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## Climate Change Sensitization in Pakistan's Public and Private TV News: A Case Study of Floods 2022

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### Abstract

*This paper analyses the portrayal of climate change by Pakistani television news during the 2022 floods a major climate-related catastrophe in the country. A quantitative content analysis of 9 p.m. prime time news shows of three major channels i.e., PTV (public), GEO and ARY (private) has been conducted from June to September 2022 under the postulates of Framing Theory. Items relating to flooding were coded in the coding sheet if their main frame, tone and source explicitly referred to climate change. PTV concentrated on relief and official response, often taking a positive evaluative stance on government actions, and devoted a smaller share of its flood coverage to climate change (9 percent). In contrast, GEO and ARY placed more emphasis on governance and accountability, cited scientific and non-governmental sources more frequently, and adopted climate discourse more comprehensively (22 percent and 18 percent, respectively). However, chi-square tests showed that cross-channel differences in frames and tone were not statistically significant; therefore, the findings are interpreted as descriptive differences in emphasis rather than confirmed statistical differences between channels. The study contributes to climate communication scholarship by showing that Pakistani television coverage of the 2022 floods*

*remained limited in its explicit climate-change representation and relied heavily on episodic disaster and relief frames. With implications for enhancing climate risk communication in Pakistan's extremely vulnerable context, the findings demonstrate how ownership contexts may shape media narratives of climate disasters without establishing statistically significant channel-level differences.*

**Keywords:** Climate Change, News Media Coverage, Sensitization, Floods, and Media Framing.

## **1. Introduction**

Pakistan, which is frequently listed as one of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries (Ali & Raza, 2023; Eckstein et al., 2023), faces one of its most pressing challenges: climate change. As a clear reminder of how climate change exacerbates pre-existing vulnerabilities in governance, infrastructure, and livelihoods, the 2022 floods affected over 33 million people, displaced millions, and caused damages exceeding USD 30 billion (World Bank, 2023; Haque & Khan, 2024). The public's perception and reaction to such crises are greatly influenced by the media. With its extensive audience and ability to set agendas, television news continues to play a crucial role in how Pakistanis understand the causes, responsibilities, and solutions of disasters (Yusuf, 2024; Schmidt et al., 2023).

Pakistani disaster coverage, however, has frequently come under fire for ignoring long-term climate attribution, accountability, and adaptation discussions in favor of short-term spectacle and humanitarian suffering (Ali & Raza, 2023; Smith, 2025). This disparity is especially significant since broadcasters' framing decisions affect how viewers define the issue, place blame, assess organizations, and envision solutions (Entman, 1993; Schäfer & Painter, 2021). Thus, assessing the larger communicative context in which climate policies and public awareness develop requires an understanding of how Pakistan's public versus private broadcasters' frame climate change during disasters (Yusuf, 2024).

Furthermore, even though more people are consuming digital media, television is still the most reliable and accessible news source in Pakistan, especially in underserved and rural areas with low internet and literacy rates.

But this dynamic means climate issues remain under-represented in broadcast coverage. A systematic review of the literature by Asif, Jamil, and Ahmad (2024) found that the Pakistani media generally do not sufficiently report on climate change. This is often because of editorial preferences, lack of infrastructure for environmental journalism and low viewership (Asif et al., 2024). Their findings highlight the need to investigate whether public and private broadcasters use different coverage strategies and whether flagship TV bulletins, because of their wide reach and powerful framing, offer sufficient coverage of long-term climate narratives.

The floods in 2022 revealed the systemic vulnerabilities of Pakistan's healthcare system and triggered serious public health emergencies. Governance and logistics shortcomings impeded disaster response, health systems were overwhelmed, and waterborne diseases increased (Abdullah et al., 2024). Zaidi and Memon (2023) also revealed the millions of people being forced towards poverty and malnutrition due to cascading post-flood health shocks, such as outbreaks of diseases, nutritional deficiencies and lack of access to needed care. These observations showcase how media's narrative frames that focus more on structural issues than isolated suffering can influence public opinion, policy discussions, and resilience tactics in the long run.

This study is a comparative analysis of the discourse on climate change during the floods of 2022 between two private channels GEO and ARY and one public channel PTV. It investigates whether ownership structures affect the volume and framing of climate discourse and whether coverage increases public awareness of the structural factors that contribute to disaster risk by methodically examining prime-time bulletins of top tier news channels of Pakistan.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Climate Change and Media Framing**

According to framing theory, public perception and policy discourse are shaped by the way the media characterize issues, attribute causes, and offer solutions (Entman, 1993). Scholars have recognized recurrent frames in the context of climate change, including governance, economic costs, scientific attribution, disaster impact, and adaptation (Nisbet, 2009; Schäfer & O'Neill,

2017). Depending on the framing used, audiences may consider climate change a humanitarian crisis, a scientific certainty or a question of responsibility (whether it lies with government, industry or society). As studies indicate, humanitarian disaster framing is often the most common in television news, with spectacle and immediacy overriding complex long-term and structural causes (Smith, 2025).

## **2.2 Disaster Coverage in the Global South**

Crucial is the role of the media in bridging local experiences to global climate discourse—especially for developing nations which are most vulnerable to climate disaster. A common characteristic of South Asian TV coverage is that while narratives and imagery of disaster impacts, such as loss of life and rescue efforts, are widely disseminated, the root structural causes such as international climate justice and the shortcomings of governance systems remain largely unreported (Yusuf, 2024). This focus has the danger of creating a minimal awareness and low public pressure to policymakers for policy and actions for adaptation.

## **2.3 Ownership Models and Media Narratives**

In the perspective of media political economy, the nature of media ownership impacts the framing. Public media more closely follow the state position of attributing causes to science and officials' responses and actions on relief, while private media are more prone to critically frame climate discourse focusing on the responsibility and governance deficit (McNair, 2018). As several comparative studies showed, the effect of private media's increase in diversity of climate discourse could lead to overestimation of crisis to attract audience (Schmidt et al., 2023).

## **2.4 Climate Communication in Pakistan**

However, Pakistan, despite being an exceptionally vulnerable country, has not received adequate research attention within the climate communication scholarship. Studies have suggested that the climate change coverage of Pakistani media is erratic, often peaking in the times of natural disasters and then tapering off (Ali & Raza, 2023). Studies conducted on both 2010 and 2022 floods report an overwhelming concentration of relief-driven

communication without adequate attention to climate policy and adaptation measures. There is still a lack of research on coverage in Urdu and regional languages, which are widely accessible in rural areas (Yusuf, 2024).

## **2.5 Research Gap**

As per the existing dominant literature, very little is known about how Pakistani television news creates climate narratives during disasters, even though international literature outlines how climate change is framed in Western and international contexts. Furthermore, there hasn't been a systematic investigation into the relative effects of ownership models, public versus private broadcasters. By examining how three prominent Pakistani TV channels presented climate change during the 2022 floods, this study fills these gaps by examining whether ownership affects tone and framing and what that means for raising awareness of climate change.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in applying framing theory to both visible frames and absent or weakly represented frames in Pakistani flood coverage. Framing, rather than solely being a concern about powerful categories, also includes the marginalization of frames about climate attribution, adaptation and themes as a key marker of weak climate sensitization. With this consideration, we can also understand how episodic frames on disaster and relief may limit public knowledge about climate change by remaining on suffering and response.

## **3. Research Objectives**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- i. To assess the extent and scope of flood coverage related to climate change on PTV, GEO, and ARY from June to September 2022.
- ii. To determine which frames are most frequently used to tell stories about flooding and climate change.
- iii. To examine the tone and framing of two private and 1 public channels.
- iv. To determine if the differences that have been noticed are statistically significant.

#### **4. Research Questions**

**RQ1:** How much climate related flood coverage did each channel air from June to September 2022 relative to its total flood coverage?

**RQ2:** Which major frames dominated the coverage across and within channels?

**RQ3:** Is there a difference in framing of Climate related coverage in major Public and Privately owned channels in Pakistan?

**RQ4:** What is the relationship between frame choice and channel and story tone?

#### **5. Theoretical Framework**

Framing theory, which emphasizes how the selection and emphasis of particular aspects of reality shape public perception and response, serves as the foundation for this study. Entman (1993) asserts that frames identify issues, identify their root causes, render moral assessments, and offer solutions. Media frames affect whether audiences perceive climate disasters as natural disasters, governance failures, or the result of global warming.

As identified in previous literature, disaster coverage tends to revert to the “humanitarian” and “episodic” frames in most contexts. This means the focus would shift to humanitarian aid, and the acute symptoms and events related to disasters (Nisbet, 2009; Schfer & O'Neill, 2017). With its policy and systemic features overlooked, such framing tends to depoliticize the problem of climate change although empathy can be stirred among the audience. Meanwhile, attribution and responsibility frames will highlight the global obligations, the root causes and the needs for adaptation in the long run.

In the context of hybrid media in Pakistan, while the private media outlets may have relatively higher degree of autonomy, they are also market-driven, and the state-owned PTV, for instance, has a tendency to reflect state discourse (McNair, 2018; Yusuf, 2024). Based on the above studies, this research examines whether the model of ownership has an impact on framing of climate change-induced flood and how climate risk perception is influenced.

Therefore, framing theory has been utilized in this study not only to identify if media chose particular frames over others but also whether or not they converted a significant climate catastrophe into continuing climate communication. The division between episode frames, like impacts of disaster and aid given, and thematic frames like causes and responsibilities and adaptation mechanisms, are crucial in this argument as they help to draw out if floods were communicated as just a humanitarian problem and not a climate-risk issue.

## **6. Method**

### **6.1 Research Design**

This study has adopted quantitative content analysis methodology using prime-time television news bulletins. Each individual news item in the 9pm bulletin is treated as a unit of analysis. An 'item' is considered to be a news item or segment introduced exclusively by the bulletin anchor, which features visual representation.

### **6.2 Sampling Frame**

The study focused on three news channels, namely PTV News (public), GEO News, and ARY News (private). For each channel, the flagship 9 pm bulletin was selected as the primary program of analysis, covering the period from June 1 to September 30, 2022.

#### **6.2.1 Inclusion criteria**

This study included the news items that covered the 2022 floods or their impacts and explicitly mentioned climate change, global warming, greenhouse gases, attribution to climate change, or adaptation and mitigation. Items solely about politics or unrelated events were excluded from the data unless they directly linked floods to climate change.

### **6.3 Codebook**

Every news item was examined from a number of angles for the coding scheme. Disaster Impact and Human Toll, Attribution and Science, Governance and Accountability, Response and Relief, Solutions and Adaptation, Economy and Infrastructure, or Human Interest and Community Resilience were the categories from which the main frame was selected. Coverage's valence or tone was rated as neutral, negative, or positive. Government representatives, scientists or experts, NGOs/ INGOs, local citizens, foreign organizations, the corporate sector, or none at all were among the sources mentioned in the news stories.

To ascertain whether the item included field reporting, studio-only presentation, maps or data graphics, or flood visuals, visual cues were analyzed. Lastly, three categories were used to record item length: 30 seconds or less, 31 to 90 seconds, and 91 seconds or more.

#### **6.3.1 Coding Procedure**

A sampling list of bulletins was compiled from archives available on official YouTube channels of the networks. 2 Coders were trained on a 15% pilot subsample to refine frame definitions. Ambiguities and inconsistencies were resolved before final coding. At least 20% of the sample was double-coded to assess reliability.

### **6.4 Reliability**

Intercoder reliability was calculated using Cohen's kappa. Agreement exceeded conventional thresholds ( $\kappa \geq 0.70$ ) for frames ( $\kappa = 0.78$ ), tone ( $\kappa = 0.82$ ), and sources ( $\kappa = 0.74$ ) passing the acceptable thresholds for reliability.

### **6.5 Statistical Analysis**

The analysis was conducted in three phases. The counts and percentages of climate-linked items by channel, month, and frame were first reported using descriptive statistics. Second, chi-square tests were used to compare the

independence of tone and frame distributions across channels; effect sizes were indicated by Cramer's V. To avoid over-interpreting percentages, descriptive differences were not treated as evidence of channel effects unless supported by inferential tests. Where chi-square results were not statistically significant, the findings were interpreted as tendencies, patterns, or differences in emphasis rather than statistically established differences between channels.

## **6.6 Ethical Statement**

All materials were publicly broadcast and were taken from official network channels. No human subjects or officials were involved in the data collection process.

## **7. Findings & Discussion**

The three channels' coverage of flood stories related to climate change showed descriptive variation. Only 11 (9.2%) of the 120 flood-related items that PTV broadcast during the study period specifically connected the floods to climate change, as Table 4.1 illustrates. With 30 of its 136 flood items (22.1%) being climate-linked, GEO, on the other hand, paid more attention to climate change. Between the two, ARY mentioned climate change in 23 out of 128 flood items (18.0%). These results suggest that, descriptively, the public broadcaster (PTV) was less likely than the private broadcasters (GEO and ARY) to place the floods in the context of climate change.

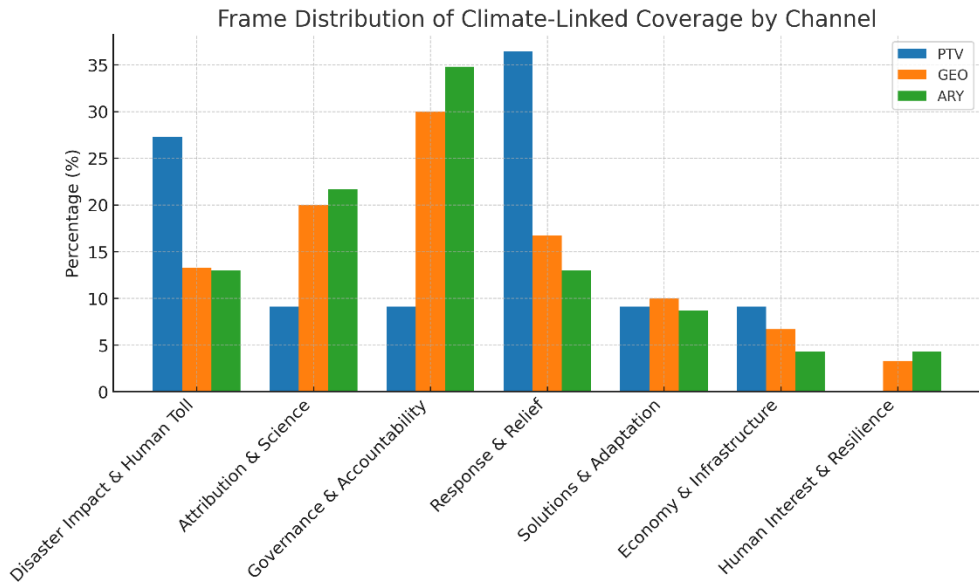
**Table 7.1**

*Distribution of Climate-Linked Flood Coverage by Channel*

Channel	Total Flood Items	Climate-Linked Items	Percentage (%)
PTV	120	11	9.2
GEO	136	30	22.1
ARY	128	23	18.0

Note: Percentages are calculated relative to each channel's total flood coverage.

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*Figure 7.1* Frame Distribution of Climate Linked Coverage by Channel

With PTV emphasizing Response and Relief (36.4%) and GEO (30.0%) and ARY (34.8%) giving precedence to Governance and Accountability, the frame distribution of climate-related items varied descriptively across channels. The chi-square test, however, showed that these differences were not statistically significant ( $\chi^2(12, N = 64) = 6.71, p = .876$ ). A small-to-moderate correlation between channel ownership and frame selection is indicated by the effect size, Cramer's  $V = .23$ . This implies that while there are descriptive differences, they are not significant enough to show a consistent pattern among the three channels.

