

Association of Print Media Agenda and Policy Agenda on International Relations of Pakistan with USA

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to examine the the association between print media agenda and policy agenda (State and NGOs) and its impact on the foreign policy of Pakistan with USA from 2015 till 2017 on categorized issues. Data is collected from DAWN and The News International of Pakistan. Quantitative research method was adopted and content of newspapers and policy documents (State and NGOs) was analyzed to find out the coverage, rank order, frame, slant and association between print media agenda and policy agenda (State and NGOs) regarding Pak-US relations' issues. Findings revealed that print media agenda and state policy agenda are associated ($r_s = +.362$) having moderate positive association and print media agenda and non-government policy agenda are associated ($r_s = +.490$) having moderate positive association. Hence, hypotheses are supported.

Key Words

Content Analysis, DAWN, International Relations, The News International, Print Media Agenda, Policy Agenda.

Introduction

This research article examined the association of Print Media Agenda and Policy Agenda and its impact on the foreign policy of Pakistan with USA for the two years (31st December 2015 until 31st December 2017). Content of mainstream newspapers and state policy documents and non-government organizations were analyzed. Categorized issue were based on international relations of Pakistan and United States of America (USA) that are ; Avoiding Seclusion, Reconciliation with USA, War against Terror and Peace Coordination and NSG Cooperation.

American's administration shifted from Pakistan to India due to its vested interests. Pakistan pro Sino approach moved it to strengthen ties and to work with China on various projects. This discourse affected non-government sector.

Nine hundred studies worked to establish media influence public viewpoint (Anton &Yao, 2016). Ansolabehere supported policy issues and public view (2001, p. 533). The thermostatic model of Erikson (1993) showed public opinion changes with policy agenda, if one increased the other decreased. Thermostatic model (Wlezien, 1995, p. 986) has unique relations of public and policy makers. Wolfe (2013) argued on the gap between policy agenda in mass communication.

Hence, it needs attention as policy agenda equally be examined as in political sciences. Media has power to affect all disciplines. Therefore, policy agenda disinterment cannot be neglected (pp. 175-192).

The above-mentioned gap shall be fulfilled in this study comprising two years about policy and print media agenda.

Objective

The objective of the study is:

1. To investigate the association of print media agenda and policy agenda on International relations policy of Pakistan on Pak-US relation's issues.

Research Questions

RQ1: Whether and to what extent, association exists between print media agenda and state policy agenda and what is its impact on the International relations' issues of Pakistan with USA?

RQ2: Whether and to what extent, association exists between print media agenda and Non-government organization policy agenda and what is its impact on the International relations' issues of Pakistan with USA?

Limitations

This research analyzed two highly-circulated newspapers of Pakistan keeping in view time constraint and resources. Period was two years i.e. December 2015 until December 2017. The research was delimited to the following categorized issues:

1. Pak-US International Relations
1. Avoiding Seclusion
2. Reconciliation with USA
3. War against terror
4. Peace Coordination
5. NSG Cooperation

Literature Review

Lipmann (1922) expressed about the image created by media in heads and the world outside (p. 29). Media place unreal pictures in our heads. Media focused on what to think about an issue (Cohen, 1963). McCombs and Shaw (1972) measured media coverage that change our opinion. (pp. 176,187).

Becker and McCombs (1979) studied the importance of various political campaigns regarding the motivation of voters for need orientation (pp. 301,307). Smith (1987) also examined the association of newspaper coverage and opinion of voters. After twenty-two surveys, he found people are more interested in environment issues (p. 379).

Ghanem and Wanta (2006) worked on the credibility of agenda setting (p. 277-289). Weaver (1977) found that an individual has more need for orientation on policy (1977, p. 107). Lennon (1997) concluded that the level of relationship increased to +.80 on media effect. In the study on media and public agendas on War against terror, it has been revealed that audience agenda is influenced by media (Riaz, 2008).

Strong association (+.78) has been found among people of Tokyo of 8 aspects of global environment in Japanese newspapers (Mikami, 1995, p. 209).

