



EDITORIAL PRIORITY AND QUANTITATIVE MAPPING OF A PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTER'S PODCAST PORTFOLIO: EVIDENCE FROM RADIO PAKISTAN (2021–2025)

Muhammad Atif
misteratif@yahoo.com

PhD Scholar, Department of Media & Communication
Studies, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur Pakistan.

Prof. (R) Dr. Abdul Wajid Khan
Dr.abdulwajid@yahoo.com

Former Chairman, Department of Media & Communication
Studies, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur

Abstract

This study introduces an Editorial Priority (EP) framework and applies it to evaluate editorial priority distributed across the podcast portfolio of Radio Pakistan country's national public service broadcaster. Drawing on a complete quantitative dataset of 1,078 podcast episodes covering 13 main categories, 37 sub-categories and a total broadcast duration of 30,227 minutes (503 hours 47 minutes) uploaded for stream between August 2021 and July 2025, the framework operationalizes editorial priority through two composite dimensions. Depth (production investment, weight 60%), total podcast episodes and share of each category of total broadcast minutes. and width (thematic scope, weighted 40%), measured by sub-category coverage index (SCI) and sub-category balance index (SBI). The resultant EP score calculated as $EP = (0.60 \times \text{depth}) + (0.40 \times \text{width})$ applies to all 13 main categories and their 37 component subcategories, allowing for systematic comparisons of the distribution of editorial resources. The results show a clear concentration of editorial investment in the news and current affairs category ($EP = 36.36$; rated as medium priority), which alone accounts for 35.90% of all episodes and 34.71% of total broadcast minutes, while other 12 categories score below 15, three in the Low Priority band and nine in the Very Low Priority band. The EP framework provides a transparent, replicable audit tool applicable to any PSB podcast catalogue, with implications for content policy and strategic planning.

Keywords: *Content Audit, Editorial Priority, Institutional Media Analysis, Podcasting, Public Service Broadcasting, Quantitative Mapping, Radio Pakistan, Subcategory Balance Index, Subcategory Coverage Index*

Corresponding Author: Muhammad Atif (PhD Scholar, Department of Media & Communication Studies, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur Pakistan.)

Email: misteratif@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

Public service is essential for broadcasters to provide a wide range of content to inform, educate, entertain, and serve the public interest, reflecting a considerable distribution of editorial resources in their communications (Yonge & Hughes, 2024). Yet in practice, all media organizations such as the PSB entity operate under the constraints of budget, staff, airtime, and institutional culture that create an unequal distribution of editorial investment in thematic areas. Understanding these divisions, to hold both entities accountable and to assess whether PSBs are actually fulfilling their mandate rather than just policy.

The rise of digital-on-demand media, and podcasting in particular, has created a new arena in which PSB's editorial priorities are enforced and showcased. Unlike traditional broadcast schedules, podcast catalogues are assembled as constant, computable, and measurable archives of duration, making them exceptionally capable for systematic quantitative analysis. Each episode produced is a documentary editorial decision. Therefore, the overall structure of the podcast portfolio creates a rich, clear record of institutional priorities.

Radio Pakistan, Pakistan's national public service broadcaster and operating since 1947, launched its podcast platform in August 2021. As of July 2025, the platform contained 1,078 episodes, organized into 13 major categories and 37 subcategories. The total recorded broadcast duration of these episodes was 30,227 minutes (approximately 503 hours and 47 minutes, equivalent to approximately 21 days of continuous audio content). This study constitutes a complete, data-rich record of Radio Pakistan's editorial choices in the digital podcast domain over a period of four years, making it an ideal subject for a systematic quantitative editorial audit.

This study presents and applies an original Editorial Priority (EP) Framework designed to translate the raw quantitative data of a PSB podcast catalogue into interpretable, comparable indicators of editorial emphasis. The framework operationalizes editorial priority as a composite function of two analytically distinct but complementary dimensions: Depth (how much production investment in episodes and broadcast minutes has been allocated to a thematic area) and Breadth (how widely and how evenly that investment has been distributed across the subcategories that define the thematic scope of each main category). The resulting EP scores enable systematic ranking, classification, and comparison of editorial emphasis across all categories and subcategories.

The contribution of this study is threefold. First, it provides a complete, evidence-based quantitative account of the structure, scale, and distribution of Radio Pakistan's podcast portfolio as it stood in 2025. Second, it introduces the Editorial Priority Framework as a methodological instrument for PSB content audit and evaluation, demonstrating its application with full transparency in formula derivation, calculation, and

classification. Third, it reveals substantive empirical findings about editorial imbalance in Radio Pakistan's podcast portfolio that carry direct implications for institutional strategy and PSB policy.

