Hope in Times of Terrorism: Action-Expressions Speak Louder than Passive-Sorrows

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The present study tried to address questions related to USA Pakistan being allied at different national and international fora but Pakistan being the victimised/suffering friend and USA being a powerful/dictating ally only. The quarries addressed were: If the members of victimized group expect mere acknowledgements of their suffering from their ally groups, or they are in need of action expressions or passive sorrows. This exploration was followed by which expressions offer higher hope, and satisfaction to the suffering group. The paper capitalized on experimental design using the condolence offered by the U.S. after the Peshawar School Massacre. Across conditions, recruiting between subjects design with 209 university students in Islamabad, experimental manipulation included: sorry-expressions (feel sorry), action expressions (action-expressions: feel outraged/feel responsible), and sorrow expressions (sorrow-expressions: feel guilty/feel regret). Results suggest that statements with mere sorry expressions fall short of conveying much hope for change and pain shared by the ally; participants reported more satisfaction in response to action-expressions (outrage-responsibility) than in response to sorrow-expressions (guilt-regret).

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Acknowledgements from the allies, in the form of expressions of condolences and apologies, have become common in current times than

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ever before (Brooks, 1999). The psychological literature has described several ways such acknowledgements may offer comfort to the suffering groups. For instance, acknowledgements may provide an initial platform for the emergence of positive group relations and intergroup forgiveness (Branscombe & Cronin, 2010; Lazare, 2004; Nadler, & Shnabel, 2008; Wohl, Hornsey, & Philpot, 2011). Such acknowledgments are thought to provide an ally group facilitation to help heal the victim group's wounds (Kellerman, 2006). We postulate that the logic behind why acknowledgement expressions are so powerful could be rooted in the hope for change and belief that the ally (such as the US) shares the pain of the suffering group (such as Pakistan).

Pakistan has been an ally of the U.S. since 9/11/2001. Although in every political announcement it has been emphasized that the two countries are working closely, on the public level there is a prevalence of uncertainty. In particular, with reference to Pakistan's support of the U.S. war against terrorism. On the one hand, the US is running one of the largest economic development programs in Pakistan such as USAID and Fulbright, on the other hand, there is much uproar among Pakistani's about some that create ambivalence in the U.S.-Pakistan relationship as allies (Button & Carton, 2014).

Among the issues that induce ambivalence in the narratives of Pakistani public include the drone attacks (80,000 Pakistanis killed in US 'War on Terror': report, 2015), and the events such as the Peshawar School Massacre by foreign militants that happened on 16 December 2014, when terrorists killed 132 children between the ages of eight to eighteen (In Pakistan school attack, Taliban terrorists kill 145, mostly children, 2014). Pakistanis were in a spell of sorrow and hopelessness (Pakistan Council on Foreign Relations, 2014; Hussain, 2008). In such a situation, the need for support and hope from allies was crucial. The same day, the US President Barrack Obama issued a statement of condolence (Statement by the President on the Terrorist Attack on the Army Public School in Pakistan, 2014). The statement said: *"The United States condemns in the strongest possible terms today's horrific attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar, Pakistan. Our hearts and prayers go out to the victims, their families, and loved ones. By targeting students and teachers in this heinous attack, terrorists have once again shown their depravity. We stand with the people of Pakistan, and reiterate the commitment of the United States to support the Government of Pakistan in its efforts to combat terrorism and extremism and to promote peace and stability in the region"* (The White House, December 16, 2014).

Such a response from The White House gives a context to study what could prevent dissatisfaction with expressions of acknowledgement from ally nations. To our knowledge, there has not been any research exploring effective acknowledgements from allies, which provides us an opportunity to formulate an exploratory theoretical formulation to explore this topic in the Pakistani context.

