

Exploring the Diverse Views of Professionals and Students on Causes and Consequences of Terrorist Attacks on their Performance

Anjum Naz*
Shazia Maik**
Abida Nasreen***

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the views and opinions of professionals (doctors, teachers, transporters) and students on the causes and consequences of terrorist attacks on the performance of. The assumption of the study was that the professionals and students have different views on this issue. A semi-structured interview schedule was used based on the study's research questions. Data generated from the interview questions concerning causes and consequences of terrorist attacks were coded thematically. The results of the study unveiled the fact that the effects of terrorism have disturbed the participants of the study psychologically and they feel horrified to go out. They informed about their irregular behavior on that specific day of the blast. Professionals in the medical field were the most affected ones because they have direct dealing with victims of terrorist attacks. It was suggested that counseling sessions may be conducted and media should play a positive and effective role, to minimize the severe effects of these incidents.

Keywords: Terrorist Attacks, Performance, professionals.

Introduction

Terrorism in any form is considered as devil acts everywhere in the world (Belqioso, Costalli & Gleditsch (2019) The causes might be different in every culture but their effects are always more or less the same. The personnel in any field internalize the effects of terrorism although the intensity may be different (Schuster, Stein, Jaycox, Collins, Marshall, Elliott, Zhou, Kanouse, Morrison, & Berry, 2001). Moreover, neither the causes of terrorist attacks are the same nor the nature of attacks but the effects of these attacks seem the same especially on the professionals working in different walks of life (Anderton & Carter, 2005).

Terror, terrorism, and terrorist are the terms which are the most frequently used in the media (Ross, 2001). The fear of bomb attacks, suicide attacks, and uncertainty prevailing in the society has spoiled the social fabric and peace of our society. The term terrorism is used for "ideologically or politically motivated violence directed against civilian targets (Oppenheim & Weintraub, 2017). In another

* Associate Professor at the University of the Punjan, Corresponding email: anjum.naz@uos.edu.pk

**Assistant Professor at University of the Punjab.

*** Associate Professor at the University of the Punjab.

sense, terrorism is violence against common people to achieve political or ideological objectives (Dnkel, 2002). Terrorism is an extreme form of violent trauma (Baca, Baca, Perez, María & Cabanas, 2005). The major perceived aim of terrorism is to spread fear to pressurize the concerned authorities (Cohrs, Moschner, Maes & Kielmann, 2005). Some definitions of terrorism include only those acts which are intended to create fear (terror). Some other definitions of terrorism incorporate demonstrations of unlawful viciousness and war. Danieli, Brom and Sills (2005) discover psychological warfare as an exceptionally befuddling term connected with financial and political setup. Given how unique the causes and viewpoints of conservative, patriot dissident, socially progressive, and religious fundamentalists may be, their motivation is almost the same, i.e. spreading the fear (Crelinsten & Ronald, 1997) but at the same, the intensity and impact of the incident may vary. In this way, there is definitely not a 'one size fits all' clarification: the connection between leadership and supporters, the gathering and authoritative elements, and in addition the decision designs contrast from gathering to gathering. And keeping in mind that research plays a basic undertaking in understanding psychological oppression, to grasp this complex conjecture completely requires an interdisciplinary methodology, combined with learning from political, chronicled, social, monetary, ideological and religious contributions (Shapiro & Fair, 2010). In nutshell, Forsberg (1997) expresses that it is basic to think about every fear-based oppression in its own political, verifiable and particular social setting.

There are lots of definitions of terrorism devised by different governments, according to their own concerns. "United Nations conventions against terrorism have remained stalled since 2000, largely over deciding on an exact legal definition. Other international conventions on terrorism exist with various legal definitions; Terrorism is a form of unconventional warfare as well as psychological warfare" (Morris, 2009). Most of the people elucidate terrorism, according to his/her certain implication. To find out the solution and to eradicate terrorism it is important to understand the causes of terrorism. This research study is an effort to find out the perceived causes of terrorism and the immediate effects of the terrorist attacks on the general behavior and performance of some professional people. The findings of this research study would provide an insight into the indirect effects of terrorist attacks on the life of professionals and students. There are different kinds of the effects of terrorist attacks on society i.e. direct, indirect, short term and long term, etc. The focus of this research study was on the immediate impact of terrorist attacks on different professionals. The unique feature of this research study was the focus of the interview questions on the immediate impact of terrorist attacks. This study was an attempt to find out the immediate reaction of educated people upon the act of violence anywhere in the country.

