Muslims as Terrorists: Hate Speech against Muslims

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the diplomatic use of hate speech acts against Muslims by Western communities, who is to establish their power over Muslims, declare Muslims as terrorists, extremists and fundamentalists in their media, literature and political debates. They have prejudice against Muslims, which is reflected in their socio-political behavior. Muslims all over the world get psychologically disturbed, since such derogatory speeches, abusive titles and bigotry practices against them deconstruct their archetypal identity as peace loving community to terrorists. The hypothetical framework functional in this study is based on the Judith Butler's Theory of Excitable Speech, promoted by her in 1997. The study is both quantitative and qualitative centered on a mixed survey method, which comprises 25 close-ended questions along with the views of the selected respondents. The outcomes of the research demonstrate that anti-Islamic forces try to suppress Muslims in order to psychologically subjugate them. The study recommends that appropriate consideration should be given to uphold Muslim identity. Additionally, all the communities need to confiscate differences among them to cultivate a culture of peace in the world.

Keywords: *Hate Speech, Terrorism, Islam, Diplomatic Approaches of West, Subversion of Muslim Identity.*

Judith Pamela Butler (1956-), a renowned American philosopher and gender logician has greatly influenced political ideologies, cultural concept, queer philosophy, and literary theories of the present era. Controverting fixed structures, Butler regards human behavior as constructed under a tangible relationship between human psyche and power of discourse. In this way, it can be rightly assumed that people are shaped in language, under language and for language. Nobody is good or bad rather fixity is allocated to their identities with the help of speech. People get energy to live with honour and respect when they are acknowledged by others in a respectful manner, and they are mortified when they are abused by others. All the systems, social, political, and moral, can be challenged because they are constructed as well as controlled under the effects of speech. By applying Judith Butler's postulations of hate speech, presented in her famous book, *Excitable Speech* (1997), the present study aims to trace the influence of hate speech acts of Western communities on the Muslims. These communities rhetorically try to subjugate Muslims by using abusive titles of terrorism, extremism, and fundamentalism, etc. for them. These abusive titles against Muslims have become discursive practices at macro level, which have obliterated Muslims' identity as peace loving community.

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Hate Speech

Hate speech has constantly been in practice all through the history of mankind and it will keep promoting the divergences among different communities for the sake of religion, ethics, racialism, dogma, gender, and culture etc. With the progression of knowledge in various domains, exclusively in the domain of linguistics, socio-political agencies are getting cleverer in the use of hateful expressions with an objective to subjugate the weaker communities all over the world. In constructing and subverting different identities, language is used as a tool by different social-political agents in the world, while the effects of their utterances influence public at macro level after becoming discourse practices. Walker (1994: 8) regards hateful confrontations as "any form of communication considered to be offensive to any religious, racial, or communal group". It has been a common practice in the world that powerful people in order to validate inequalities in the society; set different ideals to deny the weaker social groups of their basic rights.

Some linguistic critics, politicians and especially anthropologists have tried to study the practices of social groups engaging in blazing wars or trolling (Lee 2005; Walker 2008) as well as pursuing to expose the values involved by users to their behaviors, they have been suspected of overlooking divergent practices and siding with the haters Jane (2014). According to Butler, such speech is always premeditated and diplomatic, which affects a communal group at macro level. It is used to frame subjects in any societal perspective under the perpetual set-up of power conformations. Jacques Lacan (1901 – 1981), a renowned French psychologist attacks the universal norms related with the formation of subjects as he argues, *"the subject is constituted as such by processes of internalization, introjection, projection, and identification, then there cannot be a universal, general subject, but only concrete specific subjects, who are produced within a concrete socio-symbolic and family structure"*. Grosz (2002) quotes (Lacan 2003), who says, *"the name is the time of object and also the time of the other",* he associates the spatio-temporality of proper names with linguistic events.

In her book, *Subjects of Desire, Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth Century France* Butler (2012) examines the influence of Hegel's thoughts on some eminent philosophers such as Sartre, Foucault and Lacan. Her ideas about performative politics were influenced by a theory of subject formation propounded by George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831). In *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*, Butler (2000) contends: "even in an attempt to maintain our individuality, there is need to constitute a proper inside first, which can be differentiated from other identities on the basis of similarities and differences". She considers the performative politics as a progression or a movement in the formulation of subjective and sexual identities. She believes that subjects are formed when in specific conditions the external constitutive inside or "the temporal side of identity" as well as "constitutive outside" works on them. In this regard, it is psychological subjugation of the subjects that is under the influence of Hegelian theory of subject formation.

