COMMUNICATIONS CORRELATE TRUST IN PAKISTAN ARMY: RECOMMENDING MEASURES FOR IMAGE BUILDING

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Trust in defense institutions is vital for national cohesion and national integration. For this purpose, the media dependency theory, video malaise theory, and virtuous circle theory are extended to propose a theoretical framework. Against this background, the objectives of the study are to explain public trust by analyzing the correlation of the uses of communications with the trust in the Pakistan Army.

Design/Methodology: :To conduct this research quantitative approach is used, a purposive sample of (n = 269) university students is selected based on a sample collected from the universities in Lahore. The survey method was used to collect data. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 was used for applying the correlations and partial correlation tests.

Findings: : Communications on Twitter and Facebook are creating distrust for the Pakistan Army, but the interpersonal forms of communication are creating trust for the Pakistan Army. The study finds major support for the media malaise theory. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Originality: This study painted a more comprehensive picture of the trust in the army in the evolving media environment in Pakistan.

Keywords: Video malaise theory, virtuous circle theory, communications, trust in Army

Paper type: Research Paper

INTRODUCTION

Today the entire world living in a rich communicational environment in which social media are also emerging as the primary means for access to traditional news (Hussain et al., 2021). Traditional and digital communications connect citizens for online and offline participation. These sources enable citizens to actively or passively seek media sources to get awareness about issues (Hussain et al., 2023). As compared to previous centuries, more advancement has arisen in access to communication sources at the dawn of the twenty-first century (Hussain et al., 2023; Hussain & Baig, 2023). Zulqarnain and Hassan (2019) report that youth in Pakistan are relying on social media when compared with mainstream media. People are now fully aware of new communication sources, including online websites, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube (Hussain et al., 2021). People can use and control these tools, which have an immense effect on youth behaviors, attitudes, and ideologies. According to Moy and Scheufele's (1996) research, media use affected the characteristics of social and political trust which are based on the idea that different media might affect individuals' perceptions.

People commonly just read material that supports their own opinions. People who are critical of the Pakistan Army will look for similar communication from different sources, which further lessens their trust in them. Media play a significant role in educating the thoughts and perceptions of youth by presenting the image of the Army. It was observed that the trust of youth in Pakistani political institutions is decreasing who are using diverse communication sources in the high-choice media environment. The trust or trust deficit informed by media may vary depending on the type of media usage. It is therefore aimed to analyze the associations of the diverse communications or media sources with the hierarchy of trust in the defense institution of the Pakistan Army.

Literature Review

This literature review section discusses literature about the role of communications for trust and trust deficit in political institutions which have relevance for our study design for the correlations of communications with trust in the Army. Avery (2009) explains the negative effect of news media exposure on public trust in government. Ceron (2015) identifies the positive relationship between news consumption websites and political trust. Bakker et al (2018) explore no effects of forms of the crisis on willingness to follow the advice of the local government.

Khalifa (2020) defines dependence as an association in which the ability of individuals to reach their goals is based on the communication sources and the system of media on which it depends. Zhou et al (2020) explain that there are negative effects of the use of the Internet on political trust in contexts of central as well as local governments and the judicial system. Meng and Zhou (2022) explain media effects on the level of political trust and it is explored that exposure to official media is positively correlated with political trust but uses of official media on the other hand individual media were negatively correlated with political trust.

Chang (2022) explains newspaper political content has a high-level effect on political trust, and watching television political news harms political trust. Call-in political issues programs harm political trust. The Internet harms political trust in the context of legislation and political parties. Liu (2023) describes the significant relationship of digital media with political trust and COVID-19 political trust.

The previous research focuses on political trust but less emphasis is made on the defense institution in the reviewed studies. The current study is different from the previous studies because it re-conceptualizes the construct of communication sources and levels of political trust by contextualizing specifically the institution of the army in Pakistan. Secondly, this study adds to the knowledge of media dependency, media malaise, and virtuous circle theory by explaining the relationship of multiple communication sources with the levels of trust which the previously reviewed academic studies have not explained comprehensively when contextualizing trust in the Pakistan Army.

Theoretical Framework

This theory investigates the impacts of particular media messages and the impacts are seen as diffuse (Norris, 2000). This theory offers a logical explanation for the generally favorable correlation between news media use and civic involvement; in addition to that, those who are more knowledgeable pay more attention to political news (Norris, 2000). A virtuous circle is typically encountered among highly educated people who can absorb and critically evaluate the flow of political communication presented in the media (Norris, 2000; Curran et al, 2014; Hirvilammi, 2020; Avery, 2009). According to Lissitsa (2021), the virtuous circle theory emphasizes the convenience and broader access to political knowledge that the media provides. Exposure to political media may be a virtuous circle of greater civic involvement and political interest which increases trust in political institutions (Lissitsa, 2021). Extended from virtuous circle theory a research question and a hypothesis are formulated.