Literature Review

History of Terrorism in Pakistan

Cohrs, Christopher, Moschner, Barbara, Maes, Jurgen and Kielmann (2005) state that in this era our the world is not peaceful and we all are facing many military interventions such as Iraq war, Kosovo war, Afghanistan war, the war in Kashmir, and Bosnia, terrorism against *Nukhsalis* and *Rohingya* Muslims. It's a high time that intellectuals consider to think the hidden reasons for these wars and try to sort out the complexities of interrelated factors involved within this war scenario.

Pakistan exactly named as the '*Islamic Republic of Pakistan*' was a peaceful and prosperous country until 1978. After 1979 when Russia invaded Afghanistan a change was observed in the whole world scenario. The superpower misused the Islamic concept of Jihad. They used *Madrasas*' innocent students for this purpose and equipped them with the arms to defeat Russia. They supported Pakistan financially to achieve their goal to defeat Russia. In the eighties, the preferences of superpower changed and all support was pulled back. With the collapse of Russia and the evacuation of the Russian army from Afghanistan, the situation of Pakistan changed. In this changed situation, the terrorism strappingly immersed and swiftly increase in Pakistani society. After 9/11 Pakistan once again became the front line state in the war against terror in the international community (Sonderling, 2008). Pakistan tried to restrain terrorism and militant groups as an ally of the international community and NATO forces. Consequently, these militant groups turned against Pakistan and they started terrorist attacks in Pakistan. in the recent past, there has been fatal wave of terrorist attacks in almost every part of the country and has reached the other border of the country, the city of Lahore. The terrorists had not even spared the high-security zones and has targeted the very calm, beautiful, and city of diplomats, the capital city Islamabad. People of Pakistan feel a great concern for being the battlefield of this war on terror.

Causes of Terrorism

Terrorism is the biggest problem of this era and the talk of the town (Jenkins & Baird, 2002). Nearly all over the world people suffered due to terrorist attacks (Saiya, 2017) and similarly in Pakistan. After every terrorist attack, everyone tried to guess the reason for terrorist attacks and had diverse and contrasting views. Clarifying psychological warfare as far as background conditions (social, monetary, statistic, political, or social) is insufficient and mistaken even under the least favorable conditions. Concentrating totally on hidden structures gives minimum analytical limits. If we consider conditions like 'Globalization', for instance, encourages the spread of psychological oppression however it's anything but an immediate reason (Yagur, Grinshpoon, & Ponizovsky, 2002). Rather, recorded possibilities and the recognitions and expectations of little, radicalized political intrigues are most essential in clarifying

psychological warfare. We should not overlook that psychological warfare requires the dynamic support of just a few people who could possibly speak to aggregate interests (Foa, 2001).

Fear-based oppression is certainly not a solid marvel, regarding belief system as well as in association with regional culture and conditions. In some cases, psychological warfare is associated with social development or political gathering that appreciates critical famous help, to a great extent because of its strategic exercises, for example, giving truly necessary social administrations. (Gidron, 2002 Different militant organizations are all the more socially disconnected. They might be part groups of bigger associations or small groups that have shaped with the end goal to utilize fear-mongering (Norris, Friedman, Watson, Byrne, Diaz, and Kaniasty, 2002). Such organizations have a couple of choices other than psychological oppression and after some time it might turn into a personality for them as much as a methodology. Gatherings of the two sorts are liable to interior strains and divisions, and factionalism is normal. Their pioneers' battle back to protect consistency and devotion.

There are many obvious as well as hidden reasons for terrorism in Pakistan. The nature of terrorism prevailing in Pakistan does have social, economical, ethnic, and religious reasons. According to Saiya, (2017) high population growth rates, high unemployment, lagging economies, political disenfranchisement, extremism, ethnic conflict, religious conflict, territorial conflicts are the probable reasons for terrorism. Shapiro and Fair (2010) documented the following reasons for terrorism

Table 1
Reasons for terrorist Attacks

Sr. no	Reasons for terrorist attacks
1	Defenselessness and desperation.
2	Biased and financial deficiency
3	Influence of socialist Regimes
4	Scarcity and monetary misuse
5	Easy admittance to armaments
6	Absolute sensation of Terrorism
7	Lack of democratic system
8	Religious fanaticism
9	Biological and Social Elements

Source: Shapiro and Fair (2010). Understanding Support for Islamist Militancy in Pakistan. *International Security*, 34(3), 26.

