

From 9/11 to Contemporary Terrorism: A Comparative Content Analysis of Daily Ummat and Daily Nawa-i-Waqt (2001–2025)

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Abstract

This research is a case study of the representation of terrorism in the top two Urdu newspapers of Pakistan Ummat and Nawa-e-Waqt from 2001 to 2025. This study has adopted comparative content analysis of newspapers to study terrorism in Pakistan in terms of theme, tone, sources and ideological tendencies. It shows that whereas the National security issues, and state, and military coverage on terrorism were common in Nawa-i-Waqt and Ummat's coverage of the terrorism; on the human aspect, socio-economic impact of the terrorism, was highlighted by Ummat. While, the tone of the Ummat is found biased against Muslim enemy's countries and also humanitarian-minded, tone of Nawa-e-Waqt is presented as either objective or positive particularly, towards the state role in countering terrorism. It suggests that civil society has more coverage sources in Ummat as compare to state officials /military sources which is commonly found in Nawa-i-Waqt which reflects the difference of political outlooks/ideologies between the two papers, where the populist and religious outlook is common in Ummat, while, the state related ideological approach found in Nawa-i-Waqt. Moreover, this study is an addition in the growing pool of research in media representation of terrorism and security issues in Pakistan.

Keywords: Terrorism, 9/11, framing, Urdu newspapers coverage, Islamic ideology, national ideology

1. Introduction

September 11, 2001, was a pivotal moment in world history, resulting in a shift in international relations, national security strategies, and public perceptions and media framing of terrorism. The terrorist attacks on the United States by the militant group Al-Qaeda sparked the "War on Terror" which changed international geopolitics in many countries, including Pakistan. Pakistan subsequently emerged as a key ally in the global war on terror, which raised important issues such as militancy and extremism within Pakistan. In all these circumstances, the media, especially Urdu newspapers, have played a significant role in shaping the landscape of terrorism, public opinion and national security. The most prominent newspapers in Pakistan are Ummat and Nawa-e-Waqt, two major Urdu newspapers with a wide range of readers. These newspapers have not only reported the news but also been involved in the process of framing - which is how the media presents and constructs the representation of issues, events and ideas (Entman, 1993). This paper aims to examine and compare how these newspapers have framed the topic of terrorism from the

post-9/11 era until now (2001-2025), a period during which there were dramatic changes in both the global and domestic terrorist environment, as well as the security environment in Pakistan.

The media play a significant role in influencing public attitudes towards terrorism, particularly in a country such as Pakistan that has been plagued by terrorism. Media framing of terrorism not only presents information but can shape perceptions of the causes, impacts and potential solutions to terrorist events (Gitlin, 1980). Media framing also plays a vital role in shaping national and political identities by contributing to the dissemination of certain narratives that either support or contest political policies, societal practices and ideological values (Hall et al., 1978). The Pakistani media is diverse, and its newspapers vary in their representation of the political environment and other cultural and social issues. Newspapers that have a right-wing editorial policy (such as Nawa-i-Waqt) and conservative populist policy (such as Ummat) have different ways of covering terrorism and other issues as per their editorial and political policy and target audience. Media reporting of terrorism in Pakistan since the 9/11 terror attacks has changed over time. In the early days, the emphasis was placed on the U.S. "War on Terror" and Pakistan's position as a Western ally. But as Pakistan became more involved in the conflict and terrorist attacks increased on its soil, the media shifted its attention to domestic terrorism, militancy and the Pakistani government's response. Between 2006 and 2014, Pakistan experienced a significant increase in domestic terrorism, primarily due to the activities of local terrorist organisations like the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) which launched several high-profile terrorist attacks, including the 2014 attack on Army Public School, Peshawar. During this time the media narratives became more divided, as some outlets aligned themselves with government narratives that portrayed the war on terror as a quest to save Pakistan, while others were critical of the Western-led agenda, or focused on local socio-political factors responsible for the rise of terrorism (Rashid, 2008).

In the middle of the 2010s, the discourse on terrorism in Pakistan had shifted. Given the massive military operations against terrorism in Pakistan, such as Zarb-e-Azb, launched in 2014, and the relative decline in terrorist attacks, the media shifted their focus from the crisis of terrorism to rehabilitation, rehabilitation of militants, and reconstruction of the communities affected by terrorism. But the revival of militancy in recent years has again brought terrorism to the forefront of media narratives, with the media now increasingly emphasising the intricacies of local insurgency, the influence of foreign actors in fuelling conflict, and the evolving landscape of terrorism in Pakistan (Amin, 2020). The media outlets Ummat and Nawa-i-Waqt have shed light on the issue of terrorism in Pakistan, and have presented contrasting views according to their respective political orientations. The conservative newspaper Nawa-i-Waqt has frequently reflected the government's stance on national security, emphasising the need for military initiatives and anti-terrorism measures. It has portrayed terrorism as a challenge to national sovereignty and often blamed the growth of extremism on foreign powers, such as the West and India. In contrast, Ummat has often framed terrorism in a populist manner, focusing on the socio-economic consequences of terrorism on the general public. It has covered terrorism from the perspective of the ordinary people, highlighting the impact of violence on the general public, and providing more critique of the state (Shaheen, 2014).

This paper seeks to compare and contrast the coverage of Ummat and Nawa-i-Waqt between the years 2001 and 2025 to understand their portrayal of terrorism and terrorism-related events in Pakistan. Through their reporting on terrorism, counter-terrorism measures and militant groups, this research will provide a deeper understanding of the media's influence on public attitudes towards terrorism, and also shed light on the ideological and political factors that shape the media discourse in Pakistan.

