

## Who's the Real Terrorist: Stigmatizing Labels and the Changes in Attitude towards the Labelling Countries among Pakistani Youth in Foreign Countries

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### Abstract

**Objectives.** The primary objective of the present study was to identify various negative labels used against Pakistani Muslim immigrants in foreign countries by the natives of those countries and the changes that occurred in the attitudes of the labelled victims due to those labels. Additionally, the research also aims to investigate the consequent actions that the labelled victims performed as a result of those negative labels and extending the already established labelling theory even further.

**Method.** The final study sample comprised of eighteen Pakistani Muslim immigrants gathered before saturation point, using a theoretical sampling technique. A multiple grounded theory method was selected based on the objective of adding newer information to an already developed theory. A semi-structured interview protocol was used as the main tool for data collection which was completed in four phases, each phase consisting of five interviews with three in the last. A three-step coding including open, axial and selective coding, was used on transcribed data which was transformed into categories, themes and sub-themes using a thematic analysis method.

**Results.** The findings of the study included three main categories including the labels used, changes in attitudes and the consequent actions due to labelling; along with their respective set of themes and sub-themes. Additionally, the findings did proposed possible addition of newer perspective in the labelling theory.

**Conclusion.** This study not only achieved its study objectives but also highlighted an important prevalent issue of terrorist labelling against Pakistani Muslim immigrants in foreign countries. The study also successfully suggested newer areas for future researchers to conduct studies and further expand on the labelling theory.

**Keyword.** *Negative labels, changes in attitudes, consequent actions, multiple grounded theory*



## Introduction

The original labelling theory explains the concept of deviance as it suggests that the environment's negative perception about the labelled individual leads to frustration and consequently aggressive behavior. Becker's (2008) discussion on deviant in his book "Outsiders: Studies in the sociology of deviance" is useful in conceptualizing how "deviant" or "criminal" identities are created in comparison to the building of enemy identities. Becker (2008) writes, "the deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label" (p. 9). Whereas, the enemy label is assigned to those that threaten to disrupt the social order and equilibrium of a society. From this it can be suggested that the enemy serves as a symbol not only of what one ought not to be but also of what should be hated and feared by the people.

A review of the past literature identifies labeling and discriminatory practices as a necessary function in the building of enemy identities. First, labeling creates clear divisions between "us" and "them" (Said, 1978). In context of Muslims the practice of racism and Islamophobia is a clear example of facilitation in the construction of the enemy. According to Said (1978) these discourses and practices heavily rely upon the creation of opposites and "others" which are used to ostracize and deliberately separate the dominate group from the subordinate; which is done for the sole purpose of maintaining cultural hegemony over others. On this matter Memmi et al. (2013) also wrote that racism is useful in "generating a totally negative vision of the other who is then seen grossly distorted behind mists of prejudice".

Moreover, the second function of labeling, as a part of the process of enemy building, is that by designating a group as enemies can create solidarity within the dominant group. The social construction of enemies becomes a valorizing tactic and a strategy of domination (Memmi et al., 2013) while serving to isolate labeled groups socially and thus denying them "regular human and citizenship rights" (Kinsman et al., 2000, p. 281). Furthermore "these labelled deviant or group of deviants are then segregated or isolated and this functions to alienate them from conventional society" (Kinsman et al., 2000, p. 284).

Thirdly, the labeling is a useful mechanism which legitimizes the State's actions of oppression against the so-called enemy. Classifying individuals or groups based upon perceived differences that are real or imagined often results in the party being labeled as backward, different, abnormal, or inferior both biologically and culturally (Kappeler & Potter, 2017) which is same what's currently been happening with Muslims around the globe. This labelling serves, most significantly, as a way of maintaining social control. These implied labels clarify "the moral boundaries of society and demonstrate that there are limits to how much diversity will be tolerated" (Kappeler & Potter, 2017, p. 21). This can be observed from the growing hatred in recent times where the natives of several European and Western countries are demanding to send immigrants back to their countries especially in case of Muslim immigrants by labelling them as terrorists, secluding them from rest of the society.

## Changes in Attitude due to Labelling

This aforementioned hatred towards other country or its people can simply be termed as Xenophobia and it can be found in every corner of the world (Geschiere, 2009; Hooper, 2018). It can also be explained as an attitudes, prejudices and behavior that reject, exclude and often vilify people, based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity (Crush & Ramachandran, 2010; Hooper, 2018). There is extensive history of xenophobia and can be discovered in a broad spectrum of behaviors including discriminatory, stereotyping, and dehumanizing remarks; discriminatory policies and practices by government and private officials such as exclusion from public services to which these targeted groups are entitled; selective enforcement of by-laws by local authorities; assault and harassment by state agents particularly the police and immigration officials; as well as public threats and violence that often results in massive loss of lives and livelihoods (Misago et al., 2015).

Yakushko (2009) reports that xenophobic rhetoric often portrays immigrants as criminal, lazy, and uneducated. He added that that such term has historically been used to indicate to a fear of outsiders but in more recent times it has been linked with ethnocentrism, which is characterized by the attitude that one's own group or culture is superior to others.

