

Framing of Drone Attacks in Pakistani Elite Press: A Comparative Study of Dawn and the Nation

Sajjad Ahmed Paracha

*Assistant Professor, Dept. of Communication Studies,
Islamia University, Bahawalpur*

Fatima Imran

*Research Associate, Dept. of Mass Communication,
Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan*

Muhammad Ashraf Khan

*Chairman, Dept. of Mass Communication,
Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan
Email: drmak00@yahoo.com*

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Abstract This study is a test of "media framing theory", which asserts that there is some cognitive structure lies in mind, which leads the perception of anyone. These frames are created intentionally and sometimes, the reader himself makes them. Pakistan is at stake after 9/11 and is continuously trying to explain before the world as well as before the people of Pakistan that she doesn't have any link with Al-Qaeda and terrorism. To make the world believe her position, Pakistan had to become the ally in war on terror but still the people of Pakistan are facing much destruction in the shape of drone attacks. Being in such crucial position, Pakistani media frame these air strikes negatively. This study is a semantic and narrative analysis of the editorials of *The Nation* and *Dawn*. A total number of 82 editorials were analyzed, 65(79.26%)of daily *The Nation* while 17 (20.73%)editorials of daily *Dawn*. The results prove the H1, which describe that *The Nation* frame drone attacks more negative than *Dawn*.

Keywords: Drones attacks, predator, reaper, UAVs, FATA, Waziristan, war on terror

1. Introduction

It is proved by the 9/11-commission report (2001) that none of the 9/11 terrorists was Pakistani. But Mass (2010) quotes Obama's views about Pakistan "Pakistan--- a nuclear power with a fragile civilian government, a dominant military with an intelligence service that supports militants, we need to make clear to people that the **Cancer is in Pakistan**".

It is awfully disappointing that despite being a strong ally, Pakistan had to face so many destructions, not just in her territory but also she has to face so many scratches on her image and the poor people of Pakistan are still facing this brutality in the form of drones. On 23rd January 2008, the president's 3rd day of joining and the same day first 2 air strikes of Obama administration, were killed twenty people. In 1st strike, four Arabs, all steadily affiliated with Al Qaeda, died. But in the second strike, the drone targeted the house, hitting the residence of a pro-government tribal leader of Wana, in South Waziristan. The blast killed the tribal leader's whole family, including three children. According to the New American Foundation, the total number of drones in Obama's first nine and half months in office, is equal to the air strikes in the last three years of the Bush regime, most of the victims being innocent civilians (Mayer, 2010).

1.1. Drones

Pilot less Aircraft, having so many other names like drones, sky warrior, predator, reaper and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), operated by the Pentagon, CIA and other US agencies of federal government. With the help of spy cameras and detective apparatus the UAVs have the ability to reconnaissance/explore the real-time information and the laser-guided missile and bombs to hunt the actual targets. Predator MQ-1 was first targeted in 1995 and has been remained the most common in use (Tristam, 2009).

1.1.1. Merits of drones

1. Smaller than jet aircrafts to put out of sight.
2. Less expensive than fighter jet.
3. Have no risk of pilot's life
4. Training for UAVs is less expensive than jet fighters.
5. Have the ability to strike accurately even it can target a single room in a house
6. Invisible to Radar.

The ratio of using these drones has been increased with the passage of time by the military as a successful weapon. Military Budget of USA 2010 includes approximately 3.5 billion for UAVs.

1.1.2. Demerits of drones

Although it is a versatile weapon to strike targets as well as gathering information but

- 1: They have unreliable cameras.
1. 2: They lose communication links in rain
- 3: The time span of lurking is less than expectations.
- 4: They perform well only in daytime and clear weather. Fog, moisture, rain, snow frost and crosswinds can badly affect the drones' technical skills.
- 5: Low altitude of drones for escaping the range of Radar, these can be shot or fired by the ground enemy (Tristam, 2009).

History of UAVs starts from the World War II (1939-1945), when the "radio plane" has been used as a target for navel anti-aircraft gunners (Benolkin, 2004). History says that cruise missile; special-operations raids and drones are the common tactics or weapons used by USA (Zenko, 2010).

Unmanned drone aircraft are the most impressive striking aircraft in new world of weapons. This seven ton weaponized spy plane can easily fire the target and it is invisible to radar. History shows that drones from the spy craft to shepherders, they are growing faster and make it a full kingdom of these wily birds so called name are "Demon, vultures and reapers, 24 countries fly presently (Hagermann 2010).