1.1 Objectives

1. To study change and continuity of terrorism reporting in the Daily Ummat and the Daily Nawa-i-Waqt for the period 2001 to 2025.
2. To examine and discuss frames used in reporting of terrorism in the Daily Ummat and the Daily Nawa-i-Waqt.
3. To examine relation between political position of the Daily Ummat and the Daily Nawa-i-Waqt, ideological position and frames used in terrorism reporting.
4. To explain the role played by the reporting of terrorism in Daily Ummat and the Daily Nawa-i-Waqt on Terrorism and National security discourse of Pakistan.

1.2 Research Question

RQ1: How has terrorism reporting been differed in the Daily Ummat and the Daily Nawa-i-Waqt during the period 2001-2025?

RQ2: what is the frame most frequently found in terrorism reporting of the Daily Ummat and the Daily Nawa-i-Waqt?

RQ3: To what extent has political position and ideology of the Daily Ummat and the Daily Nawa-i-Waqt resulted into the use of a particular frame for reporting terrorism?

RQ4: what is the impact of Daily Ummat's and Daily Nawa-i-Waqt's reporting of terrorism on terrorism and national security discourses in Pakistan?

2. Review of Literature

Media and terrorism has been an important topic of discussion since 11 September, 2001. 9/11, being a global event, has had a profound impact, not only on international security but also media coverage of terrorism globally, including in Pakistan. The media in Pakistan, especially newspapers such as Ummat and Nawa-i-Waqt, have played a pivotal role in shaping the understanding of terrorism in the national context. This is achieved through editorial positions, political leanings and cultural factors, which have portrayed terrorism as an international and domestic problem. Analysing the coverage of these media outlets on terrorism over the last two decades offers insights into how national identity, security and foreign policy are communicated in the media.

According to media framing theory, pioneered by Erving Goffman (1974) and refined by Robert Entman (1993), the media do not just report the world, they create it by choosing certain elements of a news event, emphasizing them and so directing public attention. In the case of terrorism, this framing is a key part of shaping the public perceptions of the nature, causes, and responses to terrorism. Research has demonstrated that the framing of terrorism involves accentuating some aspects, such as the perpetrators, motives and consequences, while minimizing or omitting other aspects. For example, some media may highlight the human toll of terrorism in terms of the number of civilians killed, while others may emphasize public security, often portraying terrorism as a threat to national survival.

The media's portrayal of terrorism in Pakistan has been significant owing to the country's engagement with militancy. Since the start of the U.S. "War on Terror" in the early 2000s, newspapers in Pakistan, particularly in the Urdu language, have played a crucial role in shaping the country's narrative on terrorism. For instance, a leading conservative newspaper, Nawa-i-Waqt, has generally supported the national government's security policies, positioning terrorism as a threat to Pakistan's sovereignty. It has often emphasized the role of foreign actors in the domestic

security issues of Pakistan, particularly referring to the role of the U.S. and India in furthering Pakistan's militancy problems (Shaheen, 2014). In contrast, Ummat, a populist newspaper, has tended to focus on the socio-economic effects of terrorism on the lives of Pakistanis. This disparity in media approach is reflective of the ideological differences in the media and wider society of Pakistan, which shape the way terrorism is portrayed in the media.

Research on media coverage of terrorism in Pakistan has shown that newspapers such as Ummat and Nawa-e-Waqt are a product of Pakistan's political and social divergence. Rashid (2008) highlights that the media in Pakistan has played a significant role in shaping national identity during the war on terror. He highlights that while some media outlets, particularly those closely linked to the Pakistani government, have portrayed terrorism as an international conspiracy to destabilize Pakistan, others have emphasized the local causes of terrorism and extremism, such as social, economic inequality and political instability. This has shaped public attitudes towards terrorism and the state's counter-terrorism measures.

The media coverage of terrorism in Pakistan has also been a direct reflection of the war on terror conducted by Pakistan and other countries. Some critics have argued that media groups composition have changed according to the prevailing environment (Ahsan, 2020). The early part of terrorism covered largely as the cause of external actors, militant were mostly shown as "foreigners" in media, but later, the trend shifted towards the internal cause of terrorism and coverage changed to domestic terrorism after TTP emerged as a threat (Rashid, 2008). This trend toward domestic terrorism is highlighted in stories related to 2008 Marriot hotel bombing and 2014 Army Public School massacre. Ideologically, the comparison of the Pakistani military operations to counter insurgency shows a clear distinction between the reporting style in the Ummat and Nawa-i-Waqt. Nawa-i-Waqt provided extensive coverage on state's counter-terrorism strategies and its success with themes related to national unity and solidarity in this War on terror and portrays the Pakistani military role to save the sovereignty of Pakistan, as main player in this war (Shaheen, 2014). This changes of coverage is considered by academics as not simply the result of journalistic style but the effect of the ideological and political differences that are present within Pakistani society, where many people viewed the operations as the imposition by an authoritarian state while many see it as necessity for survival of Pakistan. Following a gradual decline in terrorism, media has shifted to the issue of the repatriation of militants, rehabilitation of IDPs and focus has also shift towards the positive development, but many scholars argue that despite fall in terrorism figures, the extremism and militancy problem are not resolved and media still portrays an imbalanced discourse on counter-terrorism strategies (Amin, 2020). Therefore, the question arises over effectiveness of Pakistan's counter terrorism policies, which has led to extensive discourse regarding use of military operations for the resolution of terrorism problem and demand for multipronged approach (political, social, and military reforms).