**Table 7.2**

*Frame Distribution of Climate-Linked Coverage by Channel*

Frame Type	PTV (n = 11)	GEO (n = 30)	ARY (n = 23)
Disaster Impact & Human Toll	3 (27.3%)	4 (13.3%)	3 (13.0%)
Attribution & Science	1 (9.1%)	6 (20.0%)	5 (21.7%)
Governance & Accountability	1 (9.1%)	9 (30.0%)	8 (34.8%)

Response & Relief	4 (36.4%)	5 (16.7%)	3 (13.0%)
Solutions & Adaptation	1 (9.1%)	3 (10.0%)	2 (8.7%)
Economy & Infrastructure	1 (9.1%)	2 (6.7%)	1 (4.3%)
Human Interest & Resilience	0 (0%)	1 (3.3%)	1 (4.3%)

Note.  $\chi^2(12, N = 64) = 6.71, p = .876$ , Cramer's  $V = .23$ , indicating a small-to-moderate association between channel and frame choice.

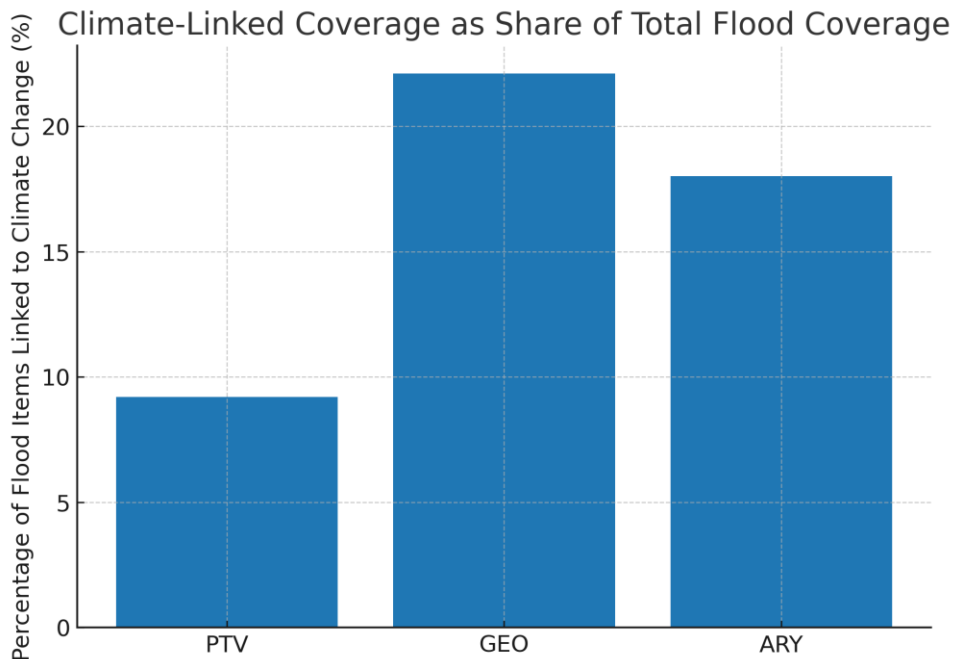


Figure 7.2 Climate Linked Coverage as Share of Total Flood Coverage

Interesting descriptive contrasts were also revealed by tone differences, with PTV taking a more positive view of government actions (45.5%) whereas GEO (43.3%) and ARY (43.5%) tended to be more critical. Nevertheless,  $\chi^2(4, N = 64) = 2.51, p = .642$ , the chi-square test once more revealed no statistically significant association. There is very little correlation between tone and channel ownership, as indicated by the effect size, Cramer's  $V = .14$ . This

## Climate Change Sensitization

suggests that tone variations are not a consistent pattern across channels, even though they are apparent in percentages.

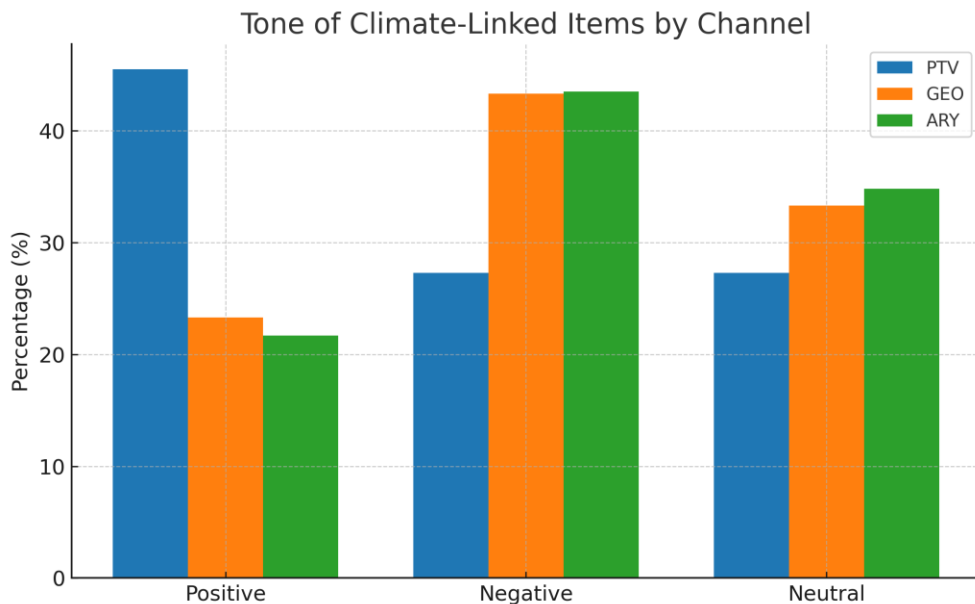
These results show a descriptive tendency in which the public broadcaster appeared more positive about state institutions during the floods, while the private broadcasters appeared more critical in their framing. However, because the tone differences were not statistically significant, this pattern should be interpreted cautiously as a descriptive tendency rather than a confirmed channel-level difference.

**Table 7.3**

*Tone of Climate-Linked Items by Channel*

Tone	PTV (n = 11)	GEO (n = 30)	ARY (n = 23)
Positive	5 (45.5%)	7 (23.3%)	5 (21.7%)
Negative	3 (27.3%)	13 (43.3%)	10 (43.5%)
Neutral	3 (27.3%)	10 (33.3%)	8 (34.8%)

Note.  $\chi^2(4, N = 64) = 2.51, p = .642$ , Cramer's  $V = .14$ , indicating a small association between channel and tone.



*Figure 7.3* Tone of Climate Linked Items by Channel

Overall, only a small portion of all flood reports across the three channels were climate-linked (Table 4.1). GEO and ARY contributed larger shares (22.1% and 18.0%, respectively), while PTV contributed the smallest percentage (9.2%). These variations in relative emphasis among ownership types are depicted in Figure 7.1.

Channel differences were not statistically significant ( $\chi^2$ ,  $p = .876$ ), though descriptive contrasts suggest differences in emphasis across channels (Table 7.2, Figure 7.2). Response and Relief accounted for a large portion of PTV coverage (36.4%), Governance and Accountability was emphasized by GEO (30.0%), and Governance and Accountability was given top priority by ARY (34.8%). On private channels, attribution and science frames were more common than on PTV.

Ownership patterns showed descriptive contrasts in tone distributions (Table 7.3, Figure 7.3). While GEO and ARY tended toward more negative tones, PTV had more positive assessments of the government and relief efforts (45.5%). About one-third of items on GEO and ARY had neutral coverage, whereas 27.3% of items on PTV did the same.

Taken together, these findings do not statistically confirm differences among the three channels, but they do show meaningful descriptive contrasts in the scope and presentation of flood coverage associated with climate change.

## **8. Discussion**

The results should be interpreted with caution. They demonstrate descriptive contrasts in the dissemination of information about climate-related disasters, but the chi-square tests did not establish statistically significant differences among the three channels in relation to frame or tone. According to framing theory (Entman, 1993; Nisbet, 2009), PTV's focus on official response and relief points to a definition of the problem and a causal attribution that prioritizes state action over structural or scientific factors. On the other hand, GEO and ARY gave relatively more attention to scientific attribution and governance shortcomings, which encouraged a more critical assessment of institutional accountability and readiness.

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These descriptive differences are aligned with prior research indicating private broadcasters as having more critical/accountability-seeking perspectives than public ones which often align with the dominant narrative (McNair, 2018; Schfer & O'Neill, 2017). It is important to note, however, that the present study does not conclude statistically significant findings on the differences; it merely suggests that the descriptive evidence points in a theoretically interesting direction and warrants future research with a larger sample.

Though the focus on Response and Relief frames for PTV could assuage concerns from audiences, it fails to draw sufficient attention to the needs for adaptation and long-term changes; though the focus on science and governance in the private outlets can alert the public to system-level factors, it is largely framed around government failure and blame.

Thus the theoretical contribution of the study is toward understanding framing theory, specifically framing in relation to the absence of climate and episode framing on Pakistani television news bulletins. The findings make clear that sensitization towards climate change does not occur when floods are simply reported, and when disaster footage is televised, it is done with the use of thematized framing, such as links to climate attribution, responsibility, and adaptation and resilience. It is in this way that the minimal prevalence of attribution and adaptation framing shows a gap between disaster news and climate risk communication.

The study is limited because it focused only on peak-time bulletin news and only three Pakistani television news channels. While limiting the sample scope was necessary for a close analysis of news framing, the exclusion of news bulletins across Pakistani television may have prevented the research from capturing the entirety of the climate conversation among the media landscape. Given the minimal presence of climate-linked items, small sample size and absence of statistically significant results, larger samples may have provided higher statistical power and illustrated otherwise invisible percentage differences in proportions of framing in the study. Future research may conduct audience reception studies to analyze how audiences understand frames, and conduct media analyses of the impact of the online platform, as

well as regional language television. In addition, analyses of future climatic events may offer perspective on event-specific vs. Systemic framing patterns across television channels.

Overall, the study contributes to climate communication research in Pakistan by revealing the problem is not simply public vs. Private channel dynamics, but rather limited climate change framing in disaster news bulletins, and editorial choices in relation to such frames may require careful balancing of immediate victim and perpetrator discourses toward a richer framing of risk for effective climate communication.

## **9. Conclusion**

Collectively, these findings provide suggestive evidence that ownership forms may affect the volume of, as well as source, frame and tone of climate related reporting, but they are not statistically significant within the current sample. The stronger claim here is that climate change remained an issue missing from coverage of floods, relative to the sheer scale of the 2022 disaster and Pakistan's long-term vulnerability to climate change. What is more critically, this exclusion matters, because news bulletins on television news either frame disasters as linked to structural climate risks or they frame disasters as discrete events of victimhood, aid and official response.

## **10. Practical Implications**

This research highlights the importance of the need for careful framing by policymakers and reporters. Reporters who move beyond a disaster-recovery narrative to one that discusses attributing responsibility and creating systemic change can frame their stories to ready the public for understanding climate change and seeking systemic solutions.

As a result of the influence of media stories in shaping public perceptions, the government can take action to support public deliberation and knowledge-sharing between the scientific community and the media, while consistently reinforcing both short-term recovery efforts and the need for the long-term planning of resilience measures. Joint training programs could

increase the accuracy and impact of reporting, as well as public education levels among the press, climate scientists, and emergency managers.

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## **Mic Drop Misogyny: A Feminist Analysis of Male Hosts Conduct in Pakistani Digital Media**

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### **Abstract**

*Since 2018, the Pakistani podcast scene has developed significantly and provided new forums for public discourse; however, they may also serve to reinforce traditional media's current dominant patriarchal authority structures. This research utilizes a feminist lens to explore critiques of new social media programs produced by Pakistani podcasts from 2024-2026 through analysis of the behavior of male hosts towards female guests as well as how those actions impact women within society. The study draws on theories of hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), ambivalent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996), the male gaze (Mulvey, 1975), and gender performativity (Butler, 1990) to investigate three distinct case studies: Irshad Bhatti's approach to questioning Meera; Dr. Omar Adil's commentary regarding female anchors; and Rehaan Tariq's interrogation of Wardah Malik. According to the results of the study, male interviewers commonly utilize similar discourse practices (e.g., aggressive questioning; moral judgment) combined with communication that challenges competence (Briggs et al., 2023). These three behaviors serve to render the interview an arena of gendered evaluation. This research finds that the above-mentioned behaviors are not coincidental but rather are structural performances of hegemonic masculinity both in the unregulated and virally motivated digital media environment.*

**Keywords:** Pakistani Male Hosts, Podcasts, Misogyny, Media, Masculinity, and Feminist Analysis.

## **1. Introduction**

Actress Meera was invited onto Irshad Bhatti's podcast in April of 2026 to speak about her film *Psycho*; however, instead of discussing her work and artistic achievements, the conversation diverted into her personal life and problems from her past. Although Meera pleaded with Bhatti to discuss the topic of her film, he continued to steer the conversation back to her personal life. She ended the interview early (GTV Digital, 2026). This is not just a one-off. It shows a broader trend in Pakistan's digital media where women are brought onto podcasts to face scrutiny or public embarrassment (Khalid, 2026). At the same time, Dr. Omar Adil's comments about female anchors being sexually dependent stirred backlash and legal steps, showing extreme gendered hostility (Journalism Pakistan, 2026). Wardah Malik also faced questions about her clothing and moral influence in a podcast by Rehaan Tariq, showing a type of questioning not often aimed at male guests. (Khalid, 2026).

Emerging from the current boom in podcasts, which have been largely dominated by men, are varied and ample examples. Since 2018, the movement away from state-controlled broadcast media toward decentralized digital platforms has resulted in many calling it the "Wild West" of the Pakistani media. Unlike traditional broadcast media which was strictly regulated by the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), the current absence of effective regulation has allowed male hosts of these platforms to have nearly complete control over the discourse that takes place within their shows. When women guests appear on these types of shows, the control exercised by the male host is often expressed as gender-based hostility masked as either an opportunity for genuine inquiry or as a means of critique.

The displacement of editorial judgement in favor of algorithmic engagement represents a fundamental change in the stakes associated with public discourse within this new economy, where the "mic drop", a term signifying discussion dominance, often does so at the expense of women's sensibilities and dignity, due to the priority male hosts place on creating

“viral” sound bites. This paper contends that Pakistani podcasting not only has democratized the means of public speech but has created a new level of visibility for hegemonic masculine performance. This study examined the ways certain discursive techniques used by prominent male hosts illustrated the use of digital platforms to act as a means of policing women's identities and reinforcing longstanding systems of patriarchal power.

Women's portrayal in Pakistan's media has been shaped for many years by attitudes that perceive women as objects of moral condemnation rather than as professionals (Sheikh, 2018). Business and politics operated according to fixed moral standards of conduct that were not always applied fairly, but over the last decade (2018-2016), there has been significant change because TV talk shows have faced more censorship and political division and have pushed viewers toward YouTube and Spotify. Podcasting, with its detailed discussions and idea of being “authentic,” turned into the main source for political and social talk.

The freedom granted by this mechanism also has a darker side; unlike broadcast media (which is subject to regulation), podcasts exist in a largely unregulated environment. The question of whether PEMRA has jurisdiction or any other authority over digital content is still a matter of legal dispute and creates a void that the incentives of digital platforms fill. The result of this has produced a new business model based upon “monetized misogyny,” characterized by an engine of virality driven by the creation of provocative, gendered content in expectation that it will produce engagement from an audience. In Pakistan's online environment, algorithmic amplification favors narratives that encourage storytelling to be sensationalized or polarizing in nature (Khan et al, 2025). According to Haslop et al (2024), “affective homosocial currencies,” (like shared misogynistic beliefs) are rewarded on digital platforms by reinforcing the bonds of male audiences, which translates into more views, more subscribers, and more advertising dollars.

