

Assessing Role of Newspapers in Creating Awareness of HIV/AIDS in Pakistan

Fatima Kiran*Department of Mass Communication,
University of Karachi, Pakistan***Corresponding author:** Fatima Kiran

✉ fatimakiran94@hotmail.com

Department of Mass Communication at
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Abstract

This study investigates the HIV/AIDS coverage in the selected newspapers. The premises of the study depend upon the fact that informing public about any social issue that effects people's life is among one of the fundamental functions of media, such as HIV/AIDS is one of prime importance. In this study two most prime newspapers of Pakistan Daily Jang and Dawn were analyzed. This paper adopted two approaches for investigation one is content analysis and another is discourse analysis. The content analysis was used to determine the frequency of HIV/AIDS content coverage. Discourse analysis was used to determine consciousness of these newspapers on covering HIV/AIDS stories with correct language and terminologies according to the given media guideline of UNICEF. Total 368 editions from 1st July 2017 to 31st December 2017 were sampled for the study. The result of the study indicates that newspapers have severely underestimated the severity of HIV/AIDS. The coverage given by newspapers is dissatisfactory. Selected newspapers used inappropriate terminologies and language in the stories which shows negligence of newspapers regarding HIV/AIDS issue.

Keywords: Pakistani newspapers; HIV/AIDS; Coverage; Public awareness; Content analysis; Discourse analysis; Press consciousness.

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Introduction

Pakistan is the country where health issues are the least priority for Government, policy makers and unfortunately in the eyes of media as well. Today worldwide media is consider as a fourth pillar of state which means media is responsible to cover each and every aspect of society, it also work as a watch dog in different institutions to analysis whether they are performing their duties appropriately if not then media highlighted those areas through their contents and enforce the regulatory bodies to look into the issues. Health care is the basic human right of every person whether rich or poor without any disparity as written in the article 25 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights [1].

HIV/AIDS is the Global health problem. In Pakistan it keeps growing despite many efforts to control it. UNAIDS through its sustainable development goals is leading an effort to end HIV/AIDS by 2030 as the health threat for public. Pakistan is one among the countries where number of HIV/AIDS cases is increasing rapidly almost 133,259 people estimated to have contracted with HIV [2]. Mass media consider as one of the major tool to educate

or create awareness related to risk about this epidemic. However research suggests that people those are well informed about HIV/AIDS severity are more likely to gauge the threat and have preventive behaviors [3].

The way news is reported has great influence on understanding the importance of the problem and its epidemic, little and insubstantial coverage of HIV/AIDS can minimize the severity in the eyes of public [4]. To keep society informed about HIV/AIDS media organization in Pakistan should keep covering this issue intensively. Therefore media should separately define some strategies to cover HIV/AIDS matter. Philadelphia Health Management Corporation a nonprofit research and service organization has developed their own HIV prevention print materials for focusing women in Philadelphia community, they believe in creating effective print materials that produce behavioral change and helped in delivering important message of HIV prevention [5].

There are many media organization those are working to mount the knowledge of HIV/AIDS, promoting awareness and educating their listeners, viewers and readers about the facts and figures

of epidemic and how to control it (jc 1000-media). A national survey conducted by United States where 72% of Americans identify newspapers, television and radio as a prime source of getting information about HIV/AIDS than doctors, friends and family [1]. In Uganda experts believes that a free discussion on HIV/AIDS in media and among civil society leads to success in upturning the epidemic (Joint United Nation Programme on HIV/AIDS). Mass media can be an instrument for breaking the ice that encircle the disease and can provide encouraging environment for discussions so that an individuals can protect themselves and change their behaviors.

Since comparatively there has been very little work on HIV/AIDS in Pakistan in the context of media and projection of severity of disease in newspapers that's why it is important to conduct study with respect to newspaper's role in creating awareness regarding HIV/AIDS. It will be helpful for media organizations in making their future policies for covering alarming health diseases of Pakistan.

Statement of Problem

In Pakistan HIV/AIDS gives real threat to the health of individuals, families and other communities. There are currently 132,000 HIV/AIDS patients and the figures are increasing year on year. This study examines the role of print media on creating awareness related to HIV/AIDS severity through newspaper's contents.

Literature Review

Etin Anim in 2011 conducted a study on The Perception of the HIV and AIDS pandemic by the Nigerian Press. The researcher findings shows that there was a massive decline in the coverage of HIV and AIDS between 2005 and 2010 the decline was 94%, lowered coverage shows the negligence of newspapers regarding the seriousness HIV and AIDS [6].