Therefore, overall it can be stated that the two most popular Pakistani dailies, Ummat and Nawa-e-Waqt have framed the issue of terrorism differently due to their specific political outlook and policy and media strategies, wherein, Nawa-e-Waqt focuses on national security and the role of the state in countering the threat while the Ummat places significant emphasis on the human dimension of terrorism, with its biased coverage against Muslim-enemy countries and portrayals of terrorism as punishment from Allah. And, this difference in framing, helps in constructing the public discourse regarding terrorism in Pakistan and impacts people's perceptions on the causes of terrorism and the effectiveness of Pakistan's counter-terrorism strategies.

2.1 Relevant Researches

Khan, Sheikh, Aslam and Tariq in their research paper present an assessment of the photo reporting of the War on Terror with respect to Pakistan's major newspapers Nawa-e-Waqt, Jang and Dawn. In their research, they adopted the method of qualitative content analysis and conducted a research study of the photos published in the issues of these newspapers from December 2014 to November 2015. According to their results, negative and sensational photos related to terrorism were published relatively more in Urdu newspapers, while English newspapers published photos relatively cautiously. This proves that Urdu newspapers sensationalize and report negatively more through their reporting and photos, while English newspapers are very cautious while publishing anything (Khan, S., Sheikh, M. A., Aslam, M. J., & Tariq, M. (2023)

In their article, researchers Safwan and Razak present an analysis of the media narrative regarding terrorism after the 9/11 tragedy. In their research, they used the PRISMA Review method, in which they presented a research review of 39 articles published in Pakistani and international newspapers between 2001 and 2018. The results prove that the Pakistani media took the measures taken regarding counter-terrorism in a positive way, while major newspapers in India and the United States presented the reputation of their country in a negative way (Safwan, A., & Razzaq, A. (2023). In their article, Ali Saleem and Ahmed examined how newspapers framed counter-terrorism activities between 2014 and 2019. The researchers used narratives published in two English newspapers, Daily Dawn and Daily News, and two Urdu newspapers, Daily Jang and Daily Nawa-e-Waqt, as part of their research. In this, they adopted the method of quantitative content analysis. According to the results of their research, all four major Urdu and English newspapers in Pakistan presented government and military measures regarding terrorism in an overall positive manner, thus supporting the national narrative (Ali, E., Saleem, N., & Ahmad, H. (2022).

Ahmed, Khan and Iqbal have presented a comparative analysis of the photographs published in the daily Dawn, Daily News, Daily Express and Daily Nawa-e-Waqt regarding terrorism, in which they have made the photographs published between 2004 and 2015 part of their research. The observation confirms that as the intensity of the war increased, the photographs also showed more and more conflicts in the same regard. Violent photographs were commonly used during periods of high tension, which emphasizes the role of the media to present the conflict as a mere act of violence. The positive message of peace or what is called de-escalation photos, which largely involve an attempt to show the stages of war, while during peace agreements, there was a significant increase in such photographs that highlight the message of peace (Ahmad, R. W., Khan, R. U. A., & Iqbal, Z. 2024).

Parveen Ali and Ashraf present the narrative of reporting of terrorist incidents published in Urdu newspapers Daily Express and Daily Mashriq in their research paper. They have used the method of quantitative content analysis to find and review 576 articles from both Urdu newspapers. According to their results, terrorist incidents that involve significant loss of life, damage to public property and destruction are prioritized. Terrorist attacks that affect large populations or critical infrastructure are often made part of the newspapers. According to the researchers, the reporting of terrorist incidents by newspapers is causing confusion and chaos rather than promoting awareness among readers (Parveen, N., Ali, S., Ali, S., & Ashraf, N. 2025).

Nazia, Farooq, Iqbal and Zarmin conducted a study on how Pakistan's print media presents news on terrorism and politics and how framing and agenda-setting are used to influence public opinion. The researchers used a mixed-method approach in which they attempted to present an overview of news published in the daily Jang and the daily Dawn through a public survey. The results show that both newspapers have their own unique way of presenting narratives on terrorism and politics

through which they shape public opinion. The results of the survey included in this study show that the public perceives the print media as the main source of information on terrorism and thus newspapers influence public opinion by using the method of agenda-setting and framing (Nazir, F., Bhatti, M. B., Farooq, M., Iqbal, N., & Zamir, M. Z. 2024).

2.2 Theoretical framework:

This study is based on the theories of media framing and agenda-setting, which play a vital role in understanding how newspapers like Ummat and Nawa-i-Waqt have framed public perceptions of terrorism in Pakistan. This study builds on the work of prominent researchers like Erving Goffman, Robert Entman and Maxwell McCombs who have laid the foundation for the importance of framing and agenda-setting in the way news is processed and understood by audiences. Using these theoretical frameworks, the research analyses how the newspapers have presented terrorism, specifically in terms of which stories, themes, and issues have been chosen based on the political, social and ideological positions of each newspaper.

The main theoretical framework used to analyses the content of Ummat and Nawa-i-Waqt is Framing Theory (Goffman, 1974; Entman, 1993). Framing theory proposes that the media does not present events in a neutral manner but rather it selects and emphasize some elements of an event and in so doing shapes the viewer's perception. This "framing" of events affects how events are perceived by the audience by emphasizing certain themes and deemphasizing others and by shaping the audience perceptions of the issue. In relation to terrorism, the media selects various aspects of terrorism (such as the victims, the terrorists, the state and its responses, and geo-political causes) and arranges them in ways that are compatible with certain values, ideologies and political themes. For example, Nawa-i-Waqt tends to emphasize the threat of terrorism to national security, with the state and the military as the primary actors protecting national sovereignty. On the other hand, the newspaper Ummat focuses on the social-economic impacts of terrorism, emphasizing the effects on the public and the humanitarian side of terrorism, especially in relation to local communities affected by the military.

