

ISSN: 2959-8524 (Print)  
ISSN: 2959-8532 (Online)

# UCP Journal of Mass Communication (UCPJMC)

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Vol. 1, Issue 2 (July - Dec 2023)

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### **Subscription Charges**

**National:** 1000PKR per issue

**International:** US\$200 per issue

**Faculty of Media and Mass Communication,  
University of Central Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan**

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## **Examining the Impact of Social Media Advertisements in Promoting Fashion Sense among University Students**

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### **Abstract**

*The study examines the impact of social media advertisements, specifically fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram, in promoting fashion sense among university students. The research uses a quantitative approach, using a survey method and a structured questionnaire. The sample size is 200 students from the University of Narowal. The findings show a significant positive association between exposure to fashion ads on social media and participants' fashion sense, purchasing behavior, and fashion exposure. This study provides valuable insights into understanding social media ad's impact in influencing choices and preferences related to fashion products, styles, and trends among the targeted demographic.*

**Keywords:** Social Media Advertisements, Social Media, Fashion Ads, Fashion Sense, University Students, Purchasing Behaviour, and Fashion Exposure.

## **1. Introduction**

Social media has significantly influenced societal trends in the digital age, benefiting the fashion industry by promoting products, posting videos, and attractive pictures, as people spend more time online (Chua & Seock, 2020). In Pakistan, ad spending is projected to reach US \$ 50.24m in 2023 in the Social Media Advertising market (Statista, 2023). Fashion news has evolved from being controlled by magazines to being advanced through social media platforms, where new trends and styles are shared by millions of people and through advertising, making trends more quickly known (Fashinnovation, 2020). Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube enable fashion influencers to reach millions of fashion-conscious individuals who desire constant access and accessibility (Harsh, 2022). Social media usage for fashion refers to how many fashion designers and advertisers utilize various social media platforms to promote fashion trends (Kiron, 2023).

A research by Ali (2023) highlights the influence of social media fashion photography on young people's self-awareness and fashion mainstreaming. This mental and social growth period, coupled with higher impressionability, has sparked interest in fashion, leading high fashion firms to target this younger audience.

### **1.1 Fashion Sense**

Fashion sense refers to the way in which fashion is perceived and understood. It is not simply about following trends or conforming to societal norms, but rather about cultivating a unique conception of self through fashion choices (Monica et al., 2016). Fashion is the combination of accessories and clothing to create a visually appealing appearance, influenced by social trends, culture, and personal preferences, a form of self-expression (Kawamura, 2018).

Social media has significantly influenced university students' fashion sense, as it allows users to discover and share new trends, styles, and brands (Phua et al., 2017). Fashion significantly influences our lives, with individuals striving for different looks and becoming fashion enthusiasts. Students express their personality through their appearance and latest trends (LEWIS, 2021). Many influencers and brands promote fashion trends through advertising, which produces fashion aesthetics. The way the fashion business operates has

undergone a significant transformation thanks to social media platforms (Brahma, 2023).

## **1.2 Fashion Exposure**

Fashion exposure refers to the extent to which individuals are exposed to fashion-related content, such as clothing, accessories, feet wear, and trends. Social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram can be the source of fashion exposure, particularly among youth.

## **1.3 Advertising on Social Media**

Online marketing tactics known as “social media advertising” involves promotion of products or services among targeted users by utilizing social networking platforms (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). Social media advertising significantly promotes fashion sense among university students by exposing them to various fashion-related content from brands, influencers, and fellow users (Phua et al., 2017). Advertisements often use visually appealing videos, images, interactive content, and designs to engage users and capture their attention.

## **1.4 Facebook**

Facebook, with 2.98 billion monthly active users the first quarter of 2023, is the world's most popular social networking site, enabling marketers to reach a vast audience (Statista, 2023). Facebook enables fashion influencers and brands to showcase styles and products through videos, carousel ads, and images, targeting specific interests, demographics, and behaviors (Tuten & Solomon, 2017).

This targeted approach enables fashion advertisers to reach university students who are most likely to be interested in their offerings, thereby influencing their fashion sense. Facebook is a popular social media platform for advertising due to its numerous targeting features and large user base, allowing advertisers to customize their ads based on user interests and demographics (Emeritus, 2023). According to the most recent viewing data provided by the company, 19.2% of Pakistan's population was reached by Facebook advertisements in the beginning of 2022.

## **1.5 Instagram**

Instagram is a popular social networking site for sharing visual content, particularly among younger users, including university students (Pew Research Center, 2018). With more than a billion users each month as of June 2018 (Statista, 2021), it provides a powerful platform for fashion brands and influencers to showcase their styles and engage with their target audience (Phua et al., 2017). Instagram Ads are popular for creating engaging visual advertisements that are more likely to be viewed by users than traditional text-based ad formats (Emeritus, 2023). According to a research by Casalo et al. (2018), because of Instagram visual interaction with consumers, fashion and luxury brands mostly utilize it. Instagram advertising promotes fashion brands in motivating consumers to make future fashion decisions and purchases.

Social media platforms have become crucial for information dissemination and trend propagation, particularly among university students who are learning and developing their personalities. However, there is limited understanding of the impact of social media advertisements on fashion Sense. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of two social networking sites mainly Facebook and Instagram ads in promoting fashion sense among, purchasing behavior towards fashion products and fashion exposure.

## **2. Literature Review**

Manyam et al. (2018) determined how social media is affecting young people's current fashion trends. 100 respondents were selected a sample by convenience method for study. Findings indicated that social networking sites are extensively used by students of age 18-24 and they get most of the fashion information. Minhas et al. (2021) studied Apparel Fashion Trends and Instagram about Gujranwala Youth. 100 students from the city of Gujranwala made up the research samples and study is quantitative in nature. According to findings, 90% of respondents said that Instagram is good for fashion and young people in Gujranwala adopted fashion or styles by following to numerous Instagram trends. According to a study by Letko (2019), social media is an essential component of daily living in today's society. According to the survey, 97% of the participants use social media every day. The findings

showed that just 24% of other customers and 74% of generation Z followed fashion influencers.

Therefore, the audience most affected by social media material is young people. Safdar (2021) measured the cultural impacts of social media on young people in Pakistan. The data show that virtually every aspect of university students' life has been influenced by internet media. Students' inspiration for new fashion trends, wearing styles, physical appearance, foreign cultures, frequent use of foreign languages, and a distance from religious activities, as assumed, was proven. Saha and Saha (2021) conducted a case study on Zara and H&M, analyzing the impact of social media on the fashion industry. The survey, involving 105 respondents, found that social media significantly influences fashion style, clothing choices, and trends. A study by Safdar and Khan (2020) on Pakistani women's digital media usage and cultural aspirations revealed that they are primarily inspired by new fashion trends, as digital media's global reach allows them to wear these trends.

Crews et al. (2015) found that both female fashion majors and non-fashion majors have a similar level of interest in fashion on social media. Both demographics use social media to communicate their interests, with 72% of non-fashion majors using it to stay current with fashionable trends. This highlights the importance of understanding and utilizing social media for fashion communication. A study by Mohr (2013) found that social media, including social networks, significantly influenced the opinions of fashion-related attendees during Fashion Week. Respondents considered the information provided by media sites vital or important, viewing themselves as knowledgeable sources of fashion advice to persuade others.

Elena (2020) employed a digital survey given to 120 participants, ranging in age from 16 to 23, to investigate how Instagram influencers serve as sources for fashion news. Instagram was commonly used to look up fashion trends, which is not surprising. 46% of the sample under investigation followed fashion trends on Instagram every day, 25% every week, 7% every month, and 22% less often. The frequency with which individuals followed trends varied depending on the degree of fashion innovation. Ann et al. (2022) studied the impact of media exposure on fashion consciousness through semi-structured interviews. The study found that most respondents admired fashion-

related celebrities and felt they were behind their role models. The media's current trends were adopted by respondents in unique ways, leading to buy intention. The study suggests that media exposure may contribute to a culture of bandwagoning.

Fashion is characterized by Rituraj and Scheidl (2021) as a highly visual sector in the present digital media era. Appearing on various social media sites, like Facebook or Instagram, is simple. In the online world, there are several new platforms, algorithms, and trends. Social media is regarded as a technique for igniting interest in and excitement for newly released goods. A research by Ahmad et al. (2015) on the impact of social media on the fashion sector found a significant correlation between social media usage and the industry. The study found that if social media usage increased by 1%, the fashion industry would expand by 20.6%. The 45.4% association between the two industries demonstrates their interdependence. Jesu Kulandairaj A. (2014) highlights the growing importance of social networking sites for information sharing, opinion-shaping, and communication. The study examines the advantages, adverse effects, and influences of these platforms on young people's lifestyles, as they are still in their early development stage, highlighting their potential influence on global discourse and communication.

Safdar (2022) studied the impact of internet media on Punjabi university students' perceptions of Pakistani culture confirmed three hypotheses: digital media influences clothing preferences, the connection between digital media usage and appearance changes, and a significant correlation between changing fashion trends and digital media usage. Bandara (2020) examined the impact of social media advertising on customers' shopping choices in the fashion industry. Results showed that social media marketing positively influenced customer behavior, with 87% of respondents following fashion brands and 59% being female and aged 21-31. Imtiaz et al. (2019) studied the impact of social network marketing on Pakistani consumers' intentions to buy female clothes. Results showed that social media platforms influence online word of mouth and users use content to exchange information and learn about brands.

Augustinus and Agnes (2020) studied Instagram marketing's impact on consumer fashion buying decisions. They found that Instagram promotes the app as a location for finding items, leading to online purchases. Key factors

influencing purchase decisions included availability, low prices, free delivery, positive reviews, a well-known brand, and a large following. Gul et al. (2014) examined the impact of social media on consumer behaviour and fashion awareness. The research found that social media had minimal influence on consumers' purchasing decisions and fashion awareness, with the significance of positive connections being low. The study by Rehman and Zeb (2022) found that social media advertising positively influences Muslim consumers' buying habits, particularly during the Ramadan holy month. The research found that 20% of customers aged 22-25 and 80% aged 18-21 were influenced by informative, entertaining, credible, user-friendly, private, and content aspects.

Djafarova and Bowes (2021) determined Instagram's influence on Generation Z's impulsive purchases in the fashion sector found that advertisements, opinion leaders, and user-generated content trigger pleasurable feelings, leading to impulse purchases. The study published a revised version of the "Stimulus-Organism-Response model" for Instagram. Dewi et al. (2022) found that social media marketing significantly influences customer willingness to buy clothing in Jakarta and Tangerang. Fashion marketers use social media as their primary advertising channel, with brand awareness playing a crucial role in strengthening the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intentions.

A study by Sriram et al. (2021) found a strong positive association between attention-grabbing elements and purchase intention, with celebrity endorsement being a significant factor. Emotional appeals and personal connections with celebrities also significantly influence purchase intentions. Jawaid and Rajadurai (2021) studied the impact of social media marketing on consumer loyalty in the fashion industry among college students. According to the results of this survey, 76.1% of respondents were concerned about fashion, compared to 23.9% who were not. The research also showed that while 47.7% of respondents did not favour internet shopping, 52.3% of respondents did. A research by Iqbal et al. (2020) found that social media advertising significantly influences consumer buying habits, particularly among young university students who are more likely to use the internet and social media, significantly affecting their purchasing behaviour.

### **3. Objectives**

- To examine the impact of Facebook and Instagram fashion ads in promoting fashion sense (clothes, feet wears & accessories) among university students.
- To study the impact of fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram in changing purchasing behavior of university students towards fashion products (clothes, feet wears & accessories).
- To analyze the impact of fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram in creating fashion exposure (new styles, trends & brands) among university students.

### **4. Research Questions**

1. What is the impact of Facebook & Instagram fashion ads in promoting fashion sense among university students?
2. How fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram change the purchasing behavior of university students towards fashion products?
3. How fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram create fashion exposure among university students about new fashion trends, styles and brands?

### **5. Research Hypotheses**

**H1:** Exposure to Fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram promotes fashion sense among university student.

**H2:** There is a significant positive relationship between exposure to fashion ads on social media Facebook and Instagram and purchasing behavior towards fashion products.

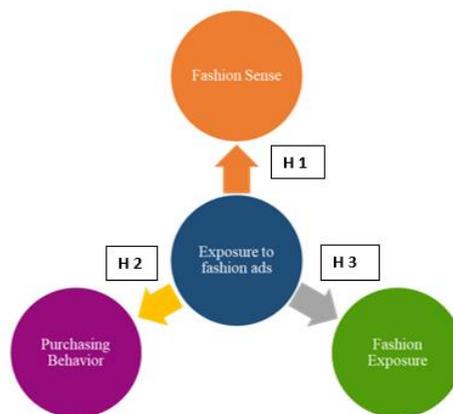
**H3:** There is a significant positive relationship between exposure to fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram and Fashion exposure (new styles, trends and brands).

### **6. Theoretical Framework**

The foundation of this study is based on two theories to comprehend the impact of social media ads in promoting fashion sense among university students. Cultivation Theory, introduced by George Gerbner and his

colleagues in the 1960s, is a prominent theory in the field of mass communication and media. It focuses on the long-term effects of media exposure on individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours. The theory suggests that repeated and prolonged exposure to media content gradually shapes individuals' views of social reality. Gerbner initially applied this theory to the effects of television on viewers, but it can be adapted to various media platforms, including social media. The Cultivation Theory explores how exposure to media over time can shape our thoughts, beliefs, and actions. In relation to this study, it helps to understand how seeing fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram can influence university students' fashion sense, shopping habits, and overall knowledge of fashion trends.

Second one social learning theory which states that individuals learn and acquire behaviours through observing and imitating others, particularly in social contexts. Albert Bandura introduced Social learning theory in 1977. In relation to this study, social media advertisements and fashion sense, university students may observe, fashion ads on social media, influencers, celebrities, or their peers endorsing and showcasing fashionable clothing items through social media advertisements on Facebook and Instagram. Through these observations, they may learn about new fashion trends, styles, and ways to put together outfits. Social media ads provide students with a platform to see how others incorporate fashion into their lives, leading to the development of their own fashion sense.