Because of this difference in perception which the people of certain country hold transgressive behavior by ingroup members tends to be seen as aberrant, while similar behavior by members of an outgroup are judged to be systematic, contributing to negative stereotypes of the group as a whole (Brauer, 2001; Riek et al., 2006).

Studies on xenophobia have found that stereotype of Arabs and Muslims as violent are widespread and that ethnocentrism is a strong predictor of attitudes regarding terrorism (Huff & Kertzer, 2018; Kam & Kinder, 2007; Oswald, 2005). A clear example of ethnocentrism can be viewed from the incident of June 2015, which cites the murder of nine African Americans by “Dylann Roof”, a White supremacist, at a church in South Carolina. Following the incident, there was a debate as to whether to label or not to label Roof as a terrorist or a mass shooter. Ultimately, Roof was charged with nine counts of murder rather than on grounds of terrorism (Bump, 2015; Butler, 2015).

In comparison to that, on December of 2015, two Muslims murdered 14 people in San Bernardino, California. The FBI opened a terrorism investigation; the media quickly used the “terrorist” label; and several state governors and Presidential candidates called for an end to immigration from certain Middle Eastern countries as a response (Perliger et al., 2013). Both incidents were similar in nature as the shooters killed a large number of people and advocated extreme political views, but the public discussion of these events was quite different, leading some to believe that race/ethnicity played a critical role in shaping discourses (King, 2015). Instances such as these shows the xenophobic thinking of these Western countries against Muslims, however, this becomes more apparent in case of Pakistan where terrorism plagues the country for more than two decades.

### **Terrorist Labelling of Pakistan in Foreign Countries**

Pakistan, a country where there is approximately around 60,000 people who have lost their lives in various terrorist attacks as of yet (Dilawar & Mangi, 2017). The people who have died in this long enduring war includes many women, children and elderly without any discrimination (Bryan et al., 2016).

Unfortunately, instead of concentrating and highlighting the losses that Pakistani people have suffered from, several of international media outlets are only interested in painting Pakistan as a terrorist country further leading to the labelling of Pakistan as a terrorist state by other foreign countries and its natives (Ali, 2005; Isfahan, 2019; Mundai, 2006).

There are many people within Pakistan or outside of it who have affiliations with different terrorist groups and organizations and based on these affiliations holds resentment towards the Pakistan for various reasons (Borum, 2007; Index, 2016). This resentment can directly be linked to anti sentiments towards Pakistan that many foreign countries holds. The anti-Pakistan sentiments is a phenomenon which is well discussed throughout the literature and is commonly known as Pakistani phobia and includes hatred or hostility towards Pakistan, its residents and the overall culture of the country and ranges from criticism of public policies, to fear or an irrational fixation (Chaudhary, 2011; Vertzberger, 2019).

This has resulted in several foreign natives in opposition of Pakistan leading to Pakistani’s being labelled as terrorists and using this as a mean to bring forth violent acts upon them which could be exemplified from the incidence that took place in the late 1960’s and peaked in the 1970’s and 1980’s as violent gangs opposed to immigration took part in frequent attacks known as "Paki-bashing", which targeted and assaulted Pakistanis and other South Asians (Ashe et al., 2016). "Paki-bashing" was unleashed after Enoch Powell's inflammatory Rivers of Blood speech in 1968, with the attacks mainly connected to far-right fascist, racist and anti-immigrant movements, including the white power skinheads, the National Front, and the British National Party (BNP) (Kabir, 2012).

On the basis of aforementioned findings in the literature it can be suggested that Pakistan is a country with many controversies surrounding it for such reasons unlike many other countries immigrant’s, Pakistani immigrants has to face more difficulties in foreign countries. Additionally, Pakistan is a Muslim country and Islamophobia is exceedingly high in non-Muslim people in European and Western countries. This adds more difficulty for Pakistani immigrants in foreign countries.

For this very reason Pakistani immigrants have to suffer from negative labels throughout their time in foreign countries.

For this purpose, the present research delves in exploring the possible presence of such labelling in the present times. Additionally, if such labels are responsible for any sort of changes in the attitude of the labelled Pakistani Muslim immigrants towards the host countries and their citizens. Furthermore, the research also aims to explore the consequent actions that the labelled victims took after facing such labels by the natives of the host countries. As in the current times where moving from one country to another is a global phenomenon, with Pakistani being no exception with Pakistan facing negative terrorist labels from several countries and media outlets (Ali, 2005; Isfahan, 2019; Mundai, 2006). It is imperative to understand the stigmatization and labelling that the Pakistani Muslim immigrants have faced in foreign country due to their country of origin and their religious believes, the changes that occurs in their attitudes and their consequent actions as a result.

