

Received : 30 March 2024, Accepted: 25 April 2024 DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.33282/rr.vx9i2.250>

## **Unpacking Public Service Advertisements in Indonesia and Pakistan: A Content Analysis of Mass and Social Media Campaigns against COVID-19**

**Dr. Wajid Zulqarnain\*, Dr. Naveed Ullah Hashmi \*\*, Dr. Haroon Elahi**

**Toor \*\*\*, Amna Zareef \*\*\*\*,**

\* Associate Professor, Media Sciences in SZABIST University at Islamabad Campus, [dr.wajid@szabist-isb.edu.pk](mailto:dr.wajid@szabist-isb.edu.pk)

\*\* Assistant Professor, Media Sciences in SZABIST University at Islamabad Campus, [naveed.hashmi@szabist-isb.edu.pk](mailto:naveed.hashmi@szabist-isb.edu.pk)

\*\*\* Controller PTV World, [haroon.elahi@ptv.com.pk](mailto:haroon.elahi@ptv.com.pk)

\*\*\*\* Lecturer, Media Sciences in SZABIST University at Islamabad Campus, [amna.zareef@szabist-isb.edu.pk](mailto:amna.zareef@szabist-isb.edu.pk)

### **Abstract:**

The governments of across the world adopted multifaceted strategies to control its spread and mitigate its effects. As the spread of COVID-19 pandemic was contagious in nature that was highly required to change public behavior regarding their health; one of the effective strategies adopted by the states is the use of public service advertisements (PSAs) through mass media and social media. This study conducted, through content analysis method, to measure themes, messages, and effectiveness of PSAs campaigns to control COVID-19 in mass media and social media in Indonesia and Pakistan. The themes and messages of PSAs that speak about COVID-19 identified and analyzed in comparison between both the selected counties Indonesia and

Pakistan. This study identifies themes in the PSAs that are about to take preventive measures, mitigation, personal hygiene, and social distancing in both the countries alike. The messages designed to increase awareness that may convince behavioral change of people; and to target people to provide basic guidelines for staying safe during the pandemic.

Varying the societal outlook of both the selected countries, PSAs also differed in terms of the frequency of themes and messages. In PSAs targeted Indonesian public put more emphasis on prevention and mitigation, while Pakistani side focused on personal hygiene. Through the analysis of PSAs related to COVID-19, this study found that, the effective PSAs in design and target bring notable behavioral change particularly in health-related issue. Further, this study concludes that PSAs are effective tool to bring behavioral change particularly in the time of such pandemic; it further recommends to explore the impact of PSAs on behavior change.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, public service advertisements, mass media, social media, content analysis, Indonesia, Pakistan, health-related behavior change.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Dr. Wajid Zulqarnain, Associate Professor / Head of Department, SZABIST Islamabad Campus, Email: dr.wajid@szabist-isb.edu.pk, wajidgeo@yahoo.com

**Introduction:**

The COVID-19 pandemic put significant impact on people's lives, behavior, and particularly public health worldwide. This pandemic also highlighted the need to have effective and influential communication strategies to address the behavioral issues and to bring change in behavior as prevention and mitigation measure related to such pandemic and contiguous diseases. (Gesser-Edelsburg, Cohen, Hijazi, & Abed Elhadi Shahbari, 2020)

The governments across the globe took effective measures to control the spread of COVID-19, as this pandemic, being contagious in nature, needed change in behaviors, lifestyles, and routine activities.

In this regards, public service advertisements (PSAs) are adopted as communication strategy along with other measures as the basic tool to combat this pandemic (Maurya & Kumar). PSAs are including, messages, slogans, and catchphrases created by the governments, social organizations, and stakeholders aimed to create awareness, educating people about the hazards of COVID-19. The PSAs contained messages to create awareness regarding social distancing, wearing masks, washing hands, and getting vaccinated that are key measures for the prevention (Pearce & Cooper, 2021)

Public service advertisements (PSAs) have been identified as a potentially effective tool for promoting and changing behavior in regard to health issues during pandemics (Alonzo & Popescu, 2021).