Butler declared that it is the influence of speech of others, which shapes one's character: "*One comes to exist by virtue of this fundamental dependency on the address of the other*". Bárczi & Csizmadia (2013) applied Butler's notions of performatives on Piroska Szenes's novels, *The Last Lord* and *We Only Live Once* to study the social construction of female identity in relation to the assertion that subjectivity is constructed culturally. Karhu (2017) in his study, *From Violence to Resistance* found that the role of norms practiced through violence in the construction of different human realities under performatives in socio-political contexts. Oswald (2005) in his study, *Understanding Anti-Arab Reactions Post-9/11: The Role of Threats, Social Categories, and Personal Ideologies* supports the concept that the threat of terrorism ultimately leads to prejudice and discrimination against Muslims.

Prejudice against Muslims

The anti-Islamic diplomacies subverted the archetypal image of Muslims from peace lovers to terrorists. They term Muslims as barbaric, irrational, primitives, and extremists. In the same manner, they term Islam as violent, threatening, and aggressive religion. On grounds of the terrorist attacks such as 9/11 in the USA, Madrid (2004), London (2005) and in France (2015), the political epoch was termed as an era of terrorism and the culprits of these attacks were declared as Muslim terrorists, fundamentalists and 'jihadis' in Western media as well as in diplomatic speeches of Western politicians. To exploit such situations, the agencies coin the different linguistic terms for different purposes. According to Shafiq (2010) over 70% population in Western European countries is apprehensive about Islamic extremism in their countries. Naeem & Anwar (2019) find in their study that Butler is highly concerned with the kind of speech, 'which is used to create disturbance in the life of people at the socio-political level.'

Theoretical Framework

Butler's theory of Hate Speech serves the structure of this study. The selection of this theory shows special relevance with the aim of the study, which is to examine how hate speech is used in a diplomatic manner in order to subjugate Muslims by subverting their identity. Butler discusses in detail the effects of hate speech acts, which constitute subjects and then work to subvert their personalities eventually. In the very beginning of *Excitable Speech*: *A Politics of the Performative,* Butler (2021) gives arguments to support her views on the role of insulting language in subject formation. She moves on to identify those expressions framed in specific linguistic mechanism, which can injure the victim's psyche. Hence the mode of linguistic injury is equally important as the insulting words are. In this process, all the subjects are positioned as objects of insult. Blumenfeld & Breen (2017) mentioned Butler's views on standardization, which involves perfection executed by people in their socio-cultural, religious, moral and ethical roles.
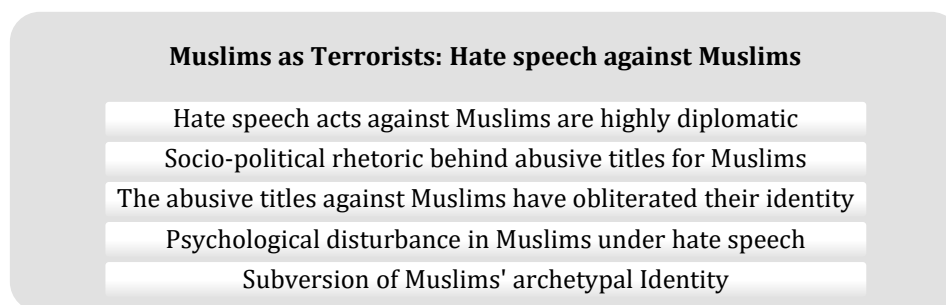

Muslims as Terrorists: Hate speech against Muslims

Hate speech acts against Muslims are highly diplomatic

Socio-political rhetoric behind abusive titles for Muslims

The abusive titles against Muslims have obliterated their identity

Psychological disturbance in Muslims under hate speech

Subversion of Muslims' archetypal Identity

Figure: 1: Theoretical Structure of the Study

Method

In the present study, the researchers conducted a survey by using a self-structured questionnaire, which comprised 25 close ended queries with remarks in order to get views of the participants. The questionnaire was designed in consideration with felicity conditions of hate speech acts under Butler's postulates. To check reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted. The questionnaire was circulated among 50 people, working in different departments such as Department of Linguistics and Communications, Department of Political Science, Department of Mass Communication, Department of Chemistry and Department of English Literature at University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan in May 2021. The selection of this

university is based on convenience sampling technique since both researchers are faculty members in the same university.