Hypothesis 1. There is likely to be a positive correlation between communications with trust in the Pakistan Army.

RQ1. To what degree and in what direction do communications correlate with trust in the Pakistan Army?

Robinson (2015) introduced video malaise theory in 1976 and argues that exposure to television results in video malaise which is negative framing, anti-institutional themes, and dissatisfaction with politics. The factors are extended from the study of Robinson (2015) which contributes to the phenomenon of video malaise. These attitudes come from the frames used by media news which focuses on sensationalism, entertainment, and a horse race for political selection (Jacobsen, 2020). Schuck (2017) explains that video malaise theory which is about individuals, scandals, exciting events, conflicts, and competition between political personalities receives more attention in the media than those about substantial political concerns. Extensive exposure to this content may lead to distrust, civic disengagement, and issues about governmental legitimacy (Schuck, 2017). Extended from these studies the hypothesis is formulated.

Hypothesis 2. There is likely to be a negative correlation of communications with the trust in the Pakistan Army.

RQ2. To which theories between video malaise and virtuous circle do findings from correlations of communications with trust in the Pakistan army contribute?

Methodology

This study uses the post-positivist approach. The study uses a cross-sectional-descriptive survey. The universe for the study is Youth in Pakistan between the ages of 18 and 35 years. The population for the study is university students in Pakistan because they are educated and have access to multiple sources of communication. The study uses the non-probability sampling technique of purposive sampling. The sample of university students is selected from the city of Pakistan Lahore. This city is selected because this city has more students than other cities. The sample of university students between the ages of 18 and 35 is justified because it is a youth bulge who are communicating with the help of online media of communication. The sample size for the study is 269 university students.

Two major constructs for the study are exposure to communication sources and trust in the Pakistan Army. The construct of communications (independent variables) is operationalized on 39 items index with the variables of: (1) Television use, (2) Newspaper use, (3) Magazine use, (4) Radio use, (5) General Internet use, (6) Facebook use for liking posts, (7) Facebook use for sharing posts, (8) Facebook use for commenting on posts, (9) WhatsApp use, (10) Twitter use, (11) Instagram use, (12) YouTube use, (13) TikTok use, (14) Interpersonal with friends, (15) Interpersonal with peer, (16) Interpersonal with family, (17) Use of Dunya news channel, (18) Use of Geo News channel, (19) Use of ARY News, (20) Use of Express News, (21) Use of Television Talk Shows, (22) Exposure to Hasb-e-hal, (23) Exposure to Mazakraat, (24) Exposure to Khabarharr, (25) Exposure to CNN , (26) Exposure to BBC Urdu, (27) Exposure to VOA Urdu, (28) Exposure to DW Urdu, (29) Uses of Government Websites, (30) Attending public political processions, (31) Use of online newspaper,

(32) Exposure to political memes, (33) Social media news use for communication, (34) Social media news use for political motives, (35) Social media news use for entertainment, (36) Critical social media use, (37) Exposure to sensational news, (38) Exposure to political scandals in news, (39) Exposure to news about corruption. The items can be seen in the questionnaire which is attached in Appendix A.

The variables for trust in the Pakistan Army (dependent variables) are (1) Competence of the army, (2) Honesty of the army, and (3) Perception that the army is concerned about the issues of Pakistan.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences is used for the analysis of data. Descriptive statistics like frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation are used to report scores on data and the items. The normality test was run to see the normality of data and the data were partially normally distributed. The Spearman Rank correlations are used to explain the associations between dependency on s and trust in the Army.

The time frame for the study is April 2023 to August 2023 which is 5 months. The current economic crisis in Pakistan is an element of the country's political instability. For months, it has resulted in serious economic difficulties, which have raised the cost of food, petrol, and oil. It alters the public confidence in political institutions.

Results and Discussion

The majority of respondents are Pakistani citizens (99.6%) who belong to Punjab province (96.7%). The female (78.4%) respondents are more than male university students (28.6%), whereas, 96.3% of respondents are university students. In addition to this, 61.3% of students are studying and 8.6% are looking for work while others are full-time homemakers (6.3%), a limited number of university students belong to the public sector (5.2%), and other respondents belong to the private sectors who are self-employed (14.9%). In addition to these characteristics, the majority of respondents belong to the city (95.9%) while limited university students (4.1%) are from the village.