*Figure 1* Proposed Theoretical Model

## **7. Method**

When beginning a research project, a researcher follows a set of comprehensive stages called a research methodology (Leedy & Ormrod 2001; Williams, 2011). For this study, a quantitative research approach is adopted. Quantitative research involves gathering data in order to quantify and statistically analyze data to support or disprove existing knowledge claims (Leedy & Ormrod 2001). Williams (2011) stated that the creation of a hypothesis or research topic, examination of the body of literature, and quantitative analysis of data are the initial phases in quantitative research.

Sukamolson (2007) explained, “there are several kinds of quantitative research. For example, it includes categories of 1) survey research, 2) correlational research, 3) experimental research, and 4) causal-comparative research”. But for this study specifically survey research is adopted for examining the impact of social media ads in promoting fashion sense among university students. Sukamolson (2007) defines “survey research as the use of a prepared questionnaire and a scientific sampling technique to quantify certain demographic characteristics using statistical techniques”.

This study uses a structured questionnaire to evaluate the influence of Facebook and Instagram fashion ads on university students' fashion sense, purchasing behavior, and exposure. The questionnaire uses a metric scale, the Likert Scale, developed by psychologist Rensis Likert, to measure respondents' agreement. The scale ranges from 1 to 5, with respondents indicating their level of agreement based on their preferences and positive responses which is measured by five points i.e. 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = moderate, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree (Joshi et al., 2015). 200 students (50% males & 50 % females) from the University of Narowal are chosen to be the part of sample. Non-probability sampling technique, also known as convenience sampling is utilized in this study. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 27 is used to draw statistical data.

## 8. Findings

Out of the total 200 participants, 50 % are male and 50 % female students which is done intentionally to avoid gender biasness and equal representation of opinions of both genders. The majority (84%) fall within the age range of 18 to 22 years. A smaller proportion (16%) of participants are between the ages of 23 and 28 years. This indicates that the majority of the respondents are younger, representing the typical age group of university students. Among the participants, 32.0% reported being in their 13th year of education, while an equal percentage (32.0%) indicated being in their 16th year of education. Additionally, 20.0% of participants were in their 14th year, and 16.0% were in their 15th year of education.

### 8.1 Exposure to fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram

The findings reveal that 26.50% of participants had moderate exposure to fashion ads on Facebook, while 37.0% agreed with their exposure. However, 21.00% disagreed, and 6.00% strongly disagreed, while 9.50% strongly agreed with the exposure level. Regarding Instagram only 5.50% of 200 participants strongly disagreed with their exposure level to fashion ads on Instagram, while 21.0% indicated moderate exposure. 42.00% agreed with their exposure level, and 22.50% strongly agreed with their exposure.

**Table 8.1** *Descriptive Statistics*

	Exposure to Fashion ads	Fashion sense	Purchasing Behavior	Fashion exposure
N	200	200	200	200
Mean	3.4500	3.5144	3.1210	3.5608
Median	4.0000	3.6667	3.2000	3.6667
Mode	4.00	3.67	3.00	3.67
Std. Deviation	.99370	.70540	.84518	.75099
Skewness	-0.671	-0.955	-0.187	-0.830
Kurtosis	-0.034	1.696	-0.365	1.053

Table 8.1 shows that exposure to fashion ads, fashion sense, purchasing behavior, and fashion exposure have mean values of 3.4500, 3.5144, 3.1210, and 3.5608 respectively, with standard deviations ranging from .99370 to .7599. The median and mode of these variables are 4.0000, 3.6667, 3.2000, and 3.6667, respectively, with almost identical values. To demonstrate a normal univariate distribution, values for asymmetry and kurtosis between -2 and +2 are deemed acceptable (George & Mallery, 2010). According to Hair et al. (2010) data is regarded as normal if the skewness and kurtosis are within a range of 2 to +2 and 7 to +7, respectively.

**Table 8.2** *Reliability Analysis*

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
.922	24

Reliability of questionnaire is measured by Cronbach's Alpha value which is .922 and as it is greater than 0.7, it can be assumed that the questionnaire for this study is reliable.

**Table 8.3** *Summary of correlation analyses*

Predictor	Dependent	R	P value	Relationship
Exposure to fashion ads	Fashion sense	0.637	< 0.001	Strong Positive
	Purchasing behavior	0.578	< 0.001	Moderate Positive
	Fashion exposure	0.596	< 0.001	Moderate Positive

Table 8.3 indicates that exposure to fashion ads correlate with Fashion sense at .637. Exposure to fashion ads correlate with Purchasing Behaviour at .578 and Exposure to fashion ads correlate with Fashion exposure at .596. The p significance value is (.001), indicating that the p value is smaller than the alpha value (0.05).

**Table 8.4** Summary of Regression Analyses

Predictor	Dependent	R	R Square	P value	Coefficient
Exposure to fashion ads	Fashion sense	0.637	.405	< 0.001	.452
	Purchasing behavior	0.578	.334	< 0.001	.492
	Fashion exposure	0.596	.355	< 0.001	.451

Table 8.4 provides the summary of three linear regression analyses, examining the relationships between exposure to fashion ads on social media and three dependent variables: fashion sense, purchasing behaviour towards fashion products, and fashion exposure. For the first regression analysis, exposure to fashion ads shows a significant positive correlation with fashion sense ( $R = 0.637$ ,  $R\text{-squared} = 0.405$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.452 indicates that for each one-unit increase in exposure to fashion ads, there is a corresponding increase of 0.452 units in fashion sense. Hence, Hypothesis 1 is accepted, as exposure to fashion ads promotes fashion sense among university students.

In the second regression analysis, exposure to fashion ads is significantly positively related to purchasing behavior towards fashion products ( $R = 0.578$ ,  $R\text{-squared} = 0.334$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.492 suggests that for each one-unit increase in exposure to fashion ads, there is a corresponding increase of 0.492 units in purchasing behavior towards fashion products. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is accepted, indicating that exposure to fashion ads on social media influences students' purchasing behavior towards fashion products.

The third regression analysis shows a significant positive correlation between exposure to fashion ads and fashion exposure ( $R = 0.596$ ,  $R\text{-squared} = 0.355$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.451 indicates that for each one-unit increase in exposure to fashion ads, there is a corresponding increase of 0.451 units in fashion exposure. Consequently, Hypothesis 3 is

accepted, signifying that exposure to fashion ads on social media expands students' exposure to diverse fashion styles, trends, and brands.

## **9. Discussion**

The study reveals that Facebook and Instagram fashion ads significantly influence university students' fashion sense, with a significant proportion of participants strongly agreeing with their positive impact on various aspects of their fashion sense. Regarding their fashion sense, nearly half of the participants (49.50%) reported that their fashion sense had improved due to these ads, with an additional 21.0% strongly agreeing. Similarly, 42.50% agreed that these ads frequently served as a source of inspiration when creating outfits, while 26.50% expressed a moderate impact. Moreover, 38.0% agreed that these ads heightened their awareness of personal style, and 27.0% reported a moderate impact, indicating that exposure to these fashion ads plays a significant role in enhancing participants' sense of style and outfit creation.

The influence of fashion ads extended beyond outfit choices. Participants also acknowledged that these ads effectively provided insights on outfit combinations, with 52.50% agreeing and 17.0% strongly agreeing. A significant number of respondents (43.00%) also agreed that these ads inspire them to explore fresh fashion styles and trends, while 17.0% strongly agreed. These findings suggest that exposure to fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram encourages participants to experiment with their fashion choices and explore new styles and trends.

Furthermore, the findings of the study reveal that the impact of fashion ads was evident in shaping participants' perceptions of fashion trends and clothing preferences. A substantial proportion (43.0%) agreed that these ads influenced their perceptions of fashion trends, with an additional 20.0% strongly agreeing. Additionally, 44.0% agreed that these ads played a significant role in shaping their clothing preferences, indicating that exposure to these ads influenced their preferences for different types of clothing. Moreover, the influence of these ads extended to footwear and accessory choices. 40.0% of participants agreed and 9.0% strongly agreed that these ads played a role in shaping their footwear preferences, while 45.0% agreed and

12.0% strongly agreed regarding their accessory preferences. These findings highlight the substantial impact of fashion ads on participants' choices when it comes to selecting and adopting different types of footwear and accessories.

In terms of purchasing behaviour, the data indicated that fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram significantly influenced participants' decisions to buy fashion items. 34.5% agreed and 12.0% strongly agreed that these ads influenced their decisions to purchase fashion items, and 34.0% agreed that the ads made them more likely to buy the showcased fashion items. Additionally, 25.0% agreed and 13.5% strongly agreed that these ads influenced their decisions to purchase clothes, while 23.0% agreed and 11.5% strongly agreed regarding their footwear purchases, and 24.5% agreed and 12.0% strongly agreed regarding their accessory purchases. These findings suggest that exposure to fashion ads on social media platforms significantly influences participants' choices when it comes to buying different fashion products.

Fashion exposure was another aspect influenced by exposure to fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram. A significant number of participants (49.0%) agreed and 12.5% strongly agreed that these ads broadened their knowledge of diverse fashion styles. Additionally, 45.5% agreed and 22.5% strongly agreed that these ads increased their awareness of various fashion-related products and brands. Furthermore, 42.0% agreed and 14.0% strongly agreed that these ads inspired them to try out new and different fashion styles, while 36.5% agreed and 10.0% strongly agreed that these ads broadened their exposure to various fashion styles and trends. These findings suggest that exposure to fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram significantly contributes to participants' fashion exposure, enriching their understanding and appreciation of diverse fashion styles, trends, products, and brands.

The regression analyses and correlation support literature and these findings, revealing significant relationships between exposure to fashion ads on social media and the dependent variables. Results of inferential statistics provide the answers of the research questions and indicate that social media advertisements related to fashion have significant impact in promoting fashion sense among university students including changing their purchasing behavior

towards fashion products and providing fashion exposure about news fashion styles, trends and brands.

## **10. Conclusion**

The study concluded that there is significant positive association between exposure to fashion advertisements on social media and fashion sense, purchasing behaviour towards fashion products and fashion exposure to new and different fashion styles, brands and trends. Fashion industry is a huge sector of production in the world. This study holds substantial significance as it aligns with the United Nations SDG (sustainable development goal) no. 12, focusing on responsible consumption and production.

As in the light of literature, theories and findings of this study social media has huge impact on people especially university students who are the future of this world and it influences their choices, preferences and purchasing behavior towards fashion trends and products. So if social media advertisers and fashion production companies or brands utilize marketing and promotion strategies for promoting environment friendly fashion products with new trends then it can bring a positive change in the society. This study also extends the existing available literature in the similar domain of communication and media.

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## Social Networking as Determinant of Online Friendship Quality and Trust: Case of Pakistan

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### Abstract

*This study's major objective is to investigate the relationships between young adults' use of social media, degree of trust, and quality of friendship. A relationship between social media use, level of trust, and the calibre of online friendship was hypothesized. It was also hypothesized that young adults' use of social media and degree of trust are indicators of the strength of their friendships. 300 college students (150 men and 150 women) made up the sample. The sample's age ranged from 18 to 30 years ( $M = 22.10$ ,  $SD = 2.11$ ). The data was collected from University students, having online friendships. Friendship Quality Scale (Thien, 2012), Trust Scale (Yamagishi, 1986) and Social Media Usage and Attitudes Scale (Rosen et al, 2013) were used. The results revealed negative relationship in social networking and perceived quality of friendship and trust among online friends. The results of regression analysis reflected that social media is a significant negative predictor of the friendship quality and level of trust is a positive predictor of online friendships. There were marked gender differences in friendship quality and level of trust as boys showed up better friendship quality and greater level of trust than girls. However, future research, longitudinal in nature is suggested to keep into account intersection between youths' online and offline friendship experiences overtime in order to reveal the dynamics of online friendships.*

**Keywords:** Online Friendship, Level of Trust, Friendship Quality, Social Networking, Social Determinants.

## **1. Introduction**

Social media and social networking has transformed and redefined the relationships 'patterns including the friendships. The mode of communication is much more developed and enriched with technology and that is the very reason that implied meaning of friendship has changed now (Topus, 2010). The element of trust in online communities has not been probed much in empirical researches yet there are inconsistent findings about the role of virtual interaction in determining friendship quality. That is why virtual communication and interpersonal relationship quality is an area of pivotal interest these days among social scientists.

Trust emerges as more challenging phenomenon when this is realized that nature of online interaction and friendship formation is permeated with narrations of fake connections or forged presentations of the users. Consumers of online social networking sites can easily exploit personal information of others and can exhibit their fake identities thus beguiling their online maintained friends. Social networks are widely popular since they are effective mediums for disseminating information and thereby linking like-minded people. The smart phones based access of such mediums has further eased their access and more and more teens are using it as source of developing friendships and social circles. The online friendships quality has been construed as experienced closeness, trust, and understanding among friends, maintained through online communication mode (Marsden & Campbell, 2001; Chan & Cheng, 2004).

The classical depiction of Sullivan's interpersonal theory of personality (1953) leads us to understand that socialization needs of adolescents and teens make them build greater interaction with others than individuals of any other age group (Chambers, 2013). The focus of the current research study is specifically online friendship, which is developed online and that remains solely online; excluded here are other modes, including mixed-mode friendships, that implies adopting both online and offline modes to carry on friendships and stipulated offline friendships, that have been established in offline mode and may or may not be extended to online mode of communication (Walther & Parks, 2002). Chan and Cheng (2004) concluded

that the quality of online friendships increased more than the quality of offline friendships. However, trust has been a central topic of research in psychology and sociology for many years (Helbing 1994; Mollering 2002; Molm et al. 2000), psychology (Rotter 1967; Cook et al. 2005). Generally defining trust is the feeling that you can depend on someone or something (Moibus & Quoc-Anh, 2004).