Table1: Reliability Statistics of Pilot Test

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No of Items
.908	.909	25

The aim of this survey research is to recognize the psychological effects of hate speech against Muslims, which is used by anti-Islamic forces, who declare Muslims as terrorists. For data collection, online system was used, and the questionnaire was sent to 200 faculty members belonging to five different departments at University of Management and Technology, where the pilot test was conducted. The respondents from both genders; male and female participated and sent back the questionnaire to the researchers. The close ended section of the questionnaire carried 25 questions, which were measured on a 3-point Likert scale from agree to disagree. The open-ended section was elicitation of the selected people to express their opinions to justify their views.

Findings

Diplomatic Use of Hate Speech against Muslims

Butler believes that everything is constituted in relation to the external forces in its surrounding environment. Hence, our ideologies, our beliefs, our ethics, our moralities, our socio-political positions, etc. all are constituted in relation to others present in the world outside. Under these notions, the formulation as well as the subversion of something is always anticipated. Besides, the external discourse controls someone's mind and thoughts. The findings of this study demonstrate that Muslims are conscious of anti-Muslim discriminatory behavior and approaches of Western countries against Muslims. There are evidence in their newspaper reports, literary works and debates of Western leaders, who accuse Muslims for any terrorist activity without investigation and proof.
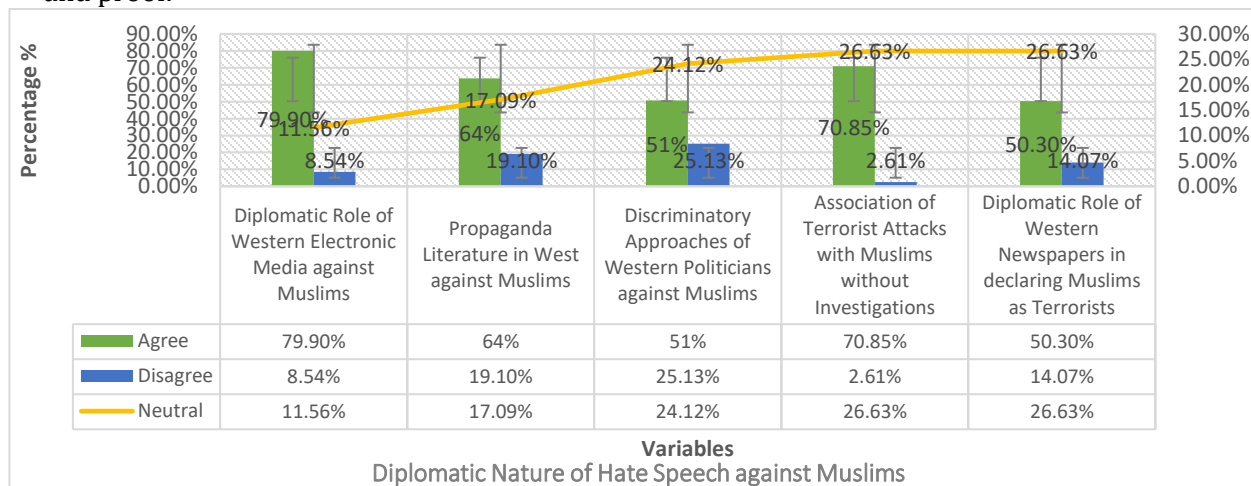

Variables	Diplomatic Role of Western Electronic Media against Muslims	Propaganda Literature in West against Muslims	Discriminatory Approaches of Western Politicians against Muslims	Association of Terrorist Attacks with Muslims without Investigations	Diplomatic Role of Western Newspapers in declaring Muslims as Terrorists
Agree	79.90%	64%	51%	70.85%	50.30%
Disagree	8.54%	19.10%	25.13%	2.61%	14.07%
Neutral	11.56%	17.09%	24.12%	26.63%	26.63%

Diplomatic Nature of Hate Speech against Muslims

Figure 2: Quantitative Analysis of Diplomatic Nature of Hate Speech against Muslims