The MQ1-B armed predator has the ability to carry on Hellfire missiles and the MQ-9 Reaper (predator B) can upload with hell fire missile as well as Laser guided bombs. The command of these UAVs is in the hand of CIA which awaiting the directions from the executives of White House (IISS, 2010).

US have launched these drones against Iraq, Yemen and Pakistan while Israel has used drones over the Palestinians in Gaza. The drone technology is relatively cheap technology even the small countries proliferate drones. Many drones companies offer low-cost turnkey drone rental programs and providing trainer if needed (Rozoff, 2010).

Hagerman quotes Singer, P.W "Last year, the US air force trained more UAVs pilots than fighters and bomber pilots combined"(Hagerman, 2010). While Pakistan has multifaceted strategy regarding drones in FATA .It gives the logistic support to launch drones from its own air bases, on the other hand Pakistan has continuously protested against these drones, which undermine the sovereignty of Pakistan, if Islamabad had not informed by CIA of the expected strikes (IISS, 2010).

According to the New American Foundation (2010) estimated total deaths from US Predator strikes in Pakistan.

2004-2010 = 1338---2144

Estimated Militant deaths from US predator strikes in Pakistan

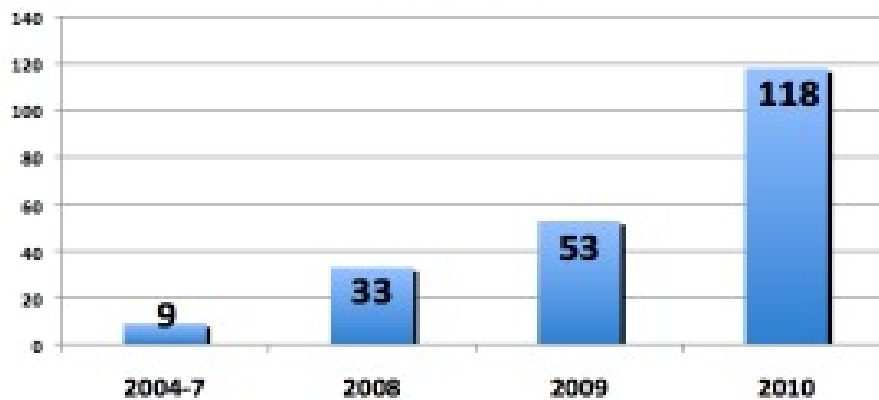
2004-2010 = 1062---1709

US strikes by target form 2004-2010

Taliban	-	87
Baitulla Mehsud	-	17
Al-Qaeda	-	32
Haqqani	-	28
Other /unclear	-	84

U.S. Drone Strikes 2004 – 2010

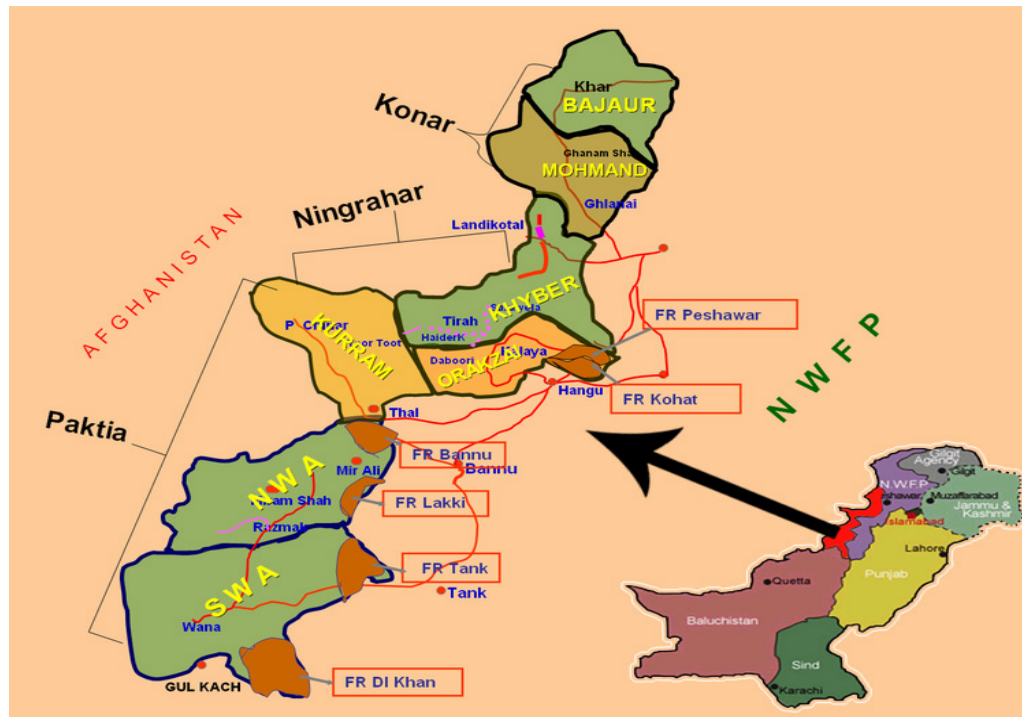
Number of U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan, 2004-2010