On environmental situation in USA, strong level of correspondence (+.71) was observed among audience image and coverage in newspaper on six aspects to develop manmade lake in Indiana (Cohen, 1975). The power of political agenda setting of mass media is not deniable (Walgrave & Aelst, 2004, p.1).

Light and Smith (1982) concluded that media is not important for policy makers. Kleinnijenhuis (2003), in Netherland revealed that media's effect on politics is very limited but its reverse impact is stronger. Trumbo' (1995) studied global warming from 1985 until 1992 and found strong relationship between media and policy attention of global warming topic.

Linsky (1986) examined agenda setting power of media in American policy making. Soroka (2002) believed that media agenda for public is strongly related with politics especially on environmental issues having strong relationship among three agendas.

Bartels (1996) in his longitudinal time series research found that media affect political agenda independently. In experimental design, Cook (1983), found if media covered the topic it is considered to be the most important for policy makers as it directly influence policies. Including the election campaign, Panebianco (1988) expressed that media make up mind of floating voter just before the voting day which means that there is strong positive or negative relation. Zucker (1978) worked on attribute agenda setting theory and concluded that if the issue is obtrusive, audiences' experience it directly. Abstract issues have less effect than the concrete issues (Yagade & Dozier, 1990). Two events were covered by Kwansah-Aidoo from Australian university to study 2nd level agenda set by Ghana media on cultural context. Of the two events covered, first was in November 5, 1996 tribal chiefs reaction of terrestrial degradation and water resources against mining in Tarkwa. The second was in October 31, 1997 Ghana protest against garbage on highway and young boy lost his life due to police clash. Policy makers were influenced by media and took notice. 223 publications are available on it by media opinion making (Rogers, Dearing and Bregman, 1993).

According to Riaz (2017), American newspapers portrayed a highly negative image of Pakistan and most of the coverage about the bilateral relations was found as negative.

Wu and Coleman (2009) found that attribute agenda setting affect extensively on the audience than prominence of issues. The 1st level agenda setting is about issues, which are perceived to be important whereas the 2nd level agenda is about the attributes of the issues that are perceived as important. First level agenda is that media make an issue prominent so that the audience start thinking about that issue or event. The second level agenda is how people should think about an issue or its attributes (Wu & Coleman, 2009).

Hypotheses

- H1: The greater the coverage of Pak-US relation's issues in policy agenda of state on International relations policy of Pakistan, the greater will be the importance for the print media.
- H2: The greater the coverage of Pak-US relation's issues in policy agenda of Non-Government organization on International relations policy of Pakistan, greater will be the importance for the print media.

Methodology

Quantitative research method had been adopted to analyze the content of newspaper and policy documents (State institutions and non-government organizations). Categorized issues of Pak-US international relations were Avoiding Secusion, Reconciliation with USA, War against Terror, Peace Coordination and NSG Cooperation.

DAWN and The News International were selected for content analysis of newspapers, editorials and columns of two mainstream newspapers. Purposive sampling was used. Data has been collected through LexisNexis from December 2015 until December 2017. Recording units were editorial, columns, press releases, article /annual reports.

Coverage is the total number of editorials/columns /reports/articles/press release published in the newspapers and policy document. Rank order is the ranking of issue from 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th. The more is the coverage given to the issue, the more highly it is ranked. Frame used as friend and foe, pro- government and anti-government and neutral. Slant was favorable (pro), unfavorable (anti-) and neutral (indifferent) to International relation policy of Pakistan. Spearman correlation coefficient test has been applied to test the hypothesis by using SPSS 21 version.

For content analysis of state policy documents, content of press releases published on Pak-US international relations by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PID and ISPR on issues from December 2015 till December 2017 were collected from archives.

For content analysis of Non-Government Organization policy documents, data was collected from the approved Policy Journals (Monthly/Quarterly/Annual reports) of Higher Education Commission of Pakistan. Non-government organizations included Policy Perspective journal (Biannual) and quarterly newsletter (Institute of Policy study), ISSI quarterly newsletter and annual report (Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad), Quarterly Regional Studies Journal (Institute of Regional Studies Islamabad), Strategic Studies annual reports, Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI).