In response to a question about diplomatic attempts against Muslims, 79.90 % of the respondents agreed that there is Western propaganda to destroy Muslim identity at large, only 8.54% disagreed upon it, since they opined that after the terrorist attack of 9/11, Muslims have become target to such treatment, and 11.56 % respondents did not give their judgments. To the next question, in this regard, 63.82 % of the respondents approved that it is a shocking situation that in the Western literature, it has become a custom to associate terrorism with Muslims in their literature, 19.10 % disagreed with this as they think that people write whatever they perceive, and 17.09 % stayed neutral. In the same manner, 50.75 % of the population agreed that there is discriminatory behavior of Western communities towards Muslims, who approach Muslims with otherness or out-group attitude, 25.13 % disagreed upon it as they opined that it has been a long practice between believers and non-believers that they act and react to each other with negative approach, and 24.12 % of them stayed neutral. A respondent talked about her personal experience, when she was studying in a Western country that she had to hide her Muslim identity from the people at her campus, since they were used to look down upon the Muslim students. Hateful attitude of West becomes clear when 70.85 % of the respondents agreed that it has been observed that all terrorist activities are associated with Muslims without any proof due to their misperception about Muslims, only 2.61 % disagreed upon that as they commented that due to different riots between *"shias"* and "*sunnies*" in different countries, Muslims have earned the fame of extremists, and 26.63 % persisted neutral. Another respondent commented that on the international airports, the security staff treats Muslims with very suspicious looks. Furthermore, 50.30 % of the respondents agreed that the newspapers in the West project distorted images of Muslims under socio-political agenda against them, only 14.07 % disagreed upon it, since they commented that Muslims should try to recover their identity by acting upon Islamic principles spreading peace in the world, and 26.63 % remained neutral.

Socio-Political Rhetoric behind Abusive Titles for Muslims

It is a common belief that a community's behavior is subjective to its ideological, cultural, and religious norms and standards, but under the current scenario, misperception about Islam has greatly disturbed Muslims, who in Western countries are not looked upon with respect in their Islamic outfits. Their first recognition is others' perception about them. In this sense, formative as well as subversive aspects of archetypes are designed not by the individuals but by the surrounding others. People use language to construct multiple identities.
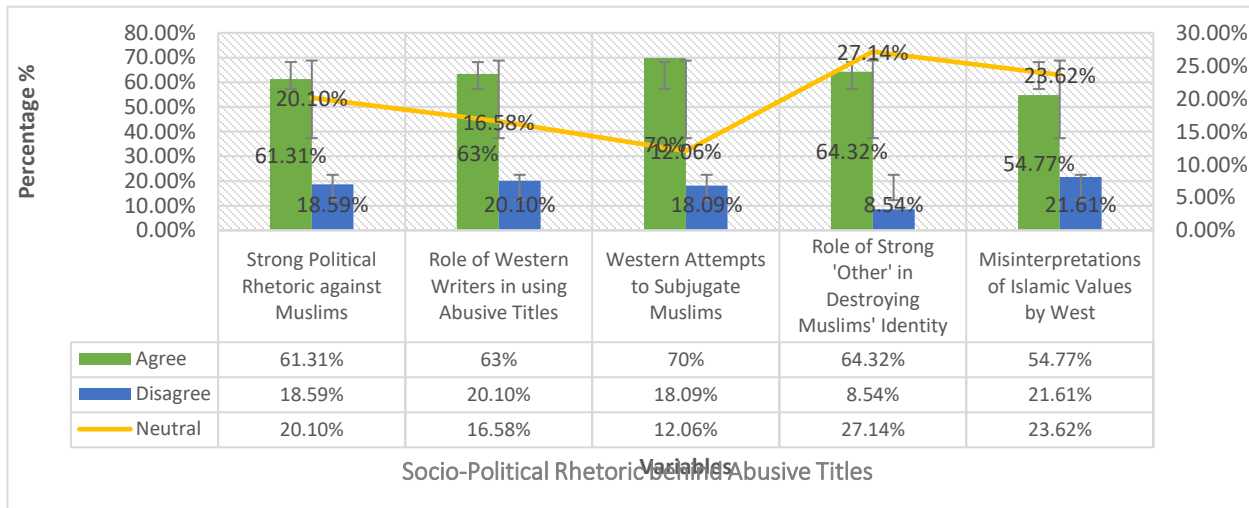

Variables	Strong Political Rhetoric against Muslims	Role of Western Writers in using Abusive Titles	Western Attempts to Subjugate Muslims	Role of Strong 'Other' in Destroying Muslims' Identity	Misinterpretations of Islamic Values by West
Agree	61.31%	63%	70%	64.32%	54.77%
Disagree	18.59%	20.10%	18.09%	8.54%	21.61%
Neutral	20.10%	16.58%	12.06%	27.14%	23.62%

Figure 3: Quantitative Analysis of Socio-Political Rhetoric behind Abusive Titles for Muslims