Terrorism committed by the religious fundamentalist is justified by their claims to hold a higher morality.

Effects of Terrorism

In the past years, reports of acts of terrorism and violence taking place in Pakistan have been reported in the news media several times a week (Ross, 2001). Moreover, widespread types of terrorist acts frequently taking place e.g. suicide bombing which is similar to the method used in Afghanistan (Galea, Resnick, Bucuvalas & Vlahov, 2002).

The effects of terrorism are numerous; some of the following features might be observed clearly such as increased anxiety, Re-experiencing the exposure through disturbing thoughts, nightmares or repeatedly talking about violent actions (Vorsina, Manning & Fleming, 2017), People are more sensitive to siren sounds, planes flying above, loud noises. Furthermore, sleep disturbance, or fear of the dark, headaches, poor attentiveness with decreased school performance, Increased thoughts about death and dying Irritability are some more symptoms of concern (Foa, 2001).

Data from a nationally representative sample of 569 US adults contacted 3-5 days after September 11, indicated that people who were not present at traumatic events may also experience stress reactions (Tillman, 2002). Moreover, Pfefferbaum, Nixon, Tivis, Doughty, Pynoos, Gurwitsch & Foy (2001) had concluded that the professional people who have profound knowledge of the society are more affected due to the sudden or surprise terrorist attacks.

Method

Objectives and Research Questions

This research study was designed to investigate the views of professionals i.e. doctors, teachers, transporters and students about the causes and consequences of terrorist attacks in Pakistan. The aim was to dig deep into the mental understanding and inner world of the participants of various fields and of various levels of education. Furthermore, the researchers were interested to know their experiences and thought processes of the participants about the terrorist attacks. The study also identified the nature of immediate effects of terrorist attacks on the performance of doctors, university teachers, transporters, and university students. Following questions were answered or partially answered in this research study; what are the perceived causes of terrorist attacks in Pakistan? What are the effects of terrorist attacks on the attitude and performance of professionals (doctors, university teachers, transporters and university students)?

Research Methodology

The study used qualitative inquiry approach. The nature of the study was investigatory and exploratory and interview protocol was used as the tools of the study. The interview questions were validated by six experts in the subjects of psychology, education and sociology and they were teaching these subjects for more than fifteen years. Five doctors, five university teachers, and five transporters agreed to participate in this research study. All those professionals were taken in the sample whose experience was more than ten years. Twenty-five university students were also conveniently selected to participate in the study. The students were inquired about the causes of terrorism in Pakistan. Selected professionals were invited to participate and presented consent forms. A flexible interview protocol was used. Interviews were conducted after getting the formal permission of the participants via an ethical consent form.

The participants were conveniently selected from the federally administered tribal areas and Swat. The coding scheme adopted for different professionals and students was as given below:

- 1) Doctors: D1, D2, D3, D4, D5
- 2) Teachers: T1, T2, T3, T4, T5
- 3) Transporters: TR1, TR2, TR3, TR4, TR5
- 4) University Students: S1, S2, S3, S4, S25.

There were questions on the war on terrorism, social inequality, stress on youngsters, fundamentalists' views, unemployment, sectarianism, the role of foreign agencies, and various indigenous organizations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted. The protocol of interview was flexible and the cross-questioning technique was used to explore the direct and indirect effects of terrorist attacks on professional people and students' performance. The focus question discussed was aimed to find out the personal insight & feelings of professionals about the effects of terrorist attacks. Researchers personally conducted the interviews, audio taped, and transcribed later to analyze the data. The researcher then developed non repetitive, non overlapping constituents clustered into themes. Under these themes participants' experiences were described and quoted. The categories of the responses were identified and discussed separately. The interviews were conducted in an uninterrupted, comfortable and quiet setting.

