

**Portrayal of the “war on terror” in academic research at universities of Pakistan
(review of graduate dissertations in University of Peshawar)**

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Abstract

This research was conducted to probe all the existing researches been conducted at University of Peshawar during the preceding decade on issues linked with “War on Terror”. Being first of its kind as a graduate academic profiling, the research remained focused on researches of the students at sociology department, university of Peshawar only. The conceptual base was to observe the kind of content being produced in the research productions and what methodologies been used to reach to the conclusion these authors have reached. The purpose for doing this research as stated was to test if this was a rational choice or market dictates that lead them for such choices. The theories been used would also give a clear glimpse of the image to be created through this research. The results of the research are expected to set the direction for future academic research in universities and give a clear depiction of how world dictates its terms on academics too besides, economics and politics. This research is an attempt to snapshot the theories consulted, the objectives framed and sources of data consulted for making arguments and how much these arguments are genuine and indigenous. The assumption being our research scholars are as much influenced in their academic work as any other field of socio-political and economic aspect of our society.

Keywords: War on Terror; Violent Movement; Internally Displaced People; Mapping Violence

Introduction

Education brings positive change in human behavior and attitude as it is an effective tool for the personality development and socialization of human beings. But sociologist claims we as human are chained in social relations so are our academic behaviors, influenced by the activities in our surroundings. Post 9/11 scenario has changed the academic life all to-gather, not only in terms of security gates and other safety measures that we observes but in all our thought processes. Similarly, our academic research assumed must have been influenced by the post 9/11 situation. The global media, American proactive defense

mechanism and advance policy and military expansion have changed the social fabric of South East, Middle East and South Asian politics, economy and sociology. The current study is an attempt, how our research dissertations have buy those ideas and internalized the arguments in their writings.

Pakistan has experienced violence and violent movements both nationalist (Bengal and Baluchistan) and Religious (KP) through its brief history of less than 70 years. But the most intensive and deadly was after 9/11 when, the American gave no choice but to join its “War on Terror”. Pakistan responding to the demands, understanding the tone of world powers opted to go along but carefully. That resulted in multi-dimensional eruption of violence particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (including and focused in the Merged Districts previously known as FATA) and to be more generous, the problems of Baluchistan are part of the same conflict.

Not going to the details of International relations and its impact on our internal politics, the focus here will remain on sociological analysis of the problem. Many researches both internal and external have been done in the preceding decade. The purpose of this research would be to understand the discourse been developed in due course of time. This study will de-limit its scope to understand the existing lot of knowledge, to guide the haphazard kind of studies being conducted in the academic world, and if the approach of the researcher found incorrect, will definitely synthesize what is the direction of these researches been conducted if any?

Research question

The “Prospect theory” presented in “Winning the War of Words” by Woitek Mackiewicz-Wolfe (2008) explains, beautifully, how we receive message and how power dictates its terms to lead us in our research in a particular direction. He criticizes Rationale Choice theory on grounds to be shared in detail in the dissertation. This research qualify the statement through review of the existing catalogue of research dissertations that the students having no knowledge or interest academically been dictated by the market trends to opt for topics of their research that in their assumption may guide them to get a job in the local and international market, specifically in Pakistan based Non-Governmental organizations. The study thus address the question of “How to comprehend the thought process of University graduates in last decade by accessing Research Dissertations written on “War on Terror” and related aspects?”

Aims of the research

This current research is designed to review the existing researches formulating a synthesis if “Prospect theory” (Kahneman & Tversky, 2013) or “Rationale Theory” (Rescher, 1988) prevails in choices of scholars making decision on problematizing the concept “War on Terror” to the process of data collection, analysis and conclusions drawn including methodologies used and theories applied.

Specific objectives

The study is intended to achieve the following specific research objectives.

