

A Comparative Analysis of Pakistani English Newspaper Editorials: The Case of Taliban's Attack on Malala Yousafzai

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ABSTRACT

This study analyse the portrayal of Malala Yousafzai after her attempt of assassination by Taliban in the editorials of four Pakistani English newspapers, *The News*, *Dawn*, *The Nation* and *Daily Times* from October 10, 2012 to November 10, 2012. It also investigates how newspapers framed Taliban after attacking Malala. The study is theoretically linked with framing theory and conducts the comparative analysis of the editorials of four Pakistani leading newspapers. A total of 29 editorials (five in *The News*, six in *Dawn*, nine in *Daily Times* and nine in *The Nation*) were analysed. The findings depict that Malala was portrayed as a courageous girl who opposed the Taliban and their mindset against the girl's education in Swat valley. The findings also show that Taliban have a negative image in the Pakistani newspapers after their attack on Malala Yousafzai.

Keywords: Malala Yousafzai, Taliban, Portrayal, Pakistan, Editorial

INTRODUCTION

The day of October 9, 2012 attack on Malala Yousafzai by Taliban was marked as a potential turning point in the life of Pakistani nation. It not only shook the entire country but also became a binding force to condemn the act of violence and reaffirm the

principle Malala daringly advocated (Lodhi, 2012). Gunned down by the Pakistani Taliban, Malala has become an international icon for her courage and determination to advocate her beliefs and disobey the environment of fear and terrorisation that radical militants contrive and thrive on. In the aftermath of this incident, national and international press faced many challenges in reporting and helping to set the agenda for worldwide public discussion of the issue (Sayah & Mullen, 2012).

Mass media in Pakistan play an important role not only in shaping public

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opinion, but also in influencing the decisions of top government and military executives. For this exclusive coverage, Pakistani and international media groups were also threatened by Taliban. The swift, impulsive and unsurpassed reaction to her attempt of assassination from across the religious and political spectrum, military leadership and every section of society reflected both anger and the outpouring of emotion that such violent acts can no longer be tolerated (Yousafzai, 2007).

The objectives of this research are to study the portrayal of Malala Yousafzai after her attempt of assassination in four Pakistani English newspapers, *Dawn*, *Daily Times*, *The News* and *The Nation*, in the light of media framing theory. This study also investigated how the Taliban were framed by these newspapers after the attack on Malala Yousafzai. The editorials of four leading Pakistani English newspapers, *The News*, *Dawn*, *The Nation* and *Daily Times*, were selected from October 10, 2012 to November 10, 2012 because in this time period, this incident was given exclusive coverage. The sample was taken from the online editions of these newspapers. A total of 29 editorials (five in *The News*, six in *Dawn*, nine in *Daily Times* and nine in *The Nation*) were analysed. The unit of analysis of this study included all editorials containing the word “Malala” in the paragraphs or headlines in the newspapers during the said time frame.

In Pakistan, English Press is considered more credible than electronic media and enjoys good status and repute. English is

an international language and in Pakistan, mostly well qualified people and policy makers read an English newspaper and this why it is also called elite newspapers. English press is considered as comparatively more responsible. As such, decision makers rely on the English Press for in-depth understanding of different pertinent issues with the help of editorials which form the essence of any newspaper and act as a reflection of its policy. The rationale for selecting *The News*, *Dawn*, *The Nation* and *Daily Times* is their status as the leading English language newspapers in Pakistan due to circulation, readership and popularity among the readers and these newspapers, by and large, remain serious and responsible on the issues of national and international importance. All four are considered as elite newspapers and belong to the prominent media groups in Pakistan, ranking first, second, third and fourth respectively in terms of circulation size. They have different approaches, perspectives and ideologies in dealing with national and international news. Their influence on policy and decision makers in the country is far more than any other local publication. In the same way, all the newspapers give special coverage of local and international events which award them a top place among other newspapers. The rationale for selecting editorial was because it is a presentation of important, contemporary events, interpretation and critical evaluation in such a way as to educate, inform, entertain and influence the readers. Editorials shed more light on the contemporary issues and suggest solutions.

The posture of an editorial is influenced by the ownership structure, philosophy and policy of the newspaper and the political environment in which the certain newspaper is operating.