1.1. Research Questions

This study is guided by three research questions

RQ1: What is the distribution of Radio Pakistan's podcast production 13 main categories and 37 subcategories by episode count, broadcast length, and thematic breadth?

RQ2: What is the Editorial Priority score of each major and minor category based on evaluation through the EP Framework, and in what order do categories rank against one another?

RQ3: What do the different patterns of editorial imbalance, concentration or neglect reflected through analysis of the EP reveal about Radio Pakistan's ability to fulfil its PSB mandate?

1.2. Literature Review

As public interest media, we already know that PSBs (public service broadcasters) are invaluable institutions. The more entrenched markets of public service, whose role is to offer content that informs, educates and entertains; hence helping foster a sense in common citizenship and community functions which commercial broadcasters do not usually perform (Day 2022) On the other hand, commercial broadcasters are often tightening controls over editorial and commercial functions, becoming bold in their new world of collaboration, adaptation and entrepreneurial thinking. Traditionally, this orientation coincides with distribution and funding based on audience reach, advertising revenue potential and shareholder return (Cornia, Sehl & Nielsen 2018). But PSBs, unlike their partners, are supposed to use resources based on public need, social value and democratic principle (Sharma, 2018). In this sense, public service media represent something broader than news and current affairs, in line with Reithian mission to inform, educate and entertain that serves citizen that would help people get the content they need (Burns, 2020).

Such a normative distinction gives rise to a practical question: how can the extent of fulfillment of editorial obligations be assessed? They propose bringing theory and practice together, challenge technology companies to bring users experience into further debate of neoliberal market norms, and develop reflective media regulation (Macnish, 2018). Quantitative content mapping is rapidly becoming a standard means of measuring editorial diversity and balance (Flöck, Vrandečić, & Simperl, 2011). Following Ørmen's (2020) classification, quantitative mapping, which is built by systematic steps like sampling, data aggregation and analysis became an important part of media and communication research nowadays. Quantitative content analysis is defined as the systematic coding and quantification of written, visual or oral content with an attempt to

be objective and systematic in the evaluation within the communication sociology framework (Huxley 2020).

The use of quantitative mapping to podcast portfolios is a relatively new endeavor. Podcast research has generally been qualitative (Berry, 2021), whereas industry data that focuses on audiences tends to revolve around practices, numbers and trends (Tennant, 2024). Most scholarship has been concerned with podcast content and audiences, while the more infrastructural and institutional dimensions of podcast production have received comparatively less attention. Understanding the systematic distributions of podcasts by type, quantity, length, and variety is still surprisingly scarce. Tennant's (2024) study of New Zealand podcasts, categorizing 722 podcasts across 12 categories, represents a notable attempt to address this gap by examining volume, duration, and diversity, and developing a new classification system. Building on this, the Radio Pakistan podcast catalogue, as a bounded, complete, and digitally documented archive, offers an unusually tractable dataset for systematic quantitative analysis. The concept of editorial balance in broadcasting, particularly within PSBs, emphasizes diversity in media content. YADLIN & SHAGRIR (2024) stated public service media generally encourage diversity as an essential element of editorial balance. Scholars note how PSBs should not only have a broad reach of topics to cover, but coverage itself must reflect public needs and social values. Lifeblood of an informed citizenry and the foundation of democratic discourse. In a democracy, diversity of media content is vital as they prevent the dilution of democratic experiences and give counter-narratives to populism (Cádima, 2017).

Radio Pakistan, created in 1947 and historically the designated public service radio institution of Pakistan with a constitutional mandate to inform them all (NAZIM, 2025), Historically, it held much influence in the establishment of one national soundscape across regions that were linguistically and culturally diverse, using its considerable reach to create as well as challenge homogeneity; thus, showing wide geographical and demographic reach (Mowtushi, 2024). The launch of Radio Pakistan's podcast platform on August 07, 2021 (PAKISTAN, 2021) represents a strategic institutional response to the digital transformation of media consumption in Pakistan. Related research, such as the study on the "Popularity of YouTube Podcasters among Social Media Users" published in the *Journal of Journalism, Media Science & Creative Arts*, reveals that youth view YouTube podcasters as sources of fact-based information and follow them for educational purposes. The study further suggests that mainstream media journalists could enhance their credibility by launching their own podcast channels, as indicated by youth perspectives (Ghafar, Ishaq, & Anees, 2023).