## Method

As the main objective of the current research work to use the concept of labelling theory to construct a novel perspective more appropriate to the current times regarding the offensive labelling of Pakistani immigrants in oversea countries, the changes it brings in the attitudes of the labelled victims and their consequent actions. The achieve this objective Multiple Grounded Theory method (MGT) was opted for as it allows the researcher to use previous literature and empirically achieved data simultaneously for development of a newer perspective or adding to a previous one (Goldkuhl & Cronholm, 2010), as both deductivism and inductivism are employed by this method (Freeman Jr, 2018; Goldkuhl & Cronholm, 2003).

## Research Question of the Study

1. What offensive labels Pakistani Muslim immigrants face in foreign countries?
2. What are the changes that occurs in the labelled Pakistani Muslim immigrants towards the labelling country and its natives?
3. What are the consequent actions of labelled Pakistani Muslim immigrants due to the offensive labels and changes in their attitudes?

## Research Objectives

1. To explain the concept of labelling on a macro level in context of labelling of Pakistani immigrants.
2. To find the different belligerent labels that Pakistani Muslim immigrants faces in foreign countries.
3. To examine the changes that occurs in Pakistani Muslim immigrants towards the labelling countries and the locals of those countries.
4. To explore the consequent actions that the Pakistani Muslim immigrants take as a result of negative labels and changes in their attitudes.

## Participants

The present study sample comprised of 18 participants in total using a theoretical sampling technique, accrued before realization of a saturation point (Breckenridge & Jones, 2009). The interviews conducted for the present study were split into four phases; each phase containing 5 interviews with 3 in the last one. The purpose of splitting the interviews was due to the requirements of grounded theory method as it suggests collection of data and analysis in a concurrent manner (Kennington, 2013). This allows researcher for addition of new topics discovered during the interviews as was done in the present study in the form of adding two newer questions; one in phase two and the other in phase three. Though the actual saturation point was realized after fifteen interviews, to strengthen the validity of the findings achieved three additional interviews were conducted making the total interviews eighteen.

**Inclusion and exclusion criteria.** The present study sample didn't have several strict criteria's, however, the few which incorporated the sample included individuals who were 1) Nationals of Pakistan; 2) were not born in foreign countries or had a dual nationality at birth; 3) had immigrated to an oversea country for a period of more than six months; and 4) were in a mentally capable state to give interview. The time period of more than six month was added to the inclusion criteria based on the logical assumption of immigration. As people who goes to foreign countries for a lesser period than six months often travels for the purpose of visiting, giving them easier option to come back to their own country in case of adverse circumstances. However, those who immigrates for a period of more than six months usually travels for the purpose of studies, occupation or moving, and lives a more normalized life in comparison

to those who travels for visit giving them far lesser option of leaving the country when they please.

Comparative to the inclusion criteria, only those individuals were excluded from the study who were 1) Not nationals of Pakistan; 2) were not currently living in Pakistan; 3) never moved to a foreign country for more than six months period; and 4) were not in appropriate mental condition for giving interview. Thus, leading to an accumulation of the following demographic information for the present study.

**Table 1**

*Demographic Information of the Participants of the Study (N=18)*

<i>Demographic Variable</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender				
Male	13	-	-	72.3%
Female	5	-	-	27.7%
Age	-	23 - 35	27.13(4.48)	
Ethnicity				
Asian	18	-	-	100%
Family Income	-	45000 - 250000	106875(65462)	-
Current Education				
Intermediate	1	-	-	5.5%
Undergraduate	1	-	-	5.5%
Graduate	15	-	-	83.5%
PhD	1	-	-	5.5%
Occupation in Abroad				
Blue collar Job	11	-	-	61.1%
Jobless	7	-	-	38.9%
Education Abroad				
Undergraduate	1	-	-	5.5%
Graduate	12	-	-	66.7%
PhD	1	-	-	5.5%
No Education	4	-	-	22.3%
Period of Stay				
Btw 6 months and 1 year	3	-	-	16.7%
More than a year	15	-	-	83.3%
Purpose of Stay				
Study	8	-	-	44.5%
Occupation	8	-	-	44.5%
Immigration	1	-	-	5.5%
Visit	1	-	-	5.5%
Age at Abroad	-	19 - 26	22.63(2.66)	-
Marital Status in Abroad				
Single	15	-	-	83.3%
Married/Engaged	3	-	-	16.7%
Dual Nationality				
Yes	1	-	-	5.5%
No	17	-	-	94.5%
Experienced Terrorist Label				
Yes	18	-	-	100%
Level of Terrorist Labelling				
Mild	2	-	-	11.1%
Moderate	3	-	-	16.7%
Severe	13	-	-	72.2%
Country of Labelling				
United Kingdom	9	-	-	50%
Australia	3	-	-	16.7%
America	5	-	-	27.8%
Sweden	1	-	-	5.5%

## Measures

Since the objective of the study was comprehensive exploration of the belligerent labels that participants faced in foreign countries, the changes in their attitudes due to those labels and their consequent actions a semi-structured interview protocol was employed. As it has been observed and evident that interview protocol is a formidable tool in investigating and extracting thorough information from the participants while remaining focused on the objectives and the aims of the study (Patton, 2015).

