



**The Status of Peace and Conflict Studies Research in Pakistan: A Study of  
HEC Recognized Journals**

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**Abstract**

This paper aims to study the status of peace and conflict research in Pakistan. In the backdrop of post 9/11 terrorism and war on terror in the region, it is gradually been realized that the area needs peace and that it needs to be practically pursued. With the emergence of peace and conflict studies as an academic discipline in Pakistan, the research on the subject is also gaining grounds. However, peace and conflict research, at the moment, is clouded under the shadows of political science, international relations, defense, strategic and security, regional studies, and current affairs. This paper focuses on peace and conflict research in Pakistan by analyzing research journals being recognized by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (the public agency authorized to recognize academic journals). The paper analyzes the contents of relevant journals, particularly journals that focus on regional affairs, political studies, defense, security and strategic studies, and peace studies. The paper analyzed the contents of the latest four issues of the said journals and categorize the articles under certain themes that might emerge as a result of analysis. A total of 29 themes have been found in this study.

**Keywords:** Peace and Conflict, Research, Pakistan, Higher Education, Journals.

**Introduction**

Pakistan is one of the seven South Asian countries. It is known to the world for terrorism. It has been fighting the War on Terror since 9/11 incident occurred in the US. As of July 2017, there have been 459 suicide attacks in the country, killing 7370 and leaving 15000+ others injured (South Asian Terrorism Portal, 2017a). It also witnessed 326 drone attacks by the US killing 2822 and leaving 350+ others injured (South Asian Terrorism Portal, 2017b). In the past seven years (since 2011), almost thirty thousand civilians, security forces, and militants died as a result of terrorism (South Asian Terrorism Portal, 2017c). More than forty percent of the fatalities occurred to civilians. Out of 163 listed countries in 2017, Pakistan is ranked at 152 in Global Peace Index (Global Peace Index, 2017). It remained one of the most violent countries in South Asian since 9/11. UCDP database records more than 40 thousand killings as a result of intra-state conflict in Pakistan since 2001.

It has been termed as 'hard country' by some writers (Lieven, 2012). US Defense Secretary in 2008, Robert Gate, termed it a place where the "greatest

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threat” to the homeland lies (US Defence Secretary, 2008). Admiral Mike Mullen termed Pakistan ‘toughest national security problem’ for the US (Mike Mullen, 2008). A January 14, 2008 issue of *The Economist* title posted the picture of a hand grenade with Pakistani flag and caption ‘the world’s most dangerous place’ (The Economics, 2008). Similarly, an October 29, 2007 issue of *NewsWeek*’s title has the headliner “the most dangerous nation in the world isn’t Iraq. It’s Pakistan (Newsweek, 2007, October 29).” A September 22, 2008 issue of *Time* magazine terms it ‘a nation at risk’ (Time, (2008, September 22). Likewise, Riedel (2012) also considers Pakistan ‘deadly’ for US relations. However, the country is not short of global honours. It is also known for Malala Yousafzai, the new face of female education, and Abdul Sattar Edhi, the legendary philanthropist who established the largest private ambulance service in the world.

### Overview of Peace and Conflict Research in Pakistan

Since its independence in 1947, Pakistan witnessed many interstate and intrastate violent conflicts. The first conflict occurred right after independence with India over Kashmir in 1948. It was followed by war of 1965, 1971. Since then, there has been no major and open war between the two countries. Pakistan also witnessed militancy in Balochistan and parts of Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA). Besides, Karachi and other major cities of Pakistan has been frequently victim to sectarian, ethnic and political violence.

Research specifically on this subject is yet to gain momentum. Prof. Moonis Ahmer held a conference on Conflict Resolution Research in South Asia back in 2010 at Karachi University. It generated high quality research scholarship from scholars around the world with specific focus on South Asia (Ahmer, 2010). However, that effort could not be institutionalized into a running research journal.

### Methodology

This research is based on secondary data. Universe of the study was HEC recognized journals in ‘X’ or ‘Y’ category. It was decided to look for latest four (4) issue of each journal. All the journals were accessed online for table of contents. However, there were a few journals that provide access to limited number of previous issues (only 1 or 2). In such cases, any available four issues were accessed for table of contents.

A separate MS Word file was maintained for each journal’s available four issues tables of contents. The authors’ names were removed from the articles’ titles in order to clean the data for more clear analysis.