Hope for change

According to Snyder (2002) an important factor that makes acknowledgement expressions 'mysteriously effective' could be the hope it offers to the suffering group. Lazarus (1999) defined hope as an appraisal that leads to a strong desire to be in a different situation than at present. Hope is to believe to have positive effects in future. Hope may foster positive feelings for the present endeavours and action tendencies for thinking and planning for the future (Snyder, 2000). In one recent review, hope has been defined as an emotion related to future-oriented appraisal of a situation with a potential for improvement (Cohen-Chen, Crisp, & Halperin, 2015).

Implicit beliefs literature has suggested a similar link between peace and hope for change by showing that the more people think that the other group is malleable, the more forgiving they are (Halperin, Crisp, Husnu, Dweck, & Gross, 2012; Halperin & Gross, 2011).   In a set of studies on the general belief that the world is changing, Cohen-Chen et al. (2015) found that hope for change comes from the general perception that the world is a changing place. It was found that the belief in the world as changing, compared to unchanging, was associated with increased support for peace building.

Hope   for   change   matters,   but   what   components   should acknowledgment expressions contain in order to communicate the greatest possibility of hope for change? Expressions with strong effect or action intentions such as emotions and appraisals may be the answer. As far as emotions are concerned, appropriate emotions may serve a communicative function (Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2004; Wohl & Branscombe, 2005). Emotions such as *guilt* and *regret* (*sorrow-expressions*) may demonstrate that the perpetrator can sympathize with the victim whereas appraisals such as *outrage* and *responsibility* (*action-expressions*) may express some form of action tendencies for future, which may imply a change in behaviour. In the next section, we elaborate on the second potent factor that may be helpful in conveying satisfactory statements of condolences from the stronger allies to the suffering group.

Pain shared by the ally

A stronger ally's acknowledgement of the pain experienced by the victim group may promote a step forward in intergroup relations. Previous research indicates that expression of sorrow may have a utilitarian function for relation improvement (Branscombe & Cronin, 2010). Acknowledging and sharing responsibility for an ally's pain may help to promote trust (Lazare, 2004). This may be seen as an opportunity for empowerment of the allies in two ways: first, working together and helping each other with greater sincerity and trust (Hornsey & Wohl, 2013); second, emotionally strengthening the weaker ally (e.g. Pakistan) by the stronger (e.g. the US). For instance De Grieff (2008) suggests that the aim of an intergroup expression, among other goals, should be to improve trust among groups.

Sorrow-expressions may convey that the ally shares the pain of the victim group. In some related literature on acknowledgements in apologies, research has shown that repentance related expressions, often represented by statements such as, "I am sorry," have no significant effect (Margutti, Traversob, & Pugliesec, 2015; Schmitt, Gollwitzer, Förster, & Montada, 2004). In contrast to sorrow-expressions of regret or guilt, the simple expression, "I am sorry," in the context of allies may be empty of hope for change as well as failing to demonstrate a convincing amount of sorrow to the receiving party.

Moreover, Wohl, Hornsey, and Bennett (2012) tested which emotional expressions may best promote satisfaction with acknowledgements. These studies explored differences in satisfaction offered by two types of emotions: primary emotions: the basic emotions experienced by both animals and humans (e.g., fear, anger); and secondary emotions: the higher-order emotions experienced only by humans (e.g., sorrow, guilt). In a range of scenario-based experiments, Wohl, and colleagues (2012) found that compared to secondary emotions, forgiveness was higher when the apology was expressed using primary emotions.

The studies reviewed above have used different expressions for sorrow, but some questions related to conveying guilt, outrage, regret, responsibility, feeling sorry, or shame remain open to answer. Expression of shame by a stronger ally such as the U.S. may run the risk of arousing negative feelings and thus not ecologically valid in present international context. Would expressions of guilt, outrage, regret, responsibility, and feeling sorry, by an ally group foster varying amounts of hope for change and perceptions of pain shared by the ally? Present is an exploratory type

of study in which we tried to explore the answers of some preliminary questions such as : Would stating any expression versus "sorry" in a statement of condolence from an ally lead to more favourable reactions to the statement; Compared to sorrow-expressions (guilt-regret), would action-expressions (outrage-responsibility) engender higher hope for change, perceptions of shared pain, and satisfaction with the statement; Would there be any difference in satisfaction with the statement between the sorrow-expressions condition and the action-expressions condition will be mediated by reported hope for change and perceptions of shared pain.