## Procedure

The study started with the construction of an interview protocol incorporating the objectives and aims of the study, which was then sanctioned by the ethical committee of National Institute of Psychology (NIP), Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU), Islamabad. Subsequently, participants who fulfilled the inclusion criteria of the study were invited for interviewing. Those who agreed to be a part of the study were given informed consent and demographic sheets, while being briefed about the topic of the study and what was their ethical rights such as skipping a question, taking a break if required or skipping the interview at any time they deemed necessary. After all the formal ethical concerns and participants inquiries were answered the main interviews were conducted.

All of the interviews were performed separately on a different day depending upon the availability of the interviewee and the researcher. To keep consistency across the research data same set of interview protocol was used throughout the research. However, due to the nature of grounded theory method two additional questions were added later on in different phases of the study. In total the interviews were conducted in four phases with each phase consisting of five interviews, while last phase consisting of three interviews. This again was done in accordance to the suggestions of grounded theory method as it requires a constant appraisal of gathered data and analyzed information obtained. The saturation point was realized after fifteen interviews, however, to strengthen the validity of the findings and achieved saturation three additional interviews were conducted making the total sample size eighteen.

The interview was all interpreted and transcribed into English language which were then coded using three step coding including open, axial and selective coding process.

Whereas, the demographic information was added to SPSS and was analyzed for frequencies and descriptive statistics as highlighted in Table 1 of the study. The themes were drawn from the interviews regardless of their reoccurrence or not based on the assumption of grounded theory that each theme is relevant. Additionally, all probable ethical concerns were rigorously monitored and taken great care of including protection of their privacy, and ensuring safety of their mental health throughout the interviewing process. They had the option to skip a certain question or study at any time and for that reason were not pressurized at any given time in answering any question.

In the current study a three stepped coding process (open, axial and selective coding) was employed for refinement of data and achievement of themes relevant to the study. Lastly for generating themes and subthemes of the study a thematic analysis method was selected as it gives researcher the appropriate freedom in constructing themes founded on the empirical data instead of pre-assumed hypothesis (Charmaz, 2014; Khan & Ahmad, 2014). Additionally, thematic analysis is a useful method as it allows researcher in generating global themes/categories along with themes and subthemes based on the aims and objectives of the study, in the present study i.e., the offensive labels, changes in attitudes towards the labelling countries and the consequent actions by the victims of the labels (Heydarian, 2016).

**Reliability and Validity.** Interrater reliability: In qualitative studies ensuring the reliability and validity of the research is very important aspect. Therefore, in the current study in order to maintain the interrater reliability and simultaneously increasing the sensitivity of the data, the transcripts of the interviews were forwarded to 5 random PhD scholars, un-associated with the study, to draw out themes in line with the aims and objectives of the study. These themes were then compared with the original and any missing important theme was added as a result.

**Researcher reflexivity.** For achieving higher internal validity and increasing theoretical sensitivity, researcher reflexivity was applied throughout the research process to diminish the influence of any pre-assumed hypothesis and biasness on part of the researcher.

## Results

The present results are based on themes which include the labels that were identified by the participants, used for them in foreign countries by the natives. Additionally, the changes that occurred in their attitudes towards the labelling countries and the labelers. Lastly, the actions that were performed as a consequent to the labels and the altered attitudes. The themes are compilation of different themes achieved in different interviews and includes some themes which were present in more than one participant while others that were unique to one participant. However, since the nature of the method demanded addition of every relevant data each theme achieved was added in the thematic tables. Three main categories that emerged from the interviews included: 1) Labels used against Pakistani Muslim immigrants; 2) Change in attitudes towards labelling countries; and 13) Consequent actions due to labelling. Each table represents a different category which is done to elaborately explain the given category and its themes and subthemes for clear understanding.

### Labels Used against Pakistani's in Foreign Countries

A number of labels were reported by the participants whom they endured during their painstaking time in foreign countries. The most commonly used offensive labels included words like 'Porki' and 'Paki', whereas other belligerent labels that were faced by the participants included labels such as 'Jihadi' and 'Terrorist' all as stated in Table 2.

Some common verbatims from the participants which included terrorist related labels can be observed from interviews of participant PI-15, PI-14, and PI-12 individually.

*"I was called as being a terrorist and someone like jihadi or someone who would go and harm people just on the basis of what I wore".*

*"The most important one was as a Pakistani we are labelled as terrorist. That was very hurting and humiliating".*

*"The hate in people there is really growing and slurs like terrorists just by looking at your face or coming to know you are a Muslim".*

Other, examples of demeaning offensive labels consisting of slangs used for Pakistani Muslim immigrants as 'Porki' and 'Paki' can be witnessed from statements of participant PI-1 and PI-6 respectively.

*"I told him that I am from Pakistan, so he laughed and said to other friends hey we got a porki".*

*"They have the slang Paki for people from Pakistan. And they use it in a very derogate way".*

These statements are a clear representation of the mindset that the foreign natives holds towards Pakistani Muslim immigrant suggestive of a hostile environment which the participants of the present study became victim of as they endured it throughout their stay in foreign countries.