Rebecca De Souza [7] examined The Construction of HIV/AIDS in Indian Newspaper: A frame Analysis. The discourse analysis of the study seems to be more than a war against HIV/AIDS. The highlighted risk groups of the findings discussed in the discourse were poor children, middle class women and married women. All in all each category was discussed with multiple and competing frames in the newspapers [7].

In their study The Colors of AIDS: An analysis of newspaper coverage of HIV/AIDS in the United States from 1992-2007, Robin C. Stevens and Shawnika J. Hull discovered that there was a notable decline of HIV/AIDS coverage in American newspapers. The decrease rate was 76% approximately. It was also noted that the coverage was increased when HIV/AIDS become fatal disease for all Americans which also indicated racial disparities for African American [4].

A study of News coverage of HIV/AIDS in selected South African Newspapers by Lungisani Moyo and Nketsi A. Moqasa indicated that selected newspapers covered HIV/AIDS epidemic moderately. The result also revealed that the language used in these newspapers were positive and encouraging which become useful for behavioral change in South African society [8].

Robin Steven and Robert C. Hornik in their study AIDS in Black and White: The Influence of Newspapers Coverage of HIV/AIDS on HIV/AIDS testing among African Americans and White Americans 1993-2007 noted that increased news coverage of HIV/AIDS decline in HIV testing among African Americans as compare to White Americans. In addition the overall decline rate was 79.2% of HIV/AIDS coverage in the newspapers [9].

Nketsi Abel Moqasa and Abiodun Salawa conducted a study on An Examination of the Language use of selected South African Newspapers for Reporting HIV/AIDS. Researchers finding shows that the newspapers used positive and sensitive language according to the guideline of UNICEF, However there were some content which consist of derogatory language [10].

Angelo, Pollock, Kiernicki and Shaw conducted a study on framing of AIDS in Africa: Press-State relations, HIV/AIDS news and Journalistic advocacy in four Sub-Saharan Anglophone newspapers. Researchers finding shows that countries with lower HIV/AIDS pervasiveness covered more than the countries those have higher. Overall result indicated that newspapers played essential character in building individual, social and political responses to HIV/AIDS epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa [11].

Matthias Rompel conducted a study on Media Reception and Public Discourse on the AIDS epidemic in Namibia. Researcher noted that AIDS phenomena remain far away from readers because it represented in the way that it can affect others but not oneself. It was also indicated by discourse analysis that newspapers coverage remained negligible in dignifying education or information of HIV/AIDS [12].

In their study on Public Knowledge about AIDS increasing Campbell and Waters discovered that campaigns and vigorous coverage enlarged knowledge about AIDS among public [13]. Isibor and Ajuwon in their study Journalistic Knowledge of AIDS and Attitude to Persons living with HIV in Ibadan, Nigeria noted that insufficient knowledge of journalists of television, radio and newspapers compromised their function to depict severity of HIV/AIDS epidemic which resulted less and inadequate coverage [14].

Adelman and Verbrugge conducted a study on Death makes News: The social impact of diseases on newspaper coverage. The researchers finding indicated that HIV/AIDS comes on third rank in news coverage in comparison to diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, cancer and Alzheimer. They also noted that newspaper coverage greatly depend upon the mortality ratio of these diseases the higher the mortality the higher the coverage [15].

Objectives of the Study

The aim of the research is to find out the role of print media that how much coverage was given by the newspapers to escalate health issue like HIV/AIDS for public. To know which kind of discourse is being used to cover the content related to HIV/AIDS and how much space is given to the issue to make it prominent for policy makers, Government and for general public. To determine whether newspapers are following the guidelines prepared for reporting HIV/AIDS issue or not.

Theoretical Perspective of the Study

Uma Sakaran and Roger Bougie suggested that theoretical framework is the conceptual model to proceed with the investigation. It is an explanation that why researcher belief that the relationship exist among the variables. "The process of building theoretical framework consist of introducing definition of the concepts or variables in your model, developing conceptual model that provides a descriptive representation of your theory and coming up with the theory that provides an explanation for relationships between the variables in your model" [16]. The theoretical framework of this study has been chosen under considered judgment of researcher. Following are the theory that has been examined:

1. Agenda setting.
2. Framing theory.
3. Theory of issue attention cycle.

Agenda setting theory

While defining agenda setting Bernard Cohen wrote that "press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its reader what to think about. And it follows from this that the world looks different to different people, depending not only on their personal interest, but also on the map that is drawn by the writers, editors and publishers of the papers they read" [17].