In Pakistan, local patriarchal standards do not function in isolation; rather, they coincide with a globally developed digital space known as the “manosphere,” which serves to reinforce anti-feminine views and support dominant masculine culture. Studies conducted demonstrate that masculine

types of words & styles receive higher rewards in digital contexts compared to feminine counterparts; therefore, an algorithmic bias exists that favors masculine authority (Teleki et al., 2025). Therefore, traditional forms of masculine authority (e.g., Ghayrat/honor; Tahaffuz/protection) and modern forms (e.g., red-pilled rhetoric; alpha-male) have come together to form an overall framework for masculinities operating within Pakistani society. Study on the media shows that women are exposed to more interruptions, control over topics, and information than men in Pakistan (Nadeem et al., 2025).

The language used in Pakistani media establishes gender identities using evaluative strategies. The evaluative strategies which create an image of femininity define female characters in terms of vulnerability while evaluating them within the framework of morals; while masculinity defines males through their honor, power, and rationality (Ajmi & Siddique, 2025). Additionally, podcasts act as a sociolinguistic platform where male hosts display rational protections by attempting to hold the female guests accountable for their moral decisions; thus, they act as the moral police on the internet.

## **2. Research Questions**

**RQ1:** How do specific language strategies such as topic forcing and moral judgment work as acts of dominant masculinity to establish host control during interactions with female guests in Pakistani podcasts?

**RQ2:** How does the digital media setting encourage the use of occupational de-legitimation as a tool for public gendered examination and moral oversight?

## **3. Literature Review**

Feminist media studies have examined the relationship between media organizations and Gender-based authority for a lengthy period, stressing on ways the media and the social gender norms that are societal do not only reflect one another, but also media actively creates, reinforces, and solidifies these by way of continuously reproducing images and patterns. In the media, women frequently do not appear as independent professionals, but rather, as

visual objects that are assessed based on their appearance, moral character, and relational status (van Zoonen, 1994). According to Goffman (1979), the concept of gender displays describes how persistent messaging serves to create power dynamics as natural. Fairclough (2003) asserts that there is no such thing as ‘un-biased’ speech when conducting interviews. The impression of power is carried in podcasts by means of the selection of topics, interruptions, whether they contain moral implications, verbiage & tone, the difference between professional related questions versus personal questions, etc. All of these are forms of style and methods of communication that produce, as well as challenge, authority.

Digital media has changed the ways of spreading gendered hate. Rather than existing as a visually represented version of offline discrimination and prejudice, the internet has made it much easier to identify and remain in valuable, interconnected platforms. Research into networked harassment and the role of media in perpetuating misogyny shows that hatred of women can serve as a strategy for increasing visibility for those who engage in this type of behavior. When audiences are outraged or humiliated, there is often a financial incentive for them to click or share that story if they continue to receive attention from the audience (Ging 2019; Marwick & Caplan 2018; Sobieraj 2018; Vickery & Everbach 2018).

Pakistan's digital landscape reflects the same pattern of male domination and use of online harassment, online stalking, and gendered intimidation, all of which have an equivalent in physical space (Tarar et al., 2021). Research indicates that Pakistani women appear on YouTube as images or narratives that suggest they are morally questionable, culturally different, or socially risky, thus resulting in societal judgment and ridicule (Tahir & Qayyum, 2025). Further exploration of YouTube's pathways indicates that the architecture of the platform reinforces the access of users to extreme content; therefore, the use of sensationalized and gender provided material is structurally advantageous whether presented as a debate, commentary or “public accountability” (Ribeiro et al., 2020).

Research on media in Pakistan indicates an ongoing gender imbalance in representation and participation. Studies of television in Pakistan show that

while formats of talk shows centered on gender can create some opportunities for mediated participation by women and cultural contact, the limited opportunities are determined by the existence of more pervasive patriarchal customs (Cheema, 2018). Research into political talk shows on Pakistani TV demonstrates that women not only receive less than their fair share of representation but also encounter cultural narratives which serve to either negate or trivialize their political engagement (Qadir & Riaz, 2015; Yahya et al. 2022).

This research suggests that unequal representation has its roots in both unequal working conditions and discursive environments. Female journalists have reported experiencing sexual harassment, violence, and institutional discrimination from male employers and from coworkers at Pakistani media organizations. Such experiences support the conclusion that unequal representation results from both poor working conditions and discursive environments (Jamil, 2020).

Not all literature has a negative perspective. Digital Feminist scholarship shows that there are possibilities for women to share their own stories and create support networks and opposition groups in digital spaces. Women utilize connected media to oppose abusive behaviour, to document their experiences of harassment, and to create communities that reject misogynistic definitions (Baer, 2016). The response to Dr. Omer Adil's sexist comments demonstrates that there is active resistance in Pakistan. There were reports indicating that over 60 journalists and media professionals expressed their opposition to the statements and demanded that he be held accountable for his actions.

Gharidah Farooqi also initiated public legal proceedings (JournalismPakistan.com, 2024; The Friday Times, 2024). However, resistance to harassment is still uneven. Many women who choose to speak out returned to public life; however, those women receive additional harassment just for being in the public eye (Sobieraj, 2018). As a result, counter-speech is required, yet costly, and any policy decisions need to address the asymmetrical burden on women to both defend themselves and defend the standards of public discourse.

#### **4. Methodology**

This study uses Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) (Lazar, 2005) to examine the patriarchal ideas and complex power dynamics in Pakistani podcast discussions. With a specific sampling method, the research picks “critical cases” from the 2024 to 2026 “unregulated” digital era like viral discussions on high-engagement platforms. These are chosen based on reach and intersectional representation and time relevance. The analysis works at both wide and detailed levels (Bartlett & Masta, 2023) and uses a special codebook for four main areas: job de-legitimation and moral judgment and topic forcing and questioning of competence (Briggs et al., 2023). Aligning with feminist practice, the study includes researcher reflexivity. It keeps a politically committed view aiming to break down gendered oppression and promote social justice in digital areas (Khomariyah & Maella, 2025).

- **Irshad Bhatti and Meera (April 2026):** Examining topic forcing and moral judgment.
- **Dr. Omar Adil’s Remarks (July 2024):** Examining occupational undermining and hostile sexism.
- **Rehaan Tariq and Wardah Malik (November 2025):** Examining communication questioning competence and disciplinary gaze.

Four analytical categories guide the study and they include:

- Occupational De-legitimation which involves framing a woman’s professional success as not genuine or as reliant on male favor.
- Moral Judgement where there is an assumption of authority to judge a woman’s character and clothing and lifestyle.
- Topic Forcing which overrides a woman’s agency by not discussing her chosen topic and redirecting to personal and controversial areas.
- Competence-Questioning Communication includes actions (like “mansplaining”) and frequent interruptions and questioning a woman’s basic understanding of her field (Briggs et al., 2023).

## **5. Findings**

### **5.1 The Mechanics of Misogyny**

#### ***5.1.1 Occupational De-legitimation: The Case of Dr. Omar Adil***

Dr. Omar Adil’s viral remarks about female anchor in Pakistan show clear hostility towards women. By describing professional women as “someone’s keep” or implying their careers rely only on sexual dependency, Adil uses a method which weakens their professional standing (Journalism Pakistan, 2026). This highlights patriarchy in two dimensions; it denies women’s professional roles and confirms the podcast host (and his male listeners) as the only real judges of professional worth. These remarks are not just odious. They are structural efforts to exclude women from public life by suggesting their presence is naturally scandalous or immoral.

#### ***5.1.2 The Podcast as a Space of Interrogation: Meera and Wardah Malik***

When Irshad Bhatti interviewed Meera, the podcast developed into an area where it became a center for probing and interrogating questions by asking her repeatedly about her English ability and her past marriages even after Meera clearly refused to answer creating what is termed as 'topic pushing' by refusing to respect her professional boundaries. Furthermore, when Rehaan Tariq interviewed Wardah Malik about her influence on the youth of Pakistan and especially regarding her clothing, he also questioned her; an indication of a “competency-questioning communication” (Briggs et al 2023) and used Wardah as an example of someone who needs 'permission' or 'correction' from the male host. As a male host, he also exercises 'masculinity' of a protective nature using the Podcast as an avenue for surveillance of the female guest.

#### ***5.1.3 Viral Humiliation and the Digital Economy***

One theme throughout these scenarios is that of the digital economy's impact, as Khalid (2026) describes how there is now a financially viable aspect of making women feel included (and violated). Controversial videos involving “fighting back” (the algorithm’s preference) between a male host and a female guest (not always participating) create a repeat-cycle where misogyny is normalized and made profitable. The emotional social bonds created from that

commentary in the comments section of those videos provide community for those who comment on these videos in the same way as the respondents evaluate the female guest by using the same properties to reinforce a male identity by excluding, degrading and humiliating the feminine Other.

## **6. Discussion**

The findings demonstrate that misogynistic content in Pakistani podcasts cannot simply be attributed to a few so-called “bad actors.” Rather, the content of podcasts is indicative of several fundamental challenges within the industry. One area of serious concern is the minimal amount of editorial control over digital media content. There are numerous regulations in Pakistan on traditional media regarding political dissent; however, there are a lack of regulations regarding gender harassment in digital media. The algorithms used by platforms to deliver content to users also contribute to the problems they will disproportionately deliver “high arousal” content, which often contains elements of rage, outrage, and humiliation. Studies show that digital platforms have an inherent bias toward “masculine” methods of expression (Teleki et al., 2025).

Podcasts are becoming increasingly significant to global discussions about gender in Pakistan, as they are now being used as a platform for discussing gender oppression from both a global and local perspective, and as an important source of resistance to dominant expressions of gender oppression. The growth of podcasts that provide an alternative platform to dominant expressions of gender oppression can help to challenge these expressions. The increased public rejection of extreme misogyny in relation to Dr. Omar Adil's reactions seem to be indicative of a larger shift within society (Ajmi & Siddique, 2025).

In addition, evidence indicates that misogynistic language used by digital media in Pakistan is not only a behavioral problem but also a structural one with roots in both patriarchal cultural systems and platforms. The hegemonic form of masculinity can help explain male superiority; although it has evolved to meet the requirements of the new environment, its application has not deviated from its primary concept (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

This aligns with performativity (Butler, 1990) as male hosts use their authority repeatedly for moral policing of female guests.

Control over women on these types of platforms (i.e. podcasts) is often based on non-censoring forms of suppression, such as the use of moral questioning and reputation framing, where women's identity is transformed from being viewed as an authority figure to that of a spectacle or object (Fairclough, 2003). This indicates towards hostile sexism as suggested by (Glick & Fliske, 1996) as female guest become target of mockery and judgement due to violating traditional gender norms. The concept of the male gaze outlined by Mulvey (1975) states that women are viewed as objects to be scrutinized and assessed by a patriarchal structure through different formats and scenarios. When female guests are interviewed on podcasts, they are treated as objects of judgment or evaluation based on their physical appearance; moral character; and personal decisions rather than based upon their professional qualifications.

Outrage can be monetarily valued; therefore, the digital economy has exacerbated this situation. Research on networked harassment and the manosphere provides evidence that using humiliation and hostility to construct content is a deliberate strategy, not just another part of talking (Ging, 2019; Marwick & Caplan, 2018; Vickery & Everbach, 2018). This research also shows that these patterns are also prevalent locally. The use of honor and shame, as well as moral regulation, creates a distinctive cultural manifestation of digital misogyny in Pakistan while at the same time allowing for visual connections to the global anti-feminist dialogue (Tahir & Qayyum, 2025; Tarar et al., 2021).

## **7. Conclusion**

In Pakistan, misogynistic tendencies and practices manifest themselves in the podcast subculture through a highly created structure of hegemonic manhood, which is influenced by various accountabilities of traditional male-dominated culture backed by traditional male authorities, international digital ideologies and the economics of the podcasting industry. Women are often placed under scrutiny and then judged morally for their participation in podcasts, making

their ability to achieve visibility contingent on the extent of their ability to endure scrutiny for taking part in those podcasts. Acknowledgment of the discursive mechanism of delegitimization and critical questioning is needed to break the concept of a “mic drop” and to create a digital media environment that values conversation over dominance.

## 8. Recommendations

To tackle “mic drop misogyny” in Pakistani digital media, a multi-step approach is needed:

- **Law Changes:** PEMRA and digital platforms must work together. They need to create clear rules against gender-based harassment and hate speech which are followed consistently.
- **Money Responsibility:** Advertisers and sponsors should stop funding content which humiliates and undermines women.
- **Media Sensitization:** It is important to design and implement gender sensitization training programs for all anchors and hosts. Moreover, women-led media platforms should be encouraged to give them visibility
- **Open Algorithms:** Platforms such as YouTube and Facebook must devise strategies as their recommendation systems can discourage gendered hostility.

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## **K-Dramas as Cultural Bridges: Analyzing Their Influence on Pakistani Viewers**

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### **Abstract**

*This research analyzes the increased popularity of Korean dramas (K-dramas) among young Pakistani audiences and the impact that these dramas have had on consumer behavior, cultural relevance, and promotion of cultural participation. Based on the Social Cognitive Theory by Bandura, the study examines the way an audience views, imitates, and internalizes values and behaviors that are exhibited by K-dramas. Qualitative data were obtained by semi-structured interviews with 25 female participants aged 18-25, and analyzed using NVivo 15 thematic analysis. The discussion revealed four themes, which included cultural resonance, Korean product and practice adoption by the consumers, language learning and visiting South Korea aspirations. The results indicate that the K-dramas have a great appeal to the Pakistani viewers as they share some common values, including family bonds, respect for older generations, and modesty. Meanwhile, they serve as cultural intermediaries, motivating the audience to learn about Korean beauty products, food, and entertainment. K-dramas also contribute to people being interested in learning the Korean language and visiting South Korea. These*

*observations contribute to existing debates on the interplay of global media flows with local cultures and how they transform them.*

**Keywords:** K-Dramas, Cultural Bridges, Globalization, Cultural landscape, Adaptation, and Observational Learning.

## **1. Introduction**

The globalization of media has changed cultural landscapes across the world. Media globalization enables the interaction and influence of various cultures as different cultures introduce each other to new languages, customs and traditions (Pha & Lhe, 2022). This phenomenon is best illustrated by the increasing popularity of Korean dramas (K-dramas) on various international streaming websites such as Netflix. Over the past two decades, South Korea's cultural exports have become a global sensation. Korean dramas, or K-dramas, now reach audiences well beyond their original viewers. They have gained popularity in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia, mainly through streaming platforms (Jin, 2024).

In Pakistan, K-dramas have become popular among young viewers, especially women aged 18 to 25 (Saleem et al., 2023). This popularity is part of Hallyu, or the Korean Wave, which includes Korean music, food, fashion, language, and media content (Samosir & Wee, 2023). Studies also show that K-drama consumption in Pakistan increased with the use of digital streaming platforms, especially after 2020 (Iftikhar & Ali, 2025). Still, more research is needed to understand how Pakistani viewers relate to Korean culture and adopt some of its elements in their everyday lives.

The growing popularity of K-dramas in Pakistan can be credited to the greater accessibility of various online streaming platforms like Netflix, Viki, Amazon Prime during the COVID-19 pandemic (Bhatti et al, 2022). While in lockdown, people were searching for new forms of entertainment and fresh content, and during this time, K-dramas became a popular choice for them because of their unique approach to storytelling, availability of various genres, and cinematography (Bhatti et al, 2022; Naseer, 2022). During the pandemic, different online platforms like Netflix have made the availability of global content more accessible to Pakistani viewers; this allows them to

explore different international content, including K-dramas, which were less accessible before.