To develop a repository of thesis/dissertation related to the conflict i.e. war on terror, conducted in the University of Peshawar

1. To understand the influence of national, international discourses on the theoretical orientation of the students
2. To understand the methodological approaches students use to collect and analyses data.
3. To find out the most common findings of students dissertations regarding terrorism and violence in the region.
4. To explore the level of originality in students thinking and writing about violence.

Literature review

The current-counter terrorism strategies of United States and Pakistan are not only perceived to have failed in eradicating terrorism but are also believed to have caused an intense problem of radicalization (Taşpınar, 2009). The excessive use of force or kinetic counter-terrorism approach against the unidentified enemies in a different cultural setting reinforces radicalization (Moghaddam & Marsella, 2004). The Pak-Afghan border region or tribal areas of Pakistan provides fertile grounds to radicalization as compared to other parts of the Pakistan and Afghanistan (Azam, 2014; Zaidi, 2010). In a recent PhD conducted by a sociologist at University of Peshawar consider that “Pakistan as a major ally in the war against terror is considered counter-productive and cultural distortion as a result of this approach has caused further radicalization (Zafar, 2015 PhD Dissertation). He argues that the major reason behind the radicalizing effects of kinetic approach is considered the non-consideration of Pashtuns’ cultural paradigm in the war against terror. There are many others who have put forward their views in different directions on this topic. Abdul Shakoor (2013) in his research stated that Pakistan is confronted with two broad

categories of terrorism namely internal and external which can be further classified. It is facing the twin menaces of religious extremism and ethnic strife.

His claims that the real threat to the security of Pakistan primarily comes from “within.” He argues that the banned organizations like Tahreek-e-Taliban and Lashker-e-Jhangvi, Mehdi Militia etc., have the means to create instability in Pakistan. The communal/regional cards like *Punjabi*, *Sindhi*, *Balochi*, *Pashtun*, *Saraike* and *Mohajir* etc. are being exploited, he considers the constructed narrative of “Pakistani nationalism” is in collapse. Sectarian violence is also one aspect of domestic terrorism. To Shakoor (2013), Kuram, D.I. Khan, tribal belt and Southern Punjab are affected by sectarian driven terrorism. Suicide attacks and attacks on infrastructure, schools, banks, railway-tracks and gas pipelines etc. are some expressions of home-grown terrorism though he agrees that “Many of these terrorist acts have external sponsorship either by states or non-state actors”(Shakoor, 2013).

The incident of 9/11 attracted the attention of U.S because the master-mind of anti-US campaign was supposedly lived in Afghanistan that led to a weapon-based attack to oust Taliban (Abbas, 2004). Resultantly, their consolidation led to revolt and insurgency and declared their offensiveness against the allied forces. Pakistan’s support to the U.S was highly disfavored by the Taliban leadership and they also turned their eyes to Pakistan. They embarked the journey to express their rage with the support of the local people in different parts of the country especially in the Northern areas of Pakistan (Abbas, 2007). The extremist movement in Afghanistan has been slowly and gradually entrenched to different parts of Pakistan. Kemp (2008) expounds that rise of radicalism/extremism in Afghanistan and Pakistan is rooted in the disintegration of tribal (in both countries) and state (mainly in Afghanistan, increasingly in Pakistan) structures; and the increased influence of religiously orthodox foreign elements who assumed prominence during the long drawn-out conflict in Afghanistan (Fair, Ramsay & Kull, 2008).

Terrorism has brought enormous crisis in South Asian countries through the adverse impacts on their social, economic, political and physical infrastructure (Saigol, 2010). Among South Asian countries particularly Pakistani state has suffered excessively on the basis of social, economic, infrastructural and human cost due to terrorism. Resultantly, the country is declared as the dangerous place and is in-Academic Research International line with countries like Iraq and Afghanistan with regard to internal order. This calls for taking a fresh look at the prevailing internal security situation and formulating a comprehensive

strategy that can work to stabilize the situation thereby creating a climate that is supportive of socio-economic activities in the country, brings back the lost atmosphere of peace and leads the people on the path to prosperity (Shapiro, 2002).