Print Media in Pakistan

Pakistan has a vibrant media landscape among the most dynamic in South Asia. Despite the political pressure and direct bans that are sometimes administered by political stakeholders, the media enjoy the freedom of speech. The print media industry experienced a media boom after the liberalisation in 2002. In the competitive environment that followed commercial interests became paramount and quality journalism gave way to sensationalism (Azam, 2008). Print media publish in 11 languages with Urdu, English and some regional languages. The divide between Urdu and English media also goes for the print media. Urdu newspapers are the leading media in the rural areas. They are conservative, folkloristic, religious and sensational and are by far the most read and influential among the general public. The English print media is urban, elitist, more liberal and professional than Urdu journalism. English print media has an impact among opinion makers, politicians, the business community and the upper strata of society in general (Mezzer & Sial, 2010).

Privately owned newspapers freely discuss public policies and keep a critical eye on the government. They report remarks

made by opposition politicians and their editorials reflect a wide range of views. The effort to ensure that newspapers carry their statements or press releases sometimes leads to undue pressure by local police, political parties, ethnic, sectarian, and religious groups, militant student organisations, and occasionally commercial interests. Such pressure is a common feature of journalism and can include physical violence, sacking of offices, intimidation and beating of journalists, and interference with distribution of newspapers (Rana, 2008). The press in Pakistan holds significant power and has suffered much under various political leaders, only to emerge resilient and more committed to freedom of speech. In Pakistan, most newspapers are privately owned and enjoy freedom of speech. There are three major players on the print media market and in the media market in general.

The News

Jang Group of publications launched an English newspaper with the name, "The News", on February 11, 1991, from Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi and London at the same time. "The News" is said to be neutral and unbiased and is believed to present both sides of the picture. The News is following the policy of "no policy". Sometimes, it seems as if pro leftist or moderate is given more importance by this newspaper. However, this newspaper never opposes the government and tries to give a balanced view while covering sensitive issues.

Dawn

Dawn is Pakistan's oldest and most widely read English-language newspaper. It is the flagship of the Dawn Group of Newspapers, published by Pakistan Herald Publications, which also owns the Herald, a magazine, and Spider, an information technology magazine. Dawn is famous for its controversial leftist social agenda. It was founded by Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah in Delhi, India, on 26 October 1941, as a mouthpiece for the Muslim League. The first issue was printed at Latifi Press on 12 October 1942. The newspaper has offices in Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad and representatives abroad. As of 2014, it has a weekday circulation of over 109,000. The CEO of Dawn group is Hameed Haroon, and the current editor of Dawn is Zaffar Abbas.

The Nation

The Nation was started by the Nawa-i-Waqt group of publications on October 1, 1986, from Lahore. Majeed Nizami is the Chief Editor of The Nation. This newspaper, like his sister paper, Daily Nawaiwaqt, is more like an ideological newspaper. Though it is much liberal than Nawaiwaqt, it is the most conservative among the other English newspapers. This newspaper is mostly supportive of Muslim League, and it strongly believes in the ideology of Pakistan, therefore, caters readership of the right and criticism against the West can be traced from the editorial policy of The Nation.

Daily Times

The Daily Times was launched on April 9, 2002. Daily Times, which is simultaneously published from Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi, is edited by Rashed Rahman. The paper was owned by Governor of Punjab and Pakistan People's Party stalwart Salmaan Taseer. The Daily Times is recognised as a newspaper that advocates liberal and secular ideas. It has gained popularity and notoriety due to some of its editorials, which are considered controversial in some parts of Pakistan, but lauded in the international press.

Background of Malala Yousafzai

Malala Yousafzai is an 18-year-old Pakistani Pashtun school girl and the youngest ever Noble Prize laureate. She is recognised for her education and women's rights activism in the Swat Valley, where the Taliban had at times not only banned girls from attending school but also burned and blown up more than hundred girl's schools (Lodhi, 2010). In 2009, Malala started writing blog for BBC Urdu Service when her parents were approached by a local BBC reporter in the Swat valley to write about the life under the Taliban. Due to the fear of Taliban, no one agreed upon to raise their voice against the Taliban; however, Malala Yousafzai, a seventh-grade student, showed her interest to write the post for BBC Urdu Service (Peer, 2012).