Rationale of the Study

The purpose of the current research was to explore how people of Pakistan perceive the expressions of acknowledgements by the U.S., their ally in the war on terrorism. This paper specifically focuses on condolences from the U.S. to Pakistan in the context of recent terrorist attack in Peshawar, Pakistan. Before getting into related literature and specific research questions of this study we briefly spotlight the national and international political context in which this study was conducted.

Literature has suggested that expressions of acknowledgement helps satisfying the suffering group (Cohen-Chen et al., 2015; Halperin, Crisp, Husnu, Dweck, & Gross, 2012; Halperin & Gross, 2011; Wohl, Hornsey, & Bennett, 2012). However there is a lack of literature on what sort of expressions would be more satisfying. This reseach, therefore, is meaningful in exploring the best fitting expressions for the allies. The use of ecologically valid political scenario would further facilitatie the applicability of our framework in the policy settings.

In our literature review, we were unable to find any psychological studies on the role of expressions in Pakistani social or political context. Additionally the significance of Pakistan-U.S. alliance on political issues such as war on terrorism makes this issue worthy of exploration. In our regional and international context, this study has a socially and psychologically applied value.

Objectives

In this research, we used an actual expression of condolence offered by the U.S. president Barack Obama. Our treatment manipulation included action-expressions (i.e., outrage, responsibility), and sorrow-expressions (i.e., guilt, regret), and a control condition (i.e., sorry). We hoped that this variation in expressions would allow for the examination of the suffering groups' preferred expressions.

Hypotheses

In summary, we had the following hypotheses for the case when members of the suffering group receive a statement from a representative of a stronger ally:

- Stating any expression versus "sorry" in a statement of condolence from an ally will lead to more favourable reactions to the statement. Specifically, such statements should elicit greater hope for change, perceptions of shared pain, and satisfaction.
- Compared to sorrow-expressions (guilt-regret), action-expressions (outrage-responsibility) will engender higher hope for change, perceptions of shared pain, and satisfaction with the statement.
- The difference in satisfaction with the statement between the sorrow-expressions condition and the action-expressions condition will be mediated by reported hope for change and perceptions of shared pain.

Method

Research Design

Experiemental research design was used. The experiment used a five-condition factorial design in which the participants were randomly assigned to one of the conditions. All participants read a statement that included one of five different expressions: sorry, guilt, outrage, remorse, or responsibility. The number of participants per condition ranged from 40 to 43.

Sample

In total, 230 participants were recruited from a public university in Islamabad. Data from 21 participants because the participants were least interested. The sample included in the analyses were a total of 209 participants, all self ideitifed Pakistani graduate students (108 women, $M_{age} = 22.74$, $SD = 1.50$; 101 men, $M_{age} = 22.90$, $SD = 1.94$).

Measures

Materials consisted of a participant information sheet followed by the questionnaire,composed of three sections.

The first section of the questionnaire included a statement of sympathy expressed by the U.S. President Barack Obama in an official statement from the White House. The second section included questions about the intentions of the U.S. with its statement of condolence. After completing ethical protocol of the research, the participants were asked to fill up the consent forms. After that, the participants were asked about their hope for change and belief that the U.S. shares their pain. The third

section was related to participants' satisfaction with the statement. At the end of the questionnaire, participants received a debriefing sheet, and their questions or concerns were addressed.

