Role of Media in Strengthening Pakistan’s Image with Respect to Security

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ARTICLE DETAILS

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Because national security is indeed a delicate subject in Pakistan, it is expected from the press to play a beneficial role in this respect. This study assessed the role of media in strengthening Pakistan’s image with respect to security.

Design/Methodology/Approach
The study is qualitative in nature, the researchers utilized survey method by employing close ended questionnaire as data collection tool. SPSS has been used for data analysis. Statistical analysis has been done using chi-square test.

Findings: As per the findings of the study, the participants were found to have felt unsafe in Pakistan after hearing a piece of particular news, but they do think Pakistan is a safe country.

Implications/Originality/Value: Media independence is a wonderful thing in a functioning democracy, but when it comes to sensitive topics like "national security", it is assumed that the media must only stick to their job of informing instead of dictating the processes.

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Introduction
In its reporting, the Pakistani media is vibrant, open but unjust, excessively critical, and at times unfavorable. It has evolved into yet another special interest organization that fiercely defends its interests. All constraints that attempt to limit its freedom irritate it greatly. The Pakistani media frequently fails to grasp the fundamentals of conflicts, aggression, and domestic and international security. Thus far, governmental institutions have failed to deliver society something which citizens deserve. The power of this group is bolstered by a lack of effective administration and the legal system, as well as inadequate welfare care and economic inequality. Outside, it was the
military stance and double morals of global actors that radicalized a segment of Pakistani culture. To counteract this tendency, many mechanisms of national power are employed, but the intended result could only be accomplished if all segments of society participate in an adequate and well-coordinated response to the problem (Awan, 2019). Since there is a negative aspect to the media, there is also a beneficial element. However, whenever it comes to domestic security, the press must be a reliable source of information, therefore it must adopt rational stances. This study assessed the role of media in strengthening Pakistan’s image with respect to security.

**Background**

The nation's "fourth pillar" is indeed the media. It can't be overstated how important it is in policy creation and execution. The media plays a significant influence in forming ideas and regulating public image. The government's three pillars, the legislature, legal, and appointed officials, which are made up of appointed and non-elected individuals, all have a part in policy formulation and execution, however, the media is perhaps the most significant component in a democratic country. It is also a major decision-maker in matters of national security. The media in modern democracies employs democratic practices to guide decisions about national security. The mainstream media's primary components for having a role in decision-making include the right to liberty, citizen autonomy, free association, equal status, justice matters, public-private collaboration, civil-military ties, as well as economic growth. Personal sovereignty is intertwined with state sovereignty, injustice & lack of rights in the system can lead to rebellious forces. A party's economic and social distress can have far-reaching effects.

The media raises awareness of topics and problems connected to these values, and the government responds by taking steps to develop regulations that benefit the country. Globalization is yet another factor to consider when examining the media's involvement in national security choices. As technology and freedom of speech become more widely available, so do the threats to national security (Javed, 2018). Globalization presents a danger to national security because nations are seeing informational wars, putting their autonomy and reputations at risk, while domestic security concerns are quickly growing as religious and cultural battles spread throughout the mainstream press.

The media examines how the foreign media portrays a country's internal condition. In the changing atmosphere, when Pakistan is fighting terrorism, the foreign media alleges that Pakistan is providing safe zones for terrorist organizations. In Pakistan, the mainstream press has been a prominent and important force in establishing the public's perspective during the last decade. Pakistani democracy is heavily influenced by the media. In Pakistan, recent incidents of judicial activism having highlighted the media's influence. From the foundation of the State of Pakistan to now, the media has played a significant role in shaping public opinion & views. It was Pakistan radio that initially shaped popular opinion, followed by Pakistan television.