Most of Pakistani authors argues that in South Asia, American policymakers recognize that pressuring New Delhi to end state terrorism and be on negotiation table for the resolution of Kashmir dispute is counterproductive for the US geopolitical and economic interests in India. Furthermore, Washington seeks a strategic alliance with New Delhi to ‘contain’ China’s rising power in the world. Therefore, Washington never raises concerns or condemns the massive Indian military presence in Kashmir valley which is meant to terrorize freedom-loving Kashmiri people to submission and subjugation. These arguments are not liked in the west and they term it as Pakistan playing politics with the west by not recognizing the importance of the “war and Terror” by linking it with an outdated “Kashmir issue”.

Research tools

The nature of research being analytical and exploratory, library method was used for collection of data. In first round library survey was conducted for the period 2005 onward academic research been conducted at Sociology department, University of Peshawar, Pakistan. Only 11 research dissertations were found for students conducted thesis at sociology department at all BS, MA, M.Phil and PhD level on the given topic or related area. The list so generated was scrutinized in second stage for identification of those theses or dissertations that had been focused on “War on Terror”. Some more 13 thesis were found at International relations department making the total researches into 24. Further survey of the libraries conducted added 14 more theses on the issue one from Psychology; two each from Gender Studies and Political Sciences; three theses from Regional Studies and Six from Social Work Department. These 38 were taken as the sample theses for analysis. After a detailed search in the respective libraries of the above mentioned departments, it was found that some departments had no thesis on the topic under investigation. For example, not even a single thesis was found in the libraries of IER, Law College, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (hereinafter referred to as IPCS), and Economics. It was because the topic of terrorism was out of the disciplinary scope of some departments such as IER, or because students of some departments are not required to write dissertation as part of their academic degree requirement such as Law College. The IPCS is the most relevant, but because it has been

established quite recently, students have not yet completed any thesis on terrorism related issue.

We came to know that students of Anthropology department had conducted thesis on terrorism and violence but the thesis were not available in the library. Despite our repeated visits to the department, the research were unable to get hold of the thesis conducted by students of Anthropology departments on the issue under study.

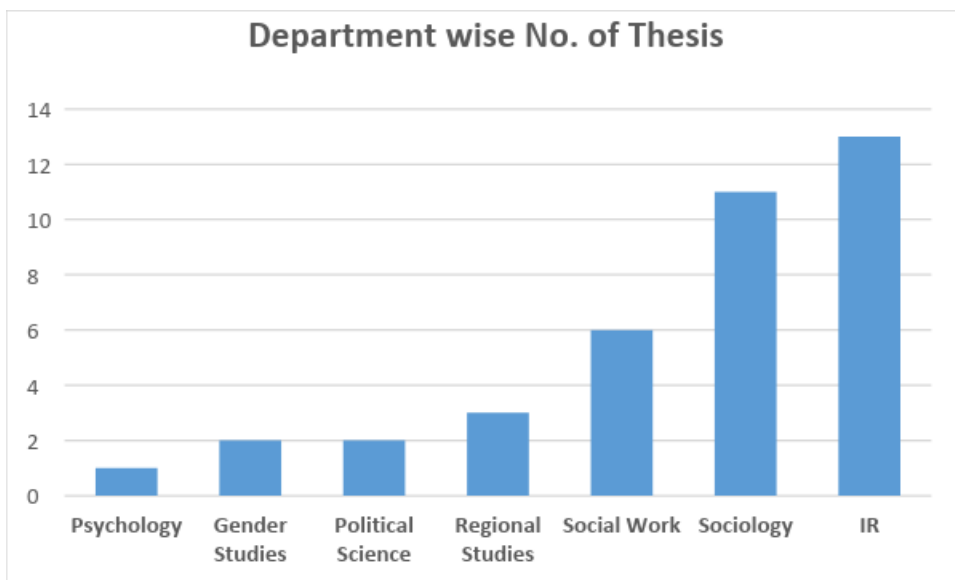
The third round is to map the literature based on the following indicators namely:

1. Objectives of the studies
2. Theoretical base
3. Methodologies
4. Major quotes from the study
5. Major citations from others work cited in the study
6. Literature used
7. Data used
8. Conclusion or findings

These categories dictated the analysis of the data. The data than was manually reviewed and put in order to shape themes and draw systematic assumptions related the same with “Rationale Theory” or Prospect theory”. The first phase took one week (September 3rd week), the second phase however was spread over three weeks (remaining of September 2018 and October first two weeks). The data analysis and thematic discussions was than generated first half of November 2018 to finalize the research by the end November 2018.

Table 1: Number of theses conducted in various departments

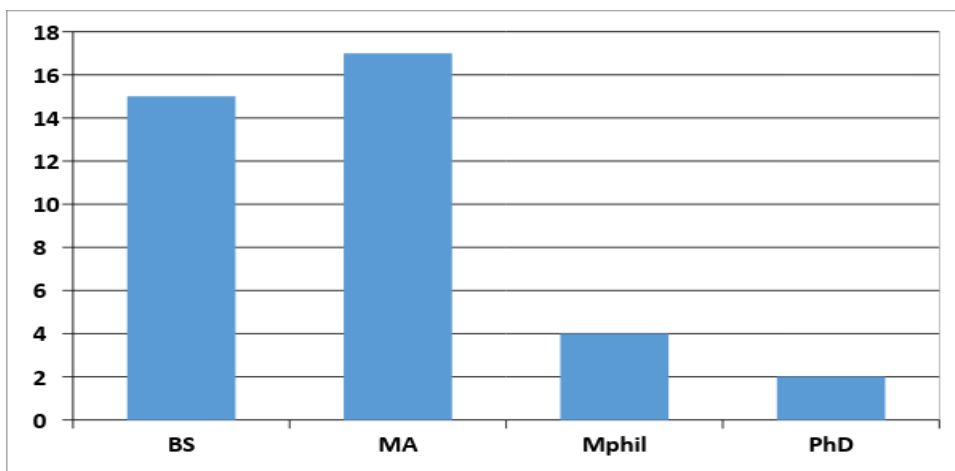
Departments	Frequency	Percentage
Psychology	1	3
Gender Studies	2	5
Political Science	2	5
Regional Studies	3	8
Social Work	6	16
Sociology	11	29
IR	13	34
Total	38	100



The above table shows department wise number of thesis conducted on the topic of terrorism and its related issues. The table shows that the department of International Relations (IR) had highest number of thesis (13 out of 38) related to terrorism and its related issues. The second highest numbers of thesis done on the topic were in the department of sociology (11 out of 38). Social Work had 6 theses while regional studies and political Science had 3 and 2 thesis on this topic respectively. Department of Psychology had only one thesis on the topic. Other departments of social science do not had thesis record on this topic from 2005-2015.