The most targeted area of Pakistan is FATA:

The Federally Administered Tribal Areas consist of seven Tribal Areas and are called the agencies, which are from north to south:

- Bajaur Agency
- Mohmand Agency
- Khyber Agency
- Orakzai Agency
- Kurram Agency
- North Waziristan Agency
- South Waziristan Agency (Amnesty international, 2010).



There are complex motives behind drone strikes, one of the purposes is to control the attacks of Taliban on US troops and second is to punish the local militant network who gives protection to Al-Qaeda militants. An American official says "The C.I.A. has drastically increased its bombing campaign in the mountains of Pakistan in recent weeks". The purpose of these strikes is to cripple down the Taliban against the attacks on US troops in Afghanistan. American officials are of the view that Pakistani Government has not been serious enough to wipe out these militants from its state.

They (govt/politicians) are not taking serious actions to wipe out these insurgents from Waziristan and they made their army busy on the other matters of the country. It is evident that US has also used helicopters despite drones, to target some of the Pakistani and Afghani Tribal areas and killed estimated 50 people having suspected link with Haqani group. It was claimed that those strikes were in the self defense while the militants fired rocket from the grounds, just across the border near Afghanistan. Gen. David H. Petraeus, the top American commander in Afghanistan, warned Pakistan to "DO MORE" and help out American to launch some unilateral ground operations in tribal areas of north Waziristan (Mazetti and Schmitt, 2010).

On the other side US doesn't have feeling of war for Pakistan but does have negative sentiments for Al-Qaeda members and Taliban, which have thought to be hidden in the safe heavens of Pakistani areas (Layalina Review, 2010).

Stewart and Birsell analyze after reading the 9 months of Obama administration had launched 39 drones in Pakistan specially target killing of Baitullah Mehsud in August 2009 that was a big success of CIA. Pakistan has been affected by 2 ways, the open violation of sovereignty of Pakistan and the deaths of poor civilians. CIA is continuing using these robotic drones, to save the life of USA's pilot thousands of miles away (Stewart and Birsell, 2009).

A news story had been published in The Nation on May 6, 2010 about drones that instead of targeting only suspected militants CIA has been striking drones against training camps, houses and so many other places of tribal areas of Pakistan near the border of Afghanistan (The Nation, 2010).

Gamage quotes the UN special reporter on Extra judicial Executions that these attacks may violate the international human rights. In the same analysis Alston discusses the Chief Legal Counselor of Obama's Administration Harold Koh says that these attacks were within the international law and had not violated the

human rights. He further concludes the result of New America Foundation that 32% were the poor people victimized by the drones (Gamage, 2010).

Here we read different views about drones all over the world. In this study the researcher is going to find out the frame regarding drones, developed by Pakistani print media with the help of editorial treatment, as we know the key role of editorial for image building.

2. Review of Literature

Taj (2010) claims after her reviewing the report of New American Foundation that the ratio of 32% of the poor civilians is not accurate. She is of the view that it's just a panic creating by the Pakistani media.

Ditz (2010) make knows the study of Brain William, concluded that "drones are the liberators for tribesman". He claims that a big majority is really against the predator attacks but a solid majority is in the favour. The study concludes that 52 percent of respondents felt the strikes were accurate; 58 percent thought they did not cause anti-American sentiment; 60 percent felt militants were "damaged" by the strikes; and 70 percent thought the Pakistani military should carry out its own strikes against the terrorists.