Moreover, the features available on these platforms to watch global content with subtitles and dubbing eliminated language barriers for viewers, making it easier for them to enjoy Korean content (Bhatti et al., 2022). This has led to an increased interest in watching Korean Content among Pakistani viewers. As a result, K-dramas have become an important part of media consumption among young Pakistani viewers. Their influence is not limited to entertainment. Previous studies show that K-dramas have also created interest in Korean fashion, beauty products, food, and language among Pakistani audiences (Sughra et al., 2022; Khan, 2024). This makes it important to understand how foreign media content affects local cultural interests and everyday choices.

Although some studies have discussed the popularity of K-dramas and Hallyu in Pakistan, most of them focus on general viewing habits, entertainment preferences, or the overall appeal of Korean media content (Bhatti et al., 2022; Saleem et al., 2023). However, less attention has been given to how Pakistani viewers connect these dramas with their own values and how they adopt selected Korean cultural practices in daily life. There is also limited qualitative research on young Pakistani female viewers and their experiences of cultural relevance, product adoption, language learning, and travel interest. Therefore, this study uses Social Cognitive Theory to examine how young Pakistani female viewers observe, remember, and adopt selected cultural elements presented in K-dramas.

## **2. Research Questions**

Following research questions are designed for this study:

**RQ1:** How culturally relevant are the themes and storylines of K-dramas to Pakistani audiences?

**RQ2:** How has the popularity of K-dramas influenced the consumption of other Korean cultural products (e.g., music, fashion, food) in Pakistan?

**RQ3:** Has the exposure to K-dramas led to increased interest in learning the Korean language or visiting Korea among Pakistani audiences?

### **3. Problem Statement**

The increased adoption rate of Korean dramas (K-dramas) on Netflix has had a significant influence on the Pakistani culture. As more and more people are consuming K-dramas, we need to know what are the drivers of this trend and to what extent Pakistani audiences believe that K-dramas are culturally relevant. Additionally, there is a need to investigate the influence of K-dramas on the consumption of the other Korean culture products such as music, fashion, food and language. This study will fill these gaps by exploring how the K-dramas influence the Pakistani viewers and their curiosity towards the Korean culture.

#### **3.1 Argument Statement**

The increasing popularity of K-dramas among Pakistani users on Netflix is not a mere trend, but also a sign of other cultural influences. K-dramas' themes and narrative appeals to Pakistani viewers, creating a sense of cultural relevance that sparks interest in other Korean cultural products and a wish to learn the Korean language and travel to Korea. K-dramas not only entertain but also help in creating a wider perception and appreciation of Korean culture in Pakistan

### **4. Literature Review**

Drama history in Pakistan can be traced back to the 1960s when Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV) was founded. The initial Pakistani dramas were mostly broadcast on PTV and became an important part of the national culture, representing the traditional family values, social norms, and the historical events (Huma, 2015). As Huma (2015) states, these dramas gained incredible popularity due to realistic depictions of social problems and emotional values. Nevertheless, Pakistani dramas experience a change in audience, as in the 2000s, the appearance of the private channels contributed to the greater commercialization of the content, and the increased relevance of the content to melodrama and sensationalism (Khan, 2024). Although

Pakistani dramas still enjoy a loyal viewership, some audiences began seeking fresh and diverse content from international sources.

K-dramas were first introduced in Pakistan around 2016 when Nageen, an Urdu-dubbed version of *Dae Jang Geum* (Korean name of Nageen), was aired on PTV. This was an early attempt to introduce Korean content to local audiences (Bhatti et al., 2022). However, it was during the COVID-19 pandemic that K-dramas became extremely popular in Pakistan and captured the attention of viewers, who were attracted by the fresh storytelling and cultural aesthetics presented in these shows (Bhatti et al., 2022).

The increasing popularity of K-dramas and its influence on Pakistani audiences is a part of greater global phenomenon Hallyu. In 1990, a Chinese journalist invented a term “Hallyu” which means Korean Wave, as he observes the increasing appeal of Korean pop, Korean films and products in China (Korean Culture & Information Service, 2011). Since then, Korea has been exporting its cultural items, music, and food, across various countries and this phenomenon comes under the term of Hallyu (Pha & Lhe, 2022; Saleem et al., 2023).

Netflix began spending heavily on creating Korean content and contributed significantly to the marketing of Korean content globally in 2016. It has since transformed the production of Korean dramas as it produces country-specific and localized original content (Park et al., 2022). In so doing, it positions itself among the biggest platforms to produce and distribute K-dramas worldwide (Song, 2020; Kim, 2020). Netflix contributed to the popularity of K-dramas in the study by Challapalli et al. (2021) reported that a majority of the participants watched K-dramas on Netflix rather than local content. Netflix has been offering subtitles and dubbing of Korean dramas to viewers who do not understand Korean, making them more accessible (Barra, 2013; Bhatti et al., 2022). This has enabled K-dramas to reach a significantly broader global audience (Saleem et al., 2023).

Over the past years, we can see that K-dramas do not only entertain but also affect the shopping habits and cultural attitude of the viewers. Various researches indicate that K-dramas contribute to audience interest in Korean cultural products. The depiction of Korean food and fashion in such dramas

can often encourage viewers to travel and buy similar products (Park and Lee, 2019; Pha and Lhe, 2022). Likewise, Cayaban et al. (2023) discovered that there is an apparent rise in consumer interest in Korean products after they are featured in K-dramas. These results demonstrate the significant role K-dramas play in influencing the consumer preferences and behaviors of viewers.

K-dramas contribute to the marketing of Korean food, as a usual trend, movies and TV shows expose audiences to the food of the country they are located in (Chan, 2007). Traditional Korean dishes such as bibimbap, kimchi and ramyun are commonly used in Korean dramas and usually attract the attention of the audience. As Pha and Lhe (2022) observed, the visuals of these dishes make people feel like trying Korean food by going to restaurants or even by making the recipes at home.

As noted in a study by Sughra et al., (2022) a large number of young viewers have become interested in the language they speak in K-dramas, which prompts them to learn some common phrases and expressions of that language. This cultural trend has led to the enrollment in language learning apps and classes being provided in the Korean Language. Korea has become one of the most popular tourism spots, according to Teh & Goh (2016), Korean drama has also contributed to the booming growth of tourism in Korea. Though Korean drama did not directly influence the overall level of tourist satisfaction, it functioned as a cultural platform where tourists orient themselves with the destination, prior to traveling to the destination (Ordoyo et al., 2021; Teh and Goh, 2016).

As K-dramas are gaining popularity among Pakistani viewers, they are not just consuming the entertainment but also engaging with Korean culture through food, language, fashion, and beauty products (Saleem et al., 2023). This cultural influence demonstrates how the media can transcend geographical borders and it is a medium of inter-cultural communication (Gatchalian et al., 2023). The rising popularity of K-dramas in Pakistan shows that media consumption patterns are changing. People are becoming more interested in international stories and themes. There is need to explore the impacts that these trends could have on local cultural identities in Pakistan.

## **5. Theoretical Framework**

Social Cognitive Theory, proposed by Albert Bandura assumes that one's learning occurs by observation and we can change our behaviors by modeling the observed behaviors and social interaction. The main premise of SCT is that people learn to act and think in certain ways by observing others, what Bandura called "models" (Bandura, 1986). According to Bandura (1986), learning is the result of interactions between behavioral, environmental, and personal factors.

### **5.1 Observational Learning**

Observational learning is one of the core concepts of Social Cognitive Theory (Nabavi & Bijandi, 2012). It suggests that people can learn new behaviours and incorporate attitudes by observing other people (Bandura, 1986). When Pakistani audiences watch K-dramas they not only get entertained but they also learn about the social behaviour, customs and values portrayed by characters in Korean dramas. K-dramas act as symbolic models that Pakistani audiences observe by watching. These dramas allow the viewers to acquire behaviours, and cultural norms by watching the characters that exhibit these elements (Nabavi & Bijandi, 2012). For Instance: K-dramas portray Korean lifestyle, products, fashion and culture which may influence Pakistani viewers to adopt similar behaviours or develop interest in Korean culture.

#### **5.1.1 Modeling**

Individuals copy behaviors demonstrated by others (Nabavi & Bijandi, 2012). K-drama characters serve as powerful models, showcasing behaviors, attitudes, and values that viewers can imitate. There are four processes involved in modeling that are attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation (Bandura, 1986; Nabavi & Bijandi, 2012). Each of these processes can be applied to K-drama consumption:

#### **5.1.2 Attention**

For modeling behavior, one must pay attention to the action (Nabavi & Bijandi, 2012). K-dramas grab viewers' attention by providing them with unique content. Viewers pay attention to the behaviors depicted in K-dramas

like use of specific Korean beauty products and they try to use the same product.

### **5.1.3 Retention**

The viewed behaviour must be remembered (Nabavi & Bijandi, 2012). When viewers watch a specific act or behaviour which catches their attention that specific content remains in their mind. Retention may also occur when viewers repeatedly watch episodes, follow related content on social media, or discuss storylines with peers, reinforcing their memory of cultural elements.

### **5.1.4 Reproduction**

The ability to copy the remembered behavior is called reproduction (Nabavi & Bijandi, 2012). This involves adopting Korean fashion styles, learning Korean language phrases, or copying specific behaviors because of their portrayal in K-dramas.

### **5.1.5 Reinforcement**

It is the perceived benefits of adopting a new behavior that is socially acceptable (Nabavi & Bijandi, 2012). For instance, if a viewer gets compliments for dressing like a K-drama-inspired type, or using a specific Korean product they will be more inclined to do this again.

## **5.2 Environmental Influences**

Environmental influences refer to external factors in an individual's social or physical environment that impact learning and behavior (Zhou & Brown, 2015). For K-dramas consumption these environmental influences can include the availability of media, the social context of viewing, and cultural settings. Platforms like Netflix act as enabling environments by providing easy access to Korean dramas for Pakistani audiences. The constant exposure to Korean culture through these dramas creates a setting where viewers can repeatedly observe and learn from the behaviours, language, and values portrayed in the shows (Zhou & Brown, 2015).

The physical and social environments in Pakistan, which share some cultural similarities with Korea (e.g., emphasis on family values), make it

easier for audiences to accept and integrate Korean cultural practices. These shared norms act as a facilitator for cross-cultural learning and adaptation (Bandura, 1998). Pakistani viewers might see a character in a K-drama performing traditional Korean greetings with respect. The repeated portrayal of such behavior in an environment that values respect for elders (a common cultural value between Pakistan and Korea) motivates viewers to adopt these greetings or emulate similar respectful behaviour.

### **5.3 Self-Efficacy**

The second concept of SCT is self-efficacy, which refers to the extent to which an individual perceives his or her capacity to execute a particular behavior (Zhou & Brown, 2015). While analysing the impact of self-efficacy, Bandura (1986) notes that this function increases motivation and persistence, and successfully changes the set behavioural patterns. In the context of K-drama viewership, audiences who consider themselves competent to decode Korean culture are more likely to adopt certain elements shown in K-dramas, such as trying Korean outfits or learning the Korean language.

### **5.4 Vicarious Learning**

Viewers learn by observing the consequences of others' (Baran & Davis, 2015, p. 173). It emphasizes the fact that people do not have to be involved in an activity to learn that activity, but they can acquire information through observing the behaviors of other people and the outcome (Bandura, 1986). This idea is especially applicable to media studies because people tend to imitate the actions taken in films, television series, and content on the internet. Vicarious learning is useful in explaining how the Pakistani viewers can learn about the Korean culture through K-dramas without having to know it first.

Viewers become familiar with the cultural practices by observing the presentation of Korean greetings, eating habits, and traditional clothing on the screen. When these cultural traits are depicted in a positive manner, they become more preferable and viewers are motivated to embrace them. When a K-drama character has positive results of a certain behavior, the viewer will tend to learn the behavior. As an example, when a K-drama character acts kindly or generously and this results in good social relations, the viewers might be motivated to follow the same behaviors in their lives.

In this study, SCT is used to understand how Pakistani viewers learn from K-dramas through observation and selective adoption. The main concepts of SCT, including attention, retention, reproduction, reinforcement, self-efficacy, and environmental influence, help explain how viewers notice Korean cultural practices, remember them through repeated exposure, and adopt selected elements in their own lives. Therefore, SCT provides a useful lens for analyzing the study's themes, including cultural resonance, cultural adaptation, language learning, and travel aspiration.

## **6. Method**

### **6.1 Research Design**

This study used qualitative research, an interview approach to investigate the influence of K-dramas on Pakistani audiences. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary method of data collection because they allowed participants to share their views in detail while also giving the researcher flexibility to ask follow-up questions related to cultural relevance, consumer adoption, language learning, and travel aspirations.

### **6.2 Sample Size**

A total of 25 female participants, aged 18 to 25, were interviewed for this study. This age group was selected because young women in this age range were more active K-drama viewers in the available sample. Arnett (2000) also explains that young adulthood is a stage where people are more open to new social and cultural experiences. During data collection, similar responses started appearing after the 19th interview. To make sure that no major new idea was being missed, six more interviews were conducted. Therefore, the final sample of 25 participants was considered sufficient for the qualitative scope of this study.

### **6.3 Sampling Technique**

Purposive sampling was used because the study required participants who had direct experience of watching K-dramas. The participants had to be female viewers aged 18 to 25 and must have watched at least two K-dramas in the last four months. This helped ensure that they had recent exposure to K-dramas and could share their views about cultural relevance, Korean products, language learning, and travel interest.

## **6.4 Data Collection**

Participants were selected through university groups and social media posts, and data was collected between November and December. Participants were given the option of selecting the time and location for their interviews. Interviews were conducted both in-person and online (Zoom/Google Meet) based on participant's preference and availability. Each interview lasted 20–30 minutes. The interviews were audio-recorded with participant's consent and notes were also taken to ensure accurate data collection. The recorded interviews were transcribed for data analysis.

## **6.5 Ethical Considerations**

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were given utmost priority. The information about the purpose of study was provided to the participants. Participant's consent was taken to ensure their voluntary involvement in the study. Moreover, the audios were recorded with their approval. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by not using participants' real names in the study. Participants were also allowed to withdraw from the interview at any stage if they felt uncomfortable.

## **6.6 Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which helps identify and report patterns within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). NVivo 15 was used to organize the interview transcripts and support the coding process. First, the audio recordings were transcribed, and each interview file was added to NVivo 15.

The analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework. Firstly, the transcripts were read more than once so that the responses could be understood properly. After this, repeated ideas were marked and coded. Most of these ideas were related to cultural relevance, Korean products, language learning, and travel interest. In the third phase, similar codes were grouped into broader themes using parent and child nodes in NVivo. For example, "Cultural Adaptation" was developed as a parent theme, while "Fashion," "Food," and "Music and Entertainment" were developed as child themes. In the fourth and fifth phases, the themes were reviewed, refined, defined, and named according to their relevance to the research questions. In

the final phase, the findings were written with the support of participant quotations, thematic maps, and word clouds generated through NVivo.

## **7. Findings**

Through thematic analysis 4 main themes were identified along with 9 subthemes. 1) Relatable Themes of K-dramas (i) Family Ties (ii) Respect for elders (iii) Hospitality (iv) Friendships (v) Festival Celebrations 2) Cultural Adaptation (i) Beauty and Skincare Products (ii) Fashion (iii) Food (iv) Music and Entertainment 3) Language Learning 5) Desire to travel Korea

### **7.1 Theme 1: Relatable Cultural Themes**

This theme reflects the SCT concept of attention. Participants were more likely to engage with K-dramas when the storylines contained values that felt familiar, such as family ties, respect for elders, hospitality, and modesty. These familiar cultural values made K-dramas more meaningful and increased viewers' attention toward the characters and narratives. This theme emphasizes that the relationship between Korean dramas and Pakistani viewers is created through similar values and relevant stories.



