	502	460	962
	Xinhua	152	286	438
Total		1792	1959	3751

Note: $df=3$, $X^2=41.02$, $p=.01$

Further it is found that there are significant variations in portrayal of Pakistan in the tweets (Table 2). AFP, AP and Reuters are covering Pakistan negatively. These agencies are propagating the negativity about Pakistan in their tweets. Chinese Xinhua is covering Pakistan positively (Table 2). Chinese agency is attempting to spread positivity about Pakistan. So, here we can argue that China is investing in Pakistan in number of economic ventures especially after materialization of the CPEC, hence, it is being covered positively in tweets of Xinhua.

Table 2. *Portrayal of Pakistan in tweets 2010-16*

		News Agency				Total
		AFP	AP	Reuters	Xinhua	
Portrayal of the Country	Negative	433	335	302	36	1106
	Neutral	163	39	40	4	246
	Positive	127	41	160	112	440
Total		723	415	502	152	1792

Note: $df=6$, $X^2=344.03$, $p=.01$

On the other side, Table 3 reveals that India is also being covered negatively by the French and American news agencies in their tweets. However, Reuters coverage is almost balanced about India (Table 3). Interestingly, we find that on contrary to Pakistan, Xinhua is covering India negatively. In this way, we find answer RQ2 that AFP, AP and Reuters are covering Pakistan negatively, and Xinhua is covering Pakistan positively. On the other hand, AFP and AP also covering India negatively however coverage is balanced in case of Reuters and negative in case of Xinhua.

Table 3 *Portrayal of India in tweets: 2010-16*

		News-Agency				Total
		AFP	AP	Reuters	Xinhua	
Portrayal	Negative	378	251	196	90	915
	Neutral	316	63	66	15	460
	Positive	119	86	198	181	584
Total		813	400	460	286	1959

Note: $df=6$, $X^2=393.52$, $p=.01$

We also find that international news agencies are discussing the issues of peace & conflicts, Human rights and foreign relations about Pakistan (Table 4). However, the peace and conflict issue is associated highly negative with Pakistan (Table 4). It indicates that Pakistan is covered negatively due to the presence of terrorism and other violent conflicts in Pakistan. Moreover, human rights violations are also being associated negatively with Pakistan. Coverage of foreign relations of Pakistan is almost balanced in the tweets.

Table 4 *News Issues Associated with Pakistan in Tweets 2010-16*

		Portrayal			Total
		Negative	Neutral	Positive	
Determining issue of News Tweet	Peace & Conflict	491	20	87	598
	Human Rights	189	12	47	248
	Democracy & Politics	120	25	49	194
	Environment & Disasters	87	11	6	104
	Foreign Relations	104	5	110	219
	Trade & Economy	12	4	32	48
	Science & Technology	10	5	8	23
	Sports & Culture	3	18	9	30
	Entertainment & Human Interest	9	146	36	191
	Defense & Security	81	0	56	137
Total		1106	246	440	1792

On the other hand, Indian image is presented in diverse manner by international news agencies. India is highly associated with human rights issue in negative tone (Table 5). Therefore, it indicates that India is covered more due to the human rights violations in India, specifically due to the sexual abuse, gang rapes in India. India is also being associated with entertainment and human-interest stories. These stories tend to create neutral image of India and these were also

presented in neutral tone by international news agencies (Table 5). Indian foreign relations are also being covered in tweets and this coverage is mostly positive in tone (Table 5). Hence, Table 4 & 5 provide support to answer RQ3.

Table 5 News Issues Associated With India in Tweets 2010-16

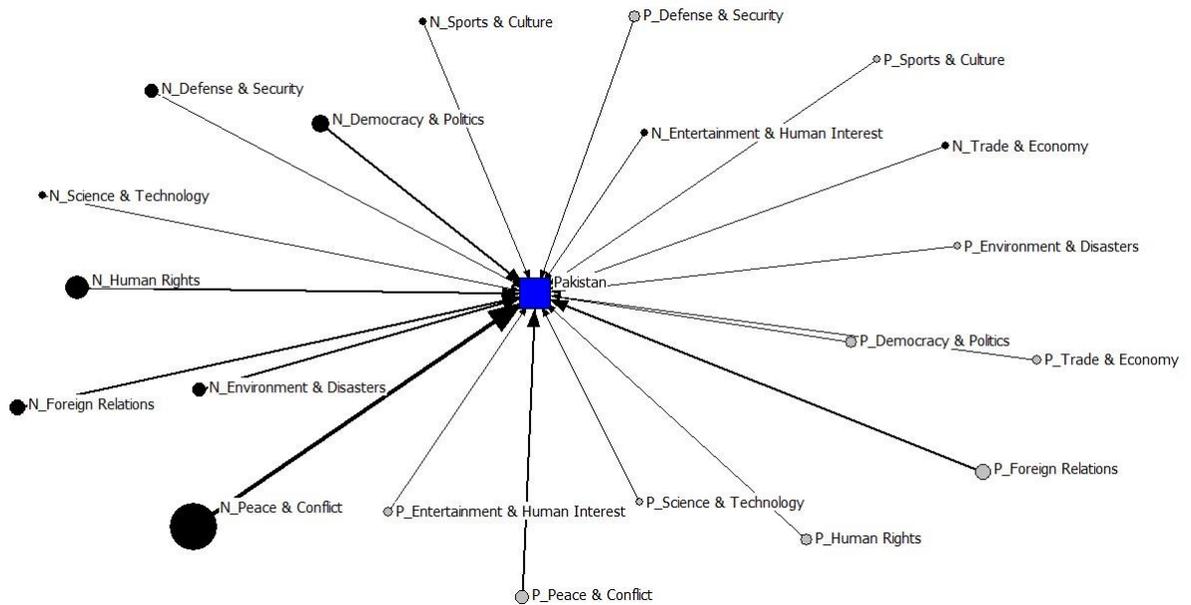
		Portrayal			Total
		Negative	Neutral	Positive	
Determining issue of News Tweet	Peace & Conflict	142	10	28	180
	Human Rights	356	6	36	398
	Democracy & Politics	65	39	57	161
	Environment & Disasters	160	20	20	200
	Foreign Relations	77	19	144	240
	Trade & Economy	32	10	68	110
	Science & Technology	30	13	74	117
	Sports & Culture	19	37	42	98
	Entertainment & Human Interest	9	297	60	366
	Defense & Security	25	9	55	89
Total		915	460	584	1959