Trust is a psychological state that involves having positive expectations about the intentions or behavior of another person (Rousseau, 2000; Lewicki, 2001). Online friendships may involve nil interpersonal real situations but according to Kelley et al. (2003) trust can never be gauged out effectively through virtual interactions and can solely be assessed in certain interpersonal situations. Trust leads to greater cooperation, information sharing, and stronger friendships. Trust is a hybrid phenomenon and this requires both elements of The Dyadic Model of Trust in Relationships. According to this model, trust is made up of two parts: the way that trust is typically expressed in a society, and the individual ways that people trust others (Meyerson, 1996).

Fukuyama (1998) developed a theory of trust based on the idea that cultural habits influence how much people trust family members and outsiders. Dawyer et al. (2007) found that online trust involves a willingness to share information, and that people's trust and usage goals affect what information they are willing to share on different websites. This can have a significant impact on the quality of their online friendships. There are discrepant evidences about friendship quality through online social interactions. According to Topus (2010), online friendships cannot be translated into productive and trustworthy relationships. Youth in the age range of (18-24 years) are using social media more heavily than previous generations (Duggan & Smith, 2013).

According to research, social media use may affect our personality, self-efficacy, friendship quality, and psychosocial wellbeing (Michikyan, Subrahmanyam, & Dennis, 2014). Friendship is a pattern of relationship that virtually everyone experiences and it has significant function of promoting affection, intimacy and trust. Interpersonal relationships are markedly

dependent on such advance mediums of communication (Pempek et al., 2009; Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). Facebook makes it easy to communicate with many people at the same time. Social media can also help users stay up-to-date on the lives of people they haven't seen in a while, and reconnect with new and old friends (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010).

The main hypotheses investigated the relationship between social media use, level of trust and quality of friendship in social media users. Another hypothesis assessed social media use as predictor of level of trust and quality of friendship in social media users. Additionally, it was also hypothesized that social networking usage, perceived friendship quality, and degree of trust would differ between the genders.

## **2. Objectives**

- To explore the relationships between social media use, trustworthiness, and friendship quality among users of social media.
- To examine the relationship between self-concept, self-compassion and decision making in young adults.

## **3. Theoretical Framework**

Social capital is a theoretical concept that emphasizes the value embedded within social relationships and networks. It is composed of two main components: bonding social capital (relationships within one's close-knit group) and bridging social capital (relationships that span different groups). According to social capital theory, social connections are a resource that may help human capital grow and amass. For example, a stable family environment can encourage school success as well as the development of credentials and talents that are highly prized and rewarded. According to evolutionary theory, social capital is any aspect of a social interaction that promotes reproduction. Savage and Kanazawa (2002, 2004) claim that human inclinations for companionship in general and signs indicating higher amounts of social capital in particular have evolved.

As developed preferences for particular forms of social connections ought to have been chosen in the EEA, gender disparities reflecting the

division of labour in foraging cultures should be expected. Women, for instance, are likely to cherish and experience emotional fulfilment from belonging to tiny social networks that consist of intimate personal connections built upon strong social bonds. Because they help with childrearing and foraging, these kinds of partnerships would be particularly adaptive for women. Membership in bigger social networks, which would include warring parties, political alliances, and hunting groups, would be expected to benefit men more than women. Those kind of social capital that bestowed wealth and social standing would mostly favour men.

Recasting sociological theories of crime in terms of evolutionary theory, according to Savage and Kanazawa (2002), might reveal fresh perspectives on what discourages crime. The possibility of losing social ties can be a potent deterrent to illegal or deviant behaviour, according to theories on choice and social control, cultural deviance, and strain. It is predicted by evolutionary theory that social bonds and ties that were most strongly associated with reproductive success in the EEA are more likely to provide a deterrent effect against deviance and crime.

Women's intimate personal ties are particularly valuable, thus the fear of losing them would discourage them from engaging in behavior that may jeopardize them. Men seem to value their social capital more than women do, and the prospect of losing such resources would likely deter illegal or deviant behavior. Empirical research showing men's sensitivity to status loss or deterioration is consistent with this line of thinking.

It is relevant to this study because it helps define friendship quality, encompassing aspects such as emotional support, intimacy, reciprocity, and satisfaction. Moreover, trust is a central element in online friendships, so it explores how online interactions, information sharing, and the context of social networking contribute to trust formation.

#### **4. Method**

The research design of this study was correlational design. The sample was comprised of (n=300) young adults. Data was collected from university students aged 18-25 years to participate in a study using social media. The

purposive sampling technique was used for this study. The social media use and level of trust were independent variables whereas quality of friendship was dependent variable.

#### **4.1 Measures and Procedure**

The demographic questionnaire consisted of age, gender and education. Another measuring tool namely Friendship Quality Scale (Thien, 2012) was used. It is a brief measure comprising 21 items with 4 subscales i.e. closeness, safety, acceptance and help. Questions are on 7 point Likert scales. Total score is computed by adding all the responses. The reliability of the scale is 0.82. Third measure used was Trust Scale (Yamagishi, 1986). The study used a 5-item questionnaire to measure participants' general level of trust in others.

The questionnaire was designed to assess two main factors that contribute to general trust: the belief that other people are honest, and the belief that trusting others is risky. The total score is obtained by adding all the responses. The reliability of the general trust scale is 0.80. Another scale measuring Social Media Usage and Attitudes Scale (Rosen et al, 2013) was employed. It is a measure comprising 11 items with 10 point Likert scale. The total score is obtained by sum of all the responses. The reliability of the scale is 0.79. For the present study young adults were taken as sample. The data was collected from the university students. Consent was taken from the individual participants.

Instructions on how to fill out questions, and participants were told that their privacy would be protected. Participants were informed of their ethical rights, which they could exercise to withdraw from the questionnaire if they so desired. After the administration of questionnaires, the data was analysed through statistical procedures. In order to conduct this study all ethical considerations were complied with.

#### **5. Findings**

The objective of current study was to examine the relationship between self-concept, self-compassion and decision making in young adults. The three scales were used for data collection. Utilizing Cronbach's alphas, the

Reliability Analysis for each assessment measure was completed. Pearson product moment correlation was utilized to assess the relationship among demographics and study variables. Simple linear regression analysis was run for assessing that social media use and level of trust predict quality of friendship in social media users.

**Table 5.1** Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (N=300)

Scale	K	M (SD)	$\alpha$	Range	
				Potential	Actual
Social media Use	11	40.53 (5.22)	0.83	0-10	0.0-7.8
Trust	5	11 (2.33)	0.70	1-5	1.0-4.7
Quality Friendship	21	58.43 (.88)	0.82	1-6	1.0-5.0

Note: "k= no. of items; M=mean; SD=standard deviation;  $\alpha$ = Cronbach's alpha".

Table 5.1 show that social media use scale yielded strong reliability that is 0.83, trust scale yielded strong reliability that is 0.70 and quality friendship questionnaire also yielded strong reliability that is 0.82.

It was hypothesized that there is probably a connection between using social media, level of trust and quality of friendship in social media users. Pearson product moment correlation analysis was used to examine the relationships. The results of correlation are given in table 5.2

**Table 5.2** Relationship between the Study Variables in social media users

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	M	SD
Gender		.09	.06	.30	.15	.10	1.29	4.5
Age			.86**	-.52**	.057	-.05	22.10	2.11
Education				-.11	.053	-.06	1.89	.78
Social Media Use					-.52*	-.55*	38.21	3.23
Level Of Trust						.64*	12.45	2.44
Quality Of Friendship								

Note. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table 5.2 showed significant negative relationship between social media use and level of trust,  $r = -.52, p < .05$  show frequent use of social media is related with lower level of trust. Results also showed negative relationship between social media use and quality of friendship  $= -.55, p < .05$ , which means that more use of social media is associated with poorer quality of friendship. However, level of trust and quality of friendship were positively related to each other,  $r = .64, p < .01$  showing that higher level of trust is related with higher quality of friendship.

It was hypothesized that social media use and level of trust were likely to predict quality of friendship in social media users. Simple linear regression analysis was run for assessing the study variables. The results of regression analysis are given in table 3.

**Table 5.3** Simple linear regression showing predictors of quality of friendship in social media users (N=100)

Variables	Quality of friendship		
	Model 1 B	B	95% CI
Social media use	-.09	-.09*	(1.00,1.00)
Level of trust	.03	.63*	(.99,1.00)
R <sup>2</sup>	.54		.56
F	2.24**		6.17*
ΔR <sup>2</sup>	.30		26
ΔF	2.80		1.80

Note: “\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; B = Unstandardized Co efficient;  $\Delta R^2 = R$  Square change;  $\Delta F = F$  change; CI=Confidence Interval”

Table 5.3 showed overall variance explained by the mode is 56% with  $F(14, 88) = 2.24, p = .01$ . The findings showed that social media use negatively predicted the quality of friendship in social media users,  $B = -.09, p = .05$ , however level of trust positively predicted the quality of friendship in social media users.

## **6. Discussion & Conclusion**

The current study looked into the relationships between social media use, trustworthiness, and friendship quality among users of social media. The results of the correlation study revealed a strong inverse relationship between the use of social media and trustworthiness. Additionally, the results indicated an adverse relationship between social media use and friendship quality. These results contrast with those of a prior study by Sponcil (2014), which looked at college students' usage of social media and its effects on their interpersonal relationships and sense of self. Students responded to a survey that evaluated their use of social media, their ability to communicate with friends and family, and how social media has affected their perceptions of themselves. At least one social networking website was used by every student in the sample.

The findings revealed a favourable correlation between social media use and relationship quality. A study by Chan and Cheng (2004) investigated and compared the quality of online versus offline friendships. The findings showed significant difference in quality of friendship of online and offline. It was explored that online friendships became stronger and more meaningful over time, more so than offline friendships. After a year, online friendships were just as strong and meaningful as offline friendships. Results also showed positive relationship between level of trust and quality of friendship in social media users. The study found that social media can help people build stronger and more meaningful friendships, especially when people use it to communicate frequently and share personal information. This is perhaps because using social media makes it simpler to get to know individuals and feel at ease sharing information with them. It can also give users access to more social support.

Social media usage enhanced the calibre of user relationships. One reason for this is because (1) it is simpler to get to know somebody without actually meeting them face to face. (2) Online users are more at ease disclosing private information. (3) Users communicate more frequently online, which promotes increased social support (Baker & Oswald, 2010). The reason for low quality of friendship and low level of trust may be due to

unexpected unethical experiences on social grounds. Because now-a-day it is easy to make a fake profiles and to mislead the information of a person in-contact on social media. So due to this factor, the quality of the friendship and level of trust among participants was discovered as poor.

The study by Dawyer et al. (2007) is important because it highlights the importance of trust in online communication. When people trust a website, they are more likely to share personal information with it. This can be beneficial, as it can allow people to connect with others and build relationships. However, it is important to be aware of the potential risks of sharing personal information online, such as identity theft and fraud. Online connections are not easy to translate into productive and profitable relationships (Topus, 2010). Greenfield (2013) conducted a study to explore how Social media is affecting teens' concepts of friendship, intimacy.

A sample of 500 teens was taken. The findings suggested that young people feel socially supported by having large networks of on-line friends they may never see. Instead, many young people now derive personal support and affirmation from "likes" and feedback to their postings. "The whole idea behind intimacy is self-disclosure. Now they're doing self-disclosure to an audience of hundreds." Which sometime prone them to serious threat of personal information mislead.

The results also revealed that social media use negatively predicted the quality of friendship in social media users, however level of trust positively predicted the quality of friendship in social media users. According to Kelley et al. (2003), trust can be evaluated in specific interpersonal circumstances. Situations involving trust are marked by substantial interdependence (each partner's actions have a significant impact on the other) and are connected with improved communication, cooperation, and problem-solving. The reason for negative prediction may be due to not having cooperation of social media friends in time of needs. So as a result of lower level of trust, the participants showed not good quality of friendships.

## **7. Limitation & Recommendations**

- Sample size was comparatively small. It reduces the external validity, so for the future studies the sample size should be increased so that results could be more generalized.
- Only young adults of university students were selected, sample should be taken from other age groups and general public for future research.

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## The Psychological Impact of Fake news about COVID-19 on Social Media Users in Pakistan

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### **Abstract**

*The present study investigates the psychological impact of fake news on social media users regarding COVID-19 in Pakistan. A quantitative study was conducted through the questionnaire survey to investigate the psychological impact of fear and stress on social media users. Social media usage behavior in pandemics creates more stress and psychological fear cause of fake news. The 400 social media users, that age group divided into two groups younger & older adults part of this study through purposive sampling. The uses and gratification theory supports this study to identify the need to use social media in pandemics. This study reveals the fear and stress of fake news in a pandemic situation having an impact on social media users in Pakistan. The demographic factor also showed that there is a difference in age, gender, and qualification in the impact of fake (misinformation & disinformation) news during COVID-19 in Pakistan.*

**Keywords:** Fake News, Digital Media, Social Media Users, COVID-19, and Psychological Impact.

### **1. Introduction**

Social media had been a growing source of news and information in the world. Fake news had spread like a real virus (Gosztonyi, 2020). Fake news had been a significant issue for the world in every field of life, be it political or social. In critical conditions, fake news had been based on sensationalism and had spread like a real virus. A study of 126,000 rumours spread on Twitter over

eleven years had recognized that they fast-traveled and reached more people than the true stories (Lohr, 2018). The outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic had spread rapidly across the world, and 206 countries had been affected on 02 April 2020 (Wilson, 2021).

The big issue had been identifying the flow of fake news data on social media in global pandemic conditions. Traditional media was easy to track, but it had been hard to monitor and analyze social media. In the health communication sector, fake news had aroused fears psychologically and socially, creating panic. Before-time breaking news on social media had also had their meaning and sense, with an impact that had been damaging to the maximum.

The then-current condition of the whole world had been critical due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost the entire world had been cordoned off, and everyone had been curious about the situation. During that pandemic, the engagement of social media had witnessed an upsurge worldwide. On social media, a massive flow of information had created chaos related to health news. The entire world had been in a health emergency due to COVID-19.