Maxell Mc Comb and Donald Shaw in their research The Agenda Setting Function of Mass Media wrote that newspaper coverage also influence news content, audience does not only learn about the public issue but they also learn about the issue which is required most attention of public through the maximum coverage news media give it. "Agenda setting is most appropriately categorized as a post positive theory and it is reasonable to evaluated agenda setting theory on the criteria of accuracy, consistency, simplicity, scope and fruitfulness" [18].

Iyengar and Kinder found position of the story as a main component for influencing the reader and increasing the news worthy of the story. Lead stories have a greater agenda setting effect because of two reasons first people paid more attention on the beginning of the news and second people imagine lead story is newsworthy because of its designation [19]. Newspapers are the market place for ideas where coverage frequency and content priority sets agenda, influence public, government and policy makers from HIV/AIDS perspective. Less coverage shows negligence of issues related to public health in newspapers agenda.

Framing theory

Framing is an individual's set of expectations to make sense of social world and media contributes to those expectations [20]. Tewksbury and Powers conducted a research on The Effects of Frames on Readers and suggested that "Framing focuses not on which topics or issues are selected for coverage for the news media, but instead on the particular ways those issues are presented" [21]. The concept of framing is tool to explain the

presentation of HIV/AIDS issue in newspaper content of The News and Dawn.

Theory of issue attention cycle

The theory of issue attention cycle is originally proposed by Downs in 1972 in his article Up and Down with Ecology. "This issue attention cycle is rooted both in the nature of certain domestic problems and in the way major communication media interact with the public" [22]. In his paper Downs explains five stages of cycle pre-problem stage, alarmed discovery and euphoric enthusiasm, realizing the cost of significant progress, gradual decline of intense public interest and the post problem stage. From the perspective of HIV/AIDS issue the stages of issue attention cycle starts from 1st stage where the issue is only discussed among the selected group of people and is disrupted from 2nd till 4th stage and ended on 5th stage of post problem where the decline of media interest.

Research questions

1. How much coverage is being given to HIV/AIDS in the major newspapers of Pakistan?
2. How much space is being given to HIV/AIDS issue?
3. What are the placements of stories in newspapers for highlighting HIV/AIDS?
4. What is the discourse used in writing the content related to HIV/AIDS in Pakistani newspapers?
5. Which of type of category is being used to discuss HIV/AIDS issue?

Hypothesis

English and Urdu both print media are ineffective in projecting the severity of HIV/AIDS for public.

Methodology

This paper adopted both Qualitative and Quantitative approach of content analysis to investigate. Rhetorical content analysis helped to understand how HIV/AIDS has been covered and depicted in the selected newspapers. Rhetorical analysis focuses on how much messages are delivered and with what (intend or actual) effects Krippendorff, 2004 [23].

Quantitative content analysis

In this study researcher enable to determine the coverage frequency of HIV/AIDS content in the selected newspaper. "Quantitative newspaper content analysis evidently provided the needed scientific ground for journalistic arguments. The respect for numbers have long history and fact that can be quantified was considered undeniable" [23]. In this study data were obtained from content analysis of news, editorials, features, columns, interviews and cartoons in Daily Jang and Dawn of Pakistan.

Qualitative content analysis

This paper also relied upon qualitative analysis of textual

contents. Discourse analysis in one such approach of qualitative analysis. In general discourse analysis tends to focus that how particular phenomena are presented [23]. Media guideline has been taken from UNESCO and UNAIDS guideline presented for language and content in HIV/AIDS related materials. This was used as a standard for analyzing language and words used for reporting HIV/AIDS materials in the selected newspapers.

Study population

The study population of this paper comprised of 368 editions of two Prime daily newspapers Dawn and Daily Jang of Pakistan for a period of 6 months (1st July, 2017 -31st December, 2017). The reason to take this time period was that there were no major events in the complete year except the World's AIDS Day that took place at the end of the year.

Selection of newspapers for study

Daily Jang and Dawn are the two major dailies of Pakistan's newspaper that has been selected for content analysis. Daily Jang is the dominant newspaper of Urdu print media and Dawn is most prominent among English print media. The weekday circulation of Daily Jang is 80,000 and Dawn is 109,000 both have highest readership.