The questionnaire began with a question about the relevance and importance of the issue of terrorist attacks, and was followed by the statement issued by the U.S. President Barack Obama (The White House, December 16, 2014), which was presented as follows:

> *"The United States condemns in the strongest possible terms today's horrific attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar, Pakistan. Our hearts and prayers go out to the victims, their families, and loved ones. By targeting students and teachers in this heinous attack, terrorists have once again shown their depravity. We stand with the people of Pakistan, and reiterate the commitment of the United States to support the Government of Pakistan in its efforts to combat terrorism and extremism and to promote peace and stability in the region. Pakistan is our ally on the war against terrorism; therefore we really feel [control/action-expression/ sorrow-expression] for this heinous event of terrorism."*

The term appropriate to the condition went in the *[control/action-expression/ sorrow-expression]* space: "*sorry*"/ "*guilty*"/ "*outraged*" / "*regretful*" / "*responsible*". Note that the italicized part of the sympathy was, in reality, offered by the U.S. President the bold italicized part of the statement was our experimental treatment. Following this statement, the key measures of the experiment were assessed on a five-point Likert scale ranging from one five (1= "not at all" and 5 = "very much").

Hope for change. Four items assessed participants' perceived *hope for change* after this statement of sympathy from the U.S. President (sample items: "How much does this statement by the U.S. President Obama shows that things will change in the future regarding the security of Pakistanis?"; "How much does the statement by the U.S. President convey that there will be efforts to actively stop such acts of extremism?") The items formed scale with Cronbach alpha .81 (M = 2.95, SD = .76).

Pain shared by the ally. Four items measured the *pain shared by the US as an ally* (sample items: "How much does this statement by President Obama show that Americans feel the pain of Pakistanis?"; "How much does the statement convey that he was suffering from the

loss of the lives of more than one hundred children?") The items formed scale with Cronbach alpha .84 ($M = 2.82$, $SD = .71$).

Satisfaction with the statement. Five items assessed *satisfaction with the statement* (sample items: "To what extent has this statement by president Obama made you feel that lives of Pakistanis are respected by the U.S.?"; "To what extent would this statement make you feel satisfied with the U.S. response to this event?"). The items formed a reliable scale with Cronbach alpha .76 ($M = 2.77$, $SD = .65$).

Procedure

The participants were approached individually to voluntarily participate in this study. After signing a consent form, the participants completed the questionnaire at the end of their class sessions, during their library hours, in student hostels and cafeterias. on the university campus. The participants were thanked and debriefed after completing the questionnaire.

Results

Independent sample *t*-test, general linear model (GLM) analyses and Process analyses for multiple mediation were conducted using IBM-SPSS 21. To explore the first hypothesis, a contrast among meaningful expressions (both action-expressions and sorrow-expressions: guilty, outraged, regretful, responsible: coded 1) and the control (sorry: coded 0) was created.

As hypothesized, all variables showed significant differences between the relatively indifferent sorrow expression condition and those conditions in which more meaningful expressions were depicted. The results revealed   a meaningful expression led to higher reports of *hope for change* (meaningful-expressions: $M = 3.13$, $SD= .68$; sorry expression: $M = 2.19$, $SD = .60$), *pain shared by the ally* (meaningful-expression: $M = 2.99$, $SD = .65$; sorry: $M = 2.15$, $SD= .47$); as well as to higher *satisfaction with the statement* (meaningful-expression: $M = 2.87$, $SD = .60$; sorry expression: $M = 2.33$, $SD = .70$). Also, see Table 1.