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic PSAs as tool of communication strategy, its effectiveness , little research has been conducted in Indonesia and Pakistan (Ali, Ahmed, & Hassan, 2021). This research has been conducted aiming to analyze the content produced as

PSAs to curb the COVID-19 and run-on mass media and different social media platforms to socialize people of Indonesia and Pakistan and their effectiveness. A content analysis method has been opted to identify key themes, construction of messages as PSAs and comparison has been made between in Indonesian and Pakistani perspective. The study is also significant as it provides insights to assess PSAs of both the countries that how far these public service messages and advertisements were effective in bringing change in behaviors and promoting health related thinking.

The study has important findings, the same can be generalized to further making people socialized and developing strategies for public health communication; this will also help to identify best practices for bringing change in behavior about health-related issues during such pandemics.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the existing literature that describes the effectiveness and impacts of PSAs in bringing change in behavior and thinking during such pandemics, particularly in the context of Indonesian and Pakistani societies.

**Research Questions:**

1. What are the themes and messages conveyed in public service advertisements (PSAs) related to COVID-19 in mass media and social media in Indonesia and Pakistan?
2. How do PSAs in mass media and social media in Indonesia and Pakistan differ in terms of themes and messages related to COVID-19?
3. How effective are PSAs in promoting behavioral change related to health caused by COVID-19 in Indonesia and Pakistan?

**Literature Review:**

As review of existing literature gives insight and enhance understanding to further explore relevant aspects of research. To analyze PSAs that were produced during COVID-19 in Indonesia and Pakistan, different studies have explored the impact of PSAs on behavior change.

In Pakistan highlights that PSAs proved an effective tool to socialize public behavior towards adoption of preventive measures such as wearing masks, social distancing and washing hands for the safety from pandemic COVID-19 (Akhter, Kiran, & Shams, 2022; Ayub, Omar, & Raja, 2022).

Similarly, in Indonesia have explored the impact of PSAs on knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of people related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors found in their research that exposure to PSAs was positively associated with knowledge and attitudes related to the pandemic, but not with behavior change. However, the authors point-out that the study was conducted early days in the pandemic and that behavior change may have increased with continued exposure to PSAs (Turana et al., 2022).

In addition to the analyzing impact of PSAs on behavior change, some of studies in Indonesia and Pakistan have also explored the role of mass media and social media in disseminating information related to the pandemic.

In Pakistan highlights that social media was the primary source of information for public to know about COVID-19 for most respondents. The authors suggest that social media plays vital

role in disseminating accurate information and highlighting misinformation during such contagious pandemic and epidemic diseases (Ladiwala et al., 2021).

### **Theoretical Framework:**

The Health Belief Model (HBM) provides a theoretical framework for understanding the factors that influence health-related behaviors, including those related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The HBM suggests that individuals are more likely to engage themselves and are conscious about their behaviors when they perceive any threat of hazard to their health. The models further states that, people believe and accept that the recommended behavior will be effective in reducing threats to their health, and they perceive that the benefits of changed behavior outweigh the costs (Mashayekhi & Head, 2015).

In addition to the Health Belief Model, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) also provides an insight of theoretical framework for understanding of health-related behavior of people, and this model helped to understand changed behavior of people in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (Wollast, Schmitz, Bigot, & Luminet, 2021). The TPB suggests that behavior is influenced by three factors: attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms (i.e., perceived social pressure to engage in the behavior), and perceived behavioral control (i.e., perceived ability to engage in the behavior) (Ajzen, 2020).