*Figure 7.1 Mind Map of Relatable Cultural Themes*

#### **7.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Family Ties**

This sub theme deals with the cultural parallels that the participants see between the Korean Dramas and the Pakistani family relationships. According to the participants, family meetings, support of family members to

each other are a common theme in K-dramas. The participants believed that these traits resemble their own cultural values and that this builds a feeling of familiarity since the same values are present in the Pakistani culture.

One of the participants claimed that in both cultures, the focus on family is enormous. You find that in K-dramas characters are always concerned with the happiness and well-being of their family and that is something we appreciate here as well.

### ***7.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Respect for elders***

Respect towards elders in K-dramas is similar to Pakistani culture, which the participants find acceptable. Both the Korean and Pakistani cultures have values like respecting the elders and hospitality that are deeply rooted in them. Korean dramas have characters who usually make an extra effort to respect their seniors. In addition, participants observed that honorifics are employed in K-dramas, like oppa (elder brother) and noona (elder sister) which is also common to Pakistani culture since they also use honorifics to address their elders. One participant mentioned that the respect element was quite familiar. We respect the elder in our society, and so do the Koreans with words such as oppa and noona. That really appeals to me.”

### ***7.1.3 Sub-theme 3: Hospitality and Modesty***

This sub theme explores how the K-dramas depicted hospitality and modesty as part of Korean culture, which was relatable to the participants in their cultural practices. The portrayal of hospitality in K-dramas including receiving guests, serving meals and being hospitable was similar to Pakistani hospitality as observed by participants. One of the participants mentioned that their focus on hospitality is one. In K-dramas, there is always food or tea when one visits a home just as we have it in our culture.

### ***7.1.4 Sub-theme 4: Friendships***

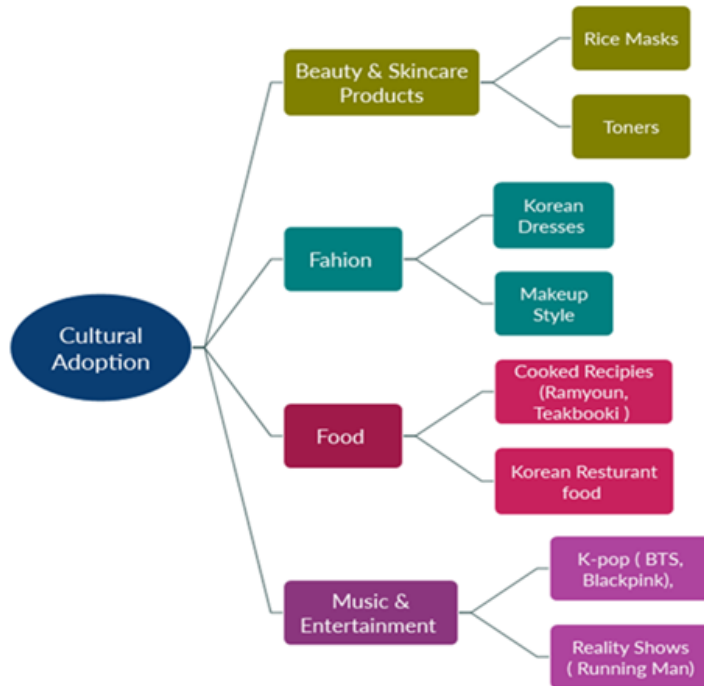
Participants also related to the friendships shown in K-dramas. They said that these friendships often show loyalty, care, and support during difficult times. This made the dramas more relatable for them. One participant shared, “An aspect that resonates with me the most about K-dramas is female friendships or just friendships in general. I think that they are very heartwarming and wholesome.”

### **7.1.5 Sub-theme 5: Festival Celebrations**

Participants also connected with festival scenes in K-dramas. Chuseok reminded some of them of Eid and Pakistani weddings because both cultures value family gatherings, rituals, and celebrations. One participant said, “Their festivals and traditional celebrations seem to be quite similar to ours such as Chuseok that reminds me of our Eid traditions. Their appreciation of rituals and their pride in culture is very similar.”

## **7.2 Theme 2: Cultural Adaptation**

This theme is related to how participants copied or tried some things they saw in K-dramas. Many participants noticed Korean skincare, fashion, food, and entertainment through drama characters. Later, some of them tried these things in their own lives, such as using Korean skincare products, wearing Korean-inspired clothes, trying Korean food, or listening to K-pop. This shows that K-dramas did not only entertain them but also influenced some of their everyday choices.



*Figure 7.2 Mind map of cultural adoption*

### **7.2.1 Sub-theme 1: Beauty and Skincare Products**

The participants were strongly influenced by the image of ideal Korean beauty and skincare activities depicted in K-dramas. The characters often have transparent and radiant skin and beauty routines have been perfectly blended in the dramas that leave viewers intrigued. Most interviewees reported using Korean face masks and toners. One of the participants mentioned using Korean sheet masks and toners.

### **7.2.2 Sub-theme 2: Fashion**

The representation of Korean fashion in the K-dramas made the participants adopt modest and stylish designs. The participants were fond of how Korean fashion emphasizes on modesty, layers, toned colors and shape. This was consistent with the Pakistani values and easy to adapt. The majority of the respondents indicated that K-dramas have directly influenced the wardrobe choices they make. One of the respondents said that even her wardrobe has changed; now she wears more neutral colors and modest styles.

### **7.2.3 Sub-theme 3: Food**

The consumption of Korean food is another aspect of cultural adoption. Traditional Korean dishes are featured in the popular K-dramas. As a result of these portrayals, viewers become interested in Korean food. Korean food including ramyun, kimchi, bibimbap, and teokbokki were frequently mentioned by participants. They mentioned that they tried these recipes at home or visited a Korean restaurant to eat these dishes. One participant shared “I’ve been to Korean restaurants here in Lahore. I’ve tried bibimbap, kimbap, and Korean fried chicken. I also love making ramyun at home”

### **7.2.4 Sub-theme 4: Music and Entertainment**

K-dramas act as a gateway to exposure in the Korean entertainment industry, which includes reality shows and K-pop. Many participants shared that they started listening to K-pop majorly BTS after watching K-dramas. Participants shared that they listen to various K-pop groups including Blackpink, EXO, Twice and Infinite. One participant shared “The first drama I saw had two Infinite members so from there I found Infinite and I listened to a lot of K-pop as well.”

Participants also shared that they watch Korean reality shows as well which includes Running Man and The Return of Superman. One participant shared “After watching a few dramas, I got curious about K-pop. Now I’m a fan of BTS and EXO. I’ve also started watching reality shows like The Return of Superman and Running Man. They’re so entertaining.”

### **7.3 Theme 3: Language Learning**

This theme can be linked with retention and reproduction. Through repeated exposure to Korean dialogues, subtitles, and common expressions, participants remembered basic Korean words and phrases and attempted to use or learn them through apps and online tutorials.

Participants shared that they prefer to watch k-drams with subtitles and as a result they’ve picked up some words such as annyeonghaseyo (Korean greeting) and Saranghae from these dramas. Also, most of the participants shared that they used Duolingo App or tutorials on social media apps (YouTube and Instagram) to learn Korean language. One Participant shared “I’ve picked up a few phrases from dramas, and I’ve even tried using language apps. I wouldn’t say I’m good at it, but it’s fun to learn basic words.”



*Figure 7.3* Word Cloud of responses of language learning question

### **7.4 Theme 4: Desire to Travel Korea**

This theme can be linked with vicarious learning of SCT. Participants said that K-dramas increased their wish to visit South Korea. The cities, food,



resemble familiar life situations. These findings suggest that K-dramas appeal to Pakistani viewers because they offer both familiarity and difference. The Korean setting, language, fashion, and lifestyle feel new, but the family-centered values make the dramas relatable.

These findings can also be understood in relation to Pakistani media consumption patterns. Pakistani dramas have traditionally focused on family relationships, social issues, domestic conflict, morality, and emotional values (Huma, 2015). These themes are familiar to local audiences, but participants' responses suggest that K-dramas offer a different viewing experience through fresh storytelling, visual appeal, diverse genres, and character development. This does not mean that Pakistani viewers reject local dramas. Rather, K-dramas seem to provide an alternative for viewers who want emotionally engaging content that is culturally relatable but less repetitive in plot and presentation.

The appeal of K-dramas also reflects cultural hybridity. Participants did not describe Korean culture as something they wanted to copy completely. Instead, they selected elements that could fit within their own lives, such as modest fashion, skincare, food, respectful behavior, and family-centered stories. This shows that viewers interpret foreign media through local values rather than accepting it passively (Kraidy, 2006).

K-dramas also introduced many participants to Korean cultural products, including K-pop, beauty products, fashion, food, and entertainment. As Kim (2018) found, global viewers of K-dramas often become interested in K-pop, which shows a connection between different Korean cultural products. In this study, some participants also moved from watching K-dramas to exploring Korean music, reality shows, skincare, and food. This suggests that K-dramas can act as an entry point into the wider Hallyu wave.

The viewing habit of K-dramas influenced some participants to explore Korean beauty products. Some viewers said that they tried Korean skincare products such as sheet masks, serums, and toners. This is consistent with Osman and Ismail (2022), who found that exposure to Korean popular culture influenced the purchase of Korean products. Son and Kijboonchoo (2016) also found that the Korean Wave affects cosmetic consumption habits.

However, this influence also raises a critical point. The attraction toward Korean beauty products may increase cultural curiosity, but it may also shape beauty standards and consumer desires among young viewers.

Participants also mentioned some changes in their clothing choices. Some liked the simple, elegant, neutral, and modest styles shown in K-dramas. This shows selective adoption because they did not copy Korean fashion completely. They chose only those styles that matched their own modesty, comfort, and social setting. Food was also mentioned by many participants. Dishes such as ramyun, kimchi, bibimbap, kimbap, and tteokbokki made them curious to try Korean food. Some participants tried these dishes at restaurants or at home. This shows that K-dramas influenced not only viewing habits but also small everyday choices.

The study also found that Pakistani viewers showed interest in the Korean language. Participants mentioned learning basic words and phrases through subtitles, repeated dialogues, apps, and YouTube tutorials. Sughra et al. (2022) similarly found that Pakistani audiences who actively consume Korean media content tend to adopt Korean words and phrases in their speech patterns. However, the language learning reported in this study was mostly basic. This shows that K-dramas may create interest in the Korean language, but deeper learning requires more formal effort.

The desire to visit South Korea was another important finding. Many participants described South Korea as a dream destination and mentioned places such as Seoul, Jeju Island, and Han River. This finding is consistent with Teh and Goh (2016), Ordoyo et al. (2021), and Pablo et al. (2022), who found that K-dramas can influence destination image and travel intention. The desire to visit South Korea also demonstrates expectations of outcomes and self-efficacy and indicates that media has the potential of influencing cognitive and practical involvement (Bandura, 1986). These findings highlight how international entertainment can be used as a cultural exchange tool and influence attitudes, preferences and behaviors.

The findings can also be linked with soft power. K-dramas create a favorable image of South Korea through stories, characters, visuals, food, fashion, language, and tourist places. This influence is not direct or forceful.

It works through attraction and repeated exposure. Nye (2004) explains soft power as influence through attraction rather than coercion, while Jin (2024) argues that digital platforms have strengthened the role of Korean popular culture in South Korea's global image-building. This is how K-dramas create soft power through entertainment.

Social Cognitive Theory helps explain these findings through observation, retention, and reproduction. Participants first observed Korean characters using skincare products, eating Korean food, speaking Korean words, and visiting different places. With repeated viewing, these practices became familiar to them. Some participants later tried selected elements in their own lives, such as Korean skincare, food, fashion, or basic Korean phrases. This supports Bandura's (1986) view that people can learn by watching models and may repeat certain actions when they find them meaningful or rewarding.

This influence is not completely simple. K-dramas help Pakistani viewers learn about another Asian culture, but they can also shape beauty choices, shopping habits, and lifestyle goals. The interest in Korean food, fashion, skincare, and travel may also help local businesses that offer Korean-inspired products or experiences. At the same time, it creates pressure for Pakistani media. If young viewers feel that local dramas have repeated plots, they may look more toward foreign content for new stories and better visuals. In this way, K-dramas support cultural exchange, but they also show that local media needs more variety and youth-focused stories.

## **9. Conclusion**

The research highlights the importance of K-dramas in Pakistan and more so among young Pakistani women between the age of 18-25. The unique narration, familiar cultural issues, and the representation of the Korean culture are similar to Pakistan. It discusses the different K-dramas' effects, including aspects that encourage people to view them, including the relatability of the cultural themes, the adaptation of the Korean culture and the need to learn the language and visit Korea. Factors such as family suggestions, social media edits, peer recommendations, and the original plots of these dramas compel the audience to watch them. K-dramas such as family structure, elders' respect

and modesty are themes that Pakistani audiences can identify with because they are close to Pakistani cultural values. This creates a feeling of identification and justifies their popularity. The research also reveals that the exposure of Pakistani youth to Korean dramas affects them greatly and they have adopted the Korean culture.

## **10. Limitations & Future Recommendations**

This study adds to the existing research on K-dramas and Pakistani audiences. However, there are some restrictions and limitations that need to be mentioned. The research was limited to female viewers only, who are active K-drama watchers, which limits the study since their opinions were not addressed. This restriction will affect the generalizability of the findings to other genders. The study was restricted to the age group of 18-25 years old because this group tends to be more responsive to the global cultural tendencies (Arnett, 2000). Future studies might include more diverse demographics, such as male audiences and older age groups, in order to provide a more comprehensive view of the K-drama effect on Pakistani society. Moreover, the sample size of 25 subjects can restrict the generalizability of the findings.

The research applied qualitative techniques (semi-structured interviews) that may also bring subjectivity and limit the extent of quantitative analysis. Therefore, the findings cannot be applied to the wider Pakistani population. Future research can use a larger sample and survey-based methods to measure the influence of K-dramas more clearly. Statistical tests such as correlation analysis or t-tests can also be used. This study focused only on K-dramas, so future studies can also include other parts of Hallyu, such as K-pop and Korean films. The data was collected from urban participants only, so rural viewers may have different media habits and cultural responses. Additional studies might involve the comparison of urban and rural population groups in order to study the regional differences in consumption of K-dramas.

## **11. Implications & Recommendations**

The results of the study have great implications on how the media shapes culture. Findings indicate that international media facilitate intercultural

attitudes by making Pakistani society more familiar with the Korean culture (Saleem et al., 2023; Sughra et al., 2022). The given trend emphasizes the active spirit of cultural exchange in the digital era and shows the great power that the global media has over the life of people. The Pakistani youth are embracing the Korean language, cuisine, fashion and beauty standards in their daily lifestyles. This assimilation of cultures poses some concerns, especially the possibility of overpowering the local customs and beliefs. The inclination to Korean media content can lead to decreased appreciation of local cultures. This can trigger issues of preserving culture. To address this problem, it is important to establish a media space that honours both the global and the local cultures.