Despite its historical significance and institutional importance as Pakistan's only national public service broadcaster, Radio Pakistan has received limited academic attention in scholarly literature. This study contributes to filling that gap by providing, for

the first time, a complete and systematic quantitative analysis of Radio Pakistan's podcast editorial strategy.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Research Design and Data Source

This study was carried out using a quantitative descriptive research design. The individual podcast episode serves as the unit of analysis, while the complete corpus of Radio Pakistan podcast episodes published on Radio Pakistan's official podcast platforms from August 2021 through July 2025 constitutes the population. No sampling was applied to the quantitative mapping or EP analysis; all 1,078 published episodes were included in the dataset. Episode metadata category, subcategory, episode count, and broadcast duration in minutes and seconds were compiled from Radio Pakistan's official podcast platforms.

2.2. The Editorial Priority Framework: Design and Rationale

The Editorial Priority (EP) Framework was developed by the researcher as the primary analytical instrument of this study. The framework is designed to translate the descriptive statistics of a podcast portfolio into a single composite indicator of institutional editorial emphasis for each content category and subcategory.

2.3. Conceptual Foundation

Editorial priority in a PSB context reflects the degree to which an institution invests its production resources in a given thematic area. This investment has two analytically distinct components. The first is production depth how much has been produced within a given thematic area, measured in both episode count and broadcast duration. The second is thematic breadth how broadly, and how evenly, that production has been distributed across the subcategories that make up a main category's thematic scope. In a comprehensive analysis of editorial commitment this is two sides of the same coin: an area can be richly produced and still lack depth if it is entirely concentrated on one sub-theme, or wide-ranging in thematic coverage but shallow with minimal spend per-sub-area.

2.4. Framework Dimensions

The EP Framework operationalizes editorial priority through two dimensions: Depth and Breadth.

Depth reflects production investment. For main categories, it is calculated as the mean of two proportional indicators: (1) the category's share of total platform episodes (Podcast Share), and (2) the category's share of total platform broadcast minutes (Minutes Share):

$$\text{Podcast Share category (\%)} = \text{Category Podcasts} \div \text{Total Platform Podcasts} \times 100$$

$$\text{Minutes Share category (\%)} = \text{Category Minutes} \div \text{Total Platform Minutes} \times 100$$

$$\text{Depth category} = \text{Podcast Share category} + \text{Minutes Share category} \div 2$$

Breadth reflects thematic scope. For main categories, it is calculated as the mean of two indices: the Subcategory Coverage Index (SCI), which measures how large a share of the platform's total 37 subcategories fall within the category; and the Subcategory Balance Index (SBI), which measures how evenly production is distributed across those subcategories:

Subcategory Coverage Index (SCI)

$$\text{Category Subcategories} \div \text{Total Platform Subcategories (37)} \times 100$$

Subcategory Balance Index (SBI)

$$\text{Dominant Subcategory Share} = \text{Largest Subcategory Minutes} \div \text{Category Total Minutes} \times 100$$

$$\text{SBI} = 100 - \text{Dominant Subcategory Share}$$

$$\text{Breadth category} = \text{SCI} + \text{SBI} \div 2$$

The SBI is designed to penalize concentration: a category in which nearly all broadcast minutes are contained within a single subcategory will receive a near-zero SBI, regardless of how many subcategories it nominally contains.

2.5. The Composite EP Score

The EP score is computed as a weighted composite of the Depth and Breadth scores, with Depth receiving 60% weight (reflecting that production volume and airtime are the most direct indicators of institutional investment) and Breadth receiving 40% weight (reflecting that thematic scope and balance are important but complementary indicators):

$$\text{EP} = (0.60 \times \text{Depth}) + (0.40 \times \text{Breadth})$$

EP Classification Scale

EP scores are interpreted using a five-level classification scale developed to provide contextual meaning for the computed values:

Table 1: Editorial Priority Classification Scale

EP Score	Editorial Priority Level
≥ 86	Very High Priority
61 – 85	High Priority
36 – 60	Medium Priority
11 – 35	Low Priority
< 10	Very Low Priority

Source: Author-developed classification framework.