Fake news is a fabricated, false information-based story that has no facts and reality, is provably wrong having attraction, and is distributed under the pretense of having a genuine face and feel (Tandoc et al., 2017).

Health communication on social media was a very sensitive matter. Fake news meant that incorrect guidance on social media could circulate and spread quickly, potentially leading people to take greater risks with their health (Brainard & Hunter, 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, there had been a lot of speculation about health information and potential cures circulating on digital media, with discussions about the origin and spread of the coronavirus. The landscape of social media had become characterized by a lack of reality, with conspiracy theories circulating as if they were facts. People easily put their trust in such news, especially when shared by close friends, leading to a psychological impact on social media users. Amid the existing fear of COVID-19, the proliferation of fake news had a severe impact on users. The pandemic had already increased fear and uncertainty regarding

life risks and finite resources (Fofana et al., 2020). COVID-19 had generated fear and uncertainty, affecting mental well-being.

In this study, the term "social media" had encompassed only two platforms, WhatsApp and Facebook. WhatsApp had been an instant messaging application available on all smartphones, enabling users to exchange photos, videos, documents, voice messages, and locations. At the time, WhatsApp had 465 million monthly active users, and its user base was still expanding (Martinez, 2018). WhatsApp was a closed-platform medium designed for personal use. Tracking fake news on WhatsApp had been challenging due to its encryption of conversations, ensuring that only the sender and receiver could access the content. WhatsApp employed an encryption code system for security purposes, making it challenging for public health officials and watchdog groups to analyze or track the spread of false information. Even WhatsApp itself had been unable to monitor the flow of information on the platform (Dodds, 2019).

Facebook was a social media platform where anyone could interact socially. Users could share things, post comments, share pictures, and news links. It offered additional features like chat, audio-video calls, and video clips. Most fake news arrived on smartphones through messages sent by friends or relatives. At that time, it had 2.4 billion monthly active users, making it a widely recognized social media platform worldwide (Szolnoki, 2018). Information on social media was not always authentic or credible. Fake news and inauthentic information on social media had been a continuous and serious threat to users' health. During the global pandemic of COVID-19, a massive flow of false information circulated on Facebook.

The current study had chosen these two social media platforms, WhatsApp and Facebook, which were avidly used by people around the world (Szolnoki, 2018). These social media applications helped the researchers determine the psychological impact of fake news during the pandemic on avid social media users. Most fake news was related to false medications, supposed cures for COVID-19, and the ongoing social situation of lockdown in Pakistan. People had been staying at home and connecting through social media, as they had fewer alternatives due to restrictions. The usage of social

media had increased, primarily because people had more free time. Previous research had focused on fake news on digital and social media during critical situations. The present research aimed to investigate the impact of fake news on demographic factors, frequently used social networking sites (SNS), gender, age, education, and locality.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Social media also has a dark side as fake news and sharing manners and attitudes of people without knowing the authentication of information. Fake news in this pandemic of COVID-19 creates an impact on social media users. People are already afraid and stressed regarding COVID-19 but the problem is how much fake news contributes to this psychological fear and stress impact by using social media. The novelty of the pandemic disease demands a study to find out the fake news' effect on users of social media regarding COVID-19 in Pakistan.

## **1.3 Aims of the Study**

- The objectives and aims of this study measure the psychological impact of fake news on social media users in COVID. This study also measures the usage of social media with demographic factors.
- To explore the association between usage of social media and trust of infodemic during COVID-19.
- To investigate the association of fake news with fear among social media users during COVID-19.
- To explore the difference between fear of death and fear of isolation among males and females.
- To know the fear of death among younger adults and older adults.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study is important from both research and practical perspectives. Health communication alerts on social media, should be ready for critical situations and create an algorithm that counters the fake news for social media on an emergency basis. It will also help the users how they are having

the impact of fake news that is revolving on social media, how they perceive the fake news, and how much they believe in it.

## **2. Literature Review**

The literature review was a past study and written document that presented a coherently contended case based on a thorough understanding of the then-current status of information about a subject of study (Machi & McEvoy, 2016). The existing knowledge and material supported the research on fake news and had also assisted the researcher in exploring new dimensions. In this study, the researcher followed a thematic pattern for the literature review and defined the following themes: (a) Social media fake news and health communication, (b) The impact of social media usage on psychological and health communication.

The phenomenon of fake news had been addressed, particularly in the last five years, often referred to as "the era of fake news" (Wang et al., 2019). The importance of the literature review had been to understand how past studies had been conducted and in which areas further research was needed. Social media had been a platform for fake news from various perspectives, particularly during critical pandemics. In this study, the researcher had aimed to identify the impact of fake news on social media users during the COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan.

### **2.1 Social Media and Fear of Fake Health Communication**

The social media avid users had been engaged in the coronavirus pandemic in Pakistan, and the circulation of fake news had posed risks to public health (Strekalova, 2017). Between February 2016 and January 2017, information and stories related to the Zika virus on social networking sites had seen fake news being shared more frequently than verified news, although this aspect was not part of this study (Sommariva et al., 2018). On social media, fake news related to health risks or panic situations had misled people and had a serious impact on social media users (Waszak et al., 2018). The theory of the Social Amplification of Risk had examined the fear level and found that the majority of news posts required sentimental components. Client engagement

had significantly increased as the degree of fear and emotional intensity rose from low levels (Ali et al., 2019).

Liu (2021) had discussed the effects of fear among people caused by fake news messages. Traditional news coverage, on the other hand, had created less panic-inducing coverage of the Ebola crisis (Kilgo et al., 2018). In common situations, demographic and belief systems played a role in the spread of fake news (Wang et al, 2019). During the COVID-19 pandemic, fake news related to health and social issues had a massive presence on social media, impacting users (Pulido et al., 2020).

Dsouza et al. (2020) had also revealed that financial crises, loneliness, stress, social isolation, and other factors had an extreme psychological impact that increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Saladino et al (2020). had conducted a study indicating that fear of COVID-19 had psychological and social impacts on children, students, and other workers. The study by Knowles and Olatunji (2020) had focused on behaviours, anxiety, and fear during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **2.2 Usage of Social Media and Fear of COVID-19**

In this study, any crises and pandemics that occurred, social media amplified the effect of the pandemic (Zhao & Zhou, 2020). The role of the media had an impact on users in the form of depression and stress (Bendau et al., 2020). The usage of social media had enhanced the COVID-19 pandemic for connectivity (Drouin et al., 2020).

The massive flow of information on social media shaped people's collective response to panic buying reactions during COVID-19 (Naeem, 2020). Fear in middle-aged and elderly individuals was related to the fear of death. The study had also found differences in fear based on age (Cicirelli, 2006). In COVID-19, social media played a significant role in spreading anxiety and fear in Iraq (Ahmad & Murad, 2020).

Pérez-Mengual (2021) had noted that individuals were fearful of personal death due to COVID-19, and the fear of death and anxiety levels were higher in females. The term "fake news" had become a concern during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. In the context of health communication, literacy

rates needed to be improved in the digital era to enhance formal and informal communication (Moscadelli et al., 2020). The impact of seeking prominence in sharing fake news, however, was not significant. Fake news significantly influenced the perceived impact of specific groups who shared the fake news related to COVID-19 (Apuke & Omar, 2020).

Alyami (2021) had explored pandemic anxiety related to COVID-19 and its connection to human well-being. This study had also examined how the fear of COVID-19 affected mental health. The sharing of fake news was a source of concern as it aimed to alter people's thought processes. All these past studies had supported the present study in developing a new narrative and dimension of this pandemic.

### **3. Research Questions**

**RQ1.** How do social media users decide what news to trust in the COVID-19 pandemic condition?

**RQ2:** Is there any fear of fake news among social media users regarding COVID-19 in Pakistan?

**RQ3:** What kind of Fear of fake news on social media users?

**RQ4.** Is there any difference between demographic factors on fear of COVID-19 in Pakistan?

### **4. Research Hypotheses**

**H1:** There is a positive relationship between the usage of social media and trust in fake news on social media in COVID-19.

**H2:** There is a positive relationship between fake news and fear of social media users in COVID-19.

**H3:** There is more fear of death than fear of isolation.

**H4:** There is more fear of death among old adults than younger adults.

**H5:** There is more fear of isolation among younger adults than older adults.

**H6:** There is a difference in the psychological impact of fake news on males and females.

## **5. Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical support of the present study used the Uses and Gratification theory. One of the classical theories of mass communication was the Uses and Gratification theory (Katz, 1973). Elihu Katz initially introduced the Gratification theory. The viewpoint had emerged in the 1970s as Katz and his two allies, Michael Gurevitch & Jay Blumler continually developed the idea. In the guidance of past studies, the Uses and Gratification theory had supported this research.

The theory had supported this research because the theory of Uses and Gratification explained the need to use social media for news and information to connect with the world. In the Uses and Gratification theory, the main purpose had been that people wanted to acquire information, which was a basic human need. In that scenario, people had control over the media to obtain information according to their individual needs. In such situations, people had been highly engaged in social media for their gratification. During the pandemic chaos, people could have easily fallen victim to fake news.

### **5.1 Implications**

In this research, according to need, this theory is implemented in this study. This theory is based on a desire to know and gratification. In this pandemic, people are restricted in their houses and they are worried about what is happening in the surroundings due to the lockdown. There is various need for gratification of the users of social media. Cognitive needs, to fulfil this need for information, knowledge, and facts.

Especially with COVID-19, people use social media to learn how to do things they haven't known about. Social integrity, due to pandemic situations lockdowns happened and compromises the social integrity. In the digital public sphere, people use social media like WhatsApp groups and Facebook pages. Users have the option to what they want to know about anything (Whiting & Williams, 2013). The fundamental justification uses and gratifications theory that the persons will look out media between competitors that satisfy their necessities and prompt outrageous fulfilment (Weaver Lariscy et al., 2011).

## **6. Method**

This part of the study was essentially considered for research. It showed how the study was processed and analyzed in a systematic way. In this methodology, the researcher discussed the research tools and design and how the measurement of the Psychological Impact of Fake News about COVID-19 on Social Media Users in Pakistan was conducted. For this study, a survey was conducted to obtain better results regarding the psychological impact on the users.

### **6.1 Research Design**

This study while Following a quantitative approach, this study intended to develop and validate a survey instrument used to analyse the impact of fake news on social media users regarding COVID-19 in Pakistan. The study was conducted as a survey on social media platforms (Facebook & WhatsApp). All the questionnaires were sent through these two social media platforms to ensure they reached avid users.

### **6.2 Population**

The population of the present study consisted of people from Lahore who had a presence on and were avid users of Facebook and WhatsApp, with ages ranging from 18 to over 55. The population was divided into two parts: younger adults and older adults.

### **6.3 Sampling**

The participants of the study were Facebook and WhatsApp users aged between 18 and 55 plus, further divided into young adults and older adults. The participants were required to have an educational background since it was a prerequisite for the study, given that they were users of social media. A total of 400 participants were selected for this research. The research employed a simple random sampling process to choose a sample from the study's population.

### **6.4 Sampling Technique**

Validity in the study was an essential element to ensure that all aspects of the study were aligned with its nature. The elements of the study were designed

in accordance with the nature of the research. The study, based on a quantitative method, conducted a questionnaire survey to collect data. All the questionnaire questions supported the study, and the sequence of the questions was appropriate and conducive for respondents to provide answers. Simple and easy methods were adopted to facilitate better understanding among the respondents.

The reliability of the study pertained to the consistency of the research results. All the questions were carefully composed in line with the research nature to ensure that the results were reliable and remained consistent when employing another method for the study. The homogeneity of the variables was tested using a correlation test.

## **6.5 Measurement**

The research aimed to measure the psychological impact of fake news and information on social media users concerning COVID in Pakistan. The impact on social media users was assessed through a survey questionnaire. The study also explored the demographic factors influencing the impact of fake news related to COVID-19.

### **6.5.1 Demographics**

In the research, participants were questioned about their demographic features, including frequently used social networking sites (SNS) (Ali et al., 2020), gender, age, and education. These demographic factors provided insights into the impact of fake news while considering age differences, gender, and education.

### **6.5.2 Fear Scale**

To assess the fear of users, a Fear scale adapted from the one established by (Ahorsu et al., 2020). was employed. This scale was specifically designed for measuring the fear of COVID-19 and the fear of fake news and information during COVID-19.

## **6.6 Data Analysis**

The data of this study was examined using SPSS. Given the nature of the research, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation was applied to ascertain

the direct relationship between the impact of fake news on social media avid users.

## **6.7 Ethical Considerations**

The research followed ethical guidelines. The privacy of the respondents was ensured at all costs. The researcher assured the respondents that their information would be kept safe and used solely for research purposes. While answering the survey questions, participants had the autonomy to withdraw from the research at any point.

## **6.8 Definition of Terms**

### **6.8.1 Fake news**

Fake news is a fabricated false information-based story that has no facts and reality, is provably wrong having attraction, and is distributed under the pretense of having a genuine face and feel (Tandoc et al., 2017). In this research, all misinformation and disinformation related to COVID-19 have been included.

### **6.8.2 Infodemic**

The massive information about any concerning problem was very difficult to find a solution (Buckley, 1997). The term "Infodemic" was used by the WHO in February 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. All the posts on Facebook and information on WhatsApp related to COVID-19 fell under this term "Infodemic."

## **7. Findings**

This chapter explained the outcomes of the present research. The findings of this study were presented in a sequence without any biases. All the tables and interpretations showed the results of the psychological impact of fake news during COVID in Pakistan. More than 400 participants had responded to the questionnaire, and some of the respondents had filled out the questionnaire non-seriously. Due to non-serious behaviour and temptation, only 400 responses were considered in this present study.

### 7.1 Demographic Information

This study had included demographic information, such as gender, age, and education levels. Demographic information factors were used to understand the variations in psychological impact among users.