Kix (2010) analysis William's study in his article and concludes that 52% tribesman felt that strikes are accurate, while 58% say that they don't have anti American feelings, 60% tells that militants were destroyed. The study "accuracy of the drone attacks" proves that the ratio of militants' death over civilian death is 10:1.

Fricker, Plaw and Williams (2010) describe in their research paper " New Light on the Accuracy of the CIA's Predator Drone Campaign in Pakistan" that the portrayal of death ratio of civilians in media /newspapers is different from the actual number of casualties. They are of the view that it is difficult to differentiate whether the victim is civilian or militant. They made a new category "unknown" and put all the unknown data into it. According to their research, a total number of 127 drone attacks in FATA, out of 1247 only 44(3.5%) were confirmed as civilians while 963(77.2) were reported as militants, while the remaining 240 individuals have pushed in the unknown category.

Ellen O'Connell (2010) a professor at Notre Dame Law School, analyzes in a research paper titled "Unlawful Killing with Combat Drones that the international law relevant to United State's use of drones to carry out attacks in Pakistan starting in 2004 through 2009. Her study shows clearly that the use of drones by America is an open violation of international human rights law. She is of the view that the people of Pakistan must take some steps to make realize the government and to bring them to halt instead of victimized by the crucial statements of United States. She criticized the media also by giving bias statements regarding drones.

Khokar (2010) describes that according to the Internal CIA and military memos, civilian casualties in the war on terrorism were far higher than reported. Drones, so constantly used, often went wrong due to the faulty intelligence information, killing hundreds of innocent civilians, including women and children. Most of these attacks were carried out on the basis of intelligence, believing, the tribesmen on the both sides of the border have provided this information.

Gamage (2010) concludes after analyzing various studies about drones that, outside of armed conflict, killings by the CIA would constitute extrajudicial executions assuming that they do not comply with human rights law. If so, they must be investigated and prosecuted both by the US and the State in which the wrongful killing occurred. He criticizes Obama administration's Chief Legal Counsel Harold Hongju Koh who declared that "U.S. targeting practices, including lethal operations conducted with the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, comply with all applicable law, including the laws of war."

Shachtman (2009) quotes Leon Panetta the CIA director refers to the predator program "the only game in town". He further gives credit to drones to kill more than a dozen Al-Qaida leaders and their allies in past year, which were highly targeted by America while Cressey (2010) The former National Security council official described that these are not very much fruitful of striking missile on the backs of militants, the ordinary people or the low-level guys have been targeted while the leaders have been saved. On the other hand Herold (2008) quotes Benjamin acknowledges that the civilian casualties in Afghan and Pakistan are not

accidents on mistakes, she is of the view that these are predicted deaths, which are the results from careful calculation by the US military attorneys.

Mass (2010) analyses different newspapers of the world and concludes that the international media propagate against Pakistan and Muslims as Daily Mail writes that Pakistani militants were involved in planning terror in Europe and London and the rumor of bomb –scare in Eiffel Tower and Paris is one of the conspiracies of Pakistani Taliban. Same as Wall Street Journal quotes US counter terrorism official "you have folks increasingly concerned about :Is it not just Europe that needs to be careful, but is there a threat here as well?" It is evident by his statement that Pakistan must have some link with Al-Qaeda and militants. He says "That's why we have been striking –with precision—people and facilities that are part of these conspiracies--- We have also been hitting groups planning to cross the border to kill people in Afghanistan or in Pakistan itself".

Mayor (2009) quotes Bruce Riedel, former CIA officer and a senior fellow at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution. Riedel tries to explain the drawbacks of drones in his article "Is the drones programs helping or hurting" that the US considers these drones as the only way to put the pressure on Pakistan and Afghanistan but these are just like a beehive, which produces more bees.

According to the IISS (2010) that drone attacks are disturbing the operational capabilities of Al-Qaeda; however there are some controversies lay between the international lawyer and human rights as well as between population and government, for using this unilateral use of drone while on the other hand US is of the view that these attacks are being launched in self defense from under governed or ungoverned regions of Pakistan.

Rozoff (2010) discusses in details that due to the continuous and increased number of drone strike in South Waziristan, the people are living in panic and anxiety, sleepless due to the night fear of strikes and hyper vigilance. He further says that an estimate number of victims by drones are more than the casualties of the disastrous flood in 2010. Rozoff further describe the detail and types of drones in his article and relates drone with a machine, which can recognize faces, behaviors and individual conversation also.