2.6. Subcategory-Level EP Calculation

For subcategories, the EP calculation is adapted as follows. Depth is computed identically as the mean of the subcategory's podcast share and minutes share relative to the

total platform. Breadth at the subcategory level cannot use the SCI (since each subcategory represents a single thematic unit, not a group of units); instead, Breadth is equated with the SBI defined as the complement of that subcategory's proportional dominance within its parent category:

Depth

$$\text{Podcast Share subcategory (\%)} = \text{Subcategory Podcasts} \div \text{Total Platform Podcasts} \times 100$$

$$\text{Minutes Share subcategory (\%)} = \text{Subcategory Minutes} \div \text{Total Platform Minutes} \times 100$$

$$\text{Depth subcategory} = \text{Podcast Share subcategory} + \text{Minutes Share subcategory} \div 2$$

Breadth

$$\text{Subcategory Share within Parent Category} = \text{Subcategory Minutes} \div \text{Parent Category Total Minutes} \times 100$$

$$\text{SBI} = 100 - \text{Subcategory Share within Parent Category}$$

$$\text{Breadth subcategory} = \text{SBI}$$

$$\text{EP} = (0.60 \times \text{Depth}) + (0.40 \times \text{Breadth})$$

2.7. Results: Quantitative Mapping and Editorial Priority Analysis

Platform Overview

As of July 2025, the Radio Pakistan podcast platform included a total of 1,078 episodes spread over 13 main categories and 37 subcategories with a cumulative broadcast time of approximately 30,227 minutes and 18 seconds (503 hours and 47 minutes; just under 21 full days). These episodes cover the four complete years of institutional podcasting production between August 2021 and July 2025. The full quantitative mapping of this dataset can be found in the next three subsections.

2.8. Distribution of Subcategories Across Main Categories (Table 2)

Table 2 presents the structural organization of the platform the number and identity of subcategories within each main category, and each category's proportional share of the platform's total 37 subcategories (the SCI value).

Table 2: Distribution of Subcategories Across Main Categories

Main Category	Subcategories	No. of Subcats	SCI (%)
Tourism	National; Main Bhi Pakistan Hun	2	5.41
News & Current Affairs	Daily News Review; Perspective (English); Nuqta-e-Nazar; News Conference	4	10.81
Sports	Player Profile; Sports World	2	5.41

Science & Education	Entrepreneurs in Focus; Global Inventions; Scholarships	3	8.11
Literature	Youth and Iqbalayat; Zameen Bolti Hai; Nigar e Adab; Afkar e Pakistan; Book Club	5	13.51
Agriculture	Agriculture Inventions & Research; Production Technology; Micro Nutrient	3	8.11
Entertainment	Drama; Comedy; Music; History; Radio Classics	5	13.51
Religion	Quran Recitation; Ap Ne Poocha; Aaye Quran e Hakeem Seekhain; Paigham-e-Ramzan	4	10.81
Health	Inventions and Research; Diseases	2	5.41
Special Initiatives	Giving Back	1	2.7
Kids	One Plus One Three; Bedtime Stories (English)	2	5.41
Politics	Interviews; Political Economy; International Relation	3	8.11
Front-Line Forces	Serving the Nation	1	2.7
Total	37 subcategories across 13 categories	37	100

Source: Data compiled from Radio Pakistan's official podcast platforms (August 2021–July 2025).

The distribution of subcategories indicates that ‘Literature’ and ‘Entertainment’ exhibit the highest level of structural diversity, each comprising five subcategories (SCI = 13.51%). They are followed by ‘News & Current Affairs’ and ‘Religion’, which include four subcategories each (SCI = 10.81%). This variation in structure suggests a broader conceptual range within these categories. At the other extreme, ‘Special Initiatives’ and ‘Front-Line Forces’ are constrained to a single subcategory each (SCI = 2.70%), reflecting highly focused and narrowly defined content mandates. It is important to note that structural diversity (subcategory count) does not, by itself, indicate balanced production investment as the SBI analysis below will demonstrate.

2.9. Episode and Duration Distribution

Table 3: Distribution of Episodes and Minutes Across Main Categories

Main Category	Episodes (N)	% of Total Episodes	Total Minutes	% of Total Minutes	Rank (Episodes)
News & Current Affairs	387	35.90%	10,492	34.71%	1

Politics	155	14.38%	3,615	11.96%	2
Entertainment	102	9.46%	2,622	8.67%	3
Special Initiatives	99	9.18%	2,379	7.87%	4
Front-Line Forces	83	7.70%	1,799	5.95%	5
Religion	37	3.43%	5,826	19.27%	10
Sports	54	5.01%	919	3.04%	6
Literature	48	4.45%	557	1.85%	7
Science & Education	43	3.99%	1,201	3.97%	8
Agriculture	32	2.97%	373	1.23%	9
Kids	24	2.23%	137	0.45%	11
Health	10	0.93%	225	0.74%	12
Tourism	4	0.37%	76	0.25%	13
Grand Total	1,078	100.00%	30,227	100.00%	

Source: Data compiled and calculated from Radio Pakistan's official podcast platforms (2021–2025). Note: Total duration = 30,227 minutes 18 seconds (503 h 47 m 18 s / approximately 20 days 22 h 47 m).