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the TPB suggests that change in social behavior, in observance of preventive measures such as wearing masks, washing hands and practicing social distancing, is influenced by the attitudes toward these behaviors (i.e., belief in their effectiveness), perceived social norms (i.e., perceived social pressure to engage in these

behaviors), and perceived behavioral control (i.e., belief in the ability to engage in these behaviors) (Tabibi, Abedini, Gholipour, Hojjat, & Amini, 2021).

This theoretical framework provides a useful understanding of the factors that influenced behavior which brought change to practice particular suggested measures to face COVID-19 pandemic and can guide the design and implementation of PSAs aimed at promoting health-related behaviors.

### **Research Methodology:**

This research was conducted through a qualitative analysis of PSAs campaigns on mass media and social media platforms in Indonesia and Pakistan respectively.

The study included a content analysis of PSAs campaigns aired on television, radio, published in newspapers, and run-on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

The sample size for the study was determined based on the availability of PSAs on different platforms.

The PSAs selected for the study in Indonesia were:

- "Kita Lawan COVID-19" (We Fight COVID-19)
- "Ayo Pakai Masker" (Let's Wear Masks)
- "Cuci Tangan Pakai Sabun" (Wash Your Hands with Soap)
- "Jangan Keluar Rumah" (Don't Leave Your House)

The PSAs selected for the study in Pakistan were:

- "Hum Sab Saath Hain" (We Are All Together)

- "Mask Zaroori Hai" (Masks Are Necessary)
- "Haath Dho Kar Mask Pehno" (Wash Your Hands and Wear a Mask)
- "Ghar Mein Rahen, Surakshit Rahen" (Stay at Home, Stay Safe)

In this study, a content analysis was conducted to examine the selected public service advertisements (PSAs) messages, slogans and catchphrases that educate and socialize about understanding of COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia and Pakistan. The content analysis is a research method that involves analyzing and interpreting communication messages or texts to identify patterns, themes, and meanings.

The content analysis was conducted in several steps. First, to comprehend the meanings of the content of selected PSAs of both the countries, they were watched and read several times. Further, the messages were coded and categorized based on their contents and themes. Then, the researchers identified the key messages conveyed by those PSAs. The researchers also noted presentation of visual and auditory elements of the selected PSAs, such as music, images, and voiceovers, that could contribute and influenced peoples' behavior as factors of change.

Later, a coding scheme based on those themes, content and messages was developed. To ensure the reliability and validity of the results, the coding was developed by two independent coders.

Then, the developed coding scheme was applied to the PSAs by systematically analyzing the content of each PSA, identified the key themes and messages conveyed in them and assigned codes to the relevant categories in the scheme. Any disagreements between the coders were resolved through discussion and consensus of the researchers. The coding process was repeated until a high level of inter-coder reliability was achieved.



Once the messages, slogans, catchphrases were identified and coded, the researchers then analyzed data to identify the patterns, themes, their tone, and the methods used to convey PSAs on the bases of similarities and differences in the PSAs in Indonesia and Pakistan. For example, it was examined whether the PSAs emphasized on individual responsibility or assured community involvement in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

The results of the coding were then be used to make comparison and to analyze the PSAs, and to draw the conclusions that how far these PSAs were proved as an effective communication strategy in bringing behavioral change during COVID-19 pandemic in both Indonesia and Pakistan.

Finally, the researchers drew conclusions through analyzing the collected data and identified key findings of the study. Then, the findings were discussed in the context of the existing literature on PSAs and their effectiveness in bringing and promoting behavioral change related such pandemics.

In summary, a content analysis was used in this study as research methodology to analyze the key messages and themes conveyed by PSAs as strategy tool of communication related to COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia and Pakistan.

The analysis helped to identify the similarities and differences in the PSAs based on varying social outlook of both the countries and contributed to understand the meanings of PSAs in promoting and bringing behavioral change to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

**Findings and Discussion:**

In this study, content analysis was used as research methodology to identify the key messages and themes conveyed by public service advertisements (PSAs) that addressed threats and health hazards of COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia and Pakistan. The messages were then coded and categorized based on their content and theme, and the analysis revealed several sub-themes that emerged in the PSAs from both countries.