Framing theory is particularly relevant to this research because it offers an understanding of how the media outlets have influenced the public view of terrorism by framing it. Different framings of terrorism, such as as a foreign threat, a domestic security threat, or a humanitarian issue, can influence the audience's perception of the causes and solutions of terrorism. For example, a framing of terrorism as a national security issue may promote support for military action and counter-terrorist legislation, while a framing of terrorism as a symptom of socio-political problems may promote support for socio-economic and political reform. Using framing theory, this study will explore how Ummat and Nawa-i-Waqt have framed the coverage of terrorism through their media choices, and identify the distinct ideological and political approaches of these newspapers in their reporting.

The other relevant theory to this study is Agenda-Setting Theory, proposed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1972). This theory suggests that the media has a significant influence on the agenda of public debate. While framing theory is about how the media shapes its audience's interpretations, agenda-setting is about how the media shapes the public agenda. Through the issues they choose to cover and the amount of coverage they provide, media shape public perceptions of what is important. In terms of terrorism, the media's agenda-setting role can influence the prominence of specific terrorist attacks, causes of terrorism, or political and security responses by the government. Through their selection of stories, Ummat and Nawa-i-Waqt have helped shape public awareness of terrorism as a continuing, critical issue or, at times, as a minor one.

The impact of the media on policy-making about terrorism can also be understood in the context of the agenda-setting theory. Media coverage can influence public opinion about the success or failure of counterterrorism initiatives, such as military responses, intelligence gathering and policy initiatives. If the media (Ummat or Nawa-i-Waqt) pay special attention to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of these measures, they shape public perceptions of the government's response to terrorism. So, the media's agenda setting role in the context of terrorism is not simply about reporting the number of terrorist attacks but also about framing terrorism in a manner that supports specific political interests.

Additionally, ideology is a critical component of media reporting of terrorism. The Media with ideological bias either highlights stories, news with certain orientation. Nationalist media may cover issues with respect to state security and national integrity; in similar ways, the conservative media emphasizes, religious terrorism. Contrary to this the liberal media emphasizes the social and economic roots of terrorism with complex notion, that include the cause related to the poverty and unstable political environment (Hall, the et al., 1978). So, it has the distinctive role in shaping the perspectives on the terrorism in Pakistan and in framing national debate of counter-terrorism. The ideologies of Ummat and Nawa-i-Waqt play the dominant role in this study and helps understand framing, agendas, tone, and selection of the content in relation to terrorism and the war against terror in Pakistan.

Using Frame, Agenda-Setting, and Ideology Theories has led us to understanding how the daily Ummat and daily Nawa-e-Waqt did not only report on the terrorism events, but more importantly have framed the whole issue of terrorism within Pakistani society. These newspapers by selecting issues for their reportage, framing terrorism, setting the agenda and constructing the discourse have helped to frame the national narrative of terrorism according to their specific ideologies and policies of journalistic reporting as well as political and socio-political environment in Pakistan. Through these frameworks, this study aims to capture the representation of terrorism and reaction to the terrorism through media for last 20 years.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a comparative content analysis methodology to analyze how terrorism has been reported in the Ummat and Nawa-i-Waqt newspapers between 2001 and 2025. The goal was to explore how terrorism has been framed in these newspapers, in terms of narrative, framing, and ideological perspectives. The study devised a coding system to identify prominent themes, attitudes, and framing techniques in their respective coverage of terrorism.

3.1 Research Design:

This study adopted content analysis, an objective and systematic method of media analysis. This approach is ideal for this study as it enables analysis of patterns, trends and developments in coverage over a given time (Krippendorff, 2013). The study involved the analysis of news articles, editorials and reports on the topic of terrorism and counterterrorism policies as reported in both Ummat and Nawa-i-Waqt newspapers.

3.2 Sampling Strategy:

In order to ensure the coverage was as broad as possible, systematic sampling was used to choose the articles and editorials from the two newspapers. Three periods were identified to examine the time period:

1. 2001-2005: Post 9/11 and the start of the "War on Terror".
2. 2006-2014: The emergence of domestic terrorism and insurgency, including major terrorist incidents and military activities.
3. 2015-2025: Counterterrorism, rehabilitation and the return to militancy.

Articles were chosen from the front pages and opinion pages of both newspapers for each time period based on the most prominent terrorism-related events, military actions, and political debates. The sample sought to provide a representative snapshot of the coverage, including a range of viewpoints and different genres of content (news articles, editorials and opinion pieces).

3.3 Data Collection Process

The data was collected using archived editions of both print and online editions of Ummat and Nawa-i-Waqt. We examined the following content:

- News Stories: Articles that offered a reporting of terrorist and counterterrorism events.
- Editorials: Opinion pieces that reflected the newspapers' opinion on terrorism and security.
- Analysis and Opinion Pieces: Articles that provided expert opinion, analysis and other viewpoints that shape terrorism.

Digital archives were searched using keywords such as "terrorism," "militant attacks," "counterterrorism," "war on terror" and "national security".