Results and Discussions

Causes of Terrorism

The causes mentioned by the educated and professional people can be divided into two categories:

- 1) Major Causes: War against terror and religious extremism
- 2) Minor Causes: unemployment, social justice, and poverty

The major causes mentioned by the respondents were the war against terror and religious extremism. One doctor quoted “*that the terrorist used the name of Islam and jihad without understanding the basic meanings of these phenomena (D5)*”. Another respondent quoted that “*the so-called war against terror is the major cause of terrorist attacks in Pakistan (D3)*”. One university teacher points out that the actual cause is unknown but the obvious one is an ‘*an act of enemies of Islam to destroy the peace (T1)*’. Most of the transporters quoted that religious extremism was the major cause of violence. One transporter quoted ‘*the suicide bombers are not the Muslims and they are only using the name of Islam. They are not even aware of the meaning of Islam(TR1)*’. The causes mentioned by the respondents were quite interesting. The interest of American agencies and the role of foreign agencies e.g. RAW, MOSSAD, KGB, CIA was considered a big reason for terrorist activities in Pakistan. The other contributing causes were unemployment, social justice, and poverty followed by government policies in FATA and Swat. A large majority of professionals consider the attacks of NATO forces within the pakistani territorial area is the main cause of terrorism. On the other hand, very few respondents consider the role of the *Taliban* and other *Jihadi* Organizations e.g. *Jaish Muhmmad*, *Lashkar-e-Taiba*, *Spa-Sahaba* as the main cause they further did not consider the role of *Madrassa* as a cause of this worldwide unrest. The table below gives the ranking of different causes mentioned by the students.

Table 2

Perceived causes of terrorism in Pakistan

Sr. No.	Causes of Terrorism	Percentage(%)
1	The interest of Foreign Agencies	67
2	Role of Foreign Agencies e.g. RAW, MOSSAD, KGB, CIA	61
3	Unemployment	49
4	Social Injustice	49
5	Poverty	43
6	Government Policies in FATA	41
7	Attacks of NATO forces within Pakistani Territory	39
8	Political Conflicts e.g. Kashmir cause	39
9	Army Operation in Swat	37
10	Lack of The democratic system in Tribal Areas	36
11	Religious Conflict	35
12	War Against Terrorism	32
13	The Taliban	24
14	Religious Fanaticism	24
15	Money Making Attitude	22
16	Financial deficiency	18
17	Jihad Culture	17
18	Extremist Ideologies	17
19	Al-Qaida	15
20	Oppression	15
21	Role of <i>Jihadi</i> Organizations e.g. <i>Jaish Muhmmad, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Spa-Sahaba</i>	11
22	Role of <i>Madressa</i>	9
23	Ethnic conflict	8
24	Role of Pakistani Intelligence Agencies	4
25	Easy Admittance to Armaments	0

Effects of Terrorism

The effect of terrorist activities, as quoted by the respondents of the study, can be divided into three major themes:

- 1) emotional impact,
- 2) effect on routine behavior and
- 3) effect on performance at the job.

Emotional Impact

The respondents quoted the emotional concern as an immediate effect of terrorist attacks. One doctor quoted “as we are supposed to directly interact with the dead bodies and injured people, this situation brings embarrassment and stress for us (D1)”. Another quoted “I think we suffered a lot because our duty hours got increased and administration canceled our leaves. The fear of suicide bombing and uncertainty add fuel to fire(D4).” The teachers also showed emotional concern as one teacher quoted that “whenever I hear news of terrorist attacks I always feel anxiety, anger, and sorrow..... It always humiliated me. I have disturbing thoughts with disturbed sleep and nightmares (T5)”. All five teachers quoted the feeling of hatred and anger for the terrorist. Another teacher quoted “the immediate feeling aroused was to know the cause of attack and rest of the day I keep on thinking about the terrorists. I generally start feeling aches and pains such as stomachaches, headaches because of such attacks (T2)”. All five transporters quoted the feelings of sorrow and anger as a quick response to the news of terrorist attacks. One quoted “I hate terrorist attacks because they do everything for money..... but they must be psychologically ill people. They are wild and Muslims could not be wild. Our religion teaches us to love humanity and save lives. Moreover, suicide is unlawful in Islam(TR3)”. The emotional feelings of the respondents were aggressive enough. They quoted the feelings of anger, hatred, sorrow, grief, hopelessness, helplessness, stress, and anxiety.

Change in routine behavior

All respondents acknowledged the fact that there are some changes which occur in their normal behavior after they hear the news of the terrorist attacks. The nature of the change in routine behavior quoted by one doctor was “*at the day of terrorist attack whole of the schedule got disturbed as an emergency imposed on the hospitals and all routine matters postponed, the particular change in my behavior is that I got aggressive and confused (D4)*”. Another doctor quoted the same statement and added “*most of the time our conversation revolves around the causes and effects of terrorist attacks and we forgot to discuss any other issue(D2)*”. The change in routine behavior quoted by one transporter was “*the whole routine matters got suffered. Most of the time, we cancel consignments. The bad mood and pessimistic feelings surround me whenever I hear the news of any attack anywhere in the country (TR1)*”. All the teachers also quoted the change in routine matters they told that they

sometimes changed their plans if they have to visit someone. One teacher added, “*On the day of terrorist attack nothing made me happy, I got pessimistic, gloomy and tried to stay at home(T5)*”.