Table 1
Independent Saple t-test Determining Differences in Meaningful Emotions and Sorry Expressions (N=230)

Variables	Emotions		Sorry				Cohen's
	M	SD	M	SD	t(228)	p	d
1. Hope for change	3.13	.68	2.19	.60	64.19	.001	1.47
2. Pain shared by the ally	2.99	.65	2.15	.47	58.31	.001	1.48
3. Satisfaction with the statement	2.87	.60	2.33	.70	24.41	.001	.83

In the next step, we tested the second hypothesis to explore differences in *hope for change*, *pain shared by the ally*, and *satisfaction with the statement* between the meaningful expressions. Excluding the control condition ("sorry"), results revealed   significant differences between remaining four expressions on *hope for change*, *pain shared by the ally* and *satisfaction with the statement*. Regarding *hope for change*, outrage and responsibility led to higher hope for change than guilt and regret (guilt: $M = 2.92$, $SD = .54$; regret: $M = 2.61$, $SD = .41$; outrage: $M = 3.37$, $SD = .61$; responsibility: $M = 3.64$, $SD = .64$), $F (1, 165) = 28.32$, $p < .001$. A similar pattern of trends was observed for *pain shared by the ally* (guilt: $M = 2.75$, $SD = .62$; regret: $M = 2.49$, $SD = .38$; outrage: $M = 3.19$, $SD = .56$; responsibility: $M = 3.52$, $SD = .66$), $F (1, 165) = 31.93$, $p <.001$. A relatively weaker, but consistent pattern of results was observed for *satisfaction with the statement*, for instance outrage and responsibility emerged as the expressions eliciting higher satisfaction than guilt and regret (guilt: $M = 2.74$, $SD = .60$; regret: $M = 2.44$, $SD = .44$; outrage: $M = 3.09$, $SD = .57$; responsibility: $M = 3.17$, $SD = .53$), $F (1, 165) = 14.76$, $p< .001$). See Table 2.

Table 2
One Way ANOVA Comparing Different Meaningful Emotional Expressions (N=230)

	Guilt	Regret	Outrage	Resp.		$\eta^2_{partial}$
Variables	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	F(3, 226)	
1. Hope for change	2.92 (.54)	2.61(.41)	3.37 (.61)	3.64 (.64)	28.32**	.34
2. Pain shared by ally	2.75 (.62)	2.49 (.38)	3.19 (.56)	3.52 (.66)	31.93**	.36
3. Satisfaction with statement	2.74 (.60)	2.44 (.44)	3.09 (.57)	3.17 (.44)	14.76**	.21

Note. Resp.= Responsibility, ** $p < .001$.

Further post hoc analysis (Fisher LSD post-hoc test) confirmed significant differences between inferences of *hope for change* and *pain shared by the ally* between all expressions (all *p< .*04).   However regarding the main outcome variable of *satisfaction with the statement*, expressions of responsibility and outrage did not differ significantly from each other (*p = .*49), but lead to more satisfaction than expressions of guilt and regret (*p< .*02). This difference was further explored by constructing a contrast variable based on these differences, comparing the combination of *action-expressions* of outrage and responsibility (*outrage-responsibility*: coded 1) to *sorrow-expressions* of guilt and regret (*guilt-regret*: coded 0).

The *action-expressions* were seen as expressing significantly higher *hope for change* (outrage-responsibility: $M = 3.51$, $SD = .64$; guilt-regret: $M = 2.76$, $SD = .50$), *pain shared by the ally* (outrage-responsibility: $M = 3.36$, $SD = .56$; guilt-regret: $M = 2.62$, $SD = .53$), and *satisfaction with the statement* (outrage-responsibility: $M = 3.13$, $SD = .54$; guilt-regret: $M = 2.61$, $SD = .54$). See Table 3.

Table 3
Comparision of Hope For Change, Pain Shared By The Ally, and Satisfaction With The Statement With Action-Expressions (Outrage-Responsibility) And Sorrow-Expressions (Guilt-Regret) (N=230)

Variables	Action		Sorrow		t(228)	p	Cohen's d
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
1. Hope for change	3.51	.64	2.67	.50	69.53	.001	1.31
2. Pain shared by the ally	3.36	.56	2.62	.53	77.04	.001	1.37
3. Satisfaction with the statement	3.13	.54	2.61	.54	37.95	.001	.96

Based on these findings, and in order to explore our third hypothesis, mediation models were created in which the outrage-responsibility versus guilt-regret contrast was the initial variable, perceived hope for change and pain shared by the ally were added as mediators, and the outcome was satisfaction with the statement. These models were tested using multiple mediation bootstrapping analyses, with 5000 resamplings (Model 4: Hayes, 2013).