**Media and National Security**

Government and political leaders have long used the word "national security" as a symbolic statement and to denote a political aim. National security is a wide concept that spans many aspects of life (Hussain, 2008). Security issues arise when any aspect of national power is threatened. In wartime, the media's responsibility is to offer a holistic image that incorporates all facets of the country's political system, not only to reflect ongoing actions in a particular region. War is no longer fought just by the military forces; instead, the entire nation is involved in economic, scientific, political, and social endeavors and products in all domains. It is an attainable aim that
may be attained through the media's informational and distribution process (ORZEA, 2018). Whenever the military and the media collide during a crisis, confrontations are to be anticipated. The army needs to win the battle with as few losses as possible, while the media tries to tell the narrative. The media wants complete independence, no restriction, unlimited access, and the capacity to immediately reach its target audiences. On the other side, the military wants to be in charge. In a pre-invasion situation, a defense commander's biggest concern is that something may leak out and alarm the enemy. However, surprise is a general's most effective weapon. The media, on the other extreme, is concerned that the military may limit information in order to boost its public image or cover up blunders. These are essential distinctions that will not be altered. For the time being, the military and the mainstream press have begun to collaborate in a cooperative manner in the name of national security.

Media & Positive Image-Building
The tremendous advancement of digital information systems has further confounded and modified the character of wars, diversifying the dynamics of old fighting techniques (Svetoka, 2016). Global access to digital reality has spawned a slew of online battlegrounds, influencing events in both the physiological and cognitive realms, as well as people’s attitudes and opinions all over the globe. Authorities and non-state actors both utilize hybrid techniques to achieve their politico-military objectives, such as international pressure, economic deception, and cyberspace.

Amid recent violent confrontations in Ukraine, Gaza, Syria, & Yemen, the people have widely utilized social media to create narratives, organize operations, and obtain information. The idea of image-fare has also changed contemporary wars, since the media may employ pictures in constructive and non-constructive ways to achieve political objectives without recourse to conventional military techniques (Yarchi, 2016, p. 301). In comparison to states that do not employ images to establish official narratives, those that do are more effective in reaching their cyber warfare policy goals. In the last 2 decades, strategies have switched fast from fighting to visuals, and their impact in local and international media renders them all the more important. Due to foreign pressures, the pictures presented by Pakistani media typically do not support the governmental narrative.

Aims & Objectives
The goal of this research is to determine the linkages between media (both traditional and new electronic media) and national security issues, the use of social networking sites by government bodies to restrict or remove dangers to national defense, and how the media threatens state security. This research is based on a number of papers, studies, evaluations, academic journals, journals, and books. Discussing a media framework as part of suggested solutions can aid in mitigating the challenges posed by new media, since they may be used in various ways to strengthen national unity and react to foreign threats.

The purpose of this research is to look at the media’s role and capabilities in reforming society, Pakistan's national security in particular.

• The research focuses on the media's role in bolstering Pakistan's national security.
• The media's flaws and how to overcome them.
Research Questions
What is the role of the Media in strengthening Pakistan’s image with respect to security?

Significance of the Study
Individuals in today's society rely on different data sources, also including electronic and print media, to keep up with world occurrences, particularly when it comes to global politics, security, as well as happenings such as warfare. As a result, there is a demand for vibrant media that can keep the masses updated about global political & social events. An examination of media studies, meanwhile, indicates that the media influences people's opinions by preserving people's specific interests (Hassan, 2018).

Ethical Considerations
Individuals who are clear about the purpose of data collected about them and their ability to give, withdraw, or retract informed consent are said to have given valid consent. In virtual settings, open and transparent communications between the researchers and potential participants are required for registration, although this can be undermined. Emails or online declarations that require participants to comply with the terms and conditions, that imply agreement, are some of the ways consent may be collected online. Nevertheless, determining if the person has read the instructions thoroughly, whether there are any ambiguities, and whether the consenting individual is the genuine participant is challenging. It might sometimes be hard to verify certain details, such as age or mental capacity to agree (Gupta, 2017). The primary obligation of the researcher is to preserve the confidentiality and privacy of the data obtained and kept; "the extent to which an investigator must care for secrecy depends on the nature of the evidence collected." They claim that if the information is not sensitive or privacy can be assured, this is less of a problem than in the situation of contentious study issues such as matters of national security or research that requires personal data.

As a result, the researcher supplied complete research details, along with a readily available link with personal details, research goals, data collecting techniques, possible benefits and risks, and steps taken to preserve study participants' privacy and confidentiality. These stages guarantee that participants may contact the investigators and explain any issues or queries they may have. Utilizing multi-step permission forms, increasing the legibility of the document by lowering the quantity of text, employing sub-headings, or using color are other approaches to guarantee participants read and comprehend research material in online contexts.