**Table 2.** Labels Used Against Pakistani's in Foreign Countries (N=18)

No.	Categories	Themes	Codes	Verbatims
		Porki	1.1.1	<i>I told him that I am from Pakistan, so he laughed and said to other friends hey we got a porki (PI-1).</i>
		Paki	1.1.2	<i>They have the slang Paki for people from Pakistan. And they use it in a very derogate way (PI-6).</i>
1	Labels Used	Terrorists	1.1.3	<i>The hate in people there is really growing and slurs like terrorists just by looking at your face or coming to know you are a Muslim is really disrespectful and hurtful (PI-12).</i> <i>The most important one was as a Pakistani we are labelled as terrorist. That was very hurting and humiliating (PI-4).</i>
		Jihadi	1.1.4	<i>I was called as being a terrorist and someone like jihadi or someone who would go and harm people just on the basis of what I wore or my religious believes (PI-15).</i>

### Change in Attitudes towards Labelling Country

When people go to abroad or plan to go to abroad they have a perception of this beautiful land of dreams where all their wishes will be fulfilled and they will achieve all their goals and objectives. While other thinks of ways how their whole life can be improved by moving to one of these first world developed countries. However, when they are faced with harsh labels and rejection by the native of these countries all the dreams and motivation shattered, leading to formation of negative attitudes towards these countries and its citizens presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Change in Attitudes Towards Labelling Country (N=18)

No.	Categories	Themes	Subthemes	Codes	Verbatims
		Hostility	Aggression	2.1.1	<i>There is aggression towards them as they are not looking at your positive things, when they are here they are fine when they go back again then they start talking about negative aspects (PI-2).</i>
			Hatred	2.1.2	<i>Country like India for example such countries put blame for everything on Pakistan, they should be stand trial in international court (PI-1).</i>
			Resentment	2.1.3	<i>I feel resentful I hate those people and because of them I can't believe in white people anymore (PI-12).</i>
2	Change in Attitudes towards others Country	Denial for acceptance	Rejection	2.2.1	<i>We then reject most of the people to which they highlight it as that we want to stay reserved or we don't want to meet them (PI-2).</i>
				Disdained	2.2.2
		Loss of belief	Opposition	2.3.1	<i>I can't believe in white people anymore. I feel as if all of them are the same and are against us (PI-11).</i>
			Trust issues	2.3.2	<i>I feel as if all of them are the same and are against us and I always feel this need to prepare our self or we will be doomed (PI-15).</i>
			Align with terrorists themselves	2.3.3	<i>These countries themselves they themselves are in line with the people or organizations who are terrorizing others and themselves so their word against Pakistan (PI-18).</i>



**Hostility.** An obvious feeling and perception that the participants formed was that of aggression towards the countries that were responsible for labelling Pakistan and the participants as terrorists or similar labels. This can be observed from the statement of participant PI-2 and PI-1 statement where they stated.

*“There is aggression towards them as they are not looking at your positive things, when they are here they are fine when they go back again then they start talking about negative aspects.”*

*“Country like India for example such countries put blame for everything on Pakistan, they should be stand trial in international court.”*

These statements show clear indications of hatred and aggression towards the countries that are responsible in labelling Pakistan as terrorist country and deeming the Pakistani people to suffer as a consequence. These feeling of hatred and aggression also developed resentment in participants towards those countries and their natives as participant PI-12 reported

*“I feel resentful I hate those people and because of them I can't believe in white people anymore.”*

**Denial for acceptance.** With a clearly presence of hostility and aggression in the hearts of the labelled victims, accepting to be a productive member of those foreign countries became a difficult task for the participants. This denial for accepting these countries and their natives comes in several forms. As a result of offensive labels and the attitudes they formed, several participants rejected the idea of being friendly with any of the natives of those countries. As participant PI-2 stated

*“We then reject most of the people to which they highlight it as that we want to stay reserved or we don't want to meet them.”*

Similarly, when the pride of their country and themselves was hurt by the negative labels many participants felt disdained towards those countries and even hated the idea of ever going back to those countries. This can evidently be seen from the statement made by participant PI-6 as

*“They have portrayed my country in such a way that everybody is talking bad about my country. So, I think I won't even prefer it if it was my choice. I won't even prefer going back to living there.”*

This depicts that the apparent change brought on by the offensive labels not only created hatred and aggression in the participants but additionally pushed them to the point where considering even being friendly with any of the natives of these countries as wrong, while coming back to these countries as undesirable.