As the father of Malala Yousafzai was extremely concerned about her daughter's safety and security, the local BBC editors advised her to use a pen name as "Gul

Makai" (corn flower). On 3 January 2009, BBC Urdu posted her first blog that later made her famous (Ali, 2012). After the blogs, Malala got fame, gave few interviews to newspapers and on television channels. She was given Pakistan's first National Peace Award for Youth, which now has the award named after her. She was also nominated for the International Children's Peace Prize by Archbishop, Desmond Tutu (Khan, 2011).

On 9 October 2012, Malala was attacked by Taliban and received three bullets in her neck and head by the Taliban gunmen while returning home after taking an exam on a school bus in Mingora. Her friends, Shazia Ramzan and Kainat Riaz, also got injured in the attack. Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) spokesman, Ehsanullah Ehsan, claimed that his group was behind her attempt of assassination. Speaking by telephone from an undisclosed location, he said "We carried out this attack and if anybody who speaks against us will be attacked in the same way". The militants said that they had attacked Malala because she was having anti-Taliban mindset and American President Barak Obama was her favorite personality. Furthermore, they claimed that Malala was giving projection to the Western culture among innocent people (Malik, 2012).

Soon after the attack, she was airlifted to a military hospital in Peshawar. After a long operation, bullets were successfully removed from the shoulder near her spinal cord and doctors decided to shift her to Armed Forces Institute of Cardiology

(AFIC) in Rawalpindi. Several hospitals around the globe offered to provide best medical treatment to Malala. On 15 October 2012, she was shifted to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham for further medical treatment (Yousafzai, 2012).

Pakistani Taliban and their Ideology

Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is called the 'Pakistani Taliban' which is the largest militant group in Pakistan. It is an umbrella organisation of different extremist militant groups based in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) beside the Pak-Afghan border. Most Pakistani radical Islamic factions are united under the flag of TTP (Abbas, 2008). In December 2007, around forty leading militants throughout Pakistan and few tribal elders organised a meeting and selected Baitullah Mehsud as the soul leader of TTP. At the time of its formation, the overall strength of TTP was about 40,000-50,000. The main objectives of TTP were to fight against the Pakistani state and put maximum pressure to enforce their own ideology of religion in Pakistan (Yousafzai, 2008).

In an interview, Baitullah Mehsud confessed that Al Qaeda played a pivotal role in the formation of TTP indirectly. According to him, development of TTP was postponed due to some disputes in uniting the local militants, and the financial assistance needed from Uzbek and Arabs rebels. Al Qaeda not only provides funds to TTP but also helps in training and planning how to attack in the groups (Khan, 2010).

The government of Pakistan blamed TTP for their involvement in the assassination of Benazir Bhutto. American intelligence agency (CIA) also established the allegations with certain evidence and blamed Baitullah Mehsud but TTP contradicted about their involvement (Laura, 2009). In 2009, TTP leader, Baitullah Mehsud, was killed in an American drone strike. Hakimullah Mehsud, the first cousin of Baitullah Mehsud, was named as his successor. Hakimullah Mehsud became prominent in the early 2008 when he was commanding Sunni militants to fight against Shia militants in Hangu district and Kurram agency. In October 2008, he masterminded a suicide attack on a jirga that resulted in the killing of over fifty tribal leaders. In the beginning of December 2008, he started launching raids and burning many trucks containing food items and arms supplies for the NATO forces in Afghanistan (Walsh, 2009).

In 2007, after the Lal Masjid siege, TTP formed an alliance with Maulana Fazlullah's Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM), a banned Islamic militant group allied to the Pakistani Taliban. Maulana Fazlullah is the son-in-law of the TNSM's founder, Sufi Muhammad and famous as "Mullah Radio" (Roggio, 2009).

Maulana Fazlullah, with the help of Taliban and his followers, got controlled over Swat and his followers quickly set up the Sharia Courts as the primary judicial courts and denied the Pakistani National Judicial Courts. He banned music, dancing and forcefully closed music and computer shops and called it major sources of sin.

He threatened barbers not to shave their customers' beards and also warned against girls attending schools (Athar, 2007). Fazlullah opposed polio vaccination campaign and claimed that it is a scheme of the Christians and Jews to keep Muslims impotent. They made Hijab compulsory for women and banned male tailors of taking measurements of female bodies and even sewing their clothes. Women must be accompanied by men while going out of their home, otherwise will be punished (Yousafzai, 2007).