The quantitative description of the data exhibits that 61.31 % of the participants agreed that Muslims are target of abusive speech under some hidden agenda of the Western communities, while 18.59 % of them disagreed and 20.10 % stayed neutral regarding this aspect. The role of Western writers cannot be overlooked in this regard, as 63.32 % of the respondents approved that they realize that there is a variety of abusive titles such as extremists, barbaric, violent and terrorists about Muslims in the Western print media, 20.10 % of them disagreed as they commented that they are not sure, and 16.58 % people showed no interest and remained neutral. The inherent intentions of the Western communities are to override Muslims. This is evident from the obtained response that 69.85 % of the respondents agreed that they are conscious of Western attempts to subjugate Muslims by exerting their influence on them, 18.09 % of them disagreed upon that and 12.06 % of them remained neutral. Likewise, 64.32 % of the selected participants agreed that the hateful speeches and negative attempts of the West are destroying Muslims' identity in a radical manner in the world. Such declarations are widely used to undermine the image of Muslims. Only 8.54 % of the respondents in this regard disagreed, and 27.14 % of them stayed neutral. In addition, 54.77 % of the respondents agreed that Western media has spread misperception about Islamic values in such a manner that they look upon their peaceful preaching of Islam with doubt, 21.61 % of the respondents disagreed and 23.62 % of them showed no interest in it.

Obliteration of Muslim Identity as Peace Loving Community

Butler questions the role of legal and political agencies, whose speech is inconsistent and highly diplomatic, especially in terms of depicting social, political, and racial differences. It is believed that our utterances carry our intentions, in response of which they carry the desirable response to make the utterance a complete performative. According to Zuquete (2008), the anti-Islamic rhetoric and bitterness have engrained the "Muslim threat" as the most popular theme not only among European radical thinkers but also among general public. In this manner, the attempts of Western communities against Muslims have obliterated the latter's identity.
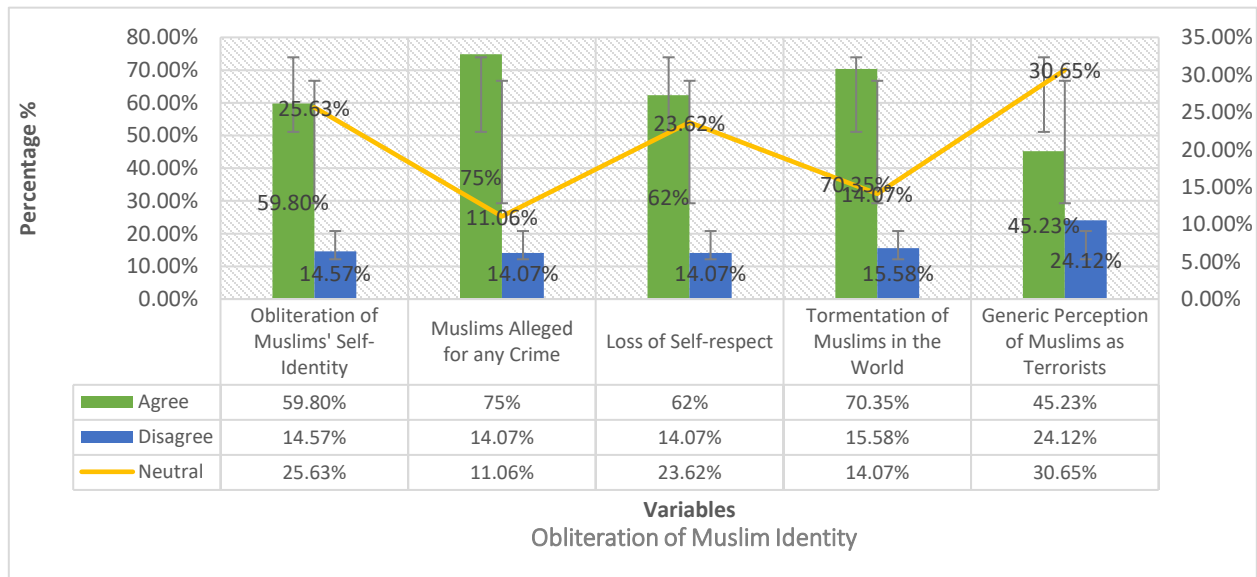

	Obliteration of Muslims' Self-Identity	Muslims Alleged for any Crime	Loss of Self-respect	Tormentation of Muslims in the World	Generic Perception of Muslims as Terrorists
Agree	59.80%	75%	62%	70.35%	45.23%
Disagree	14.57%	14.07%	14.07%	15.58%	24.12%
Neutral	25.63%	11.06%	23.62%	14.07%	30.65%

Variables
Obliteration of Muslim Identity

Figure 4: Quantitative Analysis of Obliteration of Muslim Identity as Peace-loving Community