Table 2: Number of thesis by level of degree

Level	Frequency	Percentage
BS	15	39
MA	17	45
MPhil	4	11
PhD	2	5
Total	38	100

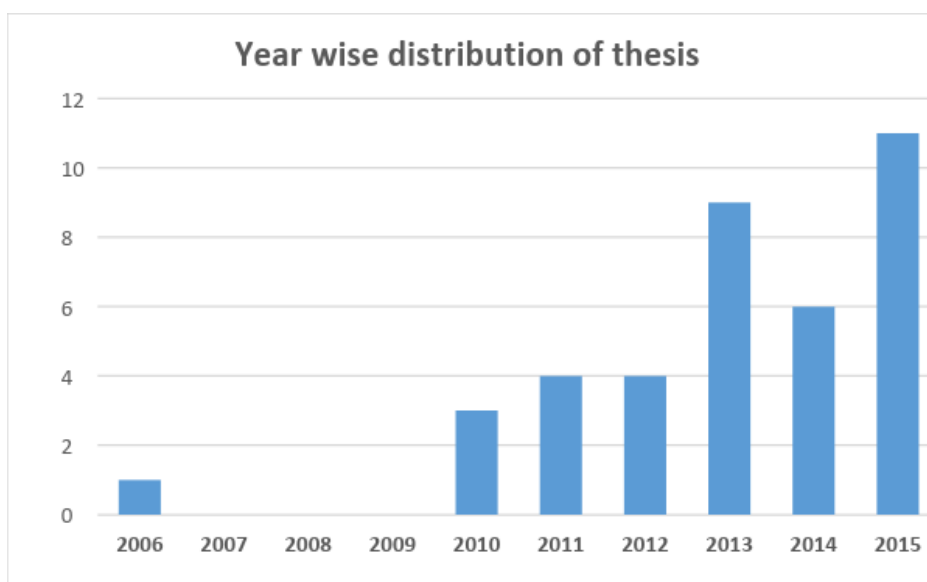


The above table shows the level of degree at which students have conducted thesis on the topic of terrorism and its related issues. The data shows that the BS level in all departments have 15 (39%) thesis on the issue under study, while 17 thesis were conducted by M.A level students, MPhil level had 4 while 2 PhD level thesis were found in the departments.

Thus, highest number of thesis on the issue under study was conducted by Masters (M.A) level students which constitute 45% of the total Thesis. This may be because MA is the oldest program while BS system is comparatively newer in the University. Secondly, all the departments run MA program while BS is not yet adopted by all departments included in this research.

Table 3: Year wise distribution of thesis conducted by students

Year wise data	Frequency	Percentage
2006	1	3
2007		0
2008		0
2009		0
2010	3	8
2011	4	11
2012	4	11
2013	9	24
2014	6	16
2015	11	29
Total	38	100



This study has the time period from 2005 to 2015. The data shows that there is no thesis in the year 2005, 2007, 2008 and 2009. However, in 2006 there was one thesis conducted on the topic of terrorism and its related issues. The data reveals that there were 3 theses in 2010 while 4 theses in 2011 and 2012. 2013 had the second highest number of theses on the topic i.e., 9. In 2014 there were 6 theses while the data shows that 2015 had the largest number i.e., 11 theses on this issue.

Why did students not take much interest in terrorism-related topics before 2010? Why did more and more students choose to conduct theses on terrorism and related issues? The data shows that the topic remained neglected in academic research before 2010. Since then, more and more students have conducted research on terrorism. This may be partly because of growing awareness among students and supervisors regarding the severity of the problem of violence and conflict in the region. It may be because of Taliban brutality in Swat and the resultant devastations in the region (military operations, IDPs etc.). Swat proved to be an eye opener for the whole nation, including students. More specifically, the issue of IDPs triggered a significant interest in terrorism-related topics as most of the theses have problems of IDP as their foci.