Table 3 presents one of the most striking structural features of the Radio Pakistan podcast portfolio: the extreme concentration of production volume in a single category. ‘News & Current Affairs’ alone accounts for 387 of the 1,078 total episodes (35.90%) and 10,492 of the 30,227 total minutes (34.71%) more than three times the episode counts of the second-ranked category (‘Politics’, 155 episodes) and more than twice its broadcast duration. Together, ‘News & Current Affairs’ and ‘Politics’ account for 50.28% of all episodes and 46.67% of all broadcast minutes leaving all eleven remaining categories to share the remaining half of production output.

A notable anomaly emerges in the ‘Religion’ category's duration data. With only 37 episodes (ranking 10th by episode count), ‘Religion’ accounts for 5,826 minutes 19.27% of total platform duration making it the second-largest category by broadcast time despite its low episode volume. As Table 4 will show, this is almost entirely attributable to one subcategory, ‘Paigham-e-Ramzan’ (5,779 minutes), which produces very few but extremely long episodes concentrated in the Ramadan broadcasting season. This creates a profound mismatch between episode count and broadcast duration that reveals a structural imbalance invisible to simple episode counting.

At the lower end, ‘Tourism’ (76 min, 0.25%), ‘Kids’ (137 min, 0.45%), and ‘Health’ (225 min, 0.74%) are the three categories with the smallest total broadcast durations categories that would typically be considered core to a PSB's educational and social welfare mandate. ‘Agriculture’ (373 min, 1.23%) and ‘Literature’ (557 min, 1.85%) are similarly underrepresented in airtime terms relative to their potential public service value.

2.11. Detailed Duration by Subcategory (Table 4)

Table 4: Total Broadcast Duration by Subcategory

Main Category	Subcategory	Minutes	% of Cat. Total	SBI
Tourism	National	68	89.50%	
Tourism	Main Bhi Pakistan Hun	8	10.50%	
Tourism Total		76	100%	10.5
News & Current Affairs	Daily News Review	702	6.70%	
News & Current Affairs	Perspective (English)	3,255	31.00%	
News & Current Affairs	Nuqta-e-Nazar	3,668	35.0% ← dominant	
News & Current Affairs	News Conference	2,867	27.30%	
News & CA Total		10,492	100%	65
Religion	Quran Recitation	23	0.40%	
Religion	Ap Ne Poocha	8	0.10%	
Religion	Aaye Quran e Hakeem Seekhain	15	0.30%	
Religion	Paigham-e-Ramzan	5,779	99.2% ← dominant	
Religion Total		5,826	100%	0.81
Politics	Interviews	2,629	72.7% ← dominant	
Politics	Political Economy	573	15.80%	
Politics	International Relation	413	11.40%	
Politics Total		3,615	100%	27.3
Entertainment	Music	2,382	90.8% ← dominant	
Entertainment	Comedy	94	3.60%	
Entertainment	Radio Classics	126	4.80%	
Entertainment	Drama	14	0.50%	
Entertainment	History	6	0.20%	
Entertainment Total		2,622	100%	9.15
Agriculture	Production Technology	334	89.6% ← dominant	
Agriculture	Agri Inventions & Research	29	7.80%	
Agriculture	Micro Nutrient	10	2.70%	
Agriculture Total		373	100%	10.4

Science & Education	Entrepreneurs in Focus	1,182	98.3% ← dominant	
Science & Education	Global Inventions	5	0.40%	
Science & Education	Scholarships	14	1.20%	
Sci & Edu Total		1,201	100%	1.67
Literature	Afkar e Pakistan	321	57.5% ← dominant	
Literature	Youth and Iqbaliyat	112	20.10%	
Literature	Book Club	107	19.20%	
Literature	Nigar e Adab	11	2.00%	
Literature	Zameen Bolti Hai	6	1.10%	
Literature Total		557	100%	42.4
Health	Diseases	203	90.3% ← dominant	
Health	Inventions and Research	22	9.70%	
Health Total		225	100%	9.78
Special Initiatives	Giving Back	2,379	100% ← only subcat.	
Special Initiatives Total		2,379	100%	0
Kids	One Plus One Three	72	52.40%	
Kids	Bedtime Stories (English)	66	47.60%	
Kids Total		137	100%	47.6
Sports	Sports World	766	83.3% ← dominant	
Sports	Player Profile	153	16.70%	
Sports Total		919	100%	16.8
Front-Line Forces	Serving the Nation	1,799	100% ← only subcat.	
Front-Line Total		1,799	100%	0
GRAND TOTAL	37 subcategories across 13 categories	30,227		