### Criteria for Journal Inclusion

A journal whose aims, objectives, and/or scope include at least one of the following keywords was included in this research.

**Table 1: Keywords for Journal Inclusion**

Security	International relations	Strategic studies
Peace	Internal affairs	Regional studies
Conflict	Politics	Terrorism

International affairs	Political science	
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HEC list includes 48 recognized journals in social science in “X” and “Y” category. Out of these 48, only 10 journals are in the “X” category while the others are in “Y” category (List of all journals is given in Annexure).

### Results and Discussion

As a first step in the analysis, the raw list of HEC recognized journals (as given in Annexure) was subject-wise categorized. As a result of this process, all the journals were categorized into twelve (12) subject categories. Only one journal was categorized both in History and Archeology.

**Table 2: Subject-wise HEC Recognized “X” and “Y” Category Journals**

S#	Subject	No of Listed Journals
1	Archeology	2
2	Criminology	1
3	Economics	4
4	Education	4
5	History	5
6	History/Archeology (Mix)	1
7	International Relations	8
8	Islamic Studies	11
9	Library Information Science	2
10	Political Science	2
11	PSC	1
12	Psychology	5
13	Women Studies	2
<b>G.TOTAL</b>		<b>48</b>

Analyzing the journals’ list in Table 2, it was found that highest frequency of journals is recognized in the subject of Islamic Studies, followed by International Relations, History, Psychology, Economics, and Education. Only 2 journals have been recognized under the subject ‘political science’ (See details in Table 2).

**Table 3: List of journals relevant to Peace and Conflict Studies**

S#	Journal Title	Subject	Website
1	South Asian Studies	History	<a href="http://www.pu.edu.pk/csas/journal/">http://www.pu.edu.pk/csas/journal/</a>
2	Central Asia	History	<a href="http://www.asc-centralasia.edu.pk/">http://www.asc-centralasia.edu.pk/</a>
3	IPRI Journal	International Relations	<a href="http://www.ipripak.org/">http://www.ipripak.org/</a>
4	Journal of Strategic Studies	International Relations	<a href="http://www.issi.org.pk/journal.aspx">http://www.issi.org.pk/journal.aspx</a>
5	NDU Journal	International Relations	<a href="http://www.ndu.edu.pk/pub_journal.htm">http://www.ndu.edu.pk/pub_journal.htm</a>
6	Pakistan Horizon	International Relations	<a href="http://www.piia.org.pk">http://www.piia.org.pk</a>

7	Policy Perspective	International Relations	<a href="http://www.ips.net.pk">www.ips.net.pk</a>
8	Regional Studies	International Relations	<a href="http://irs.org.pk/PublRegionalStudies.htm">http://irs.org.pk/PublRegionalStudies.htm</a>
9	Pakistan Vision	Pakistan Studies	<a href="http://www.pu.edu.pk/psc/journal/">http://www.pu.edu.pk/psc/journal/</a>
10	Journal of Political Studies	Political Science	<a href="http://pu.edu.pk/polsc/jops/index.html">http://pu.edu.pk/polsc/jops/index.html</a>

**Source: HEC Recognized Local Journals**

As a second process, all the journals were screened through using the screener keywords. Through this process, ten (10) journals were included for further analysis (see Table 3 for details of the journals). Out of those 10 journals, 6 were categorized under the subject International Relations 2 for History, and one each for Pakistan Studies and Political Science.

IPRI journal's scope includes the words 'global south', and 'international affairs' in its scope. Therefore, it was included.

Journal of Political Studies was included owing to the fact that its aims include the keywords 'political science', 'international relations', 'regional', and 'international issues' in its aims and scope.

Journal of Strategic Studies was included for having 'regional and global strategic issues', 'international peace and security' in its aims and scope. The journal also aims to promote informed public understanding in Pakistan.

NDU Journal includes the keywords 'national defence', 'armed forces', 'national', 'regional', 'international issues' in its aims and scope. Therefore, it was included for analysis.

Pakistan Horizon was included for the keywords 'international relations', 'international issues', 'foreign policy', 'regional and global issues', 'IR theory', 'terrorism', and 'security studies' in its aims and scope. This journal also includes women's concerns in international relations as its scope.

Pakistan Vision is a journal being published with different aims. Its aims and scope include the keyword 'Pakistan affairs' in its scope. Therefore, it was also included.