Previous Studies
According to Awan (2019), the media throughout Pakistan has faced a number of challenges during the last 72 years. It's been exposed to stringent regulation and oversight. It was regarded as the concept over which Pakistan was founded by the media. While the media's services to different areas of national security may be varied, the Pakistan media has undoubtedly played a major and beneficial role in generating crucial concerns for society. Secondary research is used in this study, which is based on desk research. The study's strength comes in the way it emphasizes the ebb and flow of the media in Pakistan, as well as its significance in the country's security situation. The study's weakness is its lack of data and statistics.

Another work by Iqbal, M. Z., and Hussain, S. (2017) attempted to analyze the reporting of significant incidents in Pakistan by two main television networks, Geo TV & Dunia TV, in order to identify the essence of the reporting in terms of upsurge or de-escalation. Its goal is to investigate these events
through the lens of peace & security media. The research is largely a secondary quantitative content evaluation of conflict attention from the media throughout lower and higher intensity periods between 2014 through 2015. The study's strength lies in how well its observations fit into the published literature on dispute news reporting, implying because when security threats are higher, news organizations take much more rhetoric and patriotic stance, whereas when dangers to national security are believed to be lesser, they take a much more humanistic standpoint. There do not appear to be any flaws in the research.

According to Javed’s (2018) research, the media is regarded as the nation's fourth pillar. It can't be overstated how important it is in policy creation and execution. The media has a significant influence in forming ideas and regulating public image. He also stated that there is a chasm between both the media and the government, owing to the state's principal spokespeople's skepticism and the press's reversal of the facts. The media's approach to coverage on national security problems is uneven and amateurish.

It was highlighted that the government's terrorist narrative was poorly articulated, creating roadblocks for state organs. Secondary factual research was utilized as an approach. The study's value comes in how it emphasizes the media's potential to accelerate and spread security awareness as an autonomous organization. In the framework of national security, he can carry out psychological warfare. It has the ability to build a link between both the public and the government. The study's only flaw is the evident lack of data and statistics gathering; otherwise, it's a quick yet effective study.

**Methodology**

The study was carried out in a quantitative manner. The study utilized a survey questionnaire method. The study also utilized SPSS of chi-square testing for hypothesis and analysis of the questionnaire.

**Design of the Study**

A questionnaire is a type of research tool that includes a “series of questions that are used to collect data from respondents”. Questionnaires could be compared to written interviews. They can take place face to face, over the telephone, on a laptop, or through email. They are an economical, rapid, and efficient approach in order to collect significant quantities of data from a big group of respondents. Because the researchers are not required to be on-site when taking out the questionnaires, the data may be acquired rapidly. Nevertheless, one issue with surveys is that participants may lie due to social acceptability (McLeod, 2018).

**Sample Size and Age**

The study had a sample size of 130 participants, with most of the participants aged between 19 to 33 years old.
Gender of the participants

Regression Table
Results & Analysis
The results revealed that 29.5% of the respondents felt unsafe in Pakistan after hearing a piece of particular news, 41.9% said no, the rest either said maybe or did not choose to respond. An overwhelming majority of respondents (52.7%) agreed that Pakistan is a safe country, with 26.4% saying no, and the rest said maybe and no response. A significant amount of respondents (44.6%) believed that the media portrayal of Pakistan is that of a safe country, 29.2% said maybe and the rest either said no or chose not to tell. 50.8% participants think media should consider the sovereignty of the country before airing news with respect to Pakistan’s image, 17.7% chose not to tell, 16.2% said maybe and the rest said no. 46.9% respondents were of the view that many people follow the media and then decide to visit Pakistan, 23.8% said maybe, 18.5% said no, and the rest chose not to tell. 48.1% of people agreed that the media’s role is vital for creating the international image, 27.9% were not sure, 17.1% denied, and a tiny sample chose not to tell.