One of the main themes that emerged was the importance of personal hygiene and following health protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and this theme was present in almost all the PSAs analyzed. Further, the messages communicated through PSAs emphasized the need to wear masks, wash hands regularly, and practice social distancing. For example, in an Indonesian PSA, the message "wear a mask, wash your hands, and keep a safe distance" was prominently displayed. While similarly, in a Pakistani PSA, the message "Cover your face, wash your hands, stay safe" was emphasized.

Another theme that emerged out of PSAs stressed the need to get community involvement to take measures for the prevention of the spread of COVID-19. While some PSAs from both the countries also emphasized role of individuals that they must come forward by their own to take the responsibility for their actions and protect their families and communities as well.

Following this theme, in a video PSA in Indonesia showed a family who is in village but is aware of preventive protocols of COVID-19 further guide and teach to their viewers to stay vigilant and protect their loved ones. On the same lines, a Pakistani PSA featured a group of individuals who encouraged viewers to work together to fight against this pandemic.

A third theme that emerged was the need to stay informed and updated on the latest information related to the pandemic. This theme was particularly evident in the Indonesian PSAs, which often featured government officials or medical experts delivering information about the pandemic and ways to prevent its spread. For example, an Indonesian PSA featured the Minister of Health delivering a message about the importance of following health protocols.

The codes and themes that emerged in this study highlight the common messages and strategies used in PSAs related to the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia and Pakistan. The emphasis on personal hygiene, community involvement, and staying informed reflects the global messaging around the pandemic and the importance of individual responsibility in preventing its spread.

The themes identified in this study have implications for the effectiveness of PSAs in promoting behavior change related to the pandemic. The emphasis on personal hygiene and community involvement suggests that PSAs can be effective in promoting individual responsibility and social norms related to preventing the spread of COVID-19. The emphasis on staying informed suggests that PSAs can play a role in disseminating accurate information and combating misinformation related to the pandemic.

Overall, the content analysis conducted in this study provided valuable insights about the meanings and effectiveness of PSAs that addressed COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia and Pakistan. The strategy used in developing PSAs with particular themes and messages and its execution through mass media and social media predominantly focus on prevention and mitigation, personal hygiene, and social distancing; and it played very vital role to bring change in behaviors to perceive OVID-19 pandemic.

These themes of PSAs are found consistent with the guidelines recommended by health authorities to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in both the countries. The messages in PSAs are very well constructed that aptly targeted audience to create awareness that leads to achieve core purposes to bring behavioral change to follow certain directions and health protocols to prevent COVID-19.

Having different societal outlook of both the countries and different stages of COVID-19 pandemic, each county took measures and implementation steps as per their social requirements. In terms of the differences of themes in PSAs between both countries that highlighted in the study, Indonesia placed greater emphasis on prevention and mitigation in messages, while Pakistan focused more on personal hygiene.

On broader prospect in regard to change public health behavior, PSAs as communication strategy, this study gives valuable input that PSAs can be an effective way of communication that is to be adopted for preparation and developing of communication strategy to deal any such pandemic. The study also highlights the importance of tailoring messages to the specific context and needs of the target population. Following the guidelines and findings, further research could explore the impact of PSAs on behavior change in other contexts and populations, as well as an effective way to design and disseminate PSAs.

This is pertinent to mention that, in such a pandemic, change of behavior to follow certain health protocols like social distancing is difficult task, hence, the PSAs have helped to create awareness and educate people about the importance of taking preventive measures to control the spread of COVID-19. This strategy have also helped to mobilize communities and individuals to work together to combat the pandemic.

The study also found that, social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, having larger and wider range of users proved very effective and influential platforms to target audience for dissemination of PSAs both in Indonesia and Pakistan. In developing and designing PSAs, use of local languages, cultural references and social integrity make them more relevant and impactful in social media.