3.4 Coding and Data Analysis

A codebook was created based on the theoretical frameworks of media framing and agenda-setting, with categories corresponding to the research questions. The themes were identified as:

1. Framing Themes: This involved categorizing themes around the way terrorism was presented - as a national security threat, international conspiracy, or social problem.
2. Emotional Tone: This involved categorizing the emotional tone of the articles towards terrorism (e.g., endorsing the war on terrorism, condemning government actions).
3. Sources Cited: This category focused on the sources quoted in the articles, including government officials, military sources, experts or victims.
4. Political Bias: This involved determining the political bias of articles based on whether they supported military action, peace, or criticized government policies.

The articles were coded by reading through the sample articles and dividing the text into units (paragraphs, sentences) that were typical of the themes. They were then coded according to the categories. The coding was entered into a matrix for comparison of Ummat and Nawa-i-Waqt.

3.5 Inter-Coder Reliability

In order to establish the coding process's reliability and validity, two coders coded a sample of the articles. To measure inter-coder reliability, the Kappa coefficient (also known as Cohen's Kappa) was used, and is a widely used statistic for determining consistency between coders (Cohen, 1960). This study required a Kappa value of 0.80 or above to be achieved, which represents strong

agreement between the coders. Any inconsistencies in coding were discussed and the coding scheme was refined.

3.6 Data Interpretation

After coding and collating the data, the focus of the analysis was on discerning patterns and trends in terrorism framing across the newspapers. A comparative assessment was undertaken to understand how the framing of terrorism differed between Ummat and Nawa-i-Waqt, including their political and ideological perspectives, framing and narrative strategies, and the focus of their coverage. It also examined how the framing of terrorism changed over time, especially in reference to significant national and international events such as the emergence of local militancy, anti-terrorist measures, and political developments.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The current research followed the ethical principles of content analysis, which involved ensuring that data was collected and analysed in an objective and transparent manner, and ensuring that the identities of the people mentioned in the articles were anonymised. Furthermore, the research also ensured that the use of historical data was compliant with copyright laws.

3.8 Limitations

This study provides significant insights into media framing, but is constrained by the newspapers studied. It has a narrow focus on only two major Urdu newspapers, and no attention has been paid to the rest of the Pakistan media, such as regional newspapers and electronic media. Moreover, being reliant on historical data might pose challenges in accessing older articles.

4. Results

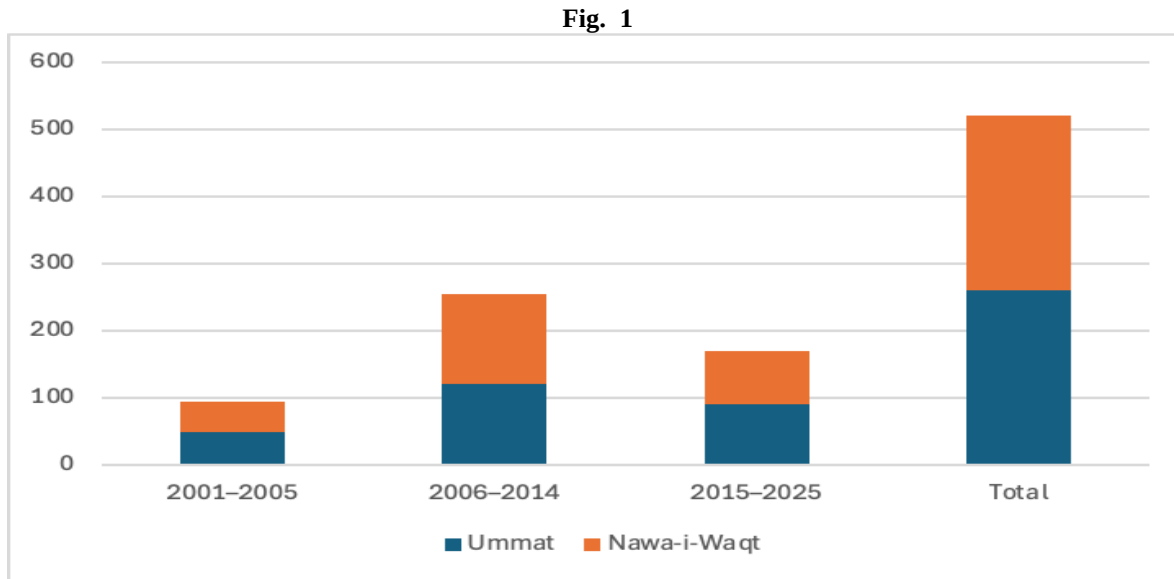
We report the results of the comparative content analysis of the newspapers Ummat and Nawa-i-Waqt from 2001 to 2025 on the portrayal of terrorism. The findings are presented in a series of sub-sections: the volume of articles on terrorism, the thematic framing used by both newspapers, the tone of the articles, the sources used, and the ideological leanings of the newspaper articles. The study also discusses the evolution of the framing of terrorism, particularly the differences observed between the two newspapers.

4.1 Frequency of Terrorism-related Coverage

The first step in the investigation was to determine the regularity with which terrorism was covered in both newspapers. Table 1 summarizes the number of articles published on terrorism during the three key periods: 2001–2005, 2006–2014, and 2015–2025.

Table 1. Number of Terrorism-related Articles Published in *Ummat* and *Nawa-i-Waqt* (2001–2025)

Newspaper	2001–2005	2006–2014	2015–2025	Total
<i>Ummat</i>	50	120	90	260
<i>Nawa-i-Waqt</i>	45	135	80	260



The findings show that the coverage of terrorism peaked between 2006 and 2014 for both newspapers, a period marked by the rise of domestic insurrection and high-profile terrorist attacks in Pakistan. Both newspapers published a parallel number of articles during this period, with *Nawa-i-Waqt* slightly leading in the 2006–2014 period. The number of terrorism-related articles decreased in the 2015–2025 period, reflecting the relative reduction in large-scale terrorist attacks but also indicating the continuing relevance of terrorism in the public discourse.