To balance globalization without losing the local culture, it is important to encourage the production and consumption of local media content. Educational institutions and policymakers should consider the inclusion of media literacy classes in the curriculum to educate youth about the ability to critically assess various forms of media. This will make them value domestic and foreign cultures. There are also significant economic implications of this cultural trend. The owners of local businesses can take advantage of the increased demand of Korean fashion, cuisine and beauty products which can enhance the economy. It is however necessary to make sure that such economic changes do not compromise local industries

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## **Reclaiming the Narrative: Deconstructing Anti-Pakistan Propaganda in the Indian Film Dhurandhar I & II**

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### **Abstract**

*Cinema operates as a powerful instrument of soft power, shaping public perception, collective memory, and political discourse through emotionally engaging narratives. This study critically examines the Indian film Dhurandhar I & II (both parts) to explore how popular cinema constructs and circulates anti-Pakistan narratives. Employing a qualitative research design, the study integrates content analysis, narrative analysis, in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) to examine selected scenes, dialogues, cinematography, sound, character portrayals, and cultural representations. The analysis is grounded in soft power theory, media framing theory, and propaganda analysis to understand how cinematic techniques contribute to ideological messaging and national identity construction. Findings indicate systematic historical distortion, emotional manipulation, selective storytelling, and the reinforcement of political stereotypes. IDIs and FGDs revealed strong audience criticism of scenes depicting the ISI, the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, the character of Sardar Rehman and SP Chaudhri Aslam, which participants described as misleading and*

*factually inaccurate. Moreover, participants highlighted the misrepresentation of Liyari culture, particularly through the costumes of the lead hero and heroine, which were seen as culturally inauthentic. The study emphasizes the importance of media literacy, critical viewing practices, and the development of counter-narratives to challenge the influence of politically biased cinema.*

**Keywords:** Cinema, Propaganda, Media Framing, Pakistan, Victimhood, Narrative Analysis, and Soft Power.

## **1. Introduction**

Film is now more than just entertainment as it plays the role of a communication platform in creating political communication and belief systems among social groups. The perception that film is political is one of the issues that have attracted the attention of many scholars who offer their analyses on how films can be framed politically, what films are when viewed politically, and why they matter politically (Li, 2023). Films are a form of communication and expression whose influences go beyond the rational or conscious minds of spectators. From a global political perspective, films can serve as an instrument of soft power in terms of conveying political ideas and ideologies that help to construct international images and legitimate national political positions (Nye, 2004). For example, in South Asia, Indian cinema is unique in its ability to penetrate the region because of its ability to produce numerous movies and distribute them internationally.

Bollywood films are consumed all over South Asia, in the Middle East, in Europe, and North America, thereby giving their ideological content room to traverse different international borders. The past two decades have seen the growth of nationalism, internal and external security themes in Bollywood films, depicting Pakistan as a threatening other that is both insecure and morally corrupt. Many Bollywood movies were screened, and their depiction sarcastically deteriorated Pakistani people that have been credited to Lashkar-e-Taiba for promoting terror activities for religious reasons. Moreover, the Pakistani army and ISI have been perceived negatively since they direct terrorists in blowing up within the Indian borders. In short, “both the US and

Indian media have portrayed a weak image of Pakistan with respect to terror activities after the 9/11 incident” (Safwan & Razzaq, 2023).

The movie *Dhurandhar I & II* can be used to illustrate this point. Although the movie has been marketed as a patriotic thriller, the reality is that the film uses various cinematic elements to advance an ideology. Through storylines, characters, and visuals, the movie depicts Pakistan as the main instigator of terrorism and political instability in the region. This paper analyses the use of cinema in shaping an anti-Pakistan ideology.

## **2. Research Questions**

Following are the research hypotheses of the study:

**RQ1:** How does *Dhurandhar I & II* reconstruct historical events and personalities?

**RQ2:** How does the film employ ideological and political framing of Pakistan?

**RQ3:** How does *Dhurandhar I & II* represent Lyari's culture and identity?

## **3. Literature Review**

According to Nye (2004), soft power is the capacity of a country to persuade or attract others without employing coercion. Soft power differs from hard power in that while the latter is coercive, the former involves the dissemination of ideas and values through various cultural products, such as films, television programs, music, among others. In this context, soft power involves influencing international perceptions through the production of narratives by cultural industries.

Among these cultural industries is cinema whose capacity to deliver ideologically charged messages through entertainment is unmatched, according to (Nye, 2004). It should be understood that unlike hard power, soft power entails the creation of reality through the use of selective storytelling and cultural symbolism. Film-making creates meaning in addition to

presenting selected realities. In other words, ideology is packaged within entertainment, thus allowing ideological content to move around seamlessly. According to scholars, the notion of films as political artifacts may be considered one of the most important areas of research in international politics, whereby the film as a political text is becoming increasingly important rather than a cultural product per se (Li, 2023).

The approach allows understanding the ways in which the cinema shapes people's perception of politics in terms of how it represents global events, national identity, and interstate relations from an ideological standpoint. Films use mechanisms like repetition, the power of emotions, and simplification of the plot to make viewers accept their interpretation of the world, thus preventing any critical analysis. When it comes to the theme of South Asian films, the issue of nationalism is still widely represented in Bollywood cinema. While at the beginning of its history, Indian cinema paid attention to socio-cultural topics, since 1990s, the focus shifted to issues of national security and terrorism. It is worth noting that such tendencies correspond directly to changing geopolitical situations and evolving political discourse in which cinema operates as a tool of promoting national identity and legitimacy of a certain state.

Contemporary Indian cinema has increasingly engaged with politically sensitive historical narratives. Kumar (2025) notes that films such as *The Kashmir Files*, *The Kerala Story*, and *Veer Savarkar* reflect deeper socio-political currents within India. Although these films promote awareness of historical events and national identity, they often present simplified interpretations of complex issues and may reinforce polarized understandings among audiences. Research demonstrates that Bollywood tends to present India as being moral, virtuous, progressive, and heroic at the same time, whereas Pakistan is depicted as an ever-present destabilizer and threat (Kabir, 2019). The movies of Bollywood are not only showing the military forces and intelligence agencies of Pakistan as negative but they are also showing the religious groups of Pakistan as negative (Sial et al., 2013).

In this way, complex historical processes and events are reduced to morality and thus form a very sharp distinction between self and other. It

should be noted that this tendency applies to Bollywood in general and not only to individual movies. Indeed, specific movies made by Bollywood feature Pakistan in an unfavorable light and depict it either as extremist, militant, or politically treacherous (Atif & Shafiq, 2019). All these images rely on stereotypes rather than on history or sociopolitical realities. As a result, Pakistani figures are represented as antagonists.

Framing theory is highly effective in providing insights into meaning construction and diffusion. From Entman's perspective (1993), framing involves the selection and relative emphasis of certain aspects of reality that are to be made more salient in communication texts in order to convey a specific interpretation of a particular issue or situation. Within the cinematic context, framing takes several forms, from narrative construction and dialogue to composition, positioning, and even sound. This combination is essential as far as promoting certain meanings and downplaying others is concerned.

Another powerful theoretical framework to analyse media phenomena is represented by Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model (1988). Unlike framing theory, propaganda models explain how media systems are able to promote dominant political and ideological agendas via systematic filtering processes. As per the above-mentioned model, media content may be influenced by ownership considerations, politics, advertising considerations, and dependence on official sources. These structural forces help produce stories based on dominant ideological assumptions.

In the realm of films, such forces can be found in the form of simple good versus evil, emotionally laden narratives, and repetitions of viewpoints that align with the state. When put together, theories of media framing and the propaganda model provide a strong framework with which to examine the process of constructing ideological messages in films. This sheds light on how cinema can not only entertain but also persuade, by combining affect and politics. As a result, films can serve as powerful tools for moulding perceptions about nationhood, international affairs, and collective memory inside and outside the nation-state.

### **3.1 Research Gap**

While there is an increasing focus on nationalist tendencies in Indian films and Pakistan continues to emerge through propagandistic frames, *Dhurandhar I & II* has been largely ignored within academic discussions. Much of the existing literature focuses on the trend in general in regards to Bollywood nationalism without examining the films themselves. This means that the ideological construction within films goes unexplored. Through this research, an attempt will be made to address this gap through a thorough qualitative analysis of *Dhurandhar I & II* and how its story construction, characters, and images reflect ideological content.

### **4. Theoretical Framework**

The current research is based on media framing theory (Entman, 1993) as well as propaganda studies, particularly as laid out by Herman and Chomsky (1988). When combined, these theories allow for an analysis of how meanings are made through selective inclusion, highlighting, and exclusion in media texts rather than through any neutral rendering of reality. Media framing theory (Entman, 1993) suggests that media highlight some aspects of an event at the expense of other aspects. This theory can be applied in *Dhurandhar I & II* in terms of how characters are highlighted in order to generate either sympathy or legitimacy, how characters are de-emphasized and simplified and how some narratives are highlighted in order to shape the interpretation of the message that is communicated through the ideologies of the film. Finally, propaganda analysis (Herman & Chomsky, 1988) allows us to recognize some of the methods used to convey ideology through films including emotional appeal, repetition, and moral binaries where a complex reality is reduced to something as simple as good versus evil. This simplification allows for easier comprehension of the ideological message within the framework of entertainment films.

### **5. Research Methodology**

A qualitative research methodology was adopted for this paper to examine the ideological content of the film *Dhurandhar I & II* in a detailed and interpretive manner. The qualitative method is appropriate for textual analysis since it offers an opportunity to analyze meaning beyond quantification and statistics.

In the current study, the researcher will examine the interplay of story construction, image construction, and symbolic elements to construct an understanding of ideologies presented through the film. The qualitative method allows the researcher to delve into deeper aspects such as assumptions and beliefs expressed within the film.

The use of this approach facilitates exploration of the ways in which *Dhurandhar I & II* represents politics and culture through storytelling techniques, character development, and aesthetic construction of film scenes. In this case, the film will be analyzed as an ideological and cultural text in which meaning is constructed and communicated to the audience. Qualitative method allows interpretation of symbolic meaning and ideological tendencies of the film.

Purposive sampling was adopted to select participants directly linked to the story/plot of the film. Either they were living in Liyari and were eyewitnesses of the events depicted in the film or they covered the events as journalist. Some of them were from law enforcement agencies who participated in Liyari operation. Political figures were also part of the participants of the FGD and IDIs. Snowball sampling was subsequently used to identify additional participants possessing specialized knowledge of the subject. Data was collected until thematic saturation point was achieved, whereby substantially new themes were stopped to appear and same answers were being appeared from continuous interviews and discussions. Saturation was observed after the tenth interview and FGD. That Indicated depth and ample diversity of perspectives.

## **5.1 Film Analysis**

Scenes in the film *Dhurandhar I & II* which are critical to the political narrative and story construction are selected for qualitative analysis. The selection criteria include their significance in the representation of ideology, development of narrative and representative aspects of the film. Rather than attempting to analyze every aspect of the film within one wide-ranging discussion, the current study highlights key points of significance politically, culturally, or emotionally and explores their contributions to the processes of

meaning-making. The following aspects of the film analysis are considered within the study:

### ***5.1.1 Dialogues and Languages***

This aspect considers how oral interactions contribute to the formation, reinforcement of political positions and meaning construction within the film, depending on the choice of words and speaking style used. For example, one such scene that is politically motivated occurs when the RAW agent and the main protagonist Hamza Ali Mazari (Ranvir Singh), informs the Pakistani woman and the heroine Yalina Jamali (Sara Arjun), “We are not enemies of your country's people, we are only taking action against those terrorists who carry out attacks in India.” This dialogue serves as a clear example of political communication and narrative building.

Though this dialogue seems to segregate people of Pakistan from being terrorists, this dialogue is meant to serve as a means for passing a certain political message. In this movie, Pakistan is shown to be sheltering or sponsoring terrorist organizations, while India is shown to take actions only in retaliation against terrorism. The analysis has found that cinema is used to convey political messages through emotionally appealing heroes.

In another important scene of the movie, the RAW agent Hamza Ali Mazari convinces Rehman Dacoit to join politics. He claims during their talk that the Baloch people have been denied of their fundamental rights since Pakistan's creation and proposes that Rehman Dacoit, a powerful voice for the Baloch community, ought to take political leadership himself instead of backing conventional political figures. The character therefore, chooses to enter politics. From the stand point of political discourse, this scene is a major illustration of narrative construction and framing.

Through the voice of an Indian intelligence officer, the movie frames themes of Baloch identity, political disenfranchisement, and representation, so projecting a certain political perspective to the viewer. Such portrayals could affect how people view the relationship between Pakistan and its province Balochistan, therefore presenting the Indian character as a kind and encouraging one. But this movie's story should also be viewed in the larger political and diplomatic background of South Asia. With arrested Indian

intelligence officer Kulbhushan Jadhav case often highlighted in this respect, Pakistan has repeatedly charged India of involvement in Balochistan and of supporting separatist groups. The scene hence captures a disputed political story and shows how film might serve as a tool of soft power and strategic communication that shapes political perceptions and affects public opinion.

### ***5.1.2 Camera Angles and Lighting***

Within this aspect, specific attention is given to the way visual strategies such as framing and illumination of certain parts of the scene contribute to power relations, emphasize emotions, and signify something symbolically.

### ***5.1.3 Background Music and Soundscape***

In this regard, it is necessary to analyze the contribution of background music to emotion creation, message perception, and emphasis on the ideological aspects of the film.

### ***5.1.4 Character Design, Costume, and Cultural Significance***

This aspect deals with the representation of identity and culture through characters' design, clothing choices, and more broadly cultural meaning. Overall, these four aspects provide an adequate framework for considering the way ideological meanings are created in the film both verbally and non-verbally.

## **5.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)**

The interview sessions carried out through the aid of a semi-structured interview guide. Questions asked included cinematic representation, ideological perspective, character representation, cultural representation, and interpretation of the movie by viewers. The interviews were carried out either face to face or through telephone and internet depending on participants' availability. All information provided by the participants was later transcribed, documented and later analysed. Confidentiality of participants' identity was maintained for ethical and academic purposes, but at some places participant's sentences were quoted with their identity after proper prior permission.

### **5.2.1 Focused Group Discussion (FGD)**

Only one focused group discussion was carried out, involving six participants. Duration of the FGD was 90 minutes. The participants selected for participation in the discussion were purposely sampled from the locals of Liyari, journalists who had covered the events depicted in the film, academia/professionals working in media industry and having expertise to critically analyze media texts as these individuals had worked on covering the real life of characters portrayed in Dhurandhar I & II. FGD allowed the development of common understanding as well as diverse opinions about the ideological stance taken in the movie, the way characters are framed and the way stories are visually presented.

### **5.2.2 In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)**

Ten in-depth interviews were carried out among the participants who were purposively sampled and highly relevant to the theme under study. These included people who possessed contextual knowledge about the topic of interest, i.e., people aware of the social and occupational environment of the area (Liyari), political and police officials, characters themselves or those knowing them in and out and journalists who have worked on covering the real stories of these characters. All these differences helped create a deeper understanding of the film and how it reflects or recreates the ideological and institutional power dynamics that exist in the real world.

## **5.3 Sampling**

In this research, participants were recruited through purposive sampling, while for the purpose of deeper analysis, some participants were selected using snowball sampling. It is worth noting that some participants have experience covering the events and public performances of the historical figures depicted in the film; for instance, Sardar Rehman (Dhurandhar I & II Rehman Dakait), SP Chahdri Aslam, Nabeel Gabol (who is known as Jameel Jamali in the movie), among others. Such hands-on expertise made their contributions meaningful and credible. Participants analyzed the whole storyline of Sardar Rehman as depicted in the movie and its closeness to historical events and news reports. They talked about their audience's

interpretation of politics in the movie, historical accuracy, narrative realism, and cultural authenticity.

## **6. Findings & Results**

The data was subjected to thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-stage model. First, the researchers got acquainted with the data including the interview transcripts, focus group discussions, and excerpts from the film. Second, codes were developed based on the repeating patterns within the data. Third, codes were grouped under certain themes. Fourth, themes were validated according to the research questions and theoretical framework. Fifth, themes were described and given names. Sixth, the results were reported through connecting the participants' answers, film excerpts, and theoretical constructs. In order to increase the validity of the analysis process, triangulation was performed through the use of three sets of data. Film content analysis, FGD, and IDIs.