Further this study highlights the image of Pakistan (Figure 1) and India (Figure 2) by using network analysis software of UCINET. Image theories of international relations argue that the state or individuals' identity should not be viewed in isolation (Alexander et al., 2005; Feklyunina, 2010). International audience creates the image of foreign nations or states according to the cognitive associations of issues and attributes of those nations (Erişen, 2012; Herrmann & Fischerkeller, 1995) and media contribute significantly in providing, shaping and constructing those attributes and connotations (Alexander et al., 2005; Avraham & Ketter, 2016; Giffard & Rivenburgh, 2000; Kunczik, 2002; Williams, 2018). In this way, it is argued that media and international communication plays a central role in the image construction of world nations and states.

Our findings reveal that although the image of both nations in being constructed negatively by the international news agencies, yet Pakistan is highly negatively associated with conflicts and India is highly negative associated with human rights violations. Pakistan is also significantly related with human rights negatively. Pakistan's foreign relations are to some extent positively presented by international news agencies (Figure 1). India is highly negative associated with human rights and disasters. It has also significant tie with peace and conflict in negative tone

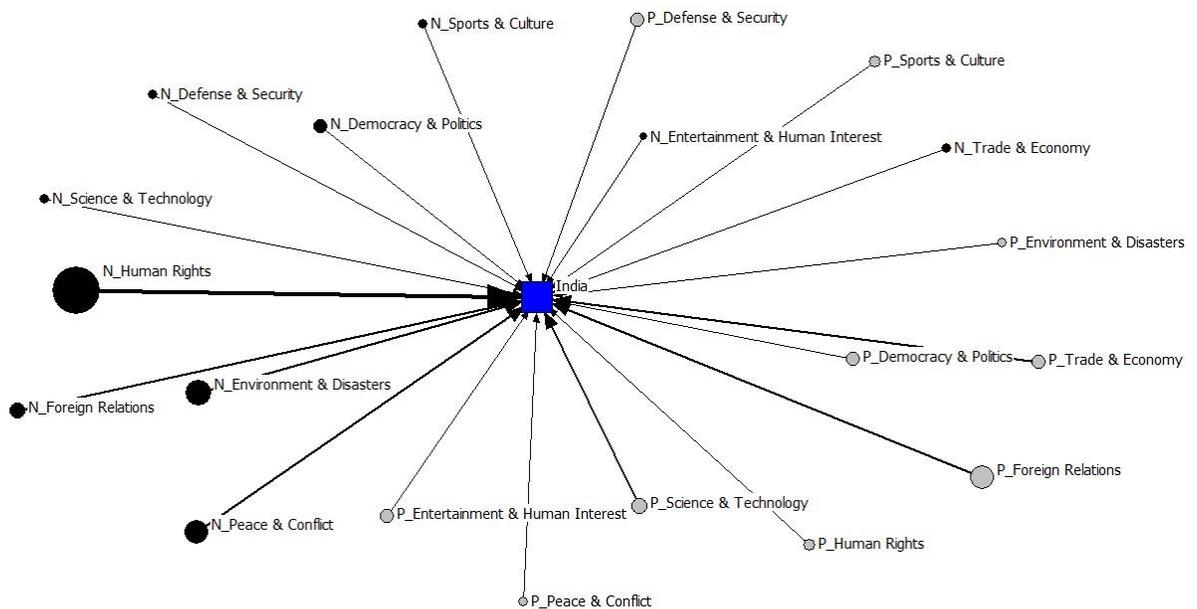
(Figure 2). Overall findings address RQ4 of study and reveal that the image of both nations is being constructed negatively in tweets of global news organizations. Pakistan is associated negatively with peace and conflict and India is associated negatively with human rights violations.