**Table 7.1** *Gender Information*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Male	203	50.7	50.7
Valid	Female	197	49.3	49.3
	Total	400	100.0	100.0

In this Table 7.1, the total number of respondents in this study was 400. The gender ratio of male respondents is 203 (50.7 %) and females are 197 (49.3) of this study.

**Table 7.2** *Age Information*

		Age	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Younger Adults	18-25	186	46.5
		26-35	63	15.8
	Aged Adults	36-45	91	22.8
		46-55	56	14.0
	Older Adults	More then 55	4	1.0
		Total	400	100.0

Table 7.2 In this study, age is categorized into three parts, younger adults, aged adults, and older adults. This research also finds the variation of the impact age-wise. 186 (46.5 %) participants of this study belong to 18-25 years old, and 63 (15.8%) participants of this study belong to 26-35 years old and also fall in younger adults. In the aged adults' category 91 (22.8 %)

participants in this study belong to 36-45 years old, and 56 (14.0 %) participants in this study belong to 46-55 years old also fall in aged adults. Only 4 (1.0 %) participants in this study.

**Table 7.3** *Qualification*

	<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Valid	Intermediate	44	11.0
	Bachelor	174	43.5
	Master	121	30.3
	MPhil	45	11.3
	PhD	5	1.3
	Others	11	2.8
	Total	400	100.0

Table 7.3 explain the qualifications of the respondents of this study. In this study 44 (11.0%) respondents are intermediate. 173 (43.5 %) respondents are bachelor, and 121 (30.3 %) respondents are Master. 45 (11.3 %) respondents are MPhil, and 5 (1.3%) PhD. In other qualifications, 11 (2.8 %) respondents fall in this category.

**Table 7.4** *Linear Regression Test to Check the Positive Relationship Between Usage of Social Media and Trust in Fake News On Social Media in COVID-19*

Effect	Estimate	R <sup>2</sup>	SE	95% CI		p
				LL	UL	
Social media Usage	.259	.067	.052	.176	.381	.000

*Note.* Total N = 400. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

A simple linear regression was conducted to know the impact of predicting participant's usage of social media based on their impact of fake

news. A significant regression equation was found ( $F(1,398) = 28.597, p < .000$ ), with  $R^2$  of .067. Participants' predicted impact of fake news is equal to  $17.504 + .278$  (Usage of social media) Participants' average impact of fake news .259. So the hypothesis is approved.

**Table 7.5** Linear Regression Coefficient of Fake News About COVID-19 And Fear of Users

Impact	Estimate	R <sup>2</sup>	SE	95% CI		P
				LL	UL	
Fake news on social media	.645	.417	.037	.553	.699	.000

Note. Total N = 400. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to predict participant's Fear based on the impact of fake news. A significant regression equation was found ( $F(1,398) = 284.215, p < .000$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .417. Participants' predicted impact of fake news is equal to  $6.968 + .626$  (Fear) Participants' average impact of fake news .645. So that the hypothesis is approved.

**Table 7.6** Difference of fear of death in males and females

Var.	Males (n = 203)		Females (n = 197)		t(398)	P	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Fear of Death	22.88	5.3	26.03	5.47	-5.831	.000	0.58

An independent sample t-test was functional to check the difference between fear of death in males and females and to test H3. The result displayed that, there was a significant change between fear of death in males and females. The finding showed that the effects of fear of death on males ( $M=22.88, SD= 5.34$ ) are less than females ( $M=26.03, SD=5.47$ ),  $t(398) = -5.83, p<.05, d=0.58$ . Cohen d estimated value is 0.58, which shows the effect

based on Cohen (1992). So there is a different fear in males and females. So that the hypothesis is approved.

**Table 7.7** *Difference in The Fear of Death On Younger Adults and Older Adults and Public University Students*

Variable	Younger Adults (n = 261)		Older Adults (n = 139)		t(398)	P	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Fear of death	22.05	4.94	28.90	3.82	6.20	0.00	1.55

An independent sample t-test was applied to check the change in fear of death between younger adults and older adults and to test H4. The result showed that there was a significant difference between fear of death in younger adults and older adults. The finding showed that the fear of death in younger adults (M=22.05, SD=4.94) is less than in older adults (M=28.90, SD=3.82),  $t(398) = -14.22$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d = 1.55$ . Cohen d estimated value is 1.55, which shows the effect based on Cohen (1992). According to the results, the difference is found in fear of death in younger adults and older adults. So that the hypothesis is approved.

**Table 7.8** *Difference of Fear of Isolation Among Younger Adults and Older Adults*

Variable	Younger Adults (n = 261)		Older Adults (n = 139)		t(398)	P	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Fear of Isolation	3.43	1.021	3.93	.411	-5.45	0.00	0.64

An independent sample t-test was run to check the change between fear of isolation among younger adults and older adults and to test H5. The result showed that there was a significant change between fear of isolation among younger adults and older adults. The finding showed that the fear of

isolation among younger adults ( $M=3.43$ ,  $SD=1.021$ ) is less than older adults ( $M=3.93$ ,  $SD=.411$ ),  $t(398) = -5.45$ ,  $p<.05$ ,  $d=0.64$ . Cohen  $d$  estimated value is 0.64, which shows the effect based on Cohen (1992). According to the results, there is a change in fear of isolation in males and females. So that the hypothesis is accepted.

**Table 7.9** *The Psychological Impact of Fake News on Gender-basis*

Variable	Males (n = 203)		Females (n = 197)		t(398)	P	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Psychological Impacts of Fake News	28.55	5.08	30.04	4.78	-3.015	0.003	0.30

An independent sample t-test was run to compare the means of males and females for the psychological impact of fake news & information and to test H6. The result showed that there was a significant change in psychological impacts on males and females. The finding showed that the psychological impacts of fake news on males ( $M=28.55$ ,  $SD=5.08$ ) are less than on females ( $M=30.04$ ,  $SD=4.78$ ),  $t(398) = -3.015$ ,  $p<.05$ ,  $d=0.30$ . Cohen  $d$  estimated value is 0.30, which shows the effect based on Cohen (1992). Results found that there is a difference in psychological impact on males and females. So that the hypothesis is accepted.

## **8. Discussion**

This research aims to find out the psychological impact of fake news and information on digital and social media users during COVID-19. In this study, the population of Lahore was targeted to get the data and measure the impact of fake news. This study showed the significant results of the social media avid users are having the impact of fake news. During COVID-19 social media users faced fake and fabricated news and the results of fake news on social media avid users having death fear and isolation fear. The comparison of younger adults and older adults has a different level of fear and

psychological impact. In this research, all the hypothesis is approved and accepted.

**H1: There is a positive relationship between the usage of social media and trust in fake news on social media in COVID-19.**

In the pandemic situation of COVID-19 avid user of social media is increasing to know the information and keep in touch with others (Wong et al., 2020). Due to the massive use of social media users affected the fake news. WhatsApp and Facebook are the tools to expand the information. People regularly share data without any earlier confirmation. In this scenario, most social media users trust fake news, which is very injurious to mental health. In this hypothesis the relation of usage of social media and trust in fake news is positive. Table 5.4 shows the results that there is a positive relationship in the usage of social media and the trust of fake news during COVID-19. More usage of social media causes trust in fake news on social media. This hypothesis is accepted and results are matched with previous studies (Strekalova, 2016; Sommariva et al., 2018).

**H2: There is a positive relationship between fake news and fear of social media users in COVID-19.**

In this study, H2 is a positive relationship between fake news and fear of social media users in COVID-19. Initially, there is Fear of COVID-19 that already exists in people who are in quarantine (Saladino et al., 2020). In this research, the researcher finds the fear of fake news in COVID-19. In this hypothesis, a linear regression test runs to measure the impact and relation of false news on social media avid users. To run the linear regression test to know the effect of fake news on (Facebook & WhatsApp) users that they have fear after facing fake and fabricated news on social media. In this pandemic, the public is afraid of this virus and after that, any news related to COVID-19 creates more panic and fear in the people, and their fake news is shared three times faster than real news on social media (Ahmad & Murad, 2020). COVID-19 fear and fake news fear mirage and create a panic situation. Fake news is a self-virus that spreads fast (Sommariva et al., 2018).

Results of this hypothesis are approved and as Table 5.5 shows the COVID-19 fear and Fake news fear, there is also panic, stress, fear of

Isolation, fear of death, and other psychological impacts on the social media users. Especially in health information panic situations always mislead the users (Waszak et al., 2018). Fake news & messages that fluting on (Facebook & WhatsApp) have the fear for the users (Hendriks, 2019). These past studies support this hypothesis and the results matched with past studies. According to the results, there is a positive relation between fake news and fear among the users of social media and also has an impact on the users.

**H3: There is more fear of death than fear of isolation among the users.**

In this research H3 hypothesis is among the users there is more fear of death than fear of isolation during COVID-19. According to the WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard, 3,899,172+ deaths around the world in July 2021 (WHO, 2021). After these deaths, there is a fear of death more than a fear of isolation. This thing showed that people are kept in touch through (Facebook & WhatsApp). This study also finds out that the number of users of social media is rising in COVID-19. Through social media connecting with other people reduces the fear of isolation but the fear of death especially factors of fake news related to death news are creating fear among the users (Pérez-mengual et al., 2021).

Table no 5.6 shows that Fear of isolation exists in users but not more than fear of death on social media (Alyami et al., 2021). On this hypothesis, H3 was tested by the Simple Independent T-test to know the change between fear of death and fear of isolation. There is more fear of death than fear of isolation on social media users.

**H4: There is more fear of death among old adults than younger adults.**

In this study's H4 hypotheses, there is more death fear in older adults than in young adults. A sample-independent T-test was conducted to know the difference. So there is found a change in fear of death among old adults and young adults. There is also in the past study that more fear of death in old adults than in younger adults (Cicirelli, 2006). Old adults are weak mantle and physically and the specific circumstances of COVID-19 they are having more fear of death with the fear COVID-19. COVID-19 is a virus that affects

humans mostly the weak immune system that is found in older adults (Zhang et al., 2019). All the literature also found and supports this study

The old adults are mostly unaware of the technology and they easily believe in rumors and fake news that flouting on Facebook and WhatsApp are full of rumors during COVID-19. There are many factors behind the fear of death in older adults, like, less social support, and weaker religiosity in society (Cicirelli, 2002). Before that, it was very hard to find out the fear factor in old adults and young adults during this kind of pandemic because this coronavirus is not in the past. So that this hypothesis supports the results and some past studies also support this hypothesis.

**H5: There is more fear of isolation among younger adults than older adults.**

In this study, H5 and Table 5.8 showed that there is more fear of isolation among younger adults than older adults. To know the difference simple independent T-test was conducted so the outcomes show that yes there is a change in younger adults & older adults. In this research, the results show that there is a difference in fear of isolation among young adults and older adults. Especially in this pandemic, young adults feel the fear of isolation (Cao et al., 2020). In the research dimension in the past studies about fear of isolation among younger adults than older adults is hard to find the difference. In this COVID-19 due to quarantine and social distancing in a pandemic having fear of isolation (Mortazavi et al., 2020).

Older adults are already spending their lives limited in a social circle so they have limited impact on fear of isolation in this pandemic but on the other hand, young adults have a broad social circle so that is why they have more impact than older adults. Usage of social media increases due to lockdowns and social distancing in young adults (Kilgo et al., 2019).

**H6: There is a difference in the psychological impact of fake news on males and females.**

In this research about H6, there is a change in the psychological impact of fake news on males and females. According to the study and past literature about fake news, especially its impact in a pandemic situation is unable to

find a past gap that fills in this study. In this hypothesis to measure the difference the simple independent T-test. Table no 5.9 outcome presented that yes there is a difference between males and females. Fear of death is common in females more the males (Pérez-mengual et al., 2021). Fear of death is found in females more than males. Females have a more responsible attitude toward COVID-19 than males to hand wash, use sanitizer, wear a mask, and other precautionary measures (Bwire, 2020).

On the other hand, females are also having more impact than males on fake news in this study. The literature also supports this present study that females are having an impact more than males. The hypothesis is tested by the independent T-test and the accepted.

## **9. Conclusion**

The findings of this study underscore the significant psychological impact of fake news on individuals who are avid users of social media, particularly Facebook and WhatsApp, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results suggest that the surge in fake news and misinformation circulating on these platforms has a tangible effect on the mental well-being of users. Respondents reported experiencing heightened fear, particularly the fear of death, and a sense of isolation. This indicates that the proliferation of unverified and sensational information during times of crisis can have a substantial influence on the emotional state and psychological health of individuals.

A notable aspect of this research is the gender-based differentiation in the psychological impact. It was observed that females tend to be more sensitive to the psychological effects of fake news compared to males. In this context, sensitivity pertains to a heightened emotional response, including increased fear and anxiety. These findings align with broader research in the field, which has consistently shown that gender can play a significant role in shaping how individuals perceive and react to information on social media. Understanding these gender-based differences is crucial for developing targeted interventions and strategies to mitigate the psychological impact of fake news, especially during times of crisis like a pandemic.

These results have broader implications for health communication and information dissemination during public health crises. They highlight the importance of combating the spread of fake news and misinformation on social media platforms, as it can exacerbate fear and distress among users. Additionally, the study underscores the need for tailored approaches to address the psychological impact of fake news, with a recognition that these effects may vary across gender. It calls for a multifaceted effort involving media literacy programs, responsible reporting, and social media platform regulations to mitigate the adverse consequences of fake news on public mental health.

## **10. Limitations of the Study**

Limitations of the study are those points or things that are unexplained in the present study. In COVID-19 fake news has a psychological impact on the social media users, and also demographic factors in this study.

This study consists of only two social media platforms: Facebook and the second is WhatsApp. Quantitative research methods are used in the study which consists of 400 respondents based in Lahore. Only online questionnaires were filled by the respondents due to the lockdown during COVID-19. This survey questionnaire was filled during the COVID-19 2nd and 3rd waves. In this study, random sampling was used to gather the data, that may not represent the whole population of the area.