Source: Data compiled and calculated from Radio Pakistan's official podcast platforms. SBI column shows the final Subcategory Balance Index for each main category (bold rows). '← dominant' flags subcategories with > 50% of parent category minutes.

Table 4 highlights significant imbalances at the subcategory level that remain undetected when examining data solely at the category level. The most pronounced example is the 'Religion' category: although it comprises four subcategories, 'Paigham-e-Ramzan' accounts for 5,779 minutes out of the category's total 5,826 minutes (99.2%),

resulting in an SBI of only 0.81, which is effectively negligible. The other three subcategories ('Quran Recitation', 'Ap Ne Poocha', 'Aaye Quran e Hakeem Seekhain') together account for barely 46 minutes across four years of production. Similarly, Science & Education's 'Entrepreneurs in Focus' absorbs 1,182 of 1,201 category minutes (98.3%), leaving 'Global Inventions' and 'Scholarships' at 5 and 14 minutes respectively a negligible presence despite their obvious public service value. Entertainment's 'Music' subcategory accounts for 2,382 of 2,622 total entertainment minutes (90.8%), leaving 'Drama' (14 min), 'History' (6 min), 'Comedy' (94 min), and 'Radio Classics' (126 min) as marginal presences. In contrast, 'Kids' is the most internally balanced category. 'One Plus One Three' (72 min, 52.4%) and 'Bedtime Stories' in English (66 min, 47.6%) are distributed almost equally, producing the highest SBI among all multi-subcategory categories (SBI = 47.6).

2.10. Editorial Priority Scores: Complete Results (Table 5)

Table 5 presents the complete EP score calculation for all 13 main categories, showing all intermediate values Podcast Share, Minutes Share, Depth, SCI, SBI, Breadth, EP Score, and Priority Classification as computed using the formulas defined in Section 3.

Table 5: Editorial Priority Score and Classification Across All Main Categories

Category	Pod. Share (%)	Min. Share (%)	Depth	SCI (%)	SBI	Breadth	EP Score	Priority
News & Current Affairs	35.9	34.71	35.31	10.81	65.04	37.93	36.36	Medium
Politics	14.38	11.96	13.17	8.11	27.28	17.69	14.98	LOW
Literature	4.45	1.84	3.15	13.51	42.37	27.94	13.07	LOW
Kids	2.23	0.45	1.34	5.41	48.18	26.8	11.52	LOW
Entertainment	9.46	8.67	9.07	13.51	9.15	11.33	9.97	V. LOW
Religion	3.43	19.27	11.35	10.81	0.81	5.81	9.14	V. LOW
Special Initiatives	9.18	7.87	8.53	2.7	0	1.35	5.66	V. LOW
Front-Line Forces	7.7	5.95	6.83	2.7	0	1.35	4.64	V. LOW
Agriculture	2.97	1.23	2.1	8.11	10.46	9.29	4.98	V. LOW
Science & Education	3.99	3.97	3.98	8.11	1.67	4.89	4.34	V. LOW

Sports	5.01	3.04	4.02	5.41	16.76	11.08	6.85	V. LOW
Health	0.93	0.74	0.84	5.41	9.78	7.59	3.54	V. LOW
Tourism	0.37	0.25	0.31	5.41	10.53	7.97	3.37	V. LOW

Source: Author's calculations using the Editorial Priority Framework. Platform totals: 1,078 episodes; 30,227 minutes; 37 subcategories. Note: No category reached High, or Very High Priority tier.