In May 2009, Pakistan Army launched an operation known as Operation Rah-e-Rast in the Swat valley to control the Swat district and eradicate the insurgency of TTP in the area. The first battle of Swat known as Operation Rahe-e-Nijat ended with a peace agreement, generally criticised in the western countries, which the Pakistani government had signed with the Taliban in February 2009. However, at the end of April 2009, the Pakistani government started a military operation against the Taliban, and Maulana Fazlullah, along with other militants, fled from the Swat valley and hid in the areas of Nuristan and Kunar in Afghanistan (Abbas, 2008; Ansari, 2011).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The media have the power to provide change in perceptions through empowering the masses with knowledge and information (Razi, 2014). The media have the power to alter the world and viewpoints and lay the societal concepts and its every aspect; thus, media's arguments are essential (Hall,

1975). The emphasis is on performing all the necessary media functions morally, with functions such as informing, educating, entertaining and influencing the masses morally towards the media (Yousafzai, 2007). Press is generally considered as the most accountable and authentic source of the media of mass communication, and is even considered more authentic than the other mass media such as the electronic, while press has an important function of highlighting critical or burning issues both national and international (Hassam et al., 2013). The organisation of the editorials revolves around three parts. First is the definition of the situation, followed by the summary of the issue and evaluation of the entire situation, and finally offering realistic, logical and practical conclusions, solutions, suggestions and recommendations (Van Dijk, 1992). In this context, the English press in Pakistan has been considered as effective in performing their functions, transmission of messages, information, views, perceptions, etc., all over the country since long (Rafiq, 2007).

There can not be two opinions about the importance of editorials. The editorials help in forming and shaping the ideology and perception of readers (Hall, 1996). The central role of editorials is to express and persuade through communicating of opinion (Van Dijk, 1996). Editorials form the greater ideological stand of any newspaper's owners and managers (Henry & Tator, 2002). Through editorials, the newspapers have the chance to communicate with the readers by commenting on different issues

(Reath, 2002). The Pakistani print media covered some major issues in the past. The question is, "Are these presentations ethical?" In order to grab readers' attention, the print media in Pakistan are seen to adopt a model "Hedonism model" which says "Do what feels good whatever cost might be" (Hassam et al., 2013). The newspapers are influenced commercially with newspaper policies according to the government and financiers. The News, Dawn, The Nation and Daily Times have private ownership and are influenced by the government as they are dependent on the government for advertisements to an extent (Tawab, 2000). According to Bernard Cohen (1963), the idea of the agenda setting and media framing is a means of producing a lasting effect on the masses which is simply a list of issues to give priority causing the public to recognise the issues being selected by the media as important and critical for the knowledge of the public (Kosicki, 1993).

The media not only give the masses the knowledge and information about issues but also the masses get the idea of the amount of worth to place on any issue due to the exposure given by the media to that particular issue. Op-eds are the sections for supporting ideas and supporting debating on important issues. Currently, Pakistani editorials function in the manner that they are the places where newspapers speak out their viewpoints on the most pertinent issues the nation encounters while performing their functions to influence the public and the government who have the knowledge of the issue and the viewpoint and understand the

viewpoint as realistic (Rafiq, 2007; Hassam et al., 2013).

Editorials force the readers to understand that the suggestions made must be heeded upon and implemented. A number of anonymous editorial writers write the editorials and these editorials depict steady viewpoints about each subject, thus predicting to the readers the stand of the newspaper towards any subject (Shoeb, 2008). Pakistani press today holds a big media scene in terms of mushrooming and growth (Hijab, 2010). The readers have restricted ways to witness events as they happen naturally, and they depend on the media for their source of knowledge. Thus, catering to their needs and desires of the knowledge of affairs of the globe out of reach of the human eye, the media's function in this regard becomes crucial in providing news and information to the audience, as well as in influencing and persuading them through media framing in term of what to reveal to the audience. After the introduction of cable TV, newspapers developed a competition with the TV and in order to maintain and attract readership, adopted television's belligerent and bold style without giving heed to the ethical standards and code of conduct, thus ignoring the earlier concepts of ethical and objective ways. This gives birth to the antagonistic, brittle and popular style of representation, making news as opinionated with the media professionals instead of objective adopt subjective means in portraying events (Jan *et al.*, 2013).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study utilised media framing as a means of assessing the results taken from the data. In social sciences, framing comprises a set of concepts and theoretical perspectives on how individuals, groups and societies perceive, organise and communicate about the reality. Framing involves the social construction of a social phenomenon by mass media sources, political or social movements, political leaders, or other actors and organisations. It is an inevitable process of selective influence over the individual's perception of the meanings attributed to words or phrases. It is generally considered in one of two ways: as frames in thought, consisting of the mental representations, interpretations, and simplifications of reality, and frames in communication, consisting of the communication of frames between different actors (Druckman, 2001).