Two mainstream newspapers DAWN and the News International were selected. Political alignment of DAWN is liberal and weekly circulation of 139,999 in 2017 and the political alignment of The News International is moderate and weekly circulation of 140,000 copies in 2017.

Operational definitions of Pak-US relation given in the table below:

Table 1. PAK-US Relations Issues Operational Definitions and Rules

Variables	Content Categories	Operational Definitions	Rule
Issues	1.Avoiding Secusion	1. Pakistan Cooperating with US to avoid aids suspensions.	1. Story containing information of Pakistan Cooperating with US to avoid aids suspensions coded as Avoiding Secusion.
	2.Reconciliation with USA	2. Pak-US projects for social development.	2. Story containing information of Pak-US projects for social development coded as Reconciliation with USA. 3. Story containing information of Pak-US demand of Eliminating terrorism from Pakistan War against terror.

3. War against Terror	3. Pak-US demand of Eliminating terrorism from Pakistan.	4. Story containing information of Pak-US role in peace building in Afghanistan coded as Peace Coordination. 5. Story containing information of Pak-US joining the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) for sale coded as NSG Cooperation.
4. Peace Coordination 5. NSG Cooperation	4. Pak-US role in peace building in Afghanistan. 5. Pak-US joining the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) for sale.	

Findings

Coverage of Pak-US International Relations Issues

State Institutions coverage on categorized issue of Pak-US International Relations policy of Pakistan include Avoiding Seclusion, Reconciliation with USA, War against Terror, Peace Coordination, NSG Cooperation. The total number of press releases published by foreign Office/PID from December 2015 till December 2017 were 13. 7 (52.3%); press releases covered Peace Coordination issue, 4 (32.3%) press releases covered War against terror issue and 2 (12.3%) covered NSG Cooperation issue.

The total number of press releases published by ISPR from December 2015 till December 2017 selected purposely, related to the categorized issues on Pak-US International relations were 23. Out of 23, 19 (75%) covered Peace Coordination issue and 5 (22%) were press releases on War against terror. The rest gained lesser coverage.

NGOs' coverage in policy journals, total numbers of reports, editorials articles published on Pak-US International Relations policy of Pakistan were 5. 3 (60%) on Peace Coordination, 1 (20%) on Reconciliation with USA and 1(20%) on NSG Cooperation.

DAWN covered the issue of War against terror of Pak-US International relations policy of Pakistan as urgent and important issue. 20(4 %) editorial and 27(4.66%) columns (total 46 (8.67%)) were published from December 2015 till December 2017 comprising 42345 words in total on this specific issue. Avoiding Seclusion comprised of 16261 words, considered important i.e., 22 (6%). Whereas Reconciliation with US and Peace Coordination are least important according to DAWN. NSG Cooperation is not important with the total coverage of 1.8% only. In total, 8 (2%) editorials and seven (1.4%) columns written comprising 15000 words on this issue.

According to The News International newspaper regarding Pak-US International Relations policy, the urgent and important issue was War against terror. Total editorials written on this issue were 30(6%) and total number of columns were 23(5%). Hence 53(12%) of the total coverage comprised 64123 words. According to the agenda of The NEWS International, 7 (2.2%) editorials and 3(.72%) columns were written i.e.10 (3.0%) comprising 12200 number of words on Avoiding Seclusion as it has been considered not important issue.

Rank Order of Pak-US International Relations Issues

According to state institutions, Peace Coordination is ranked on the top whereas, War against terror is ranked 2nd. NSG Cooperation ranked 3rd. Whereas, Avoiding Seclusion ranked 4th and Reconciliation with US never gained attention.

Table 2. Rank order of State Institution

Pak-US Relation's Issues	Rank Order
Peace Coordination	1 st
War against terror	2 nd
NSG Cooperation	3 rd
Avoiding Seclusion	4 th
Reconciliation with USA	5 th

NGO's, Policy Journals ranked Peace Coordination at 1st that is considered as urgent and the most important issue. Reconciliation with USA 2nd and NSG Cooperation ranked 3rd that is very important. War on terror ranked 4th and Avoiding Seclusion ranked 5th.