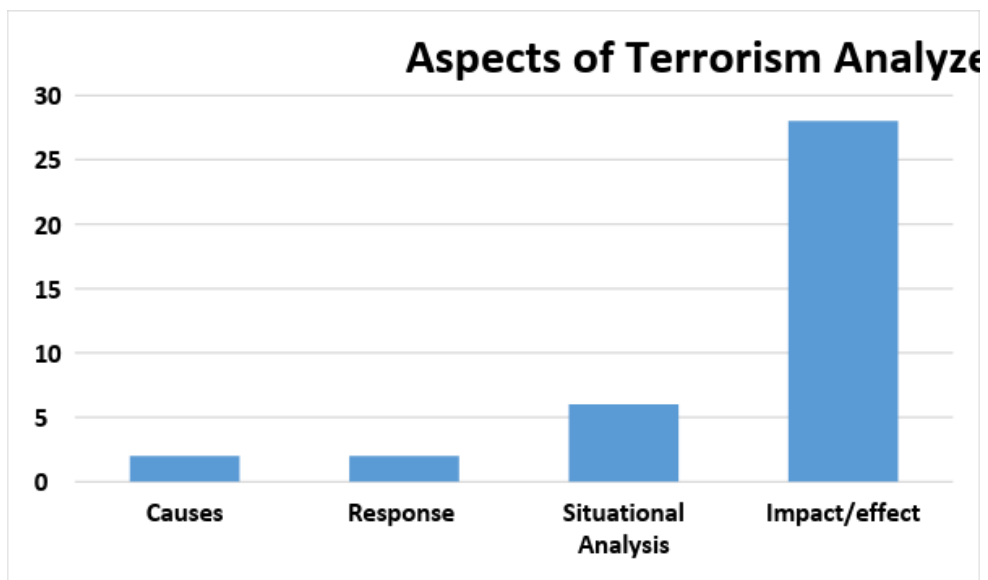
Results and discussion

The review explores that major areas/issues focused by the students in their theses mainly (18 in number) analyzed the issue of terrorism in relation to education. Among these theses, 7 theses had focused on the impact of terrorism

on the education in different agencies of FATA, while some theses covered girls' education specifically. Few theses attempted to see impact of terrorism on post graduate students of Peshawar. The second highest numbers of theses covered terrorism and economy. The students have concentrated on the impact of terrorism on the economy and socio-economic aspects of society. Internally Displace Person (IDPs) and their problems have attracted the attention of 5 students, most of whom have taken Jalozai camp as their site for data collection. One thesis has analyzed the role of Pak-Army in the rehabilitation of IDPs in Swat, one have talked about the impact of displacement on the education of children while one thesis has seen the socio-economic problems of IDPs of FATA. Other issues focused by the students in their thesis were APS attack, Afghan refugees, Cultural impacts, democracy, impact of terrorism on Pak-US relations, impact on tourism, role of police in elimination of terrorism, culturally distortion and growing radicalization in the region.

Table 4: Aspects of terrorism analyzed in students' dissertations

Focused Aspects	Frequency	Percentage
Causes	2	5
Response	2	5
Situational Analysis	6	16
Impact/effect	28	74
Total	38	100



Conclusion

It was found that most students have not explained their motivation for why they have chosen to conduct research on the specific issue. Those who have explained their motivation, they have mostly cited the huge impact of violence and conflict they have observed on social life, such as destruction of girl's school, loss of jobs, general environment of fear and insecurity in the area etc. Most students have relied on media sources, such as newspaper reports for information regarding the nature and scale of impacts of terrorism. Some student have explained that because they belong to such areas where terrorism has the greatest presence such as Swat, Waziristan etc., they wanted to academically study the various structural causes of terrorism in their villages, cities.

A few students specifically mentioned that because they lost their own near and dear ones in violence, therefore they were interested in the issue. For example, one student has mentioned that the death of his younger brother in APS attack motivated him to write desperation on the issue. Another students was himself an IDP and had suffered academically because of Army Operation in Waziristan due to which he decided to conduct research on issues of IDPs living in Bannu. It seems that personal loss of the students and their family members was the most frequently cited reason for why students chose to conduct thesis on terrorism and related issues.

It was discouraging to note that most of the students had not mentioned any specific theoretical lenses from they conducted their desecrations. There seems to be no culture of using theoretical framework at BS and MA level dissertations. All students have written a literature review chapter but this chapter in neither well organized nor is it based on authentic sources. Such students had randomly selected reports (mostly from newspapers and blogs etc.) to make a case for why the issue of terrorism is worth studying.

However, at M.Phil and PhD levels, students have attempted to include a theoretical framework for analyzing the data. For example, one student has used 'Humanitarian Perspective' as a theoretical lens from he has analyzed the conflict situation in Swat. Another student has chosen to see how state agencies have changed their structural and operational capacities in response to growing terrorism. Another student in his PhD dissertation has used 'cultural perspectives' to see how the counter terrorism strategies of US and Pakistan are counterproductive in terms of not being in line with the local culture in the regions. The student has suggested cultural sensitive approach to tackling the issue of terrorism in the region.

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