Effects on performance

It is an established fact that stress and strain can decrease the quality of the performance of human beings in the workplace. The effects of the bad mood, emotional feelings, and fear also spoiled the performance quality. All the participants confessed that they felt that their performance suffered due to the tension which they felt on the day of a terrorist attack. Doctors quoted the effect of the terrorist attacks on their performance as one told: “*I think the effect of the news of the terrorist attack anywhere caused a negative effect on my nerves as I got perplexed and made more mistakes during the working hour more than ever (D3)*”. The teachers expressed the same fact as one told: “*the immediate effect of terrorist attacks is that I forgot most of the part of my prepared lecture and consciously and sometimes unconsciously I made conversation upon the event (T1)*”. The transporters described the day with such event as a gloomy day and one of them articulated that “*the news of terrorist attack made me lazy and my heart got heavy so I failed to concentrate upon my work and made a lot of errors. Most of the time I stay at home to get a better understanding of the conditions by listening to the news channels views on it (TR2)*”. It was also found that nearly all participants’ told that their punctuality and regularity suffered due to the frequent terrorist attacks. The transporters told another fact that at the day of terrorist attack they got some irritating instructions to change the route which is very painful for them. Nearly all participants confessed that they tried to restrict their unnecessary movements. The performance of most of the teachers also got affected as one teacher told that he faced a lot of difficulties to focus upon the lecture of the day otherwise most of the time all discussions revolved around the cause and effects of terrorist attacks. Another added that they are used to discuss the event even in the classroom with the students just to soothe their nerves. The negative effects of terrorist attacks on the performance of all respondents were more or less the same; the only difference was of the intensity of the effect.

Conclusion and Discussion

This study revealed that educated people had contrasting views and opinions about the cause of terrorist attacks in Pakistan. The major cause they quoted was the war against terror and the aggressive policies of the government. The second major cause they quoted was the religious extremism that is also being described by Sonderling (2008). The causes mentioned by the respondents were quite interesting. The interest of American agencies and the role of foreign agencies e.g. RAW, MOSSAD, KGB, CIA was considered a big reason for terrorist activities in Pakistan. The other contributing causes were unemployment, social justice, and poverty

followed by government policies in FATA and Swat. A large majority of professionals consider the attacks of NATO forces within the Pakistani territorial area is the main cause of terrorism. On the other hand, very few respondents consider the role of the *Taliban* and other *Jihadi* Organizations e.g. *Jaish Muhammad*, *Lashkar-e-Taiba*, *Spa-Sahaba* as the main cause they further did not consider the role of *Madrassa* as a cause of this worldwide unrest. The table below gives the ranking of different causes mentioned by the students.

The immediate effects of terrorist attacks that respondents quoted were classified into three major categories i.e. emotional effects, change in routine behavior, and effect on performance. The emotional effects were quoted by the people in the medical field. Doctors had direct interaction with the injured people and suffered a lot on the day of the terrorist attack. The change in routine behavior and schedule was also communicated by the transporters. They stated it as the economic loss as well as fear and stress. The teachers quoted the emotional as well as the change in routine behavior. Nearly all respondents quoted the negative effect on their performance on that specific day of the terrorist attacks. Somer, Eli, Ayalla, Erez & Sever (2005) had also studied the terrorism, distress, and coping in high versus low impact regions and direct versus indirect effects and they found that the impact of terrorism is not local but worldwide.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the government and responsible institutions should share reliable information regarding the terrorist attacks with the society. It would help to remove the misconceptions of the educated people about the causes of terrorist attacks in Pakistan. Counseling sessions may be conducted and media should play a positive and effective role, to minimize the severe effects of these incidents. Moreover, the security concerns and arrangements to restrict the movement of a terrorist should also be communicated effectively to remove the feelings of insecurity and fear from the minds of people. The topic of this study was wide enough so further researches may also be planned to find out the impacts of terrorist attacks on the people of other professions i.e. media, commerce, and telecommunication, etc.

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