The quantitative version of the obtained data about Muslims' identity supports the research question, since 59.80 % of the participants agreed that they acknowledge that Muslims' identity is destroyed after use of hateful propaganda against them, only 14.57 % of them did not agree with it, and 25.63 % of them revealed no concentration in this aspect. Besides, 74.87 % of the respondents agreed that Muslims are alleged for terrorist crimes without investigations, 14.07 % of them disagreed, and 11.06% stayed neutral. The study supports another statistic in this regard as 62.31 % of the selected respondents agreed upon that Muslims have lost their desirable status and dignity after manipulation of West against them, 14.07 % of the participants disagreed upon that, as they opined that they do not think so, 23.62 % of them could not decide. Contrary to the fact that Muslims are accused for violence, 70.35 % of the respondents agreed that Muslims are themselves victims of atrocities by anti-Islamic forces in many countries due to a malicious scheme against them. They are suppressed, killed, and detained in the name of such activities, in which they were not involved. In different countries, Muslims are being killed by non-Muslims without any reason. They are being punished for the crimes, they never did. To this point, only 15.58 % were not agreed upon that and 14.07 % of them remained neutral upon this. Another significant point was highlighted when 45.25 % the target population agreed that Western communities perceive all the Muslims alike beyond consideration of their individual personalities, education, profession, talents, and behavior, 24.12 % remained disagreed and 30.6 % remained neutral.

Psychological Disturbance among Muslims

Muslims, especially those who are living in the Western countries have a variety of psychological fears and feelings such as feelings of insult, disgrace and social and financial insecurities, etc. It is a common practice that powerful communities raise different slogans such as civilization, religion and race, etc. in order to retain their own authority over other communities. Shaw (2008) commented that "pure opportunists" would like to crush all such ideologies, which could prove to be threat to their own socio-political interests. Hate speech and abusive titles badly disturb the victims' psychological state. Butler (1997) in *The Psychic Life of Power* quotes Foucault (1982) who says that hegemonic cultural standards produce "melancholic; subjects, who are doomed with the fate of subjection consciously as well as unconsciously.
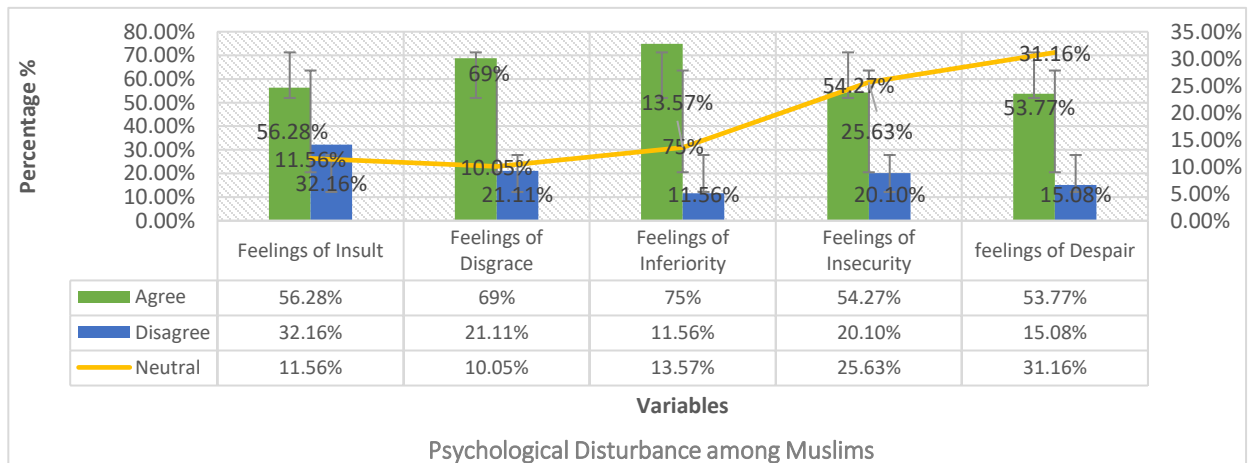

	Feelings of Insult	Feelings of Disgrace	Feelings of Inferiority	Feelings of Insecurity	feelings of Despair
Agree	56.28%	69%	75%	54.27%	53.77%
Disagree	32.16%	21.11%	11.56%	20.10%	15.08%
Neutral	11.56%	10.05%	13.57%	25.63%	31.16%

Psychological Disturbance among Muslims

Figure 5: Quantitative Analysis of Psychological Disturbance among Muslims

The quantitative interpretation of the data obtained in relevance to the disturbed psychological feelings of the Muslims present that 56.28 % of the selected respondents agreed that they feel insult over false conceptions about Muslims, 32.16 % of them disagreed on this point, and 11.56