Unit of analysis

As it is stated in Mass Media Research book by Dominick and Roger that unit of analysis is the smallest element of content analysis but also one of the most important. In written content the unit of analysis might be a single word or symbol, a theme or an entire article or story (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011) [23]. In this study following are the unit of analysis:

- All news stories on HIV/AIDS.
- All Editorials on HIV/AIDS
- All features on HIV/AIDS
- All columns on HIV/AIDS
- All interviews on HIV/AIDS
- All cartoon on HIV/AIDS

Categories of content

Wimmer and Dominick stated that "All the heart of any content analysis is the category system used to classify media content. There are two ways for establishing content emergent coding that establishes after a preliminary examination of data and other is prior coding that establish categories before the data is collected" [24]. In this study researcher adopted prior coding for that researcher relied upon other researchers categories. To analysis HIV/AIDS material in the selected newspapers this study focused on the following categories:

- Medical
- Political
- Awareness
- Disaster

Data collection tool

Data for this study was collected from July, 2017 to December, 2017 from Daily Jang and Dawn of Pakistan. Total 368 editions of newspapers were examined page by page to identify all published items of HIV/AIDS. The newspapers were sourced from the Archive room of State Bank of Pakistan library.

Results and Discussions

Krippendorff suggested that tables are more useful tool for researcher to simply the textual data. He characterized tabulation as "by far most common technique used to render data comprehensible". Thus the data for this study are presented in tabular form.

Distribution of HIV/AIDS content in newspapers from 1st July 2017 till 31st December 2017

Table 1 represent the total number of content including all categories of newspaper content which is clear that within the period of six months Daily Jang covers only 4 content regarding HIV/AIDS where as Dawn give coverage to 07 content which is relatively very low. The issue covered by newspapers routinely or to which they give a lot of space in news, editorials, features, columns, interviews and cartoons were politics, political cartoon, fashion, movie industry crosswords and so on.

Distribution of HIV/AIDS content by genre of daily jang & dawn:

The data from **Table 2** shows that Daily Jang and Dawn covers 6 news by which 2 were covered by Daily Jang and 4 were covered by Dawn, both of the newspapers give one, one editorial on HIV/AIDS yet in the study time period total 736 editorials were published, zero feature was published in Daily Jang, however 1 feature was published in Dawn, seemingly zero columns were written on HIV/AIDS where as Dawn wrote 1 column, 1 interview of specialist was published in Daily Jang and zero interview in Dawn and zero cartoon created on HIV/AIDS issue in both of the newspapers.

Appearance of HIV/AIDS news stories on front, back and inside pages of daily jang & dawn:

Iyengar and Kinder in their book News that Matters offered an idea of position of a story, according to them lead stories had a greater impact on audience. As shown in **Table 3** there were zero news on front and back pages of newspapers those were consider as the most viewed pages of any newspaper that is why most important news are placed on these pages but there were zero coverage of HIV/AIDS issue in these pages which shows the negligence of severity from Daily Jang and Dawn two most premier newspapers of Pakistan.

Distribution of HIV/AIDS content by no. of paragraph in daily jang & dawn:

The data from **Table 4** represents the paragraphs of stories covered by Daily Jang and Dawn on HIV/AIDS issue. No of paragraph shows in depth coverage of any particular issue and it also depict the newspaper policy on giving attention to particular issue. 1-5 paragraphs had highest frequency of items. The insignificant relationship between the HI V/AIDS epidemic and the paragraph devoted to cover stories shows that newspapers did not give that much reasonable prominence to the issue.

Table 1: Distribution of HIV/AIDS content in newspapers from 1st July 2017 till 31st December 2017.

Newspapers	Frequency	Percentage
Daily Jang	04	36.6%
Dawn	07	63.63%
Total	11	100%

Table 2: Distribution of HIV/AIDS content by genre of daily jang & dawn.

Genre	Frequency	Percentage
News	6	54.4%
Editorials	2	18.1%
Features	1	9%
Columns	1	9%
Interviews	1	9%
Cartoons	0	0%
Total	11	100%

Table 3: Appearance of HIV/AIDS news stories on front, back and inside pages of daily jang & dawn.

Pages	Frequency	Percentage
Front	0	0%
Back	0	0%
Inside	6	100%
Total	6	100%

Table 4: Distribution of HIV/AIDS content by no. of paragraph in daily jang & dawn.

No. of Paragraph	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 paragraph	6	54.54%
6-10 paragraph	1	9.09%
11-15 paragraph	3	27.27%
16-20 paragraph	0	0%
21 or more	1	9.09%
Total	11	100%

Distribution of HIV/AIDS content by category of daily jang & dawn:

The data from **Table 5** indicates that selected newspapers covered majority of disaster stories on HIV/AIDS, whereas stories related to awareness and political were covered equally and medical coverage of HIV/AIDS story was the least. Overall coverage of awareness related stories were inadequate respectively there should be a periodic coverage because HIV/AIDS issue needs to be covered extensively.