Historically, news media have gathered and disseminated news for public consumption. Tuchman (1978) wrote that "the news aims to tell us what we want to know, need to know, and should know" (p. 1). Framing is the act of highlighting certain aspects of a story to allow for interpretation and context, thus making an event or story more understandable for the audience (Entman, 2004; McQuail, 2005). Framing is the act defining issues typically by elites for public consumption and disseminating these definitions through the use of mass media (Berinsky & Kinder, 2006).

While a vast body of framing literature exists, Entman's (1993) definition of framing is used as the groundwork for

this study. Entman wrote, "to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem, definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (p. 52).

People perceive and select certain aspects of those perceived reality to focus on different issues and events. The concept of Entman is very much appropriate in analysing the editorials of newspapers because they define and highlight the issue, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and at the end suggest some remedies and also predict their likely effects. In this way, framing makes an issue very important and provides different aspects which people can easily understand and digest.

Salience also refers to the act of making one piece of information more memorable or meaningful (Entman, 1993). By focusing the audience on salient pieces of information, it is therefore easier to apply an overarching theme to the entire story. The news' frame helps to organise information as it applies to everyday reality (Tuchman, 1978).

A seminal work by Goffman (1974) identified the primary framework as the act of taking seemingly meaningless information and making it into something meaningful. One can view framing in communication as positive or negative depending on the audience and what kind of information is being presented. Framing might also be understood as being either equivalence frames, which represent

logically equivalent alternatives portrayed in different ways, or as emphasis frames, which simplify reality by focusing on a subset of relevant aspects of a situation or issue. In the case of "equivalence frames", the information being presented is based on the same facts, but the "frame" in which it is presented changes, thus creating a reference-dependent perception (Gamson, 1989; Edelman, 1993; Entman & Rojecki, 1993; Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

METHODOLOGY

This study is a comparative analysis of the four leading Pakistani English language newspapers, *The News*, *Dawn*, *The Nation* and *Daily Times*, to examine the portrayal of Malala Yousafzai after her attempt of assassination and anti-Taliban feeling in Pakistan after the incident. The editorials of the four English newspapers, *The Nation*, *The News*, *Daily Times* and *Dawn* published between 10 October 2012 and 10 November 2012, were selected to examine the frames of the portrayal of Malala Yousafzai and Taliban. This period was considered to be the peak time of the issue, particularly when debate over brutality of Taliban and sympathies with Malala was taking enough space in all media outlets. The sample was selected from the online editions of the respective newspaper's archives. The unit of analysis of this study included all editorials containing word "Malala" in the paragraphs or headlines in newspapers. Thus, a total of 29 editorials (five in *The News*, six in *Dawn*, nine in *Daily Times* and nine in *The Nation*, were analysed. For the data analysis,

a coding sheet was developed giving three categories (Innocent girl, Activist and Courageous) for Malala and three categories (Terrorists, Anti-Development and Fanatics) for Taliban. After reading all the 29 editorials, these categories for Malala and Taliban were selected on the base of multiple frames found in the text. Under Activist, for instance, there were different frames like child activist, social activist, girl’s education activist and human right activist. These newspapers also presented Taliban with different frames like they were written fanatics, bigoted, extremists, opposed progress and development and defy all laws of humanity and religion. After selecting the categories for Malala and Taliban, the researcher counted the frames which were appeared in the text of editorials to represent the above said categories.