Northam (2009) quotes Seth Jones, a south Asian expert at the Rand Corporation that Most of these have been done with cooperation from Pakistani authorities in the national security establishment, the military as well as the intelligence. He analyses views and reviews of different experts and think tanks. He reveals the views of Stephen Cohen of the brooking Institution's foreign policy studies program that drones are accurate with good intelligence and the majority killed by drones is believed to be militants due to the target area specified by drone itself; the collateral damage is lesser than that of the different warheads and missiles. Stephen called it a mechanical monster and he further says that Pakistan is unable to make the sovereignty in the tribal regions and that's why these are the lawless areas of militants. He says that it's an open territory and by the international law one can attack over ungoverned territory.

2.1. Review on Media Framing

Theory of framing is the primary foundation of this study. Media messages are assumed to affect the audience. A slightest change in the presentation of contents can change the public attitude at a huge scale. This study will investigate the semantic and narrative contents of national media.

Galtung (1992) observes the impact of geographic and cultural association of international news treatment in U.S. media. He is of the view that these impacts can change the level of interest of the people of different nations.

Frames are mental structures that help people understand reality, as they perceive it. Goffman (1974) defines "framing" as "the principles of organization, which govern social events.

Richardson (2006) concludes in his study that the non-Muslims sources use the negative frames for Muslims in international reporting. He quotes Lester that the experiences of others determine and use again and again in reporting.

According to Herman and Chomsky (2000), media frames can beautify as well as stain the whole picture of incident. On the other hand Gitlin (1980), tags it "significant social force" which creates public approach.

Voltmer (2006) describes a dual sense role of media that it owns the strategy of selfishness by using its target opinions to frame the information, as they want to listen; on the other hand media use its relation with different political actors to frame the news according to their wish, to earn more and more. He is of the view that media is the propagandist machine in the hands of politicians either running government or opposition. Voltmer quotes Neumann that some of the media have marginal relations with situations as they just want to earn from their target audience.

Mickiewicz (n.d) in his study "Does trust mean attentions, comprehension, and acceptance?" that most of the people trust bluntly on mediated information because they don't have time to create links and to do personal experiences and observations. But it is difficult to assume that how the broadcasters frame the message and how public receive it? He is of the view that the Russian elites miscalculate, discriminate and destruct the contents for a required frame of message, which can mold the public opinion and can underestimate their receiving power.

Hess and Kalb (2003) quote Kathleen Hall and Paul Waldman that "The metaphor of a frame ---a fixed boarder that includes some things and exclude others describes the way information is arranged and packaged in news stories. The story's frame determines what information is included and what is ignored"

Voltmer &Schmitt-Beck (n.d.) conclude in their study "News democracies without citizen? Mass Media and democratic orientations—a four country comparison", that the media negativism and political cynicism have a close and implicit relation. They quote Ball-Rokeach and Defleur regarding "media dependency theory" that in the period of economic insecurity and erosion of values, the orientation of public can easily be altered by the media because the people more rely on the media as compare to other means.

Street (2006) tells in his book "Mass Media Politics and democracies" that media with the help of frame play a role of catalyst, which can destroy the image of running government; institute, person as well as it can mold this frame as "the voice of people". Street (2001) defines "the process of selection and narration is captured by the idea of framing".

Entman (1997) says "a frame operates to select and highlight some features of reality and obscures others in a way that tells consistent story about problem their causes, moral, implications and remedies".

3. Statement of the Problem

It is evident after reviewing the literature that how much our country has affected by these drone attacks. There must be some solution that would stop this violence, and people must know about such kind of diplomatic policies of both countries. With the help of media these dual policies can be visible.

This study will investigate that in which perspective Pakistani elite press portrayal these predator attacks. What is the frame used by Pakistani media whether it is friend or foe, or it may show the neutral stance. After reviewing

4. Research Questions

1. How did Pakistani press portray drone attacks?
2. Which type of frame was evident in the coverage of both newspapers?
3. To what extent the portray of drone attacks by the Dawn was different from that of The Nation?

4.1. Hypothesis

H1: The Nation frame drone attacks more negative than that of Dawn.