**Loss of belief.** Another change that occurred in the attitudes of the participants was their loss of belief in these countries. As before going to foreign countries and experiencing the labels many participants believed those countries and natives of those countries to be nice and corporative. As most of the knowledge or perception developed before actual experience was through media. However, after the negative experiences they considered it to be fake and deceptive. This loss of trust in natives of the foreign country added a lot of fear and paranoia in many of the participants of the study, for the safety of their country and their own selves as participant PI-11 and PI-15 stated respective statements

*“I can't believe in white people anymore. I feel as if all of them are the same and are against us.”*

*“I feel as if all of them are the same and are against us and I always feel this need to prepare our self or we will be doomed.”*

While some believed the foreign countries to be a threat for Pakistan and other felt hatred and aggression towards them. There were those as well who considered that such countries themselves are responsible for all the actual terrorism and are themselves aligned with terrorist groups and organizations, as participant PI-18 hinted

*“These countries themselves are in line with the people or organizations who are terrorizing others and themselves so their word against Pakistan.”*

From this section of the interviews it can be stated that not labelling changed the perception and attitudes of the victims towards the country that was responsible in creating those labels. This attitude was compilation of aggression, hostility, suspicion and resentment towards the host countries and its citizens.

### **Consequent Actions due to Labelling**

A very famous saying suggests that for every action there is an equal amount of reaction. In current study this statement coincides perfectly as participants who were labelled by the devaluing labels acted out in different ways. While for some a more inward reaction seemed more appropriate the other chose a more outward reaction as illustrated in Table 4 of the present study.

**Table 4.** *Consequent Actions due to Labelling*

<i>No.</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Themes</i>	<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Codes</i>	<i>Verbatims</i>
2	Consequent Action due to Labelling	Inward Activities	Self-doubt	3.1.1	<i>After coming back from abroad when you look at news you feel more like people abroad were thinking right about us (PI-2).</i>
			Shame	3.1.2	<i>I was quite embarrassed but I still managed to put a smiled on my face and said ok, but inside I was furious as hell but I had to pay my bills so I had to be nice (PI-1).</i>
			Self-harm	3.1.3	<i>I was thinking like injuring myself (PI-4).</i>
			Uncommunicative	3.1.4	<i>I was like quiet because I could not do anything about that (PI-5).</i>
		Outward Activities	Agitated	3.2.1	<i>I was usually angry at people I was irritable, irritability was like if someone were just simply talk to me I would be answering them annoyingly and irritability (PI-15).</i>
			Physical altercation/ Violence	3.2.2	<i>One of them pushed me, I just threw the punch and they all just got in to the fight (PI-12).</i>
			Getting fired from job	3.2.3	<i>The funny thing the one who did fire me himself was a Pakistani (PI-17).</i>
Moving towards illegal means	3.2.4	<i>When you are in a position where you desperately need money to sustain your life or even to fill your stomach you don't care about the rights and wrongs you just do what you have to do weather its legal or illegal (PI-13).</i>			

**Inward Activities.** While suffering most people choose to outburst due to their aggression and frustration. However, when stranded alone among a hostile crowd several participants suffered internally and caused harm to themselves either psychologically or physically. As can be observed from statements of participant PI-2 and PI-1 where they endured the pain of feeling lost and hopeless about their county's situation and even feeling tormented from inside respectively

*"After coming back from abroad when you look at news you feel more like people abroad were thinking right about us."*

*"I was quite embarrassed but I still managed to put a smiled on my face and said ok, but inside I was furious as hell but I had to pay my bills so I had to be nice."*

Not only these labels added a sense of hopelessness and torment in the participants it made some of the participants suicidal ideated or completely mute as statements from PI-4 and PI-5 depicts these as

*"I was thinking like injuring myself."*

*"I was like quiet because I could not do anything about that."*

**Outward activities.** Nevertheless, not all of the participants remained silent and endured the cruel labels and some even tried different methods like physical altercations or illegal activities. While some even suggested of even going as far to thinking of actually doing something which the labels suggested them of. The most common reaction by the participants was however in the form of aggression and agitation towards others like in case of participant PI-15 who explained

*“I was usually angry at people I was irritable, irritability was like if someone were just simply talk to me I would be answering them annoyingly and irritability.”*

Nevertheless, few went a step further and even had physical confrontations with the labelers. Participant PI-12 recalled on one experience where he got in to a physical fight after being labelled and ridiculed as he elaborated

*“One of them pushed me, I just threw the punch and they all just got in to the fight.”*