Figure 1 *Image of Pakistan in Tweets (2010-2016)*



Note: Black circles represents negative associations and grey circles represent positive associations. Symbol size and lines thickness represents the frequency of elements

Figure 2 *Image of India in Tweets (2010-2016)*



Note: Black circles represents negative associations and grey circles represent positive associations. Symbol size and lines thickness represents the frequency of elements

Another major objective of this study was to highlight and associate the liking and sharing of India and Pakistan in the tweets of news agencies. Because the interactive features of twitter cannot be underestimated for understanding the image of nations on twitter. We further observed highly substantial differences coverage and shared depiction of Pakistan and India (Table 6) and there are significant differences in liking of Pakistan and India (Table 6). Portrayal of Pakistan has been more negative as compared to India in tweets of news agencies. Similarly, not only global agencies but the followers are also sharing and propagating more negativity about Pakistan as compare to India. India is slightly more liked by the followers of international news agencies. In this way, current study found an evidence to conclude that international audience is also engaged on twitter for constructing and propagating online images of states and nations via the tweets.

Table 6 *Differences in Retweets of News Agencies (2010-2016)*

	Country	N	M	SD	T	Sig.
Portrayal of the Country	Pakistan	1792	-.37	.85	-7.25	.000**
	India	1959	-.16	.85		
Number of Tweet Replies	Pakistan	1792	4.28	18.13	1.34	.181
	India	1959	3.48	18.64		
Number of Retweets	Pakistan	1792	77.07	123.53	1.27	.204
	India	1958	72.48	96.51		
Number of Favorites	Pakistan	1792	28.29	53.56	-1.92	.054*
	India	1959	31.84	59.12		
Shared Portrayal	Pakistan	1792	-48.62	188.97	-5.85	.000**
	India	1958	-14.68	166.04		

**differences are significant at .01 level

*Differences are significant at .05 level

4. Conclusion

We conducted this study to highlight and compare the image of two south Asian nuclear powers in online platform of twitter. We studied the coverage of India and Pakistan in tweets of four global news agencies; Associated Press, Agence France Press, Reuters and Xinhua. We observed that there are substantial variations in coverage, portrayal and sharing of Pakistan and India in tweets generated by news agencies. We found that India and Pakistan have been covered negatively in news tweets, but Pakistan's image is more negative as compare to India. Pakistan is

highly associated with conflicts issues in negative tone and India is presented negatively due to human rights violations. Finally, it is concluded that not only these global news agencies, but followers are also sharing and propagating negativity more about Pakistan as compared to India.

4.1. Recommendations

Keeping in view the findings of the study, followings recommendations are being suggested.

- 1) Governments of both countries; India and Pakistan, should work to promote soft image of their countries by collaborating international news agencies.
- 2) Tourism and beauty of these countries should be encouraged to create soft stories about them.
- 3) Indigenous news agencies of India and Pakistan should be developed and digitalized for creating and disseminating soft image of both countries.
- 4) Media literacy and awareness about new media diplomacy should be created among the public specifically to the youth of India and Pakistan.
- 5) Access to modern information and communication technologies should be ensure at gross root level.

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Annexure – I: Coding Instructions and Definitions of Issues**ISSUES**

Sr.	Category	Key Terms
1	Peace & Conflict	War, bombing, terrorist Attack, border conflicts, war killings, war on terror, negotiations, Terror financing, Talibanization, terror supporting, Negotiations, peace dialogues, statements about peace, peace initiatives, Daaish, ISS, UNO Role, etc.
2	Human Rights	Social killings, feminity, women rights, poverty, health issues, minority rights, injustice, third gender rights, children rights, labor rights, Freedom of speech, etc.
3	Democracy & Politics	Civil military conflicts, military coups, strikes, protests, civil unrest, processions, elections, political rallies, laws, legislation, bills, political leadership, electoral frauds, rigging, political instability, etc.
4	Disasters & Environment	Natural disasters, floods, earth quacks, fire, accidents, rains, storms, tsunami, accidents, AIR crash, railway accidents, carbon emission, pollution, etc.
5	Foreign Relations	Delegations, meetings, tours, statements, visits, agreements, MOU, joint sessions, immigrations, etc.
6	Trade & Economy	Trade and Economy, Trade agreements, trade exchanges, aid, debt, crises, Inflation, IMF loans, unemployment, etc.
7	Science & Technology	Scientific inventions, technological development, space inventions, technological failure, scientific backwardness etc.
8	Sports & Culture	Sports, Olympics, games, Easter, rituals, customs, World cups, players, spot fixing, players drug addictions etc
9	Entertainment & Human Interest	Personality, music, fashion, human interest, stars & celebrities, showbiz industry, films etc.
10	Defense & Security	military collaborations, NATO alliance, military development, missile development, defense budget & spending, chemical weapons, nuclear proliferation, NSG (Nuclear supplier group), security lacks, insecurity, threats etc.

VALENCE

Positive (+1)

Positive image of the country concerned on human perception.

Neutral (0)

Neither positive nor negative image of the country concerned on human perception.

Negative (-1)

Negative image of the country concerned on human perception.