5. Method

The study is primarily a content analysis, comparing the frame of drone attacks between two Pakistani dailies, Dawn and The Nation. A time period of one year has selected from January 2010 to December 2010 due to the rationale that number of drone attacks increased in the year 2010. This study is based on the theory of Media Framing.

Editorials are considered to be the one of the most powerful tool to mold public opinion of high officials, policy makers and general public.

The population of this research study includes all the editorials of the selected newspapers of 2010, regarding drones.

A census was conducted due to the fact that only 65 editorials were written by The Nation and 17 by Dawn on the subject under study.

5.1. Coding Unit

Each paragraph was coded in terms of slant and was categorized as positive, negative and neutral frame of the coverage.

Paragraphs contains positive reflection, movement, assessments, testimonials, discussions and impressions---depicts positive stance regarding drone attacks. Similarly the paragraphs that represent negative picture, emotion, judgment, statements, discussions and imitation, illustrate negative stance of drones, while all the paragraphs, which present neither positive nor negative have been considered as neutral.

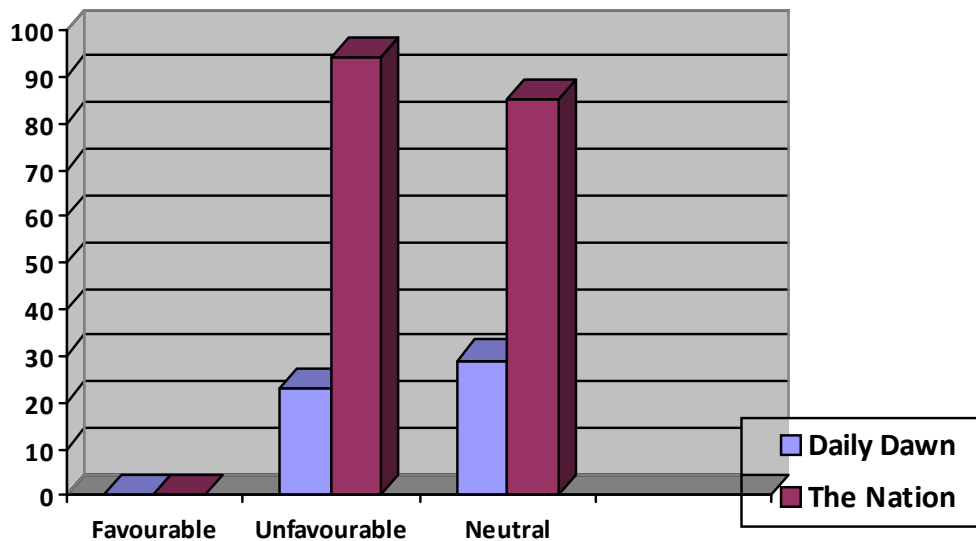
6. Findings

A total number of 82(100%) editorials were found in both Pakistani newspapers in which 65(79.26 %) were from The Nation and a small number of 17(20.73%) were found from the Dawn regarding drone attacks. After splitting these editorials, 231(100%) paragraphs were analyzed in which 179(77.48%) from The Nation while 52(22.5 %) from Dawn. The slant shows the result that The Nation presents no paragraph in favor of drones while 94(52.5%) were unfavorable and 85(47.48 %) shows neutral stance towards the drone attacks. On the other hand the slants of Dawn moves mostly towards neutral. There were no favorable, 23(44.23%) unfavorable while 29(55.76%) neutral paragraphs regarding drone attacks. (See Table: 1)

Table: 1 Distribution of slant by Daily The Nation and Dawn

Newspapers	Editorials (N %)	Paragraphs (N %)	Favorable (N %)	Unfavorable (N %)	Neutral (N %)
Daily Dawn	17(20.73 %)	52 (22.5%)	0 (0.00 %)	23(44.23 %)	29(55.76 %)
The Nation	65(79.26 %)	179(77.48 %)	0 (0.00 %)	94(52.5%)	85(47.48 %)

Figure 1. Graphical presentation of slant



First of all the difference between the numbers of editorials in both dailies, show the importance of the issue in their policies. The graphical presentation clearly shows that Dawn has less coverage, and the neutral slant of Dawn is higher than the unfavorable slant while The Nation gives more unfavorable slant than neutral. Whereas both are not in favor of drone attacks. While comparing the results, The Nation is more against of drone attacks than Dawn. In this regard the findings of the study support the H1---The nation frame drone attacks more negative then Dawn, though it is close to the neutral behavior to some extent. (See fig: 1)

RQ 1: How did Pakistani press portray drone attacks?