Table 1: Communication Sources and Trust in the Army

	Competence[1]	Honesty[2]	Concern[3]
Do you happen to watch television?	.076	.089	.112
	(.217)	(.145)	(.066)
Do you happen to read the offline print version of the newspaper?	-.082	-.034	-.026
	(.177)	(.579)	(.668)
Do you happen to read online or offline versions of magazines?	.057	.089	.149*
	(.349)	(.146)	(.015)
Do you happen to listen to the radio?	.052	.049	.117
	(.392)	(.426)	(.056)
Do you happen to use the Internet?	.136*	-.011	.022
	(.026)	(.854)	(.719)
Do you happen to use Facebook for liking posts?	-.120*	-.048	-.102
	(.048)	(.434)	(.095)
Do you happen to use Facebook for sharing posts?	-.132*	-.096	-.047

	(.031)	(.115)	(.441)
Do you happen to use Facebook for commenting on posts?	-.185**	-.102	-.134*
	(.002)	(.096)	(.028)
Do you happen to use WhatsApp?	.120	.047	-.012
	(.050)	(.439)	(.849)
Do you happen to use Twitter?	-.180**	-.167**	-.230**
	(.003)	(.006)	(.000)
Do you happen to use Instagram?	-.026	.017	.016
	(.667)	(.777)	(.790)
Do you happen to use YouTube?	-.106	-.068	-.131*
	(.084)	(.264)	(.031)
Do you happen to use TikTok?	-.126*	-.020	.005
	(.038)	(.748)	(.939)
Do you happen to use face-to-face communication with friends?	.125*	.180**	.211**
	(.041)	(.003)	(.000)
Do you happen to use face-to-face communication with peers?	.065	.046	.116
	(.287)	(.455)	(.057)
Do you happen to use face-to-face communication with family?	.127*	.052	.128*
	(.037)	(.394)	(.036)
Do you happen to watch Dunya news?	-.074	.075	.057
	(.227)	(.220)	(.350)
Do you happen to watch Geo News?	.111	.102	.119
	(.069)	(.095)	(.051)
Do you happen to watch Express News?	.029	.023	.076
	(.636)	(.702)	(.217)
Do you happen to watch ARY news?	.043	-.001	.082
	(.484)	(.981)	(.182)
Do you happen to watch Television Talk shows?	.027	.045	.086
	(.659)	(.458)	(.161)
Do you happen to watch the political satire show of Hasb-e-Hal?	.066	-.009	.067
	(.280)	(.882)	(.273)
Do you happen to watch the satirical show Mazakraat?	.063	.043	.046
	(.306)	(.478)	(.450)
Do you happen to watch the political satire show of Khabarharr?	.057	.005	.102
	(.350)	(.933)	(.096)
Do you happen to watch Cable News Network?	-.017	.003	.050
	(.779)	(.960)	(.416)
Do you happen to watch British Broadcasting Corporation Urdu?	.011	-.022	.015
	(.858)	(.721)	(.806)
Do you happen to watch Voice of America Urdu?	.022	-.011	.020
	(.717)	(.861)	(.740)
Do you happen to watch Deutsche Welle Urdu?	-.021	.039	.045
	(.736)	(.524)	(.467)
Do you happen to browse governmental websites?	.017	-.007	.059
	(.782)	(.910)	(.336)
Do you happen to attend public political processions (siyasi jalsa)?	-.101	-.188**	-.095
	(.098)	(.002)	(.119)
Do you happen to read online newspapers?	.054	-.071	.097
	(.375)	(.243)	(.113)
Do you happen to watch political memes?	.084	-.082	.039
	(.171)	(.180)	(.519)
Do you happen to use social media for news-seeking to get communication?	.128*	-.053	.116
	(.036)	(.385)	(.057)
Do you happen to use social media for news-seeking for political motives?	-.007	-.078	.048
	(.911)	(.201)	(.437)

Do you happen to use social media for news-seeking about entertainment?	.004	-.072	.056
	(.953)	(.241)	(.361)
Do you happen to critically evaluate the social media posts?	.072	-.030	.059
	(.240)	(.622)	(.335)
Do you happen to watch political conflicts on talk shows?	-.021	-.097	-.029
	(.731)	(.114)	(.636)
Do you happen to watch political scandals in the news?	.041	-.040	.074
	(.504)	(.515)	(.229)
Do you happen to watch news related to corruption?	.047	-.064	.097
	(.440)	(.298)	(.113)

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
To what degree do you agree that the army of Pakistan is competent?[1]
To what degree do you agree that the army of Pakistan is honest?[2]
To what degree do you agree that the army is concerned about the security of Pakistan?[3]

Use of face-to-face with friends significantly correlates in the positive direction with the response that the army is competent (r = .125, p = .041), honest (r = .180, p = .003), and is concerned about the security of Pakistan (r = .211, p = .000), these three correlations are of small size, which suggests that those who use of face-to-face with friends, they trust the army.