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## Role of Media in Empowerment of Transgenders in Pakistan

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### Abstract

*The media serves as a platform for the transgender community to promote their rights, draw attention to issues they face, and shed light on their hardships. Through news reports, documentaries, and interviews, the media can influence the public's perception by dispelling the myths and stereotypes that have long rendered transgender individuals powerless. The media can also promote social change by positively portraying and highlighting transgender persons. By making their achievements, skills, and stories public and encouraging more acceptance and inclusion, the media helps to subvert traditional conventions and prejudices. Understanding the media role in shaping public perceptions of transgender individuals and their empowerment is crucial for advancing social justice and promoting equal rights. This research can also help inform interventions aimed at reducing stigma and discrimination against transgender individuals and improving their access to education, healthcare, and employment.*

**Keywords:** Transgender Community, Systemic Discrimination, Media Role, Transgender Empowerment, and Role of Media.

## **1. Introduction**

Transgender in Pakistan face systemic discernment, viciousness, and banishment in the public. It is the media that plays an essential role in shaping public attitudes and perceptions towards marginalized communities, including Tran's genders. However, the depiction of the transgender individuals in Pakistani media has been primarily negative, fortifying stereotypes and limiting their reflectivity and empowerment. This research study aims to explore the role of media in transgender empowerment in Pakistan and assess the perception of the general public regarding media's impact on transgender issues (Banerji, 2020).

Understanding the role of media in transgender empowerment is vital for encouraging social justice, advancing equal rights and challenging stereotypes for transgender individuals. This research study aims to contribute to the academic literature on media and social change, particularly in the context of gender, sexuality, and social justice in Pakistan. By providing insights into the potential of media to promote transgender empowerment, the study can inform interventions and policies aimed at reducing stigma, discernment, and improving the lives of transgender individuals in Pakistan (Abbas et al, 2014).

Pakistan has a diverse media landscape, consisting of both state-owned and privately-owned outlets. The media in Pakistan works in a challenging environment, with issues such as censorship, harassment, and violence against journalists and media workers being common. The state-owned media outlets in Pakistan include the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC), PTV, and APP. These outlets are under the control of the government and often face criticism for biased reporting in favor of the ruling party. The private media sector in Pakistan includes a range of TV channels, newspapers, radio stations, and online news websites. However, the private media sector in Pakistan also faces challenges, including ownership and financial pressures, editorial censorship, and self-censorship due to fear of reprisals from powerful groups (Shahzadi, 2008).

As far as Pakistani culture is concerned, it is a rich blend of diverse traditions, customs, and beliefs that have evolved over centuries. Family

values and respect for elders are deeply ingrained in the culture, and hospitality and generosity are highly valued virtues. Education also holds a significant place in Pakistani culture, with a strong emphasis on literacy and learning. However, access to quality education is still a challenge for many Pakistanis, particularly those living in rural areas and from marginalized communities. The education system in Pakistan comprises both public and private schools, colleges, and universities. Religious schools, known as madrasas, also play an important role in the education system. Despite ongoing efforts to improve the education system, issues such as inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and outdated curricula remain major challenges (Ali, 2019).

When comes to the transgender population around the globe, according to a report by the World Health Organization (WHO), the estimated global population of transgender individuals is around 0.5% to 1.5% of the total population. This means that there are 25 to 75 million transgender people worldwide. There are limited official statistics on the population of transgender individuals in Pakistan. However, some NGOs and research institutions like the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) have estimated that there are almost 500,000 transgender community members in the country, which represents around 0.25% of the total population (WHO, 2017).

South Asian media outlets frequently associate the transgender community with negative stereotypes, which can be extremely dangerous in some cases. Simultaneously, transgender journalists were permitted to become presenters following changes to the country's legal framework. Marvia Malik was the country's first transgender news anchor. When the appearance was announced, the news quickly spread throughout the local and international media. People close to her say she no longer works in the media, despite the significant impact of her appointments' publicity. Malik's job changes highlight transgender people's lack of visibility in Pakistani media and the dearth of transgender journalists who work in print or broadcast media. Before that, transgender and their issues were hidden from the public media (Zakria, 2019).

According to the World Report on Human Rights, transgender are at risk in Pakistan due to the fierceness they faced. The local Trans Action group reported that 479 attacks took place against transgender in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province alone in 2018 according to the (World Report, 2018). In Pakistan, the transgender community is routinely excluded from the general social structure. They have little to no access to healthcare, little knowledge of their fundamental rights as residents of the nation, and little awareness of those rights.

Mostly the families of transgender children disown them early on and force them to leave their homes. Transgender consequently coexists in communities. Due to limited access to education, 42% of the community's members are illiterate. Also, to sustain themselves, the transgender community mostly works three jobs: dancing at celebration events, which accounts for 51% of income, sex work, which accounts for 15% of income, and begging, which accounts for 12% of income (USAID, 2016).

The transgender population in Pakistan has experienced various forms of societal, institutional, and legal discrimination. The Pakistani Constitution guarantees the rights, dignity, and status of every citizen; however, their rights are given state-level regulations and protection mechanisms regarding vulnerable populations, particularly the transgender community. The problem is made worse by the lack of acceptance and respect for these groups, which makes them social outcasts, denies them access to fundamental rights, and exposes them to numerous sorts of discrimination, harassment, and violence based only on their identity and gender. Although the Supreme Court of Pakistan ruled in the year 2009 that transgender people should have equal inheritance and employment rights in addition to other rights, no real steps have been taken to bring about this goal (Abbas et al, 2014).

Transgender people are people born with biologically transit features and personalities who choose to assume either masculine or feminine identities by publicly dressing and acting like that. This community has a great history in the Indian subcontinent, taking care of the Mughal harems and making important literary, musical, and artistic contributions. According to an old legend, God answers the prayers and bad dua of transgender, giving

them the special power to bring prosperity and fertility. Although they originally held a respectable place in society, many have been forced into begging and prostitution as a result of the dramatic decline in their status throughout time. After the Mughal emperor and Harem culture died out, the transgender community in South Asia faced significant marginalization, stigma, and social exclusion. However, there has been a recent revival of the community status in the South Asia, with India and Nepal building on several policy and legal reforms (Shahzadi & Ali, 2018).

Pakistan's Supreme Court adhered to this regulation in 2009. Transgender population in Pakistan has recently experienced some favorable legal changes addressing the status of their rights. The Transgender Persons Act gives transgender individuals legal status and makes discrimination against transgender people in different sectors illegal, was passed by National Assembly of Pakistan in 2018. The Supreme Court's ruling on September 25, 2012, that transgender people are entitled to all of the rights protected by the Constitution and enjoyed by other members of society, prompted the enactment of the Act. However, several religious organizations have since asserted that homosexuality is legally protected by the law. Senator Mushtaq Ahmad Khan of the Jamat-i-Islami (JI) has entered a case in the Federal Shariat Court contesting the law, while Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (Fazl), a significant supporter of the federal government, has referred to the law as "against Islam."

The Transgender Persons Act was passed by the nation's government, giving the group fundamental rights and enabling individuals to have their gender identification recognized in legal papers. The transgender population in Pakistan experiences several difficulties, including trans phobic remarks and exclusion from society, assault, and harassment, even though the legislation forbids discrimination at school, work, or on public transit. Despite having a safeguarding legal framework, the transgender population nevertheless experiences regular violence and discrimination. The prejudiced attitudes that are prevalent in businesses and schools throughout daily life are a reflection of this. One cannot stress the importance of the media in this situation (Chaudhary, 2022).

Globally many countries successfully implement laws to provide safety and protection to the transgender community and give them equal rights but still transgender individuals face discrimination and violence across the world, and their rights and visibility have been a subject of international concern in recent years. The media has been identified as a key tool for promoting transgender empowerment and visibility, and several initiatives and studies have been undertaken globally to explore the role of media in promoting transgender rights.

In the United States, media representation of transgender individuals has increased significantly in recent years, with several high-profile transgender individuals becoming media personalities and advocates. However, media representation remains an issue of concern, with transgender individuals often being portrayed in a sensationalized and stereotypical manner, reinforcing negative biases and stigmatization (Haider-Markel & Joslyn, 2018).

In India, the media has played a significant role in raising awareness about transgender rights and visibility, with several transgender individuals becoming media personalities and advocates. However, the media representation of transgender individuals has also been criticized for perpetuating stereotypes and objectifying the transgender community (Banerji, 2020). In Europe, media representation of transgender individuals has also been a subject of debate and concern. A study conducted by the European Parliament highlighted the need for media professionals to be trained in promoting transgender rights and visibility and recommended the adoption of media guidelines to ensure responsible and inclusive coverage of transgender issues (European Parliament, 2017).

As they (re)present a condensed and short form of transgender identity, the transgender' narratives being shared on media in Pakistani are notably twisted and false. In Pakistan, Trans phobic concepts that are framed in Western terminology and frames are not unusual. Transgender people are becoming more visible in the media, but this increased visibility comes at a cost. (Asghar & Shahzad, 2018). The trans community is in dire need of positive identity development models. Marian Edelman once remarked, "It's

hard to be what you can't see" (Edelman, 2015). There aren't many resources for developing a positive identity that take trans people's healthy development into account.

## **2. Problem Statement**

In this fast-paced world where each day mankind is witnessing new advancements in every field to make life easier and more comfortable, we still lack morals and duty towards mankind. Globally we see a lot of discrimination against transgender and in Pakistan, we see misconduct and abuse against them every single day. Our attitude toward the transgender community is still a matter under debate. People are motivated by some myths about transgender, but few have attempted to debunk them. Because they are a neglected and marginalized group in our society, this study tries to detect the media's portrayal of them and the perception of the general public about them. What is depicted in the media regarding transgender people is known as media reality. Many studies have been undertaken around the world to examine the effects of television on viewers, particularly their behavior. There is also a vast range of research that analyzes media content, notably television content. This study also focuses on the role of media in transgender empowerment and the perception of the public about it.

Transgender individuals in Pakistan face systemic discrimination and violence and have long been marginalized from mainstream society. Despite recent legislative initiatives to safeguard transgender rights, such as the Transgender Persons Act of 2018, there remains a serious lack of public knowledge and the better understanding of their issues, which feeds into damaging stereotypes and biases.

Media plays a crucial role in shaping public attitudes and perceptions towards different social groups, including transgender individuals. However, the portrayal of transgender individuals in Pakistani media has been predominantly negative and sensationalized, reinforcing negative stereotypes and limiting opportunities for the transgender community to have their voices heard. Moreover, there is a lack of research on the role of media in transgender empowerment in Pakistan and few best practices or guidelines for media organizations and journalists on covering transgender issues responsibly and

inclusively. Therefore, there is an urgent need for research to explore the potential of media in promoting transgender empowerment in Pakistan.

Role of media in transgender empowerment and the perception of the public about them is a highly significant research topic due to the increasing visibility of transgender individuals in the media, as well as the ongoing struggles they face in society. Research has shown that media representations of transgender individuals are often negative and stereotypical, leading to increased stigma and discrimination against this population (Hunt, 2016).

Understanding the media role in shaping public perceptions of transgender individuals and their empowerment is crucial for advancing social justice and promoting equal rights. This research can also help inform interventions aimed at reducing stigma and discrimination against transgender individuals and improving their access to education, healthcare, and employment. In recent years, transgender people have been depicted in media specifically on TV in a variety of ways, including as dancers or vocalists (with an obscene gesture), begging in public areas, being used as a laughing stock, or living in a depressing environment. Surprisingly, no research has been conducted on them to determine how media influences their empowerment. The current research is an exploratory examination of the impact of media on transgender empowerment and the perception of the public about it. It contributes to the knowledge gap of an understudied group, by examining transgender lives and spectacular topics seen in the media and the perception of the public about them. The visuals given by the media can influence an individual's perspective of any subject (Shahzadi & Ali, 2018).

Transgender individuals in Pakistan face immense social and economic marginalization, discrimination, and violence. This study can shed light on how media can be used as a tool to challenge these biases and empower transgender people. Empowering transgender individuals has a broader impact on society as a whole. By giving voice to an often-marginalized group, the study can help pave the way for a more inclusive society in Pakistan. This study also contributes to literature on media and social change, particularly in the context of developing countries. It can provide insights into the unique challenges and opportunities for media to

promote social change in a complex social and cultural context. Overall, the study of the role of media in transgender empowerment in Pakistan has significant implications for social justice, media practice, and public policy.

### **3. Research Questions**

**RQ1:** Is the role of Pakistani media in transgender empowerment positive?

**RQ2:** What is the perception of the general public regarding the role of Pakistani media in transgender empowerment?

### **4. Objectives of study**

Objectives of the research study are as under:

- i. To assess the impact on public attitudes and perceptions towards the transgender community.
- ii. To identify best practices for media organizations and journalists in covering transgender issues in a responsible, inclusive, and ethical manner.

### **5. Research Methodology**

Quantitative research methodology has been applied to this research work and the survey method has been applied through a questionnaire. A survey questionnaire has been distributed to public and private sector university students of the Lahore region to find out the role of Pakistani media in Transgender empowerment and the perception of the public regarding that empowerment in general. All respondents who agreed to complete the surveys did so within the stipulated time frame. The questionnaires were then examined. The researcher followed quantitative as well as analytical approaches too to analyse the research data. The primary sources were the internet and newspapers as well as other scholarly articles. The secondary sources include a survey of people relevant to the objectives of this research.

#### **5.1 Survey**

For this study, the researcher chooses a survey method to gauge the role of Pakistani media in Transgender empowerment and to study the perception of society in general about that.

## **5.2 Population**

The male and female students of college and university and educated people in Pakistan who consume content related to transgender media were the populations of this research. Young, teenagers, and mid-age females and males have been chosen as the literature review, and comes up with the opinion is that the educated population is the prime user group and consumer of media. Therefore, people from the age of 18 to 31 and onwards, were selected as the population for this study.

## **5.3 Unit of analysis**

The educated and student population of the general public who has transgender-related content in Pakistani media was the unit of analysis of this study.