Generally Pakistani press portrays drone attacks unfavourable and neutral, but not in favourable manners.

RQ 2: Which type of frame was evident in the coverage of both newspapers?

Both newspapers mostly had showed unfavorable frame or slant regarding drone attacks, as discussed above the frame of favorable had not been appear even a single time.

RQ3: to which extent Dawn portrayal was different from The Nation?

There was a clear difference between the coverage of Dawn and The Nation. Dawn had bluntly very less coverage regarding drone attacks. The number of editorials of Dawn is only 17(20.73%) of the total number that is 82(100%) while the number of The Nation's editorial were 65(79.26%). Same as Dawn framed drone attacks more neutral 29(55.76%) than unfavourable 23(44.23%), which shows that Dawn had some neutral policies regarding drone attacks. While The Nation had an open unfavourable frame of 94 (52.5%) regarding drones and had a close slant of neutral frame 85 (47.48%) towards drone attacks, which depicts a balanced policy to some extent.

7. Discussion

A lot of studies have shown that frame can mold the image, which already exists in someone's mind. People blindly trust the mediated information and with the help of frame they can understand reality and can select the related one (Herman and Chomsky, 2000; Mickiewicz, n.d; Goffman, 1974; Street, 2006; Entman, 1997; et. al).

As it has discussed above that the editorials have played a key role while using the frame to make, generate and persuade people towards any issue, as well as it can change or mold the public opinion also. Results prove the H1, which describe, daily The Nation frame drone attacks more negative than daily Dawn. It is evident that Dawn frames drone attacks neutrally 29(55.76%) most. It depicts the neutral policy of Dawn

newspaper towards government, US and towards the killing of poor civilians. Although the frame of unfavorable is quite near to the neutral stance but the less number of editorials regarding such issue shows the less concern about drone attacks and the rigid policies of America.

On the other side The Nation has a clear frame of unfavorable 94(52.5%) regarding drones which shows the more concern, feelings and sentiments towards killing of poor civilians, sovereignty of Pakistan, humanity and the so called dual policies of America and Pakistan regarding drone attacks. Although it had closed the neutral frame which shows the balanced approach towards government to some extent.

The words and phrases, which have used mostly to frame drone attacks and the users of drones "unfavorable" are "thanks to a joystick holder, forked tongue of US for drones, drone jeopardize country, raining drones on Pakistan, death toll of drones reached higher, massacre by drones, deathly attacks, maiming by drones, butchering the tribal population in FATA, Aerial incursions, ominous threat by drones, butchering Pakistani citizens, murderous consequence of UAVs, and scapegoat Pakistani".

It is evident that none of 9/11 terrorists was Pakistani and the Afghan war didn't have direct concern with Pakistan, then why has this brutality been doing with Pakistani people. These drones, in the name of militants have targeted more than 2000 Pakistani. It's an open violation of human rights and is totally against the international law of defense and security. The two-pronged strategy of Pakistani Government says that drones are undermining the sovereignty of Pakistan while on the other hand it gives a full logistic support to drones and NATO forces.

Pakistani media has to play a sincere role to portray drones in negative frame. It must be acted with social responsibility, which provides accurate information regarding fatal issues.

As we know the Dawn is less concerned about drones' issue as compare to The Nation. The total number and slant shows the whole situation that Dawn has just a bird eye view regarding drones while The Nation had played a great role to make public opinion.

American media is continuously trying to portray drones as a "liberator" of FATA's people from the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. America is of the view that drones are helping out the people of Pakistan to overcome the militants and she is denying constantly of the collateral damages and the casualties of poor civilians by the deathly drones. Pakistan is also playing the two-pronged strategy for drones by giving logistic support and providing air bases for launching drones. On the other side the government gives statements against drones to cool down the sentiments of people of Pakistan.

Results safely reflect the frames, adopted by the both newspaper, which is more often "unfavorable than neutral by The Nation regarding drone attacks. At the same time Dawn is more often neutral than unfavorable, which proved the H1 that--- The Nation frame drone attacks are more negative than Dawn.

Although both newspapers did not portray drones attacks favorably, even in a single paragraph.

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