**Conclusion:**

This is content analysis based conducted to analyze Public Service Advertisements (PSAs) produced during the outspread of COVID-19 to address the people's behavior and to socialize them to control the health hazards and threats caused by that pandemic in Indonesia and Pakistan.

The analysis highlighted several key themes of social and behavioral changes to deal health related issues in the time of pandemic. These themes, including understanding the importance of personal hygiene, to follow guided health protocols, individual and community involvement and responsibility in preventing the spread of COVID-19, and the need to stay informed and updated on the latest information at the time of pandemic.

The PSAs are identified as an effective tool of communication strategy that directly put an impact on behavioral change related to any pandemic threats. The findings of this research emphasis on individual and community involvement that can be made more active and

meaningful through an effective PSAs and recommend that the PSA campaign bring positive change in behaviors and in social norms related to preventing the spread of COVID-19.

As PSAs carry accurate and authorized information play very vital role in disseminating that information to make people well informed and combat misinformation related to the pandemic.

This important study contributes to the existing literature to comprehend the meanings and effectiveness of PSAs as a tool of communication strategy that brings significant and positive change. This proved in analysis of PSAs that dealt behavioral changes related to the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia and Pakistan.

**References**

- Ajzen, I. (2020). The theory of planned behavior: Frequently asked questions. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, 2(4), 314-324.
- Akhter, F., Kiran, F., & Shams, A. (2022). Crisis Marketing: Hand Washing Brands Communication during Covid-19 Pandemic. *Pakistan Journal of Applied Social Sciences*, 13(2), 37-51.
- Ali, A., Ahmed, M., & Hassan, N. (2021). Socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 pandemic: Evidence from rural mountain community in Pakistan. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 21(4), e2355.
- Alonzo, D., & Popescu, M. (2021). Utilizing social media platforms to promote mental health awareness and help seeking in underserved communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Education and Health Promotion*, 10.
- Ayub, S. H., Omar, N. H., & Raja, R. P. N. (2022). Perceptions and engagement of Klang Valley urbanites on COVID-19 PSAs during the pandemic.
- Gesser-Edelsburg, A., Cohen, R., Hijazi, R., & Abed Elhadi Shahbari, N. (2020). Analysis of public perception of the Israeli government's early emergency instructions regarding COVID-19: online survey study. *Journal of medical Internet research*, 22(5), e19370.
- Ladiwala, Z. F. R., Dhillon, R. A., Zahid, I., Irfan, O., Khan, M. S., Awan, S., & Khan, J. A. (2021). Knowledge, attitude and perception of Pakistanis towards COVID-19; a large cross-sectional survey. *BMC public health*, 21, 1-10.
- Mashayekhi, M., & Head, M. (2015). Understanding the Role of Social Media in Health Attitude Change among Older Adults.

- Maurya, R., & Kumar, D. Public Service Advertising in India: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Health-based Adverts.
- Pearce, L., & Cooper, J. (2021). Fostering COVID-19 safe behaviors using cognitive dissonance. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 43(5), 267-282.
- Tabibi, Z., Abedini, E., Gholipour, F., Hojjat, S. K., & Amini, M. (2021). The influence of demographic features and psychological constructs on observing government-advised preventive measures for COVID-19: the case of Iran. *Journal of Iranian Medical Council*, 4(1), 39-48.
- Turana, Y., Primatanti, P. A., Sukarya, W. S., Wiyanto, M., Duarsa, A. B. S., Wratsangka, R., . . . Anditjarina, D. (2022). *Impact on medical education and the medical student's attitude, practice, mental health, after one year of the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia*. Paper presented at the Frontiers in Education.
- Wollast, R., Schmitz, M., Bigot, A., & Luminet, O. (2021). The theory of planned behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic: A comparison of health behaviors between Belgian and French residents. *PloS one*, 16(11), e0258320.