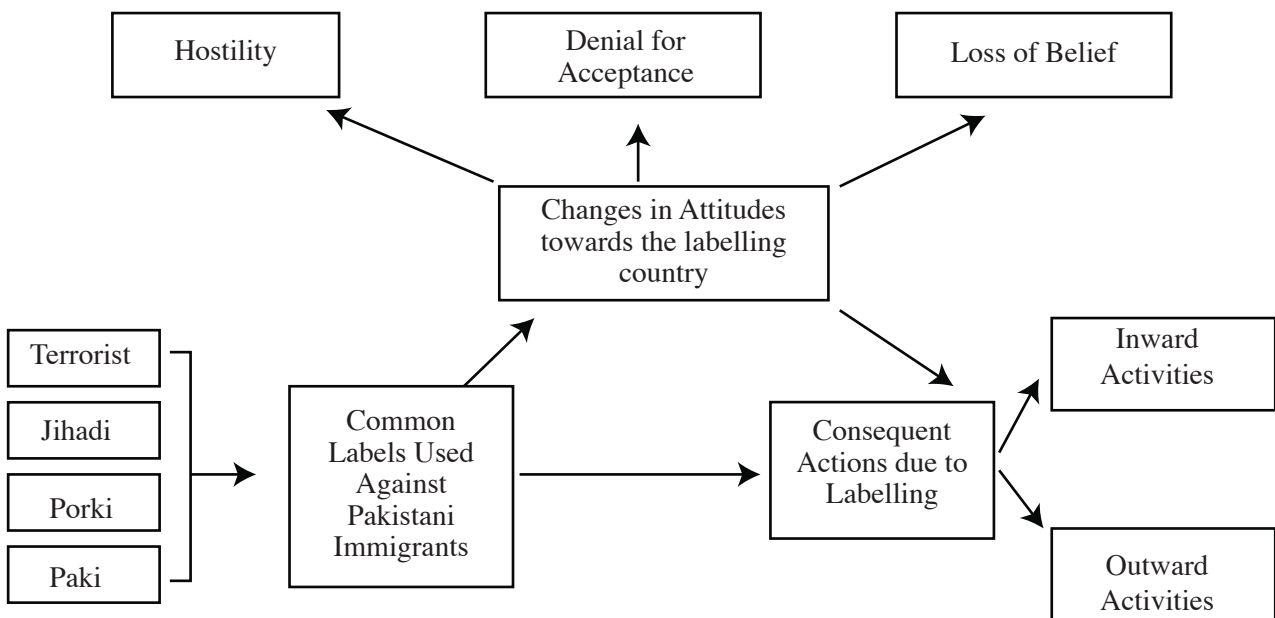
While for many others this labelling and the discrimination led to getting involved in illegal activities such as participant PI-13 said

*“When you are in a position where you desperately need money to sustain your life or even to fill your stomach you don’t care about the rights and wrongs you just do what you have to do weather its legal or illegal.”*

This section shows how the negative labels and the changes in the attitudes brought out feeling of aggression not only in verbal but physical form as well, and while some thought of committing suicide few got involved in illegal actives which was not their intention at start but a situation brought upon them by the negative hostile environment.

Processing Model for Change in Attitudes and Consequent Actions due to Terrorist Labeling

**Figure 1.** Model for changes in attitudes and consequent actions due to terrorist labeling.



The aforementioned model is a representation of the negative offensive labels and their consequent actions. Whereas, the model here suggests that the change in attitude over time due to these derogatory labels acted as a mediating variable which led to eventual actions on part of the participants of the study.

## Discussion

The aim of the present study was to explore weather in foreign countries Pakistani Muslim immigrants suffers from negative labels by the natives of the foreign countries. This assumption was based on the fact that often times on media and several other countries have labelled Pakistan as a *terrorist* country (Ali, 2005; Isfahan, 2019; Mundai, 2006). The current study endeavored in investigating whether this terrorist labelling of Pakistani Muslims immigrants also happens in foreign countries or not. Additionally, what are the extent of changes that occurs in attitudes of these labelled victims as labelling theory suggests that labelling can cause changes of perception and development of aggression and hostility towards the labelers (Cohen, 2011; Memmi et al., 2013). Furthermore, the third aim of the current study was identifying the various consequent actions of these terrorist labels and changes in attitude.

In the current study the total number of categories that were discovered upon investigation were three discussed in result section along with their respective themes and subthemes. The very first theme consisted of the labels which the individuals encountered. The most commonly used labels which multiple participants reported included tags such as *Porki*, *Paki*, *Jihadi*, and *Terrorist*; all pointing out towards the prejudice, discrimination, negative perception and schemas people in foreign countries hold towards Pakistani's. Collins English dictionary characterizes such words as offensive and derogatory (Complete, 2014; Guha, 2016). Whereas, the label, *terrorist* stems from the very perception which the foreigners holds towards Pakistan due to negative representation by media as elaborately explored and explained by Shabbir (2012) in his work. These findings not only indicated towards the presence of possible labels used against Pakistani Muslim immigrants but also led to the achievement of the first aim of the present study.

Consequently, the changes in perception and attitudes of the Pakistani Muslim immigrants towards the labelling country included *aggression*, *rejection*, *resentment*, *hatred*, *hostility* and *disdained* which are considered as a normal reaction towards the perpetrators or in this case labellers as many researches have already established that labelling causes sense of such feelings in those who are labelled (Elman, 2019; Merari, 2010).

This goes to show that negative labeling not only disrupts the social life of the targeted group rather interrupts the general mental health of that group as well (Alcalá et al., 2017) which was apparent from the findings of the consequent actions such as that of *suicidal ideation*, *feeling of embarrassment* and even *joining illegal* activities. This joining of illegal activities perfectly align with the core assumptions of labelling theory which suggests that the labels are internalized by the labelled individual which later on turns that individual into the very label (Sjöström, 2018).