### **6.1 Phase-1: Getting Acquainted with the Data**

In this phase, the researcher went through an extensive review and reading of all the materials provided. They involved the interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), fieldnotes, and particular scenes from the movie titled *Dhurandhar I & II*. The main concern of the phase was the complexities of the dialogues, the visual depiction of the characters, the choice of costume, the background music, and the emotions of scenes. Moreover, the depiction of Pakistan, ISI, Lyari, Sardar Rehman, and SP Chaudhry Aslam had to be critically analyzed. In this regard, the researcher read, observed and watched the material to gain familiarity with the content and develop ideas.

During this phase, there were specific recurring issues that the participants raised during their responses and point of views. The major recurring issues included the selective historical reconstruction of events, perceived anti-Pakistan narrative portrayal, partial and reconstructed representations of Lyari, and the use of emotional cinematic techniques. All these recurring themes and issues became the basis for the development of the codes in the next phase.

## **6.2 Phase-2: Developing Initial Codes**

Once the researcher was familiar with the data, he developed initial codes drawn from the significant statements and observations made. The coding process took place manually in an effort to identify the repeated words and concepts from the data. It was specifically focused on some central aspects such as ideological and political framing of the movie, emotional manipulations of the movie, and cultural representation among others.

**Table 6.1** *Examples of Initial Codes Generated from the Data Included*

<b>Data Extract</b>	<b>Initial Code</b>
“Film Dhurandhar I & II mein ghalat dikhaya gaya hai”	selective historical reconstruction
Lyari shown only through gang violence	Negative stereotyping
ISI & political leaders shown as linked with terrorism	Demonization of state institutions & Leadership
Actors dress does not represent Baloch culture	Cultural inauthenticity
Slow-motion shots and dramatic music	Emotional manipulation
Indian suffering is foregrounded	Victimhood framing
The film supports anti-Pakistan discourse	Ideological framing

These codes were repeatedly compared and refined throughout the analysis process.

## **6.3 Phase-3: Searching for Themes**

In the third phase, related codes were grouped together to form broader themes. The researcher identified connections between the codes and organized them into meaningful thematic categories. This process helped identify major patterns emerging from the data.

The following broader themes emerged from the analysis:

**Table 6.2** *Developed Themes*

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Developed Theme</b>
Historical distortion, exaggeration, fictionalization	Selective Historical Reconstruction
Demonization, anti-Pakistan discourse, nationalism	Ideological and Political Framing
Stereotyping, cultural mismatch, omission of identity	Cultural Misrepresentation and Erasure
Dramatic music, emotional scenes, victimhood narrative	Emotional Cinematic Persuasion

These themes reflected the dominant concerns raised by participants and observed in the film narrative.

#### **6.4 Phase 4: Examination of Themes**

During this phase, the researcher thoroughly checked all themes for their accuracy regarding the data that had been gathered. Themes were also matched up with what was found during the interviews, FGDs, and in scenes from films. There were some overlapping codes that were re-evaluated. An example of two overlapping codes were selective historical reconstruction and ideological framing since these two had similar ideas but were different in terms of the message that they wanted to send. One was focused on misinformation about facts while the latter was political in nature.

#### **6.5 Phase 5: Defining and Naming of Themes**

All four themes had been analysed, so in this phase, they were all defined and named according to what they entailed. Below is the table:

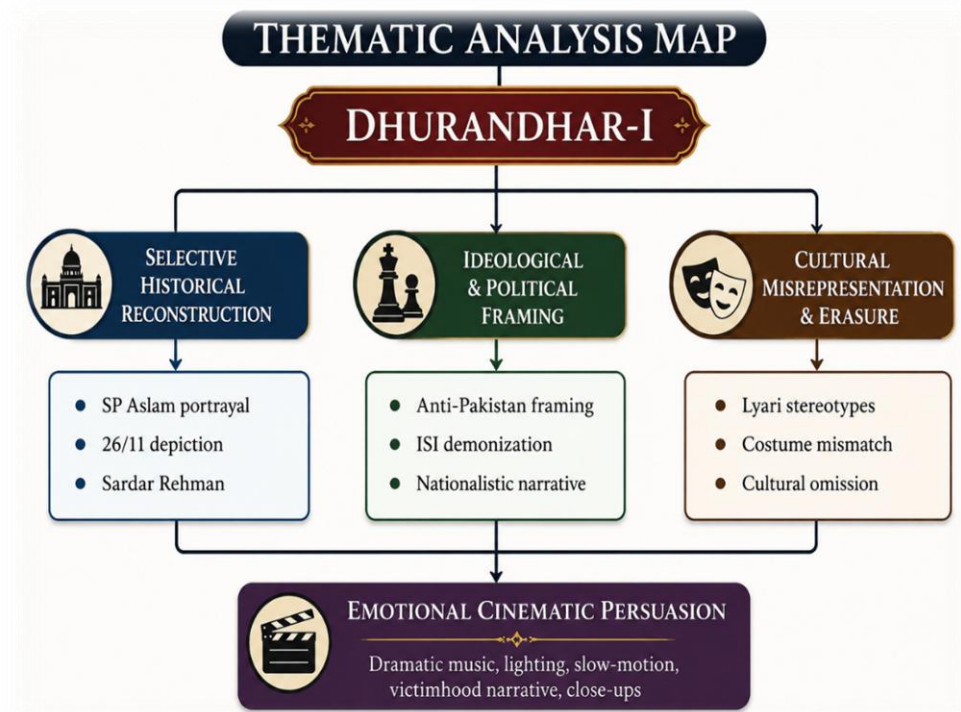


Figure 6.1 Thematic Analysis Map

### 6.5.1 Theme 1: Selective Historical Reconstruction

The participants discussed the selective and exaggerated representation of historical events and people in the film *Dhurandhar I & II*, especially regarding Rehman Dakait (Sardar Rehman), SP Chaudhry Aslam, Aqib Ali Zarwari (Asif Ali Zardari), Nawab Shafiq (Nawaz Sharif), Khanani Brothers, Jameel Jamali (Nabeel Gabol), and Major Iqbal, among others, including references to 26/11 Mumbai attacks. There is a recurring point among the participants that the movie represents history very selectively and through dramatic exaggerations, putting drama before facts. It seems that rather than giving balanced presentations, the film reinterprets the actual events of history in a way that fits its preconceived structure. The concerns regarding this theme are well-founded, since they come from journalists who have personally met the relevant personalities during their professional activities.

For example, senior journalist Shahid Anjum pointed out inconsistencies regarding SP Chaudhry Aslam in the film, saying that: “*Film*

*Dhurandhar I & II mein ghalat dikhaya gaya hai. Main SP Ch. Aslam ke saath kai baar operational halat main bhi mila hoon. Unhon ne kabhi bulletproof jacket nahi pehni.” The movie Dhurandhar I & II portrays it incorrectly. I have met SP Ch. Aslam multiple times, even during operational conditions. He never wore a bulletproof jacket.”* As can be understood, there was obviously a difference between the real-life event of this person's behavior and how he was portrayed in the film. Similarly, there were participants who were personally aware of Sardar Rehman's activities during his life.

In conclusion, it appears that *Dhurandhar I & II* is an ideologically-biased reconstruction of history in the form of a movie, rather than being an objective presentation of facts.

### ***6.5.2 Theme 2: Ideological and Political Framing***

One major theme that comes out of this film revolves around the politicization of narratives where the filmmaker attempts to construct a narrative based upon politics and the role played by various intelligence and leadership roles, including ISI. In the film, India is always shown to be virtuous and heroic whereas Pakistan is viewed as the cause of all violence and terrorism in India. Throughout discussions carried out via Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews (IDIs), participants commented extensively on the narrative style of *Dhurandhar I & II* that tends to make use of a dichotomous ideological representation of “good” and “evil.”

As per the data obtained via FGD and IDIs, these narrative styles are intentional in nature and form an intrinsic part of the film's narrative, dialogues, and cinematography. Various scenes dealing with intelligence operations, border clashes, and terrorist attacks on Indian soil during 26/11 in Mumbai were particularly criticized for the depiction of only one political stance. The participants maintained that such representations lack balance and focus more upon certain events and individuals, leaving out other alternatives. The process of selectivity in depicting events results in the construction of an ideological narrative through hyper-nationalistic discourse.

In this regard, journalists who were interviewed about the issue provided some further evidence. For instance, a senior journalist in Karachi who has covered events of real life and lives of the main protagonist in *Dhurandhar I & II*, Alauddin Hamdam Khanzada stated that the film's

narrative construction restricts Lyari and Pakistani socio-political scenario to the framework of crime and violence alone. According to him, this is what is called selective framing where reality gets distorted and hence India cannot win on the battleground; this is why such films are made. Likewise, a broadcast journalist, Zohail Shah, mentioned that there was exaggerated depiction of gang war in the film where the overall political environment is also criminalized (Names and their statements are mentioned after the prior permission).

Taken together, all of the above observations suggest that the Dhurandhar I & II movie works through ideological frames characteristic of media framing theory – emphasis, selection, and exclusion. Instead of providing an unbiased geopolitical portrayal, the film creates a simplified moral geography in which one particular national identity gets validated, while another is delegitimized. Consequently, participants interpreted the movie as an ideologically loaded text, reinforcing their politically biased views of regional conflicts and security narratives.

### ***6.5.3 Theme 3: Cultural Misrepresentation and Erasure***

This theme addresses the problem of a stereotypical and highly inaccurate depiction of Lyari as a social and cultural entity in the Dhurandhar I & II movie. The participants agreed that the film presents a one-dimensional and oversimplified view of Lyari as a locality associated exclusively with violence and criminal behavior, ignoring its deeper cultural, social, and historical layers. Such a selective presentation of Lyari’s identity can be interpreted as an attempt at cultural erasure, excluding positive elements of its social reality.

The major issue mentioned by journalists in relation to the Dhurandhar I & II movie was that it ignores Lyari’s long tradition of sports, including football and boxing, as well as arts, literature, music, and culture. Specifically, journalists pointed out that Lyari is, “a vibrant center of sport, culture, football, boxing, cycling, skating, music, literature, and arts”

It was stressed, however, that this complex picture of Lyari’s culture and social life is completely missing in the film, focusing instead on the image of a locality associated predominantly with violent gangs and criminal behavior.

Besides structural omission, visual and stylistic representations were also mentioned as problems in Dhurandhar I & II film's production. In this regard, the characterization and costume design associated with the leading female figure, Yalina Jamali, were repeatedly criticized for being culturally unrealistic. According to participants, such representation is: not representative of the traditional clothes that one would wear in Lyari and Karachi. It is perceived as aesthetically disconnected with the socio-cultural reality of the film's setting. Taken together, this theme reveals that, besides representing a flawed perception of reality, Dhurandhar I & II also contributes to silencing the richness of local cultural heritage negatively.

#### **6.5.4 Theme 4: Emotional Cinematic Persuasion**

This theme explains how Dhurandhar I & II employs cinematic techniques to emotionally persuade viewers. As opposed to pure facts, emotional persuasion is said to emerge from dialogue, visual imagery, sound design, and character depiction. Background musical accompaniment, extreme lighting contrasts, the use of slow motion effects, and close-ups were pointed out as the primary mechanisms through which Dhurandhar I & II evokes emotions such as fear, anger, compassion, and nationalism.

Participants of FGD and IDIs indicate that, in this context, cinematic means serve as guides towards emotional engagement with the selected character and storyline. Specifically, background sound is believed to enhance narrative tension, lighting and camera angles underscore power relations, and character portrayal and dialogue contribute to predetermined ideological outcomes. For Example, the scenes starring Pakistani politicians and ISI officials usually use particular cinematic techniques, including background music, lighting effects, camera angles, and visual framing. Often linked with suspicion, hostility, or moral complexity inside the story, these components seem to help to create a certain portrayal of these people.

Thus, participants perceived such cinema tactics as emotional manipulation that suppresses rational analysis by promoting feelings over reasoning and, therefore, reinforces the power of ideology within the film.

## **6.6 Phase 6: Producing the Report (Braun & Clarke Thematic Analysis)**

The last step in thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2006) involves generating a well-written analytical narrative report on the identified themes. In this step, the analyzed data are systematically converted into a report that presents the themes in a meaningful and logically organized way based on sound theory. Thus, unlike in earlier phases when only coding was performed, at this step of thematic analysis, researchers develop an interpretative story about the data collected for meeting the study objectives.

In the current study, this reporting stage involved providing the identified themes, namely selective historical reconstructions, ideological and political framings, cultural misrepresentation and elimination, and emotional cinema persuasion. All the themes were presented using information gathered during Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and In-Depth Interviews (IDIs). Special emphasis was placed on including quotes from the journalists who provided insights about their experiences based on their involvement with related figures or events in life.

The report was additionally strengthened by continuing linking it to theoretical ideas and concepts from media framing and propaganda theories. Such an approach enabled not only describing the findings but analyzing how they were constructed, formed, and conveyed via the use of cinematic techniques. The report therefore represents a comprehensive analysis of Dhurandhar I & II as a film that constructs ideological meaning via its narrative, visual and emotional tactics.

In conclusion, this stage involved making sure that the findings were reported systematically according to the principles and style of academia. Readers would be able to understand, analyze, integrate, and contribute to the scholarly debate about media framing, ideology, and cinematic propaganda.

## **7. Discussion**

It turns out that the results of this research demonstrate that Dhurandhar I & II is a highly framed cinematic text, which generates ideological meanings through the use of selective representation, emotionally charged narration,

and targeted cultural positioning. Through the analysis of four themes mentioned above, selective historical reconstruction, ideological and political framing, cultural misrepresentation and erasure, and emotional cinematic persuasion. The findings reveal that the film was found by the participants to be reinforcing narratives against Pakistan and selective reconstruction of history.

Firstly, research unveils that the selective historical reconstruction of events is in compliance with Media Framing Theory, according to which media texts selectively emphasize or omit certain parts of reality in order to direct interpretation in the intended manner. Participant accounts, particularly of journalists covering SP Chaudhry Aslam and Sardar Rehman, confirm the idea that *Dhurandhar I & II* is characterized by dramatization rather than realistic approach. This means that historical figures are reconstructed through cinema.

Secondly, the film displays the phenomenon of ideological and political framing, the mechanisms of which are described in the book *Manufacturing Consent*. Its dichotomous depiction of heroes and villains, Indians vs. Pakistanis, corresponds with the media ability to simplify geopolitical realities in accordance with dominant moral and political narratives. Moreover, the film frames such controversial issues as the activity of intelligence agencies (ISI) and the event of 26/11 in favor of the dominant discourse.

Thirdly, study suggests cultural misrepresentation and erasure are worth paying attention to. One might see how the process of selective representation works at the level of cultural visibility through *Dhurandhar I & II*'s neglect of the social, sport, and art culture of Lyari. By ignoring these features of local culture, the film creates a narrowly focused image of the region, which might be described as cultural erasure, when positive aspects are ignored and replaced with negative ones. Theme Four: Emotional Cinematic Persuasion

Theme four describes how the audiovisual features of the film are used to persuade and construct the viewers' emotions. Instead of relying on rational

analysis of information, the film uses music, lighting, editing, and close-ups to induce an already set emotion in the viewer.

## **8. Conclusion**

Based on the results presented above, research concludes, that *Dhurandhar I & II* is not just a cinematic representation but rather an ideological product whose creation process involves selective story-telling, emotional persuasion and cultural framing. The film creates a one-sided view of the world in which certain political parties, events, and spaces are selected to form a coherent narrative. Using perspectives such as framing theory and propaganda analysis, it becomes evident that the construction of meaning in the film is done through selective processes of including/excluding certain information. Responses provided by participants, especially those having journalistic experience, confirm the fact that several depictions in the film can be viewed as distorted and historically inaccurate. What is more important, the film's cultural representation is severely flawed since genuine cultural diversity of Lyari is reduced to stereotypes. Finally, audio-visual features play a vital role in emotional persuasion.