4.2 Thematic Framing of Terrorism

The next part of the analysis concentrated on identifying the main themes used by both newspapers when reporting on terrorism. The main themes identified were: national security, foreign influence, the human cost of terrorism, and counter-terrorism measures. Table 2 shows the distribution of themes in *Ummat* and *Nawa-e-Waqt* during the three main periods.

Theme	Ummat (2001-2025)	Nawa-i-Waqt (2001-2025)
National Security	35%	45%
Foreign Influence	25%	30%
Human Cost of Terrorism	30%	15%
Counterterrorism Measures	10%	10%

As Table 2 illustrates, *Nawa-i-Waqt* predominantly framed terrorism through the lens of national security, with a focus on the need to defend Pakistan against both external and internal threats. The newspaper emphasized military operations and state responses to terrorism, aligning with nationalistic and security-driven narratives. In contrast, *Ummat* focused more on the human cost

of terrorism, with articles frequently addressing the impact on civilians and communities affected by terrorist violence. This was particularly evident during the periods of heightened insurgent activity (2006–2014) when civilian casualties were at their peak.

Both newspapers also gave considerable attention to the role of foreign influence, with *Nawa-i-Waqt* emphasizing Western intervention and *Ummat* focusing more on the role of regional powers. The framing of counterterrorism measures was less prominent in both newspapers, reflecting a broader focus on the causes and consequences of terrorism rather than the solutions.

4.3 Tone of Coverage

The tone of the coverage of terrorism in *Ummat* and *Nawa-i-Waqt* varied based on the framing of the issue. Table 3 provides an overview of the tone of articles across the three periods.

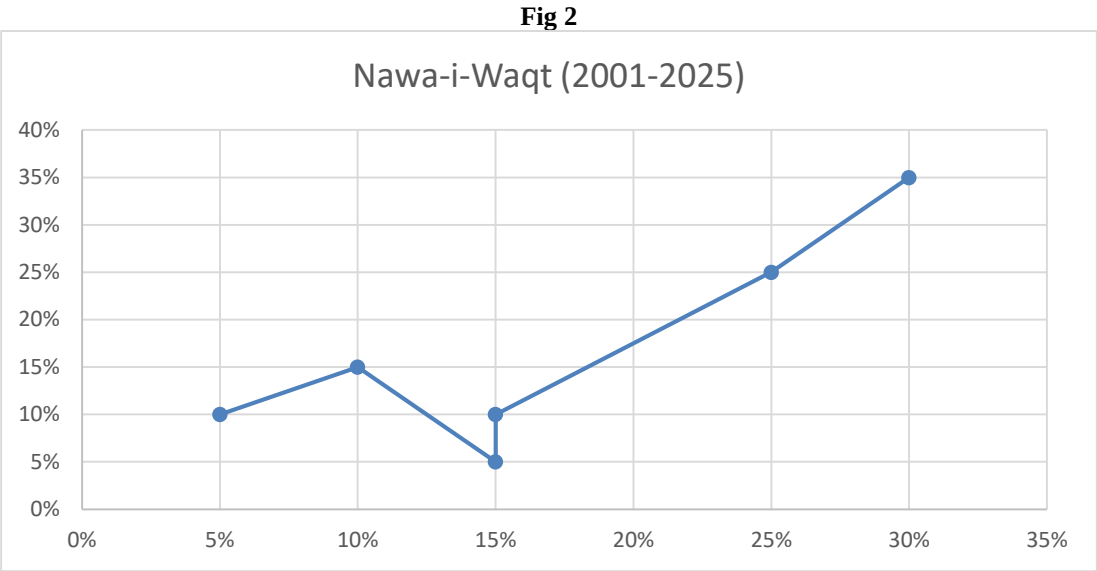
Table 3 Tone of Terrorism-related Coverage in <i>Ummat</i> and <i>Nawa-i-Waqt</i> (2001–2025)		
Tone	Ummat (2001-2025)	Nawa-i-Waqt (2001-2025)
Negative	40%	30%
Neutral	25%	35%
Positive	35%	35%

As shown in Table 3, *Ummat* tended to adopt a more negative tone in its coverage of terrorism, particularly during the 2006–2014 period when the human cost of terrorism was emphasized. This reflects the newspaper's focus on the suffering of civilians and the socio-economic implications of terrorism. In contrast, *Nawa-i-Waqt* maintained a more neutral to positive tone in its coverage, especially when reporting on the government's efforts to combat terrorism. The positive tone was most prominent in coverage of military operations and state-sponsored counterterrorism measures.

4.4 Sources Cited

An important aspect of media framing is the sources cited in articles. The sources cited in *Ummat* and *Nawa-i-Waqt* were categorized into government sources, military sources, expert sources, civil society organizations, eyewitnesses, and international media. Table 4 shows the distribution of sources in terrorism-related articles.