While observing the consequent reactions of the participants as a result of being labelled, many of them are in line to those studies found in the literatures review such as *humiliation emotional disturbances*, *feeling of suicidal ideation*, *illegal activates*, *hatred etc.* (Bastos et al., 2010; Cho, 2009; Hanassab, 2006; Lee & Rice, 2007; Mori, 2000; Pager & Shepherd, 2008; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Sherry et al., 2010). Whereas these reactions as suggested by *Figure 1* are based on the assumption of several social psychological theories which suggest that our attitudes and believes shapes our actions (Aride & Pàmies-Pallisé, 2019; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2005; Jhangiani & Tarry, 2014). From these studies it can be indicated that in the present study the actions which the participants performed was due to the changes in their attitudes after being negatively labelled by the foreign natives.

Likewise, researches on occupational difficulties of immigrant students have also suggested that international students who worked part time, suffered from several kind issues including emotional and physical stress, home sickness, lack of sleep, return back to their home country, and frustration to name a few (Arrijn et al., 1998; Bendick, 1996; Bovenkerk et al., 1995; Goldberg et al., 1996; Kwadzo, 2014). To incorporate these issues along with the labels with which the Pakistani Muslim immigrants suffered from it is of no surprise that many were severely disturbed psychologically while other got into physical altercations.

Multiple studies conducted on the mental health and well-being of immigrant students and workers have also found significant correlation between discrimination and psychological problems.

Immigrant students who encounters discrimination at institution often have several issues like low self-esteem and low self-confidence while psychological issues such as anxiety, depression and stress were found to be common among them (Brown, 2015; Hodgkinson et al., 2017; Potochnick & Perreira, 2010). Similar set of issues can be found in migrant workers as well in the present study as a direct result of labelling, stigmatization and discrimination (Delara, 2016; Kirmayer et al., 2011; Pumariega et al., 2005). These findings suggests the cruel nature of labelling and its effect in changing the attitudes of the participants towards the labelling countries and its citizens. Furthermore, the consequent actions also coincide with the findings of previous studies perfectly suggesting the realization of the last aim of the study as well.

### **Novelty of the Present Study**

The novelty of the current study lies within its method and the possible implications these findings have suggested especially in context of Pakistani culture. As terrorism is often considered and associated with those who perform an act of terrorism. However, in current times where the world is heading towards more political correctness a major part of Muslim community is suffering from the label of terrorism even when this majority has nothing to do with terrorism, especially Pakistani Muslim immigrants who have suffered from terrorism alot. This study sheds light on the grueling implications of these labels as these labels can themselves cause hatred and resentment in the hearts of Pakistani Muslim immigrants towards the labelling countries resulting in cases of actual terrorism as a consequent to these labels.

### **Implications**

There are several possible implications of the present study findings as it shows the extent to which labels and cause harm and proper methods to eradicate them are needed. The findings of the study can be helpful in identifying the possible domains in which interventions should be applied based on strategies on how to counteract these labels. Furthermore, the study results can also be used to highlight the importance of better media representation in foreign countries which in current time Pakistan needs. Lastly, these findings also added to the well-established labelling theory as the original theory constrains itself majorly within a society or culture.

The present findings suggests that the effects of labelling can be on a much larger scale and can transcend nationwide which can be useful in opening newer domains for the researchers to investigate even further on larger scales.

### **Limitations and Future Research Recommendations**

Though the researchers have practiced strict measures to reduce the possible limitations few still remained, which are addressed below:

1. Like any other qualitative study one limitation from which the present study also suffers from is low external validity. Though measures to increase the reliability and internal validity of the study were used a small sample of a population cannot be deemed as representative, and additional large-scale study incorporating the findings of the present study should be conducted in future studies.
2. Because the data was of Pakistani immigrant sample the number of female participants was rather lower due to cultural implications of not going to abroad or simply not interested in sharing their personal experiences. Studies using other explorative methods should include larger number of females to assess whether the issues of females were similar to those of males or were there significant differences.
3. Finally, the sample of the present study only included Pakistani Muslim immigrants who came back to Pakistan, while overlooking those who remained in foreign countries even after the labels. A comparative study incorporating the experiences of those who remained in foreign country should be done in future.

### **Conclusion**

Overall the study was effective in realizing the aims and objectives as it found evidences of labels that are used against Pakistani Muslim immigrants as well as the changes in the attitudes of the people due to such labels. Moreover, the study also highlighted the adverse effect of labelling in the form of psychological or deviant actions which the participants performed as a result to these labels. These findings can be useful in highlighting a topic which is mostly ignored in Pakistan and is a violation of basic human rights of immigrants. Additionally, this opens new dimensions for the labelling theory for researchers to explore.

Lastly the study has depicted how xenophobia, discrimination and racism against Pakistani Muslim community is prevalent in foreign societies and immediate actions on part of the government to establish better foreign connections is required.

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### Ethical Approval

All participants were interviewed after their written informed consent.

### Contribution of individual authors

KHS: study design, literature search, first draft, manuscript revisions, approval of the final version. AK: Supervision, literature search, manuscript revisions, approval of the final version.

### Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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