## **5.4 Sample size**

Out of the more than 120 million population of Lahore with educated youth numbering to a large fraction, the major target groups need to be selected for such a big number. Here we choose a target group of 385 educated male and female students for the survey in this study. These students were from different educational institutes and backgrounds throughout Lahore.

## **5.5 Sampling Method**

The convenience sampling method of non-probability sampling picks elements for data collection based on how conveniently they can be reached by the researcher. This could be due to regional proximity, availability at a given time, or participation in the study. The questionnaire for this study was completed by educated and available individuals.

## **5.6 Tool of data collection**

The researcher adopted a quantitative survey method. The questionnaire was used to collect the primary data from the target audience.

## **5.7 Survey Questionnaire**

A close-ended questionnaire was developed to check the perception of people towards the role of Pakistani media in Transgender empowerment. Each

individual was given open time and was asked to mention their age, educational level, and gender only. Names of persons and institutes were not asked to maintain the self-respect and privacy of both stakeholders.

## **5.8 Data Analysis**

The main goal of this study is to find out whether the media is playing a role in transgender empowerment. For this purpose, a survey method was used and questionnaires were distributed among people to obtain the desired results and findings.

The respondents of this survey were 47.5% male, 42% female, and only 10.5% trans genders. This survey was distributed among people who are 18-31 years of age. 40% of the respondents were from 18-22 years, 18% were from 23-27 years and 42% were from 27-31 years with different qualifications i.e., 45.5% were doing their bachelor, 29.5% were doing their Masters, 19% were in MPhil and 6% were the students of Ph.D.

The majority of the respondents i.e., 47% responded that they sometimes watch the content or TV programs that feature transgender individuals, 21.5% often watch such content, 20% responded that they frequently watch that content and only 11.5% were those who watch that content very frequently. Moreover, they were asked how often they watch or read news about transgender issues and only 9% of respondents said that they watch or read such news very frequently, 35% responded with sometimes, 36% said that they often watch or read transgender issues on media and 20% responded that they frequently read or watch news stories about the issues of transgender in media.

Only 8% of respondents strongly agreed that they have seen the positive representation of transgender individuals in media, while 32.5% agreed, 32% were neutral, 21.5% disagreed and 6% of the respondents strongly disagreed with this statement. Moreover, they were asked whether they have seen the negative representation of transgender individuals in media to which only 1% strongly disagreed, 13.5% disagreed, 37% were neutral, 33% agreed that they have seen the negative representation of the transgender individuals and only 15.5 % of the people strongly agreed to this.

## *Transgenders' Empowerment*

The 11% of respondents strongly agreed with the given statement that they have watched or listened to the Pakistani media content that promotes transgender empowerment, 41.5% agreed, 22% responded neutral, 21.5% disagreed with this statement and only 4% strongly disagreed. 24% responded with TV to the question of which channel promotes transgender empowerment, only 4% responded with radio, 6.5% with Print Media, and the majority i.e., 65.5% responded that social media is promoting transgender empowerment.

Only 5% strongly agreed with the statement that transgender individuals are empowered in Pakistan, 32% agreed, 25% of the respondents responded with neutrality, 31% disagreed and 7% strongly disagreed with this statement. The respondents were asked whether they think that the media can play a role in empowering transgender individuals in Pakistan to which 26.5% responded with strongly agree, 45.5% agreed, 13.5% were neutral, 11% disagreed with this statement and only 3.5% strongly disagreed with this.

A large number of the respondent people i.e., 37% agreed to the statement that Pakistani media has the responsibility to represent transgender individuals positively, 37% strongly agreed, 15.5% were neutral, 5% responded with disagreement and only 2.5% strongly disagreed that media has the responsibility to represent transgender positively. Moreover, they were asked whether they feel comfortable while interacting with transgender individuals to which only 3% strongly disagreed, 10.5% disagreed, 29.5% of the respondents were neutral, 36.5% agreed and 20.5% strongly agreed to statement that they feel comfortable while interacting with transgender.

Only 3.5% of respondents strongly to the statement that transgender should have the same rights as other male and female individuals, 6.5% disagreed, 13% respondents were neutral, 36% agreed and 41% strongly agreed that transgender should have the same rights as other individuals of the society. A major portion of respondents i.e., 51% strongly agreed to the statement that transgender individuals should be protected from discrimination and violence, 24% agreed, 16% were neutral, 6.5% disagreed with this and only 2.5% strongly disagreed that transgender should be protected from discrimination and violence.

The respondents were asked whether Pakistani media has been effective in creating awareness and changing attitudes or not to which 6% strongly disagreed, 17% disagreed, 23.5% of respondents were neutral, 39% agreed and 14.5% strongly agreed with this statement that Pakistani media has been effective in creating awareness and changing attitudes. The question was asked whether the media should do more to promote transgender rights and empowerment to which 35.5% strongly agreed, 43.5% agreed, 11.5% remained neutral, 7.5% disagreed and only 2% strongly disagreed with this statement.

The 37% respondents strongly agreed with the statement that it is important for Pakistani media to promote transgender empowerment, 39.5% agreed, 15% respondents were neutral, 5% disagreed and only 3.5% strongly disagreed with this statement. Respondents were asked have they ever observed any changes in Pakistani media's portrayal of the transgender community and issues over the past few years to which 13.5% strongly agreed, the majority i.e., 39.5% agreed, 35% were neutral, 17.5% disagreed and only 4.5% strongly disagreed and said that they haven't seen any changes in Pakistani media's portrayal of transgender community and issues over the past few years.

The 11.5% agreed strongly to statement that media has become more positive in its portrayal of transgender people and issues, 41.5% agreed, 29.5% were neutral, 12% agreed and only 5.5% strongly disagreed. 10% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement that the media's portrayal of transgender people and issues has not changed much over the years, 42.5% agreed, 29.5% responded neutrally, 17% disagreed and only 1% strongly disagreed with this. 9% of respondents strongly agreed that the media has become more negative in its portrayal of transgender people and issues over the years, 26% agreed, 38% were neutral, 24% disagreed and only 3% strongly disagreed with this statement.

Only 5% strongly disagreed with the statement that Pakistani media has improved its coverage of transgender issues and promoted their empowerment, 9.5% disagreed, 25.5% were neutral, 45.5% agreed and 14.5% strongly agreed with this statement that Pakistani media has improved the

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coverage of transgender issues and promoted their empowerment. Only 4% strongly disagreed that the media can empower transgender through by their more positive representation in media content. 3.5% disagreed, 20% were neutral, 48.5% agreed and 24% strongly agreed that the media can empower trans genders through their more positive representation.

The 28% of respondents strongly agreed that the media can empower transgender by their greater visibility of transgender issues in news and current affairs programs, 50.5% agreed, 15% were neutral, 4% disagreed and only 2% strongly disagreed with this statement. Only 0.5% strongly disagreed that the media can play a role in the empowerment of transgender by the more accurate and nuanced reporting of transgender issues, 6.5% disagreed, 17% were neutral about this statement, 47% agreed and 29% strongly agreed with this. 30% of the total respondents agreed strongly that the media can play a role in transgender empowerment by increasing collaboration with transgender rights organizations, 46.5% agreed, 12.5% responded neutrally, 9% disagreed and only 2% strongly disagreed with this.

The 32.5% of respondents strongly agreed and think that media can play a role in transgender empowerment by training journalists and media professionals, 45% agreed, 15% neither agreed nor disagree, 5.5% disagreed and only 2% strongly disagreed that media can play a role in trans gender's empowerment by training journalists and media professionals. 24% strongly agreed with the statement that Government policies or interventions can support media organizations in promoting transgender empowerment, 47% agreed, 20.5% were neutral, 6.5% disagreed and only 2% strongly disagreed. 13% of respondents strongly agreed that they think the Transgender Persons Act 2018 has been effective in protecting rights of the transgender individuals in Pakistan, 34.5% agreed, 35.5% were neutral that they neither agree nor disagree, 14% disagreed and only 3% strongly disagreed with this statement.

The 11.5% of respondents strongly agreed to the statement that Pakistani society can become more inclusive and accepting of transgender individuals in Pakistan, 38.5% agreed, 29% were neutral, 17% disagreed and only 4% strongly disagreed with this. 15.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that the media plays a crucial role in empowering the transgender

community, 44.5% agreed, 27.5% responded neutrally, 11.5% disagreed and only 1% strongly disagreed with that statement. Only 1% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that the media should actively promote positive representation of transgender individuals, only 1% disagreed, 21.5% were neutral, 47% agreed and 29.5% strongly agreed and in favor that the media should actively promote positive representation of transgender individuals.

The 18% of respondents strongly agreed that the media contribute to the marginalization and discrimination of the transgender community, 45.5% agreed, 27% of respondents were neutral, 7.5% disagreed and only 2% strongly disagreed with this. 19.5% of respondents strongly agreed that the media should feature more stories and perspectives from the transgender community, 57.5% agreed, 18% were neutral, 4% disagreed and only 1% strongly disagreed. Only 5.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that they had seen the news coverage of transgender issues and experiences more often, 33% agreed, 33% were neutral, 25% disagreed and only 3.5% strongly disagreed with that statement. 25.5% strongly agreed that news coverage of transgender issues and experiences can help to increase awareness and understanding of the transgender community, 51.5% agreed with this statement, 20.5% were neutral and only 2.5% disagreed with this.

Only 1% strongly disagreed with the statement that the media should do more to promote the rights and interests of the transgender community, 3% disagreed, 16.5% were neutral, 55% agreed and 24.5% strongly agreed that the media should do more to promote the rights and interests of the transgender community. Only 6.5% strongly agreed that they see advertisements featuring transgender individuals more often, 24.5% agreed, 39.5% responded neutrally that they neither agree nor disagree, 22% disagreed and only 7.5% strongly disagreed with this. 14% of respondents strongly agreed that advertisements can help to promote the visibility and acceptance of the transgender community, 50% agreed, the neutral respondents were 28%, 7% respondents disagreed and only 1% strongly disagreed that advertisements can help promote the visibility and acceptance of a transgender community.

**Table 5.1** *Survey Results*

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Have you ever seen positive representation of transgender individuals in media?	8%	32.5%	32%	21.5%	6%
Have you ever seen negative representation of transgender individuals in media?	15.5%	33%	37%	13.5%	1%
Have you ever watched or listened to any Pakistani media content that promote transgender empowerment?	11%	41.5%	22%	21.5%	4%
Do you think that transgender individuals are empowered in Pakistan?	5%	32%	25%	31%	7%
Do you think media can play a role in empowering transgender individuals in Pakistan?	26.5%	45.5%	13.5%	11%	3.5%
Do you think media has responsibility to represent transgender positively?	37%	40%	15.5%	5%	2.5%
I am comfortable interacting with transgender individuals	25.5%	36.5%	29.5%	10.5%	3%
Transgender individuals should have same right as other male and female	41%	36%	13%	6.5%	3.5%
Transgender individuals should be protected from discrimination and violence	51%	24%	16%	6.5%	2.5%

Pakistani media has been effective in creating awareness and changing attitudes	14.5%	39%	23.5%	17%	6%
Media should do more to promote transgender rights empowerment	35.5%	45.5%	11.5%	7.5%	2%
Is it important for Pakistani media to promote transgender empowerment?	37%	39.5%	15%	5%	3.5%
Have you observed any Pakistani media's portrayal of transgender community and issues over the past few years?	13.5%	39.5%	25%	17.5%	4.5%
Do you think that media has become more positive in its portrayal of transgender people and issues?	11.5%	41.5%	29.5%	12%	5.5%
Do you think that media's portrayal of transgender people and issues has not changed much over the years?	10%	42.5%	29.5%	17%	1%
Do you think that media has become more negative in its portrayal of transgender people and issues?	9 %	26 %	38 %	24%	3%
Do you think Pakistani media improved its coverage of transgender issues and promote their empowerment?	14.5 %	45.5%	25.5 %	9.5%	5%
Media can empower transgender by more representation of transgender individuals in media content.	24 %	48.5 %	20%	3.5%	4%

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Media can empower transgender by great visibility of transgender issues in news and current affairs programming.	28.5 %	50.5 %	15%	4 %	2%
News coverage of transgender issues and experiences can help to create awareness and understanding of the transgender community.	25.5 %	51.5 %	20.5%	2.5%	1%
Advertisements can help to promote visibility and acceptance of the transgender community.	14%	50%	28%	7%	1%

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## **6. Conclusion**

The study examines the role of Pakistani media in transgender empowerment, focusing on its impact on visibility, acceptance, and inclusion of Transgenders in our Pakistani society. The study employs a survey as the primary research method, with a sample size of 200 respondents including males, females, and transgender individuals. Drawing on the cultivation theory, the research investigates the hypotheses and research questions formulated. The findings reveal that while the media is perceived to play a crucial role in advocating transgender empowerment, there is a need for improvement in how the trans genders are portrayed.

The objectives of the study include exploring the portrayal of transgender individuals in Pakistani media, identifying best practices for responsible media coverage, suggesting policy recommendations for promoting transgender empowerment, contributing to the academic literature on media and social change, and providing suggestions for training journalists and media professionals on transgender rights and empowerment. The results show that H1 proved that media is playing a positive role in transgender

empowerment in Pakistan. But there were also certain statements on which respondents choose to remain neutral.

Overall, this research study fills a knowledge gap regarding the role of Pakistani media in transgender empowerment and public perception. By examining the influence of media on transgender empowerment, the study aims to challenge stereotypes, promote understanding, and contribute to a more inclusive and equitable society in Pakistan. Future Scholars can explore the relationship between transgender empowerment, media and government policies to highlight the difficulties faced by transgender in male dominant society of Pakistan.