Distribution of HIV/AIDS content of daily jang & dawn by headline font size:

As shown in the data of **Table 6** the most frequently used font size for the headline of HIV/AIDS content was between 36-48. Headlines have an impact on readers for selecting news to read. Over all coverage was low that is why font size of HIV/AIDS is not the one that highlight the importance of issue. Carole Rich suggested that “today readers and viewers are bombarded with so much of information. Many studies show that most newspaper readers are scanners who just read headline that give a quick review of the story. Headline larger in size appeal reader towards the news out of other news on the page” [25].

Distribution of HIV/AIDS content of daily jang & dawn by page dimension:

Above data in **Table 7** suggest that newspapers misjudge the severity of HIV/AIDS. Therefore they place coverage lower in their priorities. Not giving justified space to issue is ultimately giving the message to the reader that it is an unimportant issue. Both of the newspapers give less space to reporting and covering the epidemic of HIV/AIDS. Socially responsible newspapers work as a wheel for society and human development matters.

Discourse analysis of HIV/AIDS content:

As mentioned in the guideline of UNESCO that “language media use to conceptualize and talk about HIV/AIDS reflects its personal biases, understanding and lack of understanding. It also helps shape others attitude about HIV/AIDS. Appropriate language is constructive, does not fuel stereotypes and does not prejudice” [26]. The analyzed newspapers were found very careless in using appropriate words and value neutral language when reporting of HIV/AIDS issue. For instance phrase used “HIV patient” instead of “person with HIV”, a news story entitled “503 Aids cases in capital, Na told” Found on newspaper the mentioned word “Aids” should be “AIDS”, seemingly newspaper continuously reported “HIV disease” instead of “HIV infection”, most of the stories used word “HIV/Aids” instead of “HIV/AIDS” another inappropriate reporting of HIV/AIDS issue example is news stories containing phrase “HIV/AIDS incurable disease” which is no need to use when reporting HIV/AIDS issue journalist should avoid such terms. These words according to UNSECO guideline can create distress or negative stereotype.

Table 5: Distribution of HIV/AIDS content by category of daily jang & dawn.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Medical	1	9.09%
Political	3	27.27%
Awareness	3	27.27%
Disaster	4	36.36%
Total	11	100%

Table 6: Distribution of HIV/AIDS content of daily jang & dawn by headline font size.

Font size	Frequency	Percentage
12-16	0	0%
18-24	0	0%
26-34	4	36.36%
36-48	7	63.63%
72 or more	0	0%
Total	11	100%

Table 7: Distribution of HIV/AIDS content of daily jang & dawn by page dimension.

Page dimension	Frequency	Percentage
One third	2	18.18%
One fifth	3	27.27%
One half	1	9.09%
One quarter	2	18.18%
Full page	3	27.27%
Total	11	100%

Conclusion & Recommendation

The analysis of the selected newspapers of Pakistan indicates that newspapers pay inadequate attention to the HIV/AIDS issue. The coverage of this issue is so non-periodic that newspaper's editors need to prioritize HIV/AIDS issue in order to create awareness among public. The hypothesis of the study has been proved both Urdu and English newspapers are inefficient in covering the severity of HIV but relatively coverage in English newspaper is better than Urdu newspaper.

The results of the research questions suggest something more alarming. There is no balance in genres used in reporting, no appropriate space is given to highlight the issue. The language used for reporting is not according to the guidelines proposed by UNESCO which shows careless attitude of the newspapers in relation to this issue. The result strongly suggests that there is no clear policy by the newspapers to cover HIV/AIDS issue.

So, it is concluded that newspapers of Pakistan remain

irresponsible in creating awareness regarding HIV/AIDS because there was so negligible reporting on the issue. Newspapers have to be socially responsible by doing extensive reporting in relation to educating the public. Newspapers should devote more space or have specific edition or page to discuss the severity of HIV/AIDS in depth because news coverage has powerful impact on public behavior.

Limitations of the Study

No one except science can be perfect for the first time. No one's work is beyond limitation. First because of the time limit, this study depends upon small size of population that covers 1 prime Urdu newspaper and 1 prime English newspaper. Therefore, to generalize the result the study should also have to involve more newspapers of regional languages. In addition, since the newspapers were examined by the researcher herself, it is unavoidable that in this study certain degree of subjectivity can be found.

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