Table 3. Rank order of Non-Government Institution

Pak-US Relation's Issues	Rank Order
Peace Coordination	1 st
Reconciliation with USA	2 nd
NSG Cooperation	3 rd
War against terror	4 th
Avoiding Seclusion	5 th

War against terror ranked on the top by DAWN, Avoiding Seclusion issue ranked 2nd, Peace Coordination ranked 3rd, Reconciliation with US ranked 4th and NSG Cooperation ranked 5th.

Table 4. Rank Oder of DAWN

Pak-US Relation's Issues	Rank Order
War against terror	1 st
Breaking Isolation Policy	2 nd
Peace Coordination	3 rd
Reconciliation with USA	4 th
NSG Cooperation	5 th

War against terror ranked 1st by the News International. Reconciliation with USA ranked 2nd, NSG Cooperation ranked 3rd, Peace Coordination ranked 4th and lastly ranked was Avoiding Seclusion.

Table 5. Rank Oder of The News International

Pak-US Relation's Issues	Rank Order
War against terror	1 st
Reconciliation with USA	2 nd
NSG Cooperation	3 rd
Peace Coordination	4 th
Breaking IsolationPolicy	5 th

Frame and Slant of Pak-US International Relations

Frame and Slant of Pak-US relations by state Institution is 100% favourable.

Reconciliation with USA by NGOs is 26%, NSG Cooperation is 26% and 48% news stories on Peace Coordination favoured the International relations policy of Pakistan.

In DAWN, total number of 23 editorials and 7 columns (total 13) were published on Avoiding Seclusion and cooperating with US to avoid aids suspensions. DAWN depicts 8 (34%) friendly frames, 5 (20%) foe, 1(4%) pro-government, 8 (34%) antigovernment and 2 (5%) neutral frames. Whereas in the editorials (7)/columns (5) of The News International, 3 (30%) frames were friends, 1(10%) foe, 2 (20%) anti-government and 5 (50%) were neutral.

Slant of DAWN revealed 23 (85%) editorials and columns in favour of International relations policy of Pakistan regarding Avoiding Seclusion, 2 (9%) unfavorable and 1 (4.7%) neutral. In the News International, 7 (65%) were favorable and 4(35%) neutral to International relations of Pakistan.

Total 28, editorial (14)/Columns (14) published in DAWN on Reconciliation with US, 16 (70%) frame as friend, 6 (25%) foe, 1 (4%) pro-government, 1 (4%) anti and 4 (12%). Total 36 editorial (23)/columns (12) published.18 (49%) framed as friend, 13(37%) pro government and 5 (14%) framed neutral in the News International.

Examining the slant of DAWN on Reconciliation with US, 18 (72%) were favorable and supported the Reconciliation with US, 3(12%) unfavorable not supported Reconciliation to international relations policy of Pakistan. 5 (20%) were neutral. The News International 30 (85.7%) were favorable and 5 (14%) were neutral to Reconciliation with US.

On the issue of War against terror, total 19 editorials and 28 columns were published in DAWN. 12 (25.5%) editorial/columns depicted frame as a friend, 6 (12.2%) as a foe, 2 (4.2%) pro-government, 9 (19.1%) anti-government and 18 (38.2%) neutral. In the News International, editorial (29) /columns (22), out of 51, 21(41%) had frames US as a friend, 3(5%) framed US as a foe, 26 (51%) pro-government and 1(2%) anti-government.

While evaluating slant of War against terror of killing the terrorists for eliminating terrorist organization from Pakistan, 19 (40.5%) columns/editorial were in favour of foreign policy of Pakistan.

Total number of 11 editorials and 10 columns published on Peace Coordination as a friend were 1(4.7%) and as a foe 4 (19%), pro-government 5(23%),anti-government 4 (19%) and 7 (33.3%) were neutral. The News International published 9 editorials, 8 columns, where 5 (29.4%) framed US as a friend, 2 (11.8%) framed as US as a foe, 8(7%) pro-government, 2 (11.8) antigovernment.