Multiple mediation analysis demonstrated that only *hope for change* but not *pain shared by the ally* was a significant mediator of the relationship between the outrage-responsibility verses guilt-regret

contrast and *satisfaction with the statement.* Figure 1 shows The parallel multiple mediation model with the effect of expressions with action tendencies vs. passive expressions on satisfaction with the statement through hope for change and pain shared by an ally.. *Hope for change* was significantly predicted by the contrast (β = .74, p < .001) and it was also significant predictor of *satisfaction with the statement* (β = .42, p <.001). *Pain shared by ally* was significantly predicted by the contrast (β = .73, p <.001), but it was not a significant predictor of *satisfaction with the statement* (β = .05, p <.001). Our results revealed that the relationship between the contrasts of two categories of expressions and *satisfaction with the statement* with the total effect (c = .52, p <.001). was significantly weakened after the variable of *hope for change* and *pain shared by ally* were included in the model (β = .16, p = .08); the only significant indirect effect was that of *hope for change* ($a*b$: .31; 95 % CI = [.20, .47]; total $a*b$ for all indirect paths: .35; 95 % CI = [0.24, 0.49]). Thus, the only significant mediator that completely accounted for the relationship between the expressions of outrage-responsibility and guilt-regret was hope for change. Differences between these expressions could thus be explained by the degree to which they expressed some possibility for change.

Figure 1. The Parallel Multiple Mediation Model
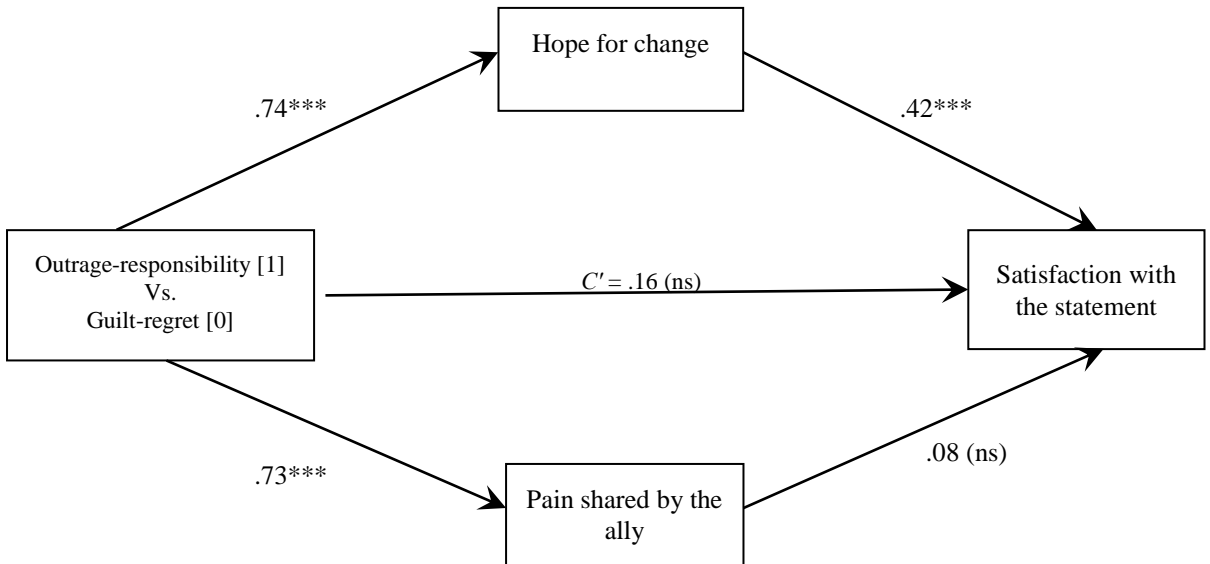
Note. Standardized regression weights are shown
*** *p* < .001.