**Table 4: Showing frequency of articles published in four (04) issues accessed for this research**

Journal Title	No. of Articles Published in 04 Issues	Issues per Year
Central Asia	29	Bi-Annual 2
IPRI Journal	21	Bi-Annual 2
NDU Journal	28	Bi-Annual 2
Political Studies	80	Quarterly 4
Strategic Studies	29	Bi-Annual 2
Policy Perspective	32	Bi-Annual 2

Pakistan Horizon	33	Quarterly	4
Pakistan Vision	50	Bi-Annual	2
Regional Studies	20	Quarterly	4
South Asian Studies	90	Bi-Annual	2
<b>G.Total</b>	<b>412</b>		

As per Table 4, a total of 412 articles were published in all the ten (10) journals that were access for this research. Note that this number is calculated based on four (04) issues accessed for this research. Clearly, the highest number of articles was published in Journal of South Asian Studies, i.e. 90 articles. It was followed by Journal of Political Studies with 80 articles in four issues. Pakistan vision stands third with 50 papers published in previous four issues. Other journals ranged from twenty to thirty five papers in past four issues.

Further, it can also be known that there were only 3 quarterly journals while seven journals were published twice a year. A total of 279 articles were published in bi-annual journals while 133 articles were published in quarterly journals. With a bit of more calculation, it can be known that at average, there were 10 articles published in bi-annual journals per issue. On the other hands, at average, the quarterly journals have published 11 articles per issue.

**Table 5: Quantitative Analysis of Research Papers in HEC  
Recognized Journals on Peace and Conflict**

S#	Keywords	Nos	S#	Keywords	Nos	S#	Keywords	Nos
1	Afghanistan	31	11	China	37	21	Militancy	3
2	Pakistan	200	12	US	58	22	United Nation	3
3	India	46	13	Russia	8	23	SAARC	4
4	State	25	14	Iran	10	24	Europe	3
5	Terror	11	15	Arab	6	25	Bangladesh	7
6	War	24	16	Israel	3	26	Middle East	6
7	Governance	9	17	Central Asia and Asia	13+37	27	Defence	7
8	Conflict	15	18	Nuclear	19	28	Religion	3
9	Peace	18	19	Policy	26	29		
10	Relation	37	20	FATA	9			

Table 5 shows the quantitative analysis of the journals. From the journal, it is clear that the most cited keyword in the Titles of these articles was Pakistan, i.e. 200 occurrences in past four issues of all journals. Second most focused area is US , i.e. 58 entries. The third most focused area is Asia and Central Asia that together have 50 entries in past four issues of all these 10 journals. Further, 37 articles focused on 'relations' amongst countries, mostly Pak-China, Pak-India, Pak-Afghanistan, and Pak-US. India was focused in 46 articles while China was focused in 37 articles. Furthermore, 24 articles focused on war issues and 26 focused on policy issues. Afghanistan was mentioned 31 times in the titles of these 412 articles. Nuclear policy or threat also got 19 entries in these articles. There were 15 entries specifically on

'conflict', 18 on 'peace' and 24 specifically on 'war'. Iran, Russia, terrorism, militancy, UN, EU, SAARC, Arab, Israel, Middle East, FATA and governance got the lowest entries in these article titles.

The major focus of these research papers is on Pakistan, India, China, US, Central Asia, War, Conflict, and Peace. UN, EU, Middle East, governance, policy, nuclear threat, and religion etc are the least focused areas.

### **Pakistan Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies (PJPCS)**

Pakistan Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies was established in 2016. Although it has yet to get recognition from the HEC, it is the only journal specifically focusing on all areas related to peace and conflict. It has published four issues as of now. It is published by the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Peshawar semi-annually.

It has published papers on war on terror, Pashto poetry, displacement as a result of terrorism, human rights violations, newspaper analysis, ISIS, social media for terrorism, community violence, peace journalism, conflict theory, conflict resolution, etc. Hopefully, with recognition from HEC, the journal would attract many research papers from around the world.

### **Conclusion**

As the study findings reveal, the major focus of peace and conflict studies research is on Pakistan, India, US, China, Asian (Central Asia), Peace, Conflict, and War. However, the research is in its infancy. There is only one journal with a specific focus on all aspects of peace and conflict in Pakistan, i.e. PJPCS. But this research journal also discontinued and it's no more publishing. There is a need for attracting more scholarship for this field of study.

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