% could not select and remained neutral. To another question in this regard, 68.84 % of the sample population agreed upon that they have feelings of disgrace and humiliation due to loss of identity, 21.11 % disagreed upon that and 10.05 % remained neutral. Another crucial situation was highlighted when 74.87 % of the participants agreed that they feel themselves inferior to others over constant hypocritical efforts of the anti-Islamic forces to destroy image of Muslims, 11.56 % of them disagreed upon feeling any kind of tension towards this aspect and 13.57 % of them remained neutral and did not decide. As well as 54.27 % of the participants agreed upon their fear about anticipated threats of life as Muslims in different countries such as Iraq, Palestine, Kashmir, and Afghanistan are facing, 20.10 % of the participants disagreed towards this and 25.63 % of them stayed neutral regarding anticipated fear. Another perlocutionary effect of hate speech against Muslims came to the surface, when 53.77 % of the respondents agreed that they are suffering from different psychosomatic disorders such as anguish, hopelessness, and dejection day by day over the current situation of Muslims only 15.08 % of them disagreed, and 31.16 % failed to decide.

Subversion of Muslim Archetypal Identity

According to Butler, the process of subjection under the influence of performativity depends upon the identity of the listeners. If subjection is a psychological feeling, it can be due to multiple factors. It looks as if the long-lasting prejudice and discernment against Muslims have reached to a level, which could become a source of hate crime against them. This hatred triggers feelings of abusive labelling, which prove to be serious intimidation for Muslims' identity. Among all these factors power of humiliating discourse cannot be neglected.
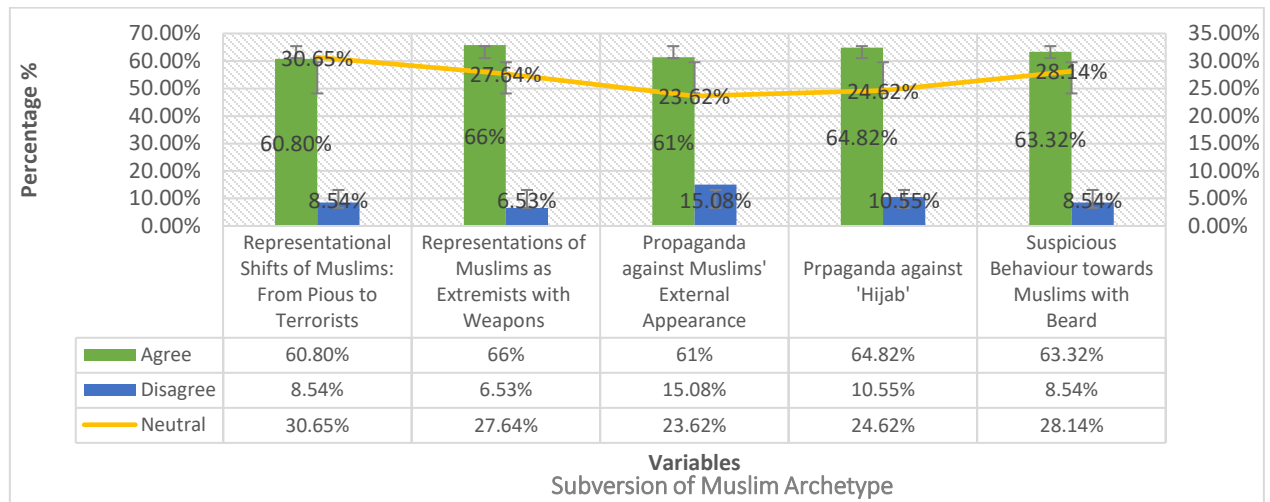

	Representational Shifts of Muslims: From Pious to Terrorists	Representations of Muslims as Extremists with Weapons	Propaganda against Muslims' External Appearance	Prpaganda against 'Hijab'	Suspicious Behaviour towards Muslims with Beard
Agree	60.80%	66%	61%	64.82%	63.32%
Disagree	8.54%	6.53%	15.08%	10.55%	8.54%
Neutral	30.65%	27.64%	23.62%	24.62%	28.14%

Variables
Subversion of Muslim Archetype

Figure 6: Quantitative Analysis of Subversion of Muslims' Archetypal identity

The quantitative account of the data about subversion of Muslims' archetypal identity is established when 60.80 % of the participants agreed that the Western communities have subverted archetypal representations of Muslims from peaceful people to extremists and violent, only 8.54 % of them disagreed on the subject of this practice, and 30.65 % of them remained neutral. Another attempt of the West against Muslims is evidenced 65.83 % of the participants agreed that Western communities represent Muslims armed with weapons in their cartoons to destroy their identity, only 6.53 % of them did not agree upon that and 27.64 % stayed neutral. In addition, 61.31 % of the participants agreed that there is a propaganda after projecting Muslims' image as narrow-minded and backward with stereotypical approach towards different things, only 15.08 % of them disagreed regarding it and 23.62 % of them remained neutral.