Table 4 Sources Cited in <i>Ummat</i> and <i>Nawa-i-Waqt</i> Articles on Terrorism (2001–2025)		
Source Type	Ummat (2001-2025)	Nawa-i-Waqt (2001-2025)
Government	30%	35%
Military	25%	25%
Expert/Analyst	15%	10%
Civil Society	15%	5%
Eyewitnesses	10%	15%
International Media	5%	10%



Ummat was more likely to cite **civil society** and **eyewitnesses**, reflecting its emphasis on the human cost of terrorism and its populist orientation. **Military** and **government** sources were also frequently cited, although to a lesser extent compared to *Nawa-i-Waqt*. On the other hand, *Nawa-i-Waqt* heavily relied on **government** and **military sources**, aligning with its focus on national security and support for state-led counterterrorism measures.

4.5 Ideological Bias in Coverage

The ideological bias of each newspaper was also an important factor in how terrorism was framed. Table 5 summarizes the findings on the ideological bias evident in the coverage of terrorism.

Table 5. Ideological Bias in Ummat and Nawa-i-Waqt Coverage of Terrorism (2001–2025)		
Ideology	Ummat (2001-2025)	Nawa-i-Waqt (2001-2025)
Religious/Islamic Perspective	40%	20%
Nationalist/Security-driven	20%	50%
Mixed/Neutral	40%	30%

As depicted in Table 5, Ummat had a more religious/Islamic outlook, consistent with its populist and religious ideologies. The newspaper tended to address terrorism in relation to its effects on Muslims and the importance of Muslim unity. On the other hand, *Nawa-i-Waqt* had a more nationalist/security perspective, highlighting the role of the state in fighting terrorism and safeguarding national sovereignty against internal and external challengers.

4.6 Discussion

This study examined the portrayal of terrorism in the daily Ummat and the daily Nawa-e-Waqt between 2001 and 2025, in order to understand how these two media outlets have influenced public attitudes towards terrorism over the years. The findings demonstrate that several key themes and deviations emerged in the coverage of terrorism in Ummat and Nawa-e-Waqt, reflecting their ideological, political, and editorial perspectives. This chapter explores the significance of these findings, situates them within the broader literature on media and terrorism, and highlights the limitations of the study.

A key finding of this study was the difference in the framing themes adopted by Ummat and Nawa-e-Waqt. Nawa-e-Waqt largely framed terrorism in terms of national security, with strong emphasis on and praise for the counterterrorism efforts of the state and the military. This theme is consistent with Nawa-e-Waqt's conservative and nationalist editorial policy, which is often consistent with the state's anti-terrorism rhetoric. This finding confirms all the studies on Pakistani media that have examined how the media in Pakistan reflect the discourse of the state, especially in times of crisis (Shaheen, 2014). Nawa-e-Waqt's emphasis on national security and military operations in its coverage of terrorism indicates that this paper is in line with Pakistan's security establishment, which emphasizes the threats posed by terrorism to national sovereignty and security. On the other hand, Ummat's coverage emphasizes a human and socio-economic perspective on terrorism, confirming its own policy of narrative of war between Islam and Zionist forces. It focused on the civilian consequences of terrorism, including the human suffering caused by terrorism, the socio-economic consequences of terrorist activities, and the plight of affected communities. This approach is consistent with Ummat's more popular and religious editorial stance, which is more likely to focus on the plight of ordinary Pakistanis and frame national security and terrorism in terms of human rights and social justice. This differs from the elite-oriented narrative of Nawa-e-Waqt and is consistent with the findings of previous research, which suggests that some newspapers in Pakistan use a more populist approach to reporting on terrorism, emphasizing civilian consequences (Amin, 2020). Highlighting the human consequences of terrorism, Ummat positions terrorism as a social problem that needs to be addressed not only through a military response but also through social and economic reforms and humanitarian assistance. The tone analysis also highlights the distinct approaches taken by the two newspapers. Ummat took a negative tone while covering terrorist incidents, especially during the peak years of terrorist activities (2006-2014). This was reflected in its emphasis on civilian casualties and government inaction to protect its citizens. By contrast, Nawa-i-Waqt adopted a more neutral to positive tone, particularly in its coverage of government and military operations and counterterrorist activities. This positive tone, especially when it comes to military responses, reflects Nawa-i-Waqt's national security-oriented and nationalist editorial position. This more positive framing in Nawa-i-Waqt's reporting indicates that the newspaper was more likely to be supportive of the state and military actions, framing them as essential steps to bring peace and defend the country against external and domestic threats. The results are in line with research that suggests media outlets close to the state are likely to be more positive in their tone when reporting government actions and, especially in times of crisis (Gitlin, 1980).

The findings on sources also highlight the political differences between the newspapers. Ummat used more sources from civil society and eyewitnesses, consistent with its emphasis on the social consequences of terrorism. By relying on eyewitnesses and civil society sources, Ummat aimed to highlight the impact of terrorism on individuals and society, humanising the issue. On the other hand, Nawa-i-Waqt relied more heavily on government and military sources, reflecting its emphasis on national security and its pro-government narrative. This practice is reflective of

Nawa-i-Waqt's focus on the state and military's role in countering terrorism, which also reinforces its pro-state and pro-security position.

These results are supported by the newspapers' partisan leanings. Nawa-i-Waqt's framing of terrorism reflected a nationalist/security bias, focusing on the need to safeguard Pakistan's sovereignty and the role of the state in addressing terrorism as a national security threat. On the other hand, Ummat took a religious/Islamic approach to terrorism, emphasising the impact on the Muslim population and frequently placing itself in the role of the underdog. This religious approach is in line with the newspaper's conservative populist politics, which at times mobilises religious sentiment and appeals for Islamic solidarity.