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## Impacts of Romantic Dramas on Youth of Lahore

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### ***Abstract***

*This study shows at how Pakistani romantic television dramas affect young people in Lahore, Pakistan, including journalists, housewives, and students. Using the disproportionate stratified sampling approach, 192 respondents from each group made up the sample size of 385 drama watchers. The efficacy of Pakistani romantic television dramas on Lahori youth was measured using a 14-item questionnaire. Statements with Agree/Disagree/Neutral responses are included in the inventory. Prime-time dramas on Pakistan's public and commercial television networks frequently include romance. Results showed that the group of people aged 15 to 29. While many television series depict Pakistan's true culture, others demolish our families and young people's moral ideals.*

**Keywords:** Romantic Television Drama, Effectiveness, Romance, Youth, Moral Values, Family Values.

### **1. Introduction**

In general, this study examines the effects on our society of romantic Pakistani TV programs. People's opinions and mindsets can be altered by television, which is a tremendously powerful medium. Television is a great medium for both entertainment and education. With a television these days, no home is complete. when the corona virus outbreak is making folks stay inside. A significant source of entertainment for the general public these days is television. Television provided viewers with a depressing reminder of the contemporary trends and lifestyle shifts that are evident in society. The public

can be informed, entertained, and educated with the help of the media, as it has always been. People need to take the messages that the media has given them into account in addition to progressively changing their cultural and societal ideas (Karim, 2016).

What exactly is being displayed to us in dramas is the question at hand. Does it reflect the structure of the family and our culture? We used to watch dramas together with our family once. However, you cannot watch the majority of today's dramas with your family.

Media is all around us in our daily lives. They are often invisible to us, and we don't want to give them any influence (Baran, 2004). I have conducted my research using the survey approach. I have created some inquiries in order to get information. I have obtained information from residents of all areas of Lahore for this. Next, I have done a data analysis. Dramas influence both boys and girls, changing their perspectives, ways of thinking, and even their lives (Jawaria, 2021).

Wife and husband have a falling out in most TV dramas. Subsequently, the lady meets another man. The woman then gets a second marriage and files for divorce from her first husband. Romances of this kind, like a collegiate romance between a boy and a girl, are typically presented favorably in dramas. who are to blame for the rise in obscenity in society. Thus, the number of rape cases in Pakistan is rising.

The aim of this study is to examine how Pakistani love dramas affect young people's family values in Lahore. and more extramarital romances that play a significant role in our tragedies. Examining Urdu Television programs closely is more crucial than ever in the current climate, where divorce rates are rising (Siddique, 2016).

The level of Pakistani plays and the effects of modernity as shown by characters in these dramas will be ascertained with the help of this article. This study aims to assess the impact of Pakistani love plays on the youth population in Lahore. The media also had an administrative role in helping us achieve our goals. According to Zia (2014), our youth perform in romantic comedies, demonstrating how they use drama as a method of escape. The

purpose of this study is to investigate the direction that contemporary Pakistani romantic TV programs are leading our youth. There was a decline in the defense of chastity in the post-cable era, as seen by the higher number of extramarital partnerships at that period (Arafat, & Shahzad, 2020).

We can use this to verify which elements in Pakistani romantic TV dramas need to be adjusted. additionally, how these Pakistani romantic dramas on TV should be improved. Foreign culture shown in the media has been found to affect the sociocultural intelligence of young people who belong to the middle class of society. This has widened the generational divide and upended moral and social norms (Shahbaz, 2014).

## **2. Literature Review**

Comstock and Strzyzewski (1990) noted that there has been evidence of hostile relationships and a lack of day-to-day authority in modern TV homes. It's often known that married couples cease talking to each other about marital problems. The study also found that poor marital communication can be identified in soap operas.

Zia (2014) looked on how Pakistani dramas affect young people in the district of Lahore. According to the researcher, television has become an indispensable part of our lives and cannot be denied. It has advantages as well as disadvantages. Due to the high rate of illiteracy in our nation, it had an effect. At one point, PTV was the only channel available, but as other technologies like satellite, cable, and dish became accessible, competition started to arise. The interview with Framework provided the investigation's data. Researchers found that cultural youth often underwent a change in attitude due to the drama on the PTV channel, which promoted values.

Shabir et al. (2013) On Pakistani Television, the cultural impact of Urdu dramas on women was investigated "Geo Entertainment and Hum TV." Researchers wanted to investigate Hum TV dramas and Geo Entertainment, as well as if our customs and culture have anything to do with the growth of Urdu shows in Pakistani society. Their research indicates that women follow the models in Geo TV and Hum TV plays as role models, and are influenced by the style of these shows. By watching romantic films, viewers may pick up relationship patterns that they may find beneficial.

Johnson and Holmes (2009) sought to highlight these potential relationship habits. According to Johnson and Holmes, there are positive and bad aspects to kissing, hugging, loyalty, cheating, and dishonesty, for instance. The majority of married couples were found to be either depressed or to hint at happiness but not to show it. Married couples accounted for only a small portion of all instances of affection. The researchers claim that this portrayal of marriage makes viewers mistakenly believe that romance and marriage are two distinct things, with married couples' devotion being the exception rather than the rule. Our content analysis was able to identify possible relationship behaviors from romantic films, but it was not able to forecast the implications of these behaviors for an individual's future relationships.

Karim and Shehzad (2016) state that the primary motivation for the research was to understand the social and mental behavior of Pakistani youth after they recognize sentimental scenes in Pakistani dramatizations. In keeping with this, the researchers' wish to express that the primary motivation for the research was to understand the social and mental behavior of Pakistani youth after they recognize sentimental in Pakistani dramatizations

### **3. Hypotheses**

**H1:** The popularity of TV dramas is probably going to hurt our family values more than it helps.

**H2:** Adolescent moral ideas are being destroyed by Pakistani romance dramas.

**H3:** Because to romantic dramas, there are more cases of harassment against girls in Lahore.

**H4:** People are becoming more modernist because of dramas.

### **4. Methodology**

The researcher used a survey approach to get information from the target population in order to ascertain the impacts of contemporary Pakistani dramas on Youth. Lahore was the city from which the research study's population was selected. We targeted both types of gender i.e. male and female who are

watching Pakistani dramas. In this study our sample size was based on 385 respondents. The target audience age was 15 to 29 because they are readily influenced. Researcher made 15 questions with multiple choice answers for gathering data. Researcher used to SPSS software to analyse their data with the help of sample percentages method through percentage of analysis.

## 5. Findings

Following are the findings of the survey which were obtained through descriptive analysis:

**Table 5.1** *What is your gender?*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Male	192	49.9	49.9	49.9
	Female	193	50.1	50.1	100.0
	Total	385	100.0	100.0	

In this table shows that our survey consists of two types of gender women and men. Questions were asked from 193 women & 192 men.

**Table 5.2** *Which entertainment channel do you like?*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Geo Har Pal	83	21.6	21.6	21.6
	ARY Digital	114	29.6	29.6	51.2
	Hum TV	188	48.8	48.8	100.0
	Total	385	100.0	100.0	

In this table shows that the most favorite channel of youth in Lahore is HUM TV which is liked by 48.8% youth. 29.6% youth watch ARY dramas. 21.6% youth watch Geo TV Dramas.

**Table 5.3** *How frequently do you sit in front of Television shows?*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Regularly	70	18.2	18.2	18.2
	Occasionally	181	47.0	47.0	65.2
	Weekend	134	34.8	34.8	100.0
	Total	385	100.0	100.0	

In this table shows that, 18.2% youth watch TV dramas daily. 47% of youth watch dramas occasionally. 34.8% of youth watch dramas on weekend.

**Table 5.4** *Pakistani dramas show women's relationship with men other their husband*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Agree	209	54.3	54.3	54.3
	Disagree	70	18.2	18.2	72.5
	Neutral	106	27.5	27.5	100.0
	Total	385	100.0	100.0	

In this table shows that 54.3% youth agreed that Pakistani romantic dramas show women having relationships with men other their women.

**Table 5.5** *Producers making dramas based on love stories instead of reflecting the society*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Agree	225	58.4	58.4	58.4
	Disagree	64	16.6	16.6	75.1
	Neutral	96	24.9	24.9	100.0
	Total	385	100.0	100.0	

In this table shows that 58.4% youth agreed that Producers making dramas based on love stories instead of reflecting the society.

**Table 5.6** For getting high ratings, such obscenities are being shown in dramas, which has not according to Islamic values

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Agree	255	66.2	66.2	66.2
	Disagree	52	13.5	13.5	79.7
	Neutral	78	20.3	20.3	100.0
	Total	385	100.0	100.0	

In this table shows that 66.2% youth agreed that Producers for getting high ratings, such obscenities are being shown in dramas, which has not according to Islamic values.

**Table 5.7** Some scenes in dramas are so bold that they can't sit and watch with family

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Agree	203	52.7	52.7	52.7
	Disagree	87	22.6	22.6	75.3
	Neutral	95	24.7	24.7	100.0
	Total	385	100.0	100.0	

In this table shows that 52.7% youth agreed that some scenes in dramas are so bold that they can't sit and watch with family.

**Table 5.8** Most of unrealistic love stories are shown in Pakistani dramas

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Agree	241	62.6	62.6	62.6
	Disagree	87	22.6	22.6	85.2
	Neutral	57	14.8	14.8	100.0
	Total	385	100.0	100.0	

In this table shows that 52.7% youth agreed that most of unrealistic love stories are shown in Pakistani Television dramas.

**Table 5.9** *Pakistani dramas are destroying the moral values of young generation*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Agree	238	61.8	61.8	61.8
	Disagree	58	15.1	15.1	76.9
	Neutral	89	23.1	23.1	100.0
	Total	385	100.0	100.0	

In this table shows that 61.8% youth agreed that Pakistani dramas are destroying the moral values of young generation.

**Table 5.10** *Do you think that dupatta and veil are decreasing in young girls?*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Agree	295	76.6	76.6	76.6
	Disagree	46	11.9	11.9	88.6
	Neutral	44	11.4	11.4	100.0
	Total	385	100.0	100.0	

In this table shows that 76.6% youth agreed that dupatta and veil are decreasing in young girls who watched Pakistani dramas.

**Table 5.11** *TV dramas promoting love marriages in society.*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Agree	239	62.1	62.1	62.1
	Disagree	49	12.7	12.7	74.8
	Neutral	97	25.2	25.2	100.0
	Total	385	100.0	100.0	

In this table shows that 62.1% youth agreed that Television dramas promoting love marriages in society.

**Table 5.12** *Are you satisfied with content of Pakistani Romantic Dramas?*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Agree	54	14.0	14.0	14.0
	Disagree	265	68.8	68.8	82.9
	Neutral	66	17.1	17.1	100.0
	Total	385	100.0	100.0	

In this table shows that only 14% youth satisfied with the content of Pakistani Romantic dramas.

**Table 5.13** *Pakistani dramas show husbands abusing their wives*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Agree	180	46.8	46.8	46.8
	Disagree	76	19.7	19.7	66.5
	Neutral	129	33.5	33.5	100.0
	Total	385	100.0	100.0	

In this table shows that 46.8% youth agreed that husband abusing their wives in Pakistani dramas.

**Table 5.14** *In Pakistani dramas husband and wife are shown betraying each other*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Agree	210	54.5	54.5	54.5
	Disagree	55	14.3	14.3	68.8
	Neutral	120	31.2	31.2	100.0
	Total	385	100.0	100.0	

In this table shows that 54.5% youth agreed that husband and wife betraying each other.

**Table 5.15** *Pakistani dramas are responsible for rising divorce rate in Pakistan*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Agree	187	48.6	48.6	48.6
	Disagree	98	25.5	25.5	74.0
	Neutral	100	26.0	26.0	100.0
	Total	385	100.0	100.0	

In this table shows that 48.6% youth agreed that Pakistani dramas are responsible for rising divorce rate in Pakistan.

## **6. Discussion**

A total of 385 drama watchers were used to collect data. Pakistani current dramas were for the most part preferred by the young people. Indeed, it was demonstrated that Pakistani current romantic dramas do not exactly measure up for the youth. As the result shows that the content of Pakistani romantic dramas against our ISLAM. 66.2% respondents agree that for getting high ratings, such obscenities are being shown in dramas, which has not according to Islamic values. Only 13.5% respondents disagree with this statement.

This is what is shown in Pakistani dramas. That a woman is betraying to her husband after marriage. 54.3% respondents who agree this statement, and only 18.2% respondents disagree this statement.

Pakistani dramas also show husbands abusing their wives. 46.8% respondents agree this statement and 19.7 respondents disagree this statement. 68.8% respondents who do not satisfied the content of Pakistani dramas and 17.1% respondents satisfied with the content of dramas. 48.8% respondents agree Pakistani romantic dramas are responsible for rising divorce rate in society and 25.5% respondents disagree with it. 62.1% respondents agree with TV dramas promoting love marriage in society and 12.7% respondents disagree with it.

62.6% respondents agree that most of unrealistic love stories are shown in Pakistani TV dramas and 22.6% respondents disagree with it. 76.6%

respondents agree that dupatta and veil are decreasing in young girls and 11.9% disagree with it. Hence it is proved that Pakistani romantic dramas taking young girls towards modernism.

## **7. Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects that contemporary Pakistani romance plays have on the youth in the Lahore area. 15 research questions were given to examine how romantic dramas affect our society. Pakistani Youth and this examination question was acknowledged in light of the fact that the majority of the respondents said that the Pakistanis were intellectually upset watching current dramatization. Pakistani romantic dramas are spreading obscenity among the young generation. According to most of the respondents, the culture of dupatta, among girls is being eradicated.

That's why mostly people do not like to watch Pakistani dramas. Because in most of these dramas that content is being shown. It is destroying the moral values of the young generation. Most of the people are trying to adopt the dresses of actors in the dramas. This is what is being shown in dramas. That after marriage husband and wife are unfaithful to each other. In dramas shows mostly husbands abuse their wives and this is the reason for the increasing divorce rate in Pakistan.

Pakistani romantic dramas promote love marriages in society. Due to which we now see that the culture of friendship without marriage is becoming common in our society.

## **8. Recommendations**

- Pakistani romantic dramas must be based according to Islamic values.
- Instead of emphasizing and continually presenting women's weak parts, Pakistani dramas should promote their strength.
- PEMRA should be regulated that instead of making stories on love, make stories on the reflection of society.

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