Courageous in their editorials. The findings showed that Malala Yousafzai, referred to as innocent girl (58.3%) who fought and opposed the Taliban for the girl’s education, was framed more than courageous (25.3%) and activist (17.4%). The researcher used multiple frames for each category. For instance, different frames like brave, outspoken, fighter, anti-Taliban and symbol of resistance were used under the category of Courageous. *The Nation* and *Daily Times* published 9 editorials each during the selected time period and presented Malala more aggressively than *The News* and *Dawn*. The editorial policy of *The News* and *Dawn* was found restrained towards appreciating the bravery of Malala and the brutality of the Taliban. The reason why she was portrayed as courageous was that Malala is the only girl who opposed the Taliban and openly resisted and criticised their mindset regarding the girl’s education and development in the Swat valley. The overall findings showed that she was portrayed positively in the selected newspapers. Due to her courage and social activism, President

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1 shows that for Malala Yousafzai, the mainstream Pakistani newspapers illustrated multiple frames under three categories of Innocent girl, Activist and

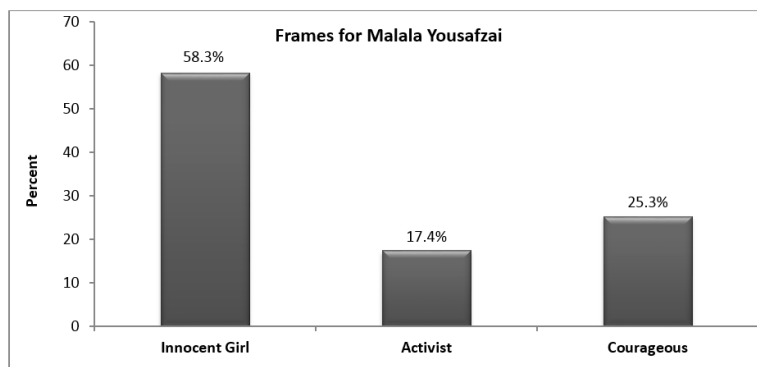


Figure 1. The overall frames for Malala Yousafzai in *The News*, *Dawn*, *Daily Times* and *The Nation* (Oct.10, 2012 to Nov. 10, 2012)

Asif Ali Zardari called Malala Yousafzai “Daughter of Pakistan” who stood tall as a symbol of girls’ education and a symbol of defiance against those who wish to enforce their rigid agenda behind the facade of religion.

Despite the positive framing, some conspiracy theories also abounded since Malala was attacked, with the rumors that this girl who spoke against the Taliban is an American agent and is being used by the US to suit its own purposes. Some voices, even in the parliament, tried to link this incident to the American role in Pakistan or implied that it was Malala’s own fault. Jamiat-e-Ulema-i-Islam (JUI) leader, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, painted this incident as a deception to get support for an army operation in North Waziristan (NW). He clearly claimed that such a military operation in NW would not be allowed under any circumstances. The PML-N in the shape of Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, clearly denied the notion to support any resolution move by the government and its allies regarding

endorsing a military operation in NW. While arguing, PML-N questioned that if the fugitives had come from Afghanistan, there was no logic in sending troops into the North Waziristan area. However, the American Special Envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan Marc Grossman flatly stated that America is in no way pushing Pakistan to take any decision on North Waziristan. He reiterated that the topic of NW was not even under discussion between US and Pakistan.

Figure 2 shows that for Taliban, the Pakistani English newspapers also illustrated multiple frames under three categories of Terrorists, Anti-development and Fanatics in their editorials. The findings revealed that the Taliban were portrayed Fanatics (48.2%) more than terrorists (38.5%) and anti-development (14.3%). The findings showed that the selected newspapers presented and framed Taliban negatively. According to Entman’s concept of framing, the perceived social reality of the Taliban being hardliners towards girl’s right to be educated, was very much highlighted and discussed in the editorials. There were

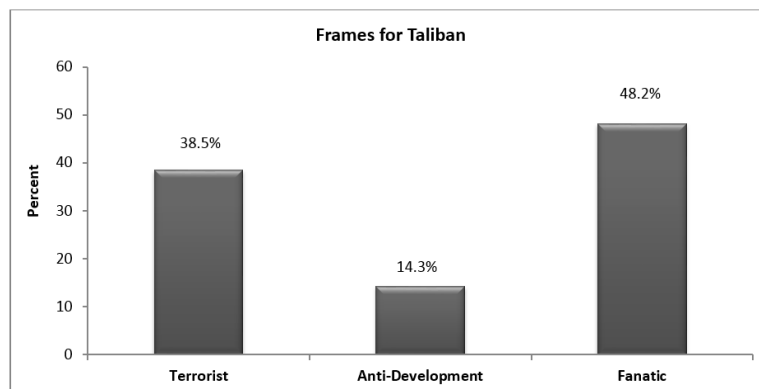


Figure 2. The overall frames for the Taliban in The News, Dawn, Daily Times and The Nation (Oct. 10, 2012 to Nov. 10, 2012)