The way in which these newspapers frame their articles, their styles and their biases are not just a reflection of editorial choice but also of the political environment in which they operate. Nawa-i-Waqt's proximity to the Pakistani state and military is indicative of the broader role of conservative media in shaping public opinion in line with state policies, especially during threats to national security (Rashid, 2008). while the populist and humanitarian framework of Ummat captures the role of religious, grass-root level journalism in constructing security narratives. This divide in the Pakistani media ideology is not a coincidence but reflect a broader polarization in the Pakistani socio-political landscape where different segments of media serve various audiences and disseminate varied visions regarding terrorism and counter terrorism.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that both the Ummat and the Nawa-e-Waqt portray terrorism differently based on their respective ideologies and journalistic policies, with the Nawa-e-Waqt focusing on national security and military actions, and the Ummat prioritizing the human and social dimensions of terrorism. Furthermore, it has a biased coverage towards Muslim-enemy countries such as USA and Israel, presenting terrorist attacks in those countries as punishment from God. Such different framings play a significant role in shaping the public perception of terrorism in Pakistan and its possible solutions and remedies. The importance of media in the shaping of public opinion on national security and the government policy and shaping media discourse on terrorism issues is stressed in this study.

5. Conclusion

This study has offered a detailed comparative study of how Ummat and Nawa-i-Waqt newspapers have framed terrorism from 2001 to 2025, revealing the subtle differences between these two prominent Urdu language newspapers in Pakistan. This research has demonstrated that when it comes to terrorism, the media in Pakistan is not only reporting the events but also the political and ideological perspectives of the newspapers themselves. The case of Nawa-i-Waqt and Ummat exemplifies this split, with Nawa-i-Waqt placing an emphasis on national security, military operations and state-led counter-terrorism and Ummat on the human face of terrorism, the socio-economic effects on citizens and the need for reform and humanitarian responses. The thematic analysis has shown that the newspapers, while reporting on the same events, have different areas of focus. Nawa-i-Waqt is in sync with state narratives, portraying terrorism as a threat to national integrity and emphasising the military's actions as essential for national survival. Nawa i-Waqt reported on terrorism and the “War on Terror” during 2001–2025 with a center-right/nationalist perspective and a particular emphasis on security policy: it presented terrorist incidents in a toughness and national security context, appeared to criticize US and Western policies, and often reported on the government’s counter-terrorism measures with support or concern within a strict punishment and security framework. Nawa i-Waqt’s editorial style found the capture of terrorist incidents and analysis of the scenario to be linked to the state’s security operations, Pak–US relations, and Afghanistan/Pakistan border tensions, while at times criticizing the government for

its insufficiently effective policy or weak long-term strategy. It generally emphasized support for or proper implementation of security forces' operations and placed terrorist incidents within the framework of Pakistan's internal security and regional policy. By contrast, Ummat has been more focused on the socio-economic impacts of terrorism, highlighting the plight of ordinary Pakistanis affected by violence and military actions. The daily Ummat adopts a distinct religious and political angle in reporting on terrorist incidents. Its coverage often portrays terrorism as an Islamic struggle or a defense of oppressed Muslims, especially when these incidents are against Muslims or are perpetrated by Western countries and India. Ummat praises and supports religious movements in terms of militancy, while harshly criticizing secular and liberal voices, calling them anti-Islamic or anti-Pakistan. The newspaper also reports on terrorist incidents in the context of state actions, but its priority is always to defend Islamic values and national interests.

The language and the sources used also reflect these differences, with Ummat often being more critical of state responses, and highlighting the plight of the victims, whereas Nawa-i-Waqt is more supportive of government and military actions, and supports the state's efforts to counter terrorism. This underscores the polarization of the Pakistan media environment, with different newspapers catering to different ideological sections of the population, and influencing public opinion through their coverage.

Finally, this study highlights the importance of the media in shaping public opinion on terrorism, national security and counter-terrorism, in which the theory of framing plays a central role. The editorial policy of Ummat and Nawa-e-Waqt is prominently seen in its coverage of terrorist incidents, which shows that most Urdu newspapers in Pakistan distort the facts and present them in the molds of their likes and dislikes. Political leanings and framing techniques play a significant role in shaping the national discourse on terrorism in Pakistan and influence public opinion by shaping the national narrative. More research is needed to understand the role of other media such as electronic or regional newspapers in the formation of terrorism in Pakistan to get a complete picture of the influence of the media on national security and public perceptions.

5.1 Recommendation

1. Promote informed journalism to ensure that reporting on incidents of terrorism adhere to the standards of professional journalism and are based on facts, verified facts and credible sources, and are not personalized, politicized, or ideologically-based.
2. Media organizations should frame special editorial policy on reporting on terrorism and war to prevent their reporting from using wording, imagery, and frameworks that can feed extremism, hatred, and social tensions.
3. Give importance to training of journalists and editors (capacity building) so that they have a knowledge of the standards of international journalistic reporting of sensitive issues like terrorism, national security, human rights, and war and report them in an objective manner.
4. A media monitoring mechanism should be created by media regulator organizations, journalists, organizations and academic institutions for ongoing content analysis to check bias, misleading framing, and irresponsibility in coverage of terrorism so that they are corrected and controlled.
5. Researchers and universities should consider extending their comparative studies on media reporting of terrorism not only to the print media but to all media (including electronics, digital, news channels, social media, and newspapers at the regional level) to obtain a holistic picture of framing and the process of shaping public opinion at national level, etc., of the region.
6. Future research should focus on identifying the effects of media framing on national security,

the formation of public opinion, and government policy and the ways media framing shapes perceptions of extremism by various forms of research (such as questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, etc.

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