These findings provide initial support for our hypothesis that compared to expression of feeling sorry, both action and sorrow-expressions offer higher satisfaction with condolences offered by the ally. Among meaningful expressions, action-expressions of outrage and responsibility have a higher likelihood of conveying inferences of hope for change; *hope for change* and *pain shared by the ally* are strong predictors of satisfaction with the statement. More importantly, hope for change mediates the effects of action versus sorrow-expressions in *satisfaction with the statement*.

Discussion

The present study found some preliminary support for In line with previous research, we found that compared to more meaningful expressions, the expression of sorry weighs low (Margutti, Traversob, & Pugliesec, 2015; Schmitt, Gollwitzer, Förster, & Montada, 2004); all other expressions led to more positive perceptions of hope for change, pain shared by the ally, and satisfaction with the statement offered by the U.S. President Barack Obama. Among the more meaningful expressions used in this experiment, we found that *action-expressions* (responsibility-outrage) most strongly affected both hope for change, and perceptions of pain shared by Americans.

These findings indicate that a sense of responsibility-taking might communicate some action tendencies. Therefore, by acknowledging the responsibility for losses of the victim group an ally may validate a need to deal with the harm done to the victim group (also see Nobles, 2008). The findings of this study show that there is a non-significant difference between the expressions of regret and guilt. Some previous research indicates regret and guilt are weak expressions and it is possible that people feel guilt and regret when they observe others suffering from an undesirable circumstance without accepting culpability (Baumeister, 1994; Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2004). Therefore, feelings of guilt and regret (sorrow-expressions) may be perceived weaker than responsibility and not sufficient in reaching satisfaction with condolence.

Our findings suggest that the most important factor in a satisfying expression from an ally group depends on how much it conveys the message that they take at least some responsibility for victim groups' pain. Though an ally's empathy may make the victim group members feel that the ally can relate to them, mere sorrow will not satisfy the members of the victim group. There may be a need of hope for change in order for condolences to be seen as meaningful and satisfactory among the members of receiving group.

Regarding the mediation model for the effect of action-expressions of outrage-responsibility vs. sorrow-expressions of guilt-regret, these findings were representative of the despair over how Americans feel for the suffering of Pakistanis. This may mean that sharing pain may not be enough to console Pakistanis, as the mediation through pain shared by the ally was non-significant. However, higher hope for change fully accounted for differences in satisfaction between action-expressions and sorrow-expressions. These findings are particularly interesting for two reasons. First, this model explains some

attitudes and expectations of Pakistanis towards Americans. Second, our model holds in the ambivalent relationship between the US and Pakistan, indicating that hope is vital in this relationship.

Limitations and suggestions. The study also has some limitations e.g., the study was limited due to the unmundane context of the experiment, the context of Peshawar massacre. Therefore, the finding of this experiment might not be generalizable to the socially and politically stable contexts. Second, the study's sample were the students who were not directly exposed to the act of terrorism on which the vignettes of this study were based. Thus, the psychological distance from the affects on a personal level might have undestated the results of this study. Direct exploration with the affectees could be the focus for future research endeavours.

Implications.   These findings are a sign of hope for the region, in the sense that people are still open and hopeful for peace when allies like the US show appropriate gestures. These findings also point to various avenues for future research. For instance, it will be important to understand better how the effects of various expressions of acknowledgements depend on the nature of the event (e.g., a natural vs. manmade disaster), the political context (e.g., stable vs. unstable), and the qualities of the relationship (e.g., equal status vs. unequal status). This may as well open several avenues for theory building to study and integrate other factors in research on acknowledgements, emotional expressions and their specific outcomes in intergroup context.

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