Whereas 64.82 % of the respondents agreed that in West there is propaganda against females wearing 'hijab', especially in France, 10.55 % of them disagreed and 24.62 % remained neutral. Similarly, 63.32 % of the respondents agreed that in West people have religious bias for Muslims with beard as they perceive them to be fundamentalists, 8.54 % of them disagreed as regards it, and 28.14 % of them remained neutral.

Discussion

The findings of the study reveal that in the contemporary world, terrorism, as a term has been emerged as prejudice and revulsion towards Muslims. It is not easy to define terrorism; however, according to Moghaddam & Marsella (2004), some aspects can be highlighted as common acts among all terrorist acts, such as use of violence, creation of fear and political intentions to influence people, etc. Such hijacked descriptions are not in an agreement with Islamic principles and teachings at all, since Islam is a religion of tolerance, peace and universal brotherhood and equality beyond racial, cultural, social, and linguistic differences. McConnell et. al. (2001) explored that a lot of people from other religions are suspicious and apprehensive about Muslims regarding terrorist attacks in the world. They further believe that the ordinary Muslims support terrorists if they are not directly involved in the terrorist activities. Gabriel (2002) in his book, *Islam and Terrorism* comments that Muslims, who have 'long beards and head coverings', perpetrate terroristic activities. Alsheha (2012) also comments that Muslims are continuously being declared as 'terrorist' even though most of them are peace loving and 'innocent'. He further declared that Islam as a universal religion, promotes an 'ideal human society and brotherhood'. There is no peace without justice, hence major mission of Islam is to 'establish justice' and 'promote peace'.

The Western prejudice against Muslims can be clearly found in a study by Spencer (2007), who uses different arguments such as Islamic message of 'jihad', freedom of women, and enforcement of Islamization, etc. to support his notions that Christianity is a religion of peace, but Islam is not. There are elements of hatred against Muslims in Western print and social media. This shows a socio-political rhetoric of the West, which gives abusive titles to Muslims communities as extremists, fundamentalists and terrorists, etc. In this regard, Matthes & Sikorski (2019) contend that previous research in the field of terrorism indicates that media also plays a vibrant role in establishment of a direct link between extremism and Muslims. In views of Saleem et. al. (2017), this is due to negative projection of Muslims as terrorists, which stimulates anti-Muslim attitudes among other communities. Greenberg & Jonas in their *Psychological Motives and Political Orientation* (2003) found a significant link between political conservatism and negative out-group behavior causing anxiety in victims.

Additionally, in the collected responses in this study, it is discovered how hate speech of powerful agencies against Muslims contribute in destroying Muslims' identity. According to Allawi (2009), "Islam forged a civilization which was unique and easily recognizable even as it crossed boundaries of race, tribe, language and geography". In the past their external appearance was symbol of decency, piousness, noble character, etc., but in the contemporary world, their outward appearance such as wearing loose dress, having beard by men, and covering face with 'hijab' by women are strongly criticized by anti-Islamic forces in the West, especially in France, covering of face by females is not allowed. This study shows that due to the socio-political rhetoric against Muslims, there have been socio-behavioral changes on large scale in Muslims in Pakistan, when they are termed as terrorists, fundamentalists, and extremists etc. The core values of peace and piety, setting in their minds under influence of Islamic principles and teachings encounter the abusive titles used against them by anti-Islamic forces. Additionally, they find themselves distraught, when they are held responsible for such criminalities, they have never been involved in directly as well as indirectly.

The purpose of this research is not to find solutions, but to raise awareness of those issues, which produce psychic, social and political conflicts among different groups of people with the

help of power of discourse. Moreover, the application of notions of Judith Butler about hate speech acts helps in making an appraisal of diplomatic socio-political approaches of anti-Islamic forces against Muslims. Analytical approach towards terrorism associated with Muslims may pave the way for better understanding of the problems the subjects are experiencing in different parts of the world in the hands of more powerful nations. The study suggests that as human beings, it is our duty to forget religious, racial, and ethnic differences and seek tolerance for global peace and harmony.

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