Use of face-to-face with family significantly correlates in the positive direction with the responses that the army is competent (r = .127, p = .037), and is concerned (r = .128, p = .036), but the correlations are of small size, however, these findings give an indication that those who use face-to-face with family, they are of the view that army is competent and is concerned about the security of Pakistan.

There is found significant relationship in the positive direction of magazine use with the response that the army is concerned about the security of Pakistan (r = .149, p = .015), this correlation is small-sized and suggests that those who use magazines believe that the army is concerned about the issues of Pakistan. Internet use positively and significantly correlates with the response that the army is competent (r = .136, p = .026), there is a small level of correlation for this relationship, which implies that those who use the Internet trust the government of Pakistan. The use of social media for news-seeking communication positively correlates with the response that the army is competent (r = .128, p = .036), the correlation is of small size, and this is the indication that those who use social media for news-seeking to get communication, they hold the view that army is competent.

Twitter use significantly but negatively correlates with the responses that the army is competent (r = -.180, p = .003), honest (r = -.167, p = .006), and concerned about security issues (r = -.230, p = .000), these relationships are of small size, which indicates that those who use Twitter, they consider the army as untrustworthy.

The use of Facebook for commenting posts has a significant relationship with responses that the army is competent (r = -.185, p = .002), and is concerned about the

issues of Pakistan (r = -.134, p = .028), the relationships are negative, the size of the correlations are at small levels, and these indicators show that those who use Facebook for commenting posts, they think that the army is incompetent and is not concerned about the issues of Pakistan.

The use of Facebook for sharing posts significantly correlates with the response that the army is competent (r = -.132, p = .031), this correlation is negative but is of small size, this signifies that those who use Facebook for sharing posts think that army is not competent. The use of Facebook for liking posts significantly correlates in the negative direction with the response that the army is competent (r = -.120, p = .048), and this implies that those who use Facebook for liking posts think that the army is not competent. YouTube use significantly correlates in the negative direction with the response that the army is concerned about the issues of Pakistan (r = -.131, p = .031), the relationship is of small size, and this implies that those who use YouTube think that army is not concerned about issues. TikTok use significantly correlates in the negative direction with the response that the army is competent (r = -.126, p = .038), the correlation is of small size, which implies that those who use TikTok, think that the army is incompetent.

Attending public political Procession (siyasi jalsa) negatively and significantly correlates with small sized correlation, with the response that the army is honest (r = -.188, p = .002), and this suggests that those who attend public political procession, they are of the view that the army is dishonest.

This study is interesting because it contributes to the theoretical dimensions of virtuous circle theory and video malaise theory. Less support is found for the virtuous circle theory and more support is found for the media malaise theory because university students who are using the new forms of Twitter and Facebook are less likely to trust in government. The weak correlations between the uses of communication sources with the levels of trust in the Army reflect that there this less discussion about issues in the Army.

The specific findings of negative correlations of using Twitter with the trust in Army contribute to video malaise theory. The Twitter is a social platform for communicating sensational content by media organizations in Pakistan and also the opinion leaders from popular talk shows. Schuck (2017) argues that the exposure to sensational content leads to distrust in institutions and the current study also finds similar results.

Conclusion

The study finds support for the media malaise theory in the context of the uses of communication sources and their correlations with the trust in the Pakistan Army. Twitter stands alone as the major determinant for distrust in the Pakistan Army. The Facebook features (like, share, comments) are also the sources that contribute to distrust in the Army. Little support is also found for the virtuous circle theory in the

context of face-to-face. University students who are communicating interpersonally are more likely to trust the Army. Overall no major correlations are found between the use of communication sources with trust in the Army.

Recommendations

There is a need to make a public relations campaign to build the image of the Army on Twitter and Facebook. The interpersonal is found to encourage trust in Pakistan Army therefore there is a need to conduct seminars and conferences in the context of the Army's contributions. The mass media may provide balance with freedom.

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