Slant examined as 11(2.2%) favouring the International relations policy of Pakistan. In The News International 9 (2%) favoured the slant and 8 (1%) did not favour the International relations policy of Pakistan on reconciliation process for lasting peace in Afghanistan.

On NSG Cooperation, DAWN published total 7 editorial and 7 columns and The News International published total 34 editorials (21) and columns (12) about US in exploring ways to relax restrictions on nuclear-related technology to Pakistan and allowing of joining the Nuclear Suppliers Group regulating the sale of the technology. 2 (14%) articles of DAWN framed US as friend,1 (7%) as a foe.1 (75%) as pro-government, 4 (27%) as anti-government and 6 (42%) as neutral. In the News International, 9(27%) framed it as friend, 21(63%) as pro-government, 1(3%) as anti-government and 2(6%) as neutral. While examining the issue mentioned above, 3(21%) were in favour of foreign policy of Pakistan, 2(10%) opposed it while 9(64%) were neutral in DAWN. While examining the slant of The News International 14 (42.4%) were favorable, 12(36.4%) were unfavorable and 7 (21.2%) were neutral.

Correlation

Quantitative research method was used to test the hypothesis.

H1: The greater the coverage Pak-US relation’s issues in policy agenda of state on International relations policy of Pakistan, greater will be the importance for the print media.

RQ1: Whether and to what extent, association exists between print media agenda and state policy agenda and what is its impact on International relations’ issues of Pakistan with USA?

It has been revealed that media agenda and government policy agenda are correlated (rs .362) having moderate positive relationship.

Table 2. Spearman’s Correlation Coefficient (rs) Between Print Media Agenda and Policy Agenda

Agenda’s Type	Correlation Coefficient (rs)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Strength of Relationship
Media Agenda / State Policy Agenda	.362	.338	A Moderate Positive Relationship
Media Agenda / NGO Policy Agenda	.490	.642	A Moderate Positive Relationship

H2: The greater the coverage Pak-US relation’s issues in policy agenda of Non-Government organization on International relations policy of Pakistan, greater will be the importance for the print media

RQ2: Whether and to what extent, association exists between print media agenda and Non-government organization policy agenda and what is its impact on the International relations’ issues of Pakistan with USA?

It has been revealed that print media agenda and policy agenda are correlated (rs= .490) having moderate positive correlation.

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the data analysis, state institutions (MoFA/PID & ISPR) make issue as the urgent and important in accordance with the international relations. Peace Coordination and War against Terror were considered the most important and urgent issues. The more is the coverage given to a specific issue, the more it is highly ranked. Peace Coordination is ranked on the top, War against Terror is ranked 2nd whereas NSG Cooperation ranked 3rd.

Furthermore, Non-government organizations are aligned with government institutions. As Peace Coordination is considered to be the most important issue in Pak-US Relation, it was top ranked issue and Reconciliation with USA and NSG Cooperation were ranked 2nd.

Print media (DAWN & The News International) ranked War against Terror on the top like the government institutions and non-government organization. DAWN ranked Avoiding Seclusion issue as 2nd, Peace Coordination as 3rd, Reconciliation with US as 4th and NSG Cooperation as 5th respectively. The news International ranked Reconciliation with USA 2nd, NSG Cooperation as 3rd, Peace Coordination as 4th and lastly ranked was Avoiding

Seclusion. Media framed issues as a friend, foe, pro-government, anti-government and neutral. Frames and slant both were moderate.

The association between state Institutions and media frame is moderate ($r_s = +.288$) and the association between Non-Government organizations and media frame is moderate ($r_s = +.346$). In addition, the association between state institution and media slant is moderate ($r_s = .356$) and the association between Non-Government organizations and media slant is moderate ($r_s = +.423$).

The above discussion concluded that media agenda and state policy agenda are in association ($r_s = +.362$) having moderate positive relationship and media agenda and NGOs policy agenda are also associated ($r_s = +.490$) having moderate positive correlation. Hence, hypotheses are supported.

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