3. Discussion

3.1. The Dominance of News & Current Affairs: A Structural Monopoly

The most consequential finding of this study is that no category in the Radio Pakistan podcast portfolio reached the High Priority tier ($EP \geq 61$). The highest-scoring category 'News & Current Affairs' achieved an EP of 36.36, which places it at the entry point of the Medium Priority band. All 12 remaining categories fell below $EP = 15$, firmly in the Low Priority or Very Low Priority ranges. This means that Radio Pakistan's entire podcast portfolio, by the measure of the EP Framework, is editorially concentrated at a level that would conventionally be described as institutional underdevelopment across most of its thematic domains. 'News & Current Affairs' accounts for 35.90% of episodes and 34.71% of broadcast minutes a combined dominance that means one category out of thirteen effectively controls more than a third of all production resources. From a PSB mandate perspective, this is problematic. 'News and current affairs' is unquestionably a core PSB function; however, the Reithian mandate requires that informational, educational, entertainment, and public interest roles be pursued in balance. A platform that allocates 36% of its resources to one content type while distributing the remaining 64% across twelve others including 'Agriculture' (2.97%), 'Health' (0.93%), 'Tourism' (0.37%), and 'Kids' (2.23%) cannot be said to reflect a balanced editorial strategy.

3.2. The Religion Paradox: Duration Without Diversity

The 'Religion' category presents the most analytically striking case of the disconnect between volume-based and EP-based assessment. With 5,826 total broadcast minutes, 'Religion' is the second-largest category by duration (19.27% of total platform minutes). A simple duration-based analysis would rank 'Religion' second in editorial priority behind only 'News & Current Affairs'. The EP Framework reveals why this conclusion would be misleading. The 'Religion' category's apparent duration dominance is almost entirely attributable to a single programme 'Paigham-e-Ramzan', which accounts for 5,779 of 5,826 total category minutes 99.2%. This leaves three other subcategories sharing just 46 minutes over four years. The resulting SBI of 0.81 collapses the Breadth score to 5.81, and the final EP score of 9.14 places 'Religion' in the Very Low Priority

tier. The 'Religion' category does not have a developed podcast editorial strategy; it has a single seasonal programme of very long duration surrounded by minimal coverage of other religious content areas.

3.3. The SBI Paradox: Structural Breadth Without Substantive Balance

Several categories exhibit a pattern that might be called the "structural breadth without substantive balance" paradox: they contain multiple subcategories in their portfolio structure, but production is so heavily concentrated in one dominant subcategory that the others are effectively empty. 'Science & Education' has three subcategories but 'Entrepreneurs in Focus' absorbs 98.3% of category minutes, leaving 'Global Inventions' at 5 minutes and 'Scholarships' at 14 minutes (SBI = 1.67). 'Entertainment' has five subcategories but 'Music' dominates at 90.8%, while 'Drama' (14 min) and 'History' (6 min) represent minimal content (SBI = 9.15). 'Agriculture' has three subcategories but 'Production Technology' alone accounts for 89.6% of category minutes (SBI = 10.46). In all three cases, the subcategory count creates an appearance of thematic diversity that the duration data directly contradicts. The SBI is the key measure that makes this contradiction visible.

3.4. The Most Balanced Categories

The EP analysis also reveals which categories achieve genuine internal balance between their subcategories. 'Kids' is the most internally balanced multi-subcategory category on the platform: 'One Plus One Three' (72 min, 52.4%) and 'Bedtime Stories in English' (66 min, 47.6%) are distributed almost equally, producing an SBI of 47.6 the highest among any category with more than one subcategory. This means that the 'Kids' category, despite its small overall volume (137 minutes total), represents a model of proportional editorial investment across its defined thematic scope. 'Literature' exhibits a moderate degree of internal distribution. 'Afkar e Pakistan' accounts for 57.5%, maintaining a leading position, while 'Book Club' (19.2%) and 'Youth and Iqbalayat' (20.1%) contribute notable secondary shares, resulting in an SBI of 42.37. Among the categories with higher output, 'News & Current Affairs' demonstrates the most equitable distribution, with 'Nuqta-e-Nazar' (35.0%), 'Perspective English' (31.0%), and 'News Conference' (27.3%) contributing in a relatively balanced manner, yielding an SBI of 65.04.

3.5. Implications for PSB Mandate Fulfilment

The cumulative EP analysis suggests that Radio Pakistan's podcast portfolio, as it stood in 2025, reflects an editorial strategy that is heavily oriented toward news and political information, with most other thematic areas including those with the strongest public service educational and social welfare credentials receiving marginal and imbalanced investment. This has three implications for PSB mandate assessment:

1. Depth without breadth is not strategic investment. Categories like ‘Religion’ and ‘Entertainment’ that command significant broadcast time but concentrate it almost entirely within a single programme type are not delivering the thematic diversity that characterises a genuine editorial commitment to a content domain.
2. The categories most underprioritized ‘Agriculture’, ‘Health’, ‘Tourism’, ‘Kids’ have among the strongest claims on PSB resources from a social welfare and public interest perspective. Their EP scores (3.37–4.98) place them firmly in the Very Low Priority tier, indicating near-absence rather than strategic investment.
3. No category achieving the High Priority tier ($EP \geq 61$), coupled with only a single category ‘News & Current Affairs’, qualifying as Medium Priority ($EP = 36.36$), indicates that the platform’s editorial development falls short compared to what might be expected from a fully funded PSB podcast strategy.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusions

This study has presented the first complete quantitative mapping of Radio Pakistan's podcast portfolio (2021–2025) and introduced the Editorial Priority (EP) Framework as a systematic, transparent, and replicable instrument for assessing the distribution of editorial resources in a PSB podcast catalogue. Applying the framework to 1,078 episodes, 13 categories, 37 subcategories, and 30,227 minutes of content, the study has produced the following principal conclusions:

1. ‘News & Current Affairs’ occupies a structurally dominant position, accounting for 35.90% of episodes and 34.71% of minutes the only category to reach the Medium Priority band ($EP = 36.36$).
2. Twelve of thirteen categories are editorially underdeveloped relative to both their nominal thematic scope and their potential PSB value, with EP scores ranging from 3.37 (‘Tourism’, Very Low Priority) to 14.98 (‘Politics’, Low Priority).
3. The ‘Religion’ category presents the most extreme case of duration without diversity, a near-zero SBI (0.81) confirms that 99.2% of category broadcast time is concentrated in a single seasonal programme, leaving it in the Very Low Priority tier ($EP = 9.14$).
4. ‘Science & Education’ and ‘Entertainment’ exhibit structural diversity (multiple subcategories) without substantive balance, with dominant subcategories absorbing 98.3% and 90.8% of category minutes respectively both remaining in the Very Low Priority tier.
5. ‘Kids’ is the platform's most internally balanced category by SBI, demonstrating that equitable resource distribution across subcategories is achievable even at low

overall volume, though its EP score (4.98) still places it in the Very Low Priority tier.

6. The EP Framework provides methodological value beyond this study's specific dataset: it is fully replicable, formula-based, and applicable to any PSB podcast catalogue, making it a practical tool for content audit, regulatory review, and institutional strategic planning.

4.2. Recommendations

Based on the EP analysis, the following evidence-based recommendations are proposed for Radio Pakistan and, more broadly, for PSB institutions managing digital podcast portfolios:

- **R1. Rebalance episode allocation toward underrepresented high-value categories:** 'Agriculture', 'Health', 'Tourism', and 'Kids' currently receive combined podcast allocation of 70 episodes out of 1,078 (6.5%). Doubling production in each of these categories would represent a minimal investment relative to total output while substantially improving editorial balance.
- **R2. Address intra-category concentration in Religion and Science & Education:** Both categories have three or four subcategories in name but essentially one functioning programme in practice. Developing year-round content for 'Quran Recitation', 'Ap Ne Poocha', 'Global Inventions', and 'Scholarships' would significantly improve SBI scores and EP rankings without requiring large-scale resource increases.
- **R3. Use EP scoring as an annual content audit instrument:** An annual EP audit applied to the updated podcast catalogue would enable Radio Pakistan to track whether strategic diversification efforts are translating into measurable shifts in editorial balance, providing evidence for institutional accountability reports.
- **R4. Policymakers should adopt quantitative mapping metrics in PSB evaluation frameworks:** The EP Framework demonstrates that volume-based metrics alone (episode count) are insufficient for editorial evaluation. Regulatory bodies overseeing PSBs in Pakistan and comparable contexts should incorporate both Depth and Breadth metrics and particularly the SBI into their assessment criteria.

4.3. Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. The EP Framework measures production volume and structural distribution, not content quality, social impact, or audience reception. A high EP score category may still yield low public service value content and, conversely, a lower volume category may punch above its weight in terms of social impact. Future research should combine the EP Framework with qualitative content analysis and audience reception data to deliver a more nuanced evaluation of editorial performance.

Similarly, EP scores are computed relative to the total output on a platform; they describe internal skews in how editorial resources get allocated, not absolute levels of investment. A fuller analysis would require comparing Radio Pakistan's EP distribution to other comparable PSBs and similar institutional and developmental contexts (e.g., PTV, Doordarshan, SABC, ABC).

Future research could also extend the EP Framework to video podcasts, social media content, and traditional broadcast schedules to examine whether the imbalances identified in the podcast catalogue are replicated or offset in other distribution channels.

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