47.7% people said the media role is indeed vital within and outside of Pakistan with respect to security image, 21.5% said no, 18.5% said may be and the rest chose not to tell. 46.9% of people said they feel safe in Pakistan due to the image built by the media, and 17.7% each responded as no, may be, and no response. A fair majority of 41.7% agreed they will invite people living overseas to visit Pakistan, 24.4% said may be, 22% said no, and the rest chose not to tell. 49.2% people said news in the media regarding security is not always true, 22.3% said may be, 14.6% did not respond and the smallest proportion said no. 52.3% agreed that media should be banned from airing news which damages the image of Pakistan with respect to its security, 23.1% said may be, 16.2% said no, and the rest chose not to tell. 47.7% of participants were of the view that the government should take action of media portrays negative image, 26.2% said may be, 22.3% said no, and the rest chose not to tell.

Findings
H₁: Participants have felt unsafe in Pakistan after hearing a particular news
H₀: Participants have not felt unsafe in Pakistan after hearing a particular news
As P-Value is less than 0.05, it means the “null hypothesis” is rejected. Hence, participants were found to have felt unsafe in Pakistan after hearing a particular news.

H$_1$: Participants think Pakistan is a safe country.

H$_0$: Participants do not think Pakistan is a safe country.
As P-Value is less than 0.05, it means the “null hypothesis” is rejected. So, participants think Pakistan is a safe country.

H₁: Respondents think the Media portray of Pakistan is of a safe country.

H₀: Respondents do not think the Media portray of Pakistan is a safe country.
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<thead>
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<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
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<tr>
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</table>

Chi-Square Tests

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<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
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<td>.000</td>
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<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
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<td>.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
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</table>

“a. 15 cells (60.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01”.

As P-Value is less than 0.05, it means the “null hypothesis” is rejected. Respondents think the Media portray of Pakistan is of a safe country.

H<sub>1</sub>: Respondents feel safe in Pakistan due to the image built by the media.

H<sub>0</sub>: Respondents do not feel safe in Pakistan due to the image built by the media.
As P-Value is less than 0.05, it means the “null hypothesis” is rejected. Respondents feel safe in Pakistan due to the image built by the media.

**Conclusion & Recommendations**

The media is, undoubtedly, the nation's "fourth pillar." It cannot be emphasized how critical it is in policy development and implementation. The media has a considerable impact on the formation of ideas and the regulation of public perception. The legislature, judicial system, and appointed officials, which are made up of both elected and non-elected officials, all have a role in policy formation and implementation, but the media is possibly the most important component of a democratic society. It also plays a significant role in national security decisions. Media independence is a wonderful thing in a functioning democracy, but when it comes to sensitive topics like "national security", the media must only stick to their job of informing instead of dictating the processes. Because national security is indeed a delicate subject in Pakistan, and also the country's security is a top priority, the press shall play a beneficial role in this respect. As per the findings of the study, the participants were found to have felt unsafe in Pakistan after hearing
a particular news, but they do think Pakistan is a safe country. They also think the Media portrayal of Pakistan is of a safe country, and that they feel safe in Pakistan due to the image build by the media. This study will prove beneficial for academics, professionals as well as students to get an understanding of the subject matter and to build grounds for future research.

Considering the media's good and negative power, as well as its implications on security, the following advice might be considered to reduce security risks.

The media can cover terrorist attacks, but they must be extremely cautious in how they frame events and comment on them. Unlike terrorists, the media must re-examine the circumstances and adjust their terminology while covering terrorism-related incidents. This will assist in calming the tense environment. There would be far less gore and sensationalism in the reportage.

While reporting situations, objectivity must be upheld. The media must be impartial, disseminating accurate information without taking a stance. Emotions and reasoning must be properly tuned as anchors that unintentionally force their own point of view rather than impartiality at some stage.

To minimize misunderstanding, TV stations must present factual, appropriate, and unambiguous information, specifically in the context of terrorism-related occurrences. The mainstream press can act more as a tool of public diplomacy than as an agent of propaganda, removing the element of terror by avoiding strong opinions and employing gentle language. With a coherent counter-narrative that refutes the terrorists' account and disproves the extremists' viewpoints. A specific bill is needed to address the absence of the required standard. Self-regulation must be emphasized by Parliament, and media companies, journalists, and content controllers would have to go through a thorough screening procedure.

Cartelization can be ended by introducing more independent Television networks that are not reliant on advertising income, and more digital community media licenses will aid to end the monopolistic tendencies.

References