different viewpoints and interpretations about the religious ideology of the Taliban in Pakistan and they used to be discussed in the media. Now, however, the people in Pakistan feel that they are a group of people who call themselves Muslims and want to impose the Shariah law in the country; in reality, they defy all the laws of humanity and religion. They do not favour girls' right to be educated as well. *The Nation* was found more critical than other newspapers pertaining to the brutality of the Taliban. It used negative frames for the Taliban's anti-social activities as it had to maintain its posture being politically active and radicalised media in the system.

Daily Times had somehow contradictory stance from *The Nation* that was not in different direction from that followed by *The News*. The perceived status and positions of the newspapers, however, played an active role in helping them to maintain their stance in the issue. The selected frames of both the newspapers were not very different from each other but the overall construction and context of course was at extreme poles. Although *The News* and *Dawn* are said to be very open and critical about the Taliban and their mindset, in the case of Malala Yousafzai, both the newspaper's editorial policy was found indisposed to criticise and condemn.

While analysing the editorial contents of all the selected national dailies, it can be calculated that *The News*, *Daily Times*, *Dawn* and *The Nation* presented the Taliban negatively and in different contexts. *The News* and *The Nation* appreciated the stand

of a key political leaders of country who condemned the Taliban's anti-development activities against girl's schools and branding them as un-Islamic. *Dawn* considers them as a threat, particularly to the safety of the people in the Swat valley and people of other areas of Pakistan in general. *Daily Times* considers Taliban as a threat to the social and political system and not a danger having potential of crossing Pakistan's borders. All the selected newspapers raised apprehensions that the troops deployed in the Swat valley since 2007 have been unable to close the banned communication channels like radio station used very efficiently by the local militant leaders like Maulana Fazalullah to spread his twisted ideology of the religion in the region.

On the other hand, TTP released a statement by using Shariah to support and defend their attack on Malala. They claimed that although Islam does not permit attacks on women, whoever initiates campaign against Shariah and Islam is ordered to be killed by Shariah. It is a very clear command of Shariah that any female playing a role in "war against mujahedeen" should be killed. We are against co-education education system and Shariah orders us to be against it. The Taliban further justified with a threat that if anyone thinks that Malala is targeted due to her education, that is completely incorrect and is a propaganda by the media. She is attacked because of her pioneer role in preaching secularism and so-called enlightened moderation. And, whoever will commit so in the future too will be targeted again by the TTP (Ron, 2012).

CONCLUSION

This article has presented a comparative analysis of 29 editorials regarding the attack on Malala Yousafzai by the Taliban which appeared in four leading Pakistani English newspapers; *The News*, *Dawn*, *Daily Times* and *The Nation*. The purpose for this study was to investigate the portrayal of Malala Yousafzai after her attempt of assassination by the Taliban in Swat. The study also examined how the Taliban were presented in the selected newspapers after the incident. The findings revealed that after her attempt of assassination, Malala Yousafzai was framed and presented more as an innocent girl who opposed the Taliban and their mindset against the girl's education in the Swat valley. She was called the "daughter of Pakistan" by President Asif Ali Zardari and due to her bravery, November 10, 2012 was celebrated as the Malala Day throughout the world. Some negative framing was also observed as she was called an American agent, who was being used by the US to suit its own interests in Pakistan. The findings also illustrated that the attack on Malala Yousafzai made the Taliban unpopular in Pakistan. They were presented as a group of people who are against progress, development and modernisation in the region and disobey all the laws of humanity and religion. They were portrayed as fanatics more than terrorists and anti-development. The killing of innocent people in series of suicide bombing across the country and bombing of girl's schools in the Swat valley by Taliban have created a change of mind among the people who believe that

such brutality has nothing to do with the religion of Islam but the acts of terrorism by certain fanatics using the name of Islam. This incident not only presented the Taliban negatively but also earned a bad name for Pakistan as well.

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