## **9. Implications of the Study**

In terms of theoretical contributions, this study is relevant as it contributes to the understanding of media framing by providing an example of how multiple framing techniques are used in one movie from a historical, political, cultural, and emotional perspective. This study also sheds light on the problem of propaganda in modern films as it shows how ideology can be conveyed through mainstream films rather than overtly political movies. Practically speaking, this study draws the attention of the filmmakers towards their obligation of presenting politically and culturally sensitive issues accurately, balanced, and nuanced. This study also underscores the importance of media literacy in helping the audience analyse cinematic works critically rather than accept them as facts. At a more general level, this study draws attention to the soft power potential of cinema as an art form that shapes the national image and geopolitics.

## 10. Limitations of the Study

It has to be acknowledged that the scope of this study is relatively narrow as it only examines one film. Therefore, generalization of findings beyond the examined film becomes complicated. Qualitative nature of the study is another limitation that makes its results non-conclusive as they rely on subjective interpretation of findings and cannot be statistically verified. Finally, while sufficient in terms of reaching saturation, the sample size limits generalizability due to the nature of FGDs and IDIs.

## 11. Recommendations for Future Research

In the context of future research in this area, it is possible to suggest several directions for studies. First, a comparative analysis of various South Asian films would contribute to uncovering of the patterns of ideological framing in these movies. Further, future research would benefit from examining large-scale audience perception in order to verify the role played by films in shaping public opinion. Also, it would be helpful to examine long-term political and psychological consequences of cinematic propaganda. Cross-border representation of South Asia (India-Pakistan relations in particular) in cinematic works may be explored further. Finally, the potential of online and streaming media platforms would be worth investigating.

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# **Reenactment Based Crime Shows Representation on Social Media by Pakistani Channels and its Psychological Effects on Youth of Lahore**

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## **Abstract**

*This research examines the impact of crime shows with reenactments on the attitudes, perceptions and behaviors of Pakistani youth. In the age of media explosion, especially in the form of crime shows, media influence is a significant issue. In a country like Pakistan, where there is an emphasis on cultural and moral values, research on the effects of these shows on young adults is lacking. This study adopts a quantitative method, and uses a survey data collection technique with a sample of 600 undergraduate students from a university in Lahore, Pakistan. The research examines the students' media viewing patterns, exposure to crime shows and their psychogenic responses to these shows. The results show strong correlations between the consumption of reenactment-based crime shows and changes in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of youth in Pakistan. Research findings point towards the need for responsible media and ethical journalism, especially in a culture-based society. This study adds to the debate on media effects through a better understanding of the impact of reenactment-based crime shows on youth in*

*Pakistan. The results have implications for media ethics, production, and the health of young adults in an ever-changing media ecosystem.*

**Keywords:** Reenactment-Based Crime Shows, Media Influence, Pakistani Youth, Media Ethics, and Psychological Impact.

## **1. Introduction**

These days, Pakistani television channels and social media are filled with reenactment-based crime shows. These programs attempt to present real crime stories and involve the audience through the reenactment of the crime. These shows are seen as informative and entertaining, but they can also have a negative impact on viewers, especially the young (Mukhtar & Sheharbano, 2025; Huesmann et al., 2021).

This research seeks to understand the portrayal of reenactment crime shows by Pakistani channels on social media and psychological impacts on the youth of Lahore. This study is significant as it seeks to gain a complete picture of the influence of crime shows on social media and how they might affect the youth of Lahore. The research looks at the type and amount of crime shows, especially those that feature reenactments, on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Lahore's youth are a critical focus for this research as they are exposed to crime shows every day, and may be more susceptible to the potential psychological impact of these shows (Elliott, 2021). This study adds to the growing body of research on the effects of media on the psychological development of young people, and provides insight into potential negative effects of media content.

The results of this study add to the literature on the impact of crime shows on social media and the psychological effects of these crime shows on the youth of Lahore. Further, the research offers suggestions for media representation and awareness of the impact of crime shows on social media. Overall, this study seeks to address the lack of research on the effects of crime shows based on reenactments on social media and the psychological consequences on the youth of Lahore. The study is significant for media literacy programs and policy makers to be aware of the potential dangers of these type of shows and to encourage responsible media representation.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Media has become an indispensable part of people's lives, serving not only as a source of news but also as a mean of entertainment and advertising (Barati, 2023). The more people rely on media, the more influence it gains. However, while there are general guidelines about on what to report, how to report, and when to report, a lack of attention given to what not to report, whom not to report, and when not to report has been observed by researcher.

This irresponsibility of the media has been challenging the future of media ethics. A study has revealed that media coverage of crime shows is reaching at its nadir because of lack of awareness of aspects like what crime to report and how to report it (Fischer & Griffin, 2022). Whether to get rating by the quality of the content or cheap drills is a question to be answered unambiguously. The advent and popularity of re-enactment crime shows in Pakistan's media has brought into question their content and impact on the minds of young people. These shows frequently contain crude, sensationalized and may be inconsistent with the moral and cultural values of Pakistan, an Islamic nation with its own unique cultural values and practices (Huesmann et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the ethical obligations of the media to deliver morally upright and responsible media content are often compromised in the creation of these shows (Digital Media Research Association, 2023). This critical issue calls for research on the psychological effects of such shows on the youth and ethical concerns of media production in Pakistan's cultural milieu. Furthermore, these crime shows often feature graphic violence, sex and romanticized crime, which can normalize violence and crime in the eyes of the viewers, particularly the youth.

## **1.3 Significance of the Study**

This study will shed light on the psychological impact of crime reporting of electronic media on social media by Pakistani television channels on the youth of Lahore, Pakistan. The results of this study will help policymakers, media practitioners and academics to design strategies to handle crime and punishment issues in Pakistan. This research will be useful in understanding the effects of media coverage of crime and punishment on the youth's

attitudes, perceptions and behaviors towards them. The study can assist in raising awareness among the public about the role of responsible media coverage of crimes and punishments. Research can help in designing media literacy programs for the youth to encourage them to think critically and consume media responsibly.

The study will help in understanding the influence of electronic media on the public's attitudes and beliefs towards crime and punishment in Pakistan. This research can add to the body of knowledge on media's impact on public perceptions and attitudes towards different social issues, such as crime and punishment.

## **2. Research Objectives**

Following are the research objectives:

- To examine the representation of crime and punishment on social media by Pakistani TV channels.
- To assess the psychological effects of electronic media's crime reporting on the youth of Lahore, Pakistan.
- To determine the relationship between media exposure and the attitudes and behaviors of youth towards crime and punishment.

## **3. Research Questions**

**RQ1:** Is there any relationship between crime reenactment shows and fear in youth of Lahore?

**RQ2:** Is there any relationship between the content of re-enactment programs and youth's inclination towards seductive activities?

**RQ3:** Is there any relationship Between Content of re-enactments programs and promoting hatred toward crimes amongst youth?

## **4. Literature Review**

In this study, the literature review serves as a comprehensive and critical examination of the existing body of knowledge regarding the influence of crime re-enactment television programs on societal attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors, particularly among young audiences. It provides a systematic

analysis of previous studies, scholarly debates, theoretical perspectives, and empirical findings that have explored the relationship between media exposure and audience responses to crime-related content. By synthesizing relevant literature, the review establishes a strong conceptual foundation for the study and identifies gaps that require further investigation.

The literature review aims to achieve several important objectives. First, it offers an overview of the current state of research concerning the role of media in shaping public perceptions of crime, violence, victimization, and personal safety. It examines how repeated exposure to crime-focused content can influence individuals' understanding of social reality, perceptions of crime prevalence, and levels of fear and insecurity. Second, it contributes to the ongoing academic debate regarding the extent to which media representations of crime affect attitudes toward criminal behavior, law enforcement agencies, and the criminal justice system.

Furthermore, the review explores the psychological and sociological mechanisms through which crime re-enactment shows may influence viewers. In this regard, it draws upon established theoretical frameworks such as the Social Learning Theory, which suggests that individuals may learn and imitate behaviors observed in media content, and the Cultivation Theory, which argues that prolonged exposure to television content can shape audiences' perceptions of reality. These theories provide a theoretical basis for understanding how crime re-enactment programs may affect viewers' cognitive processes, emotional responses, and behavioral tendencies.

#### **4.1 Media's Role in Shaping Attitudes about Crime and Violence**

The media has been shown to have a significant impact on attitudes and perceptions towards crime and violence (Ferguson, 2007). Specifically, crime reenactment shows can perpetuate the idea of a stereotypical and "sensationalized" portrayal of crime. This may result in stereotypes and stigmatization and can affect viewer's opinions of particular groups.

#### ***4.1.1 Violence in The Media and Crime Reenactment Shows on Fear and Behavior***

Exposure to violence in the media can result in greater fear and anxiety, desensitization to violence and even aggression (Anderson, Berkowitz, & Donnerstein, 2003). The parallels to crime reenactment shows can be drawn as such shows tend to concentrate on violent and sensational crimes. Importantly, these shows may contribute to the creation of a culture of fear and anxiety, particularly in vulnerable groups such as children.

#### ***4.1.2 Promotion of Seductive Activities through Crime Reenactment Shows***

A significant issue with crime reenactment shows relates to the potential “promotion” of seductive activities, particularly among young people. Research shows that viewing sexual content in the media may be related to early sexual activity and promiscuity (Strasburger, 2001). As crime reenactment shows often involve sexual offenses, this can have a significant bearing on youth. The depiction of sexual violence as a part of entertainment in these shows can result in desensitization to its impact on society.

#### ***4.1.3 Influencing Youth Attitudes and Societal Perceptions through Crime Reenactment Shows***

Bandura stressed that people can learn from others, particularly when it is rewarded or not punished in the media, which may account for the growing interest in crime reenactment shows (Bandura, 1977).

Another effect of crime reenactment shows is to increase hatred of crimes among young people. Studies have demonstrated the influence of media on attitudes towards justice and police (Brewer, 2013). Media crime reenactment shows can portray crime and justice in a simplistic and biased way, which can result in negative attitudes towards the justice system. This can result in a distrust for the justice system and instigate vigilantism. The representation of crime reenactments in the media has been the focus of much research.

This focus has been on understanding the potential psychological impact of these reenactments on viewers, particularly the young. In this

literature review, we bring together the relevant literature in this domain, including past studies on the representation of crime shows on social media, the social learning theory, the cultivation theory and the psychological effects on youth audiences, specifically of Lahore, Pakistan. Firstly, the portrayal of crime shows in social media is a significant focus in the field of media and communications.

One of the key studies about media-crime relationship is Surette's (2011) work. He proposed that crime representation on the media has a profound impact on people's understanding of crime and justice in the society and that continuous exposure could cause desensitization to violence, or stimulation of crime imitations (Surette, 2011). This is consistent with the Social Learning theory put forward by Bandura (1977), where mass media is being used as a vehicle to learn various types of behaviors, including violence and crime.

#### **4.2 Psychological Effects on People**

Media has been proven to have a significant impact on people's psychology and behaviour. For instance, cultivation theory argues that the media can influence people's view of the world (Gerber, 2011). This theory suggests that the greater the exposure to media, the higher the acceptance to messages depicted on media. Likewise, the social learning theory proposed by Albert Bandura put forward that we learn our social behavior through imitation of others' behavior.

#### **4.3 Behavior psychology and Crime show**

Behavioral psychology is a sub-discipline of psychology that seeks to understand and explain human behavior and how it's influenced by environmental factors, including experiences, reinforcement and conditioning. It places a strong focus on observable and measurable behavior, rather than unobservable mental processes, in the study of human psychology.

There has been evidence that viewing crime shows can influence viewers' attitudes and behaviours. These shows tend to present violence and crime in a dramatised way, which can lead to viewers becoming desensitised

to violence and an overall rise in fear and anxiety in the community (Strom et al., 2016).

A study showed that viewers of crime shows were more aggressive and desensitized to violence than non-viewers (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009). Other research showed that exposure to crime shows increased perceptions of the risk of victimization, even during a time when crime rates were decreasing (Gerbner et al., 1994). Moreover, Bandura's social learning theory posits that people can acquire new attitudes and behaviours through observation, and crime shows offer plenty of opportunities for observing these behaviours (Bandura, 1977). This may contribute to the acceptance of criminal behavior and attitudes, especially among children for whom this type of learning can be particularly influential (Phillips et al., 2015). In summary, the effects of crime show on viewers are mixed, with both positive and negative consequences. But the risks of desensitization, fear and normalisation of crime and criminal attitudes underlines the need for ethical and responsible production and regulation of these programs.

#### **4.4 Use of Vulgar Thumbnails by Pakistani Media on Social Media Platforms**

The use of vulgar and provocative thumbnails on official social media accounts by the Pakistani media, such as shows like “Taftishi,” On Lahore Rung, highlights issues related to the ethical promotion of media content. In recent shows, thumbnails with provocative Urdu headlines like “4 bacho ki maa k sath jismani taluqaat” (Physical relationships with the mother of 4 children), “bivi ny har had par kr di” (Wife crossed all limits), “ghar ma sfai krny ati thi” (She used to come for cleaning at home) and “Nasha kr k larky ny do behno k sath” (After getting high, a boy with two sisters) have appeared. The use of sensational and provocative content to create interest and possibly boost ratings is evident in these thumbnails. But it also demonstrates a lack of morals and social values.

The explicit content of these thumbnails and the suggestive and sensational wording used could have implications for viewers, particularly the young audience who are exposed to such content on social media. These

thumbnails, which promote explicit content, have the potential to normalize explicit content and lead to desensitization of social norms.

## **5. Research Hypotheses**

**H1:** There is an association between crime reenactment shows and fear in youth?

**H2:** There is an association between the content of re-enactment programs and youth's inclination towards seductive activities.

**H3:** There is an association between the content of re-enactment programs and promoting hatred toward crimes amongst youth.

## **6. Methodology**

The study is utilizing a quantitative approach by designing a survey questionnaire. The universe comprises individuals who are active social media users and are either studying or residing in Lahore, Pakistan. The population of interest for this study is a subset of the universe mentioned earlier. It specifically includes male and female university students in Lahore who actively use social media and are often exposed to various forms of media, including crime re-enactment shows on social media platforms. The sample size for this research was determined to be 600 participants. The sampling technique employed for this study was simple random sampling. Data for this research was collected through the use of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire structure was close ended in nature and data were gathered between May and June 2023. The questionnaire was distributed online and face-to – face.

### **6.1 Limitations**

It is essential to acknowledge certain limitations in the methodology. One limitation is the potential for non-response bias, as some participants may choose not to complete the survey. Additionally, while random sampling was used, there may still be inherent sampling biases. However, efforts were made to mitigate these limitations and ensure the validity of the findings.

## 6.2 Reliability of the Tool

To measure the reliability of the survey a test of reliability was applied to all the question. Following is the reliability statistics:

### *Reliability Statistics*

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.793	26

In our survey, the value of Cronbach's Alpha is .793 which is more than the minimum .70 value. Further, reliability of each question was carried out that showed that all the questions fulfilled the reliability of the survey.

## 7. Findings & Results

### 7.1 Demographic results

Demographic results are the statistical data and profile of the research participants or respondents. Demographic results are essential in research as they offer information on the composition and distribution of the sample, and help researchers interpret how different sub-groups of participants may differ in their attitudes, beliefs or behaviours.

**Table 7.1.1** *Demographic Statistics*

What is your Gender?		
Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	429	71.5
Female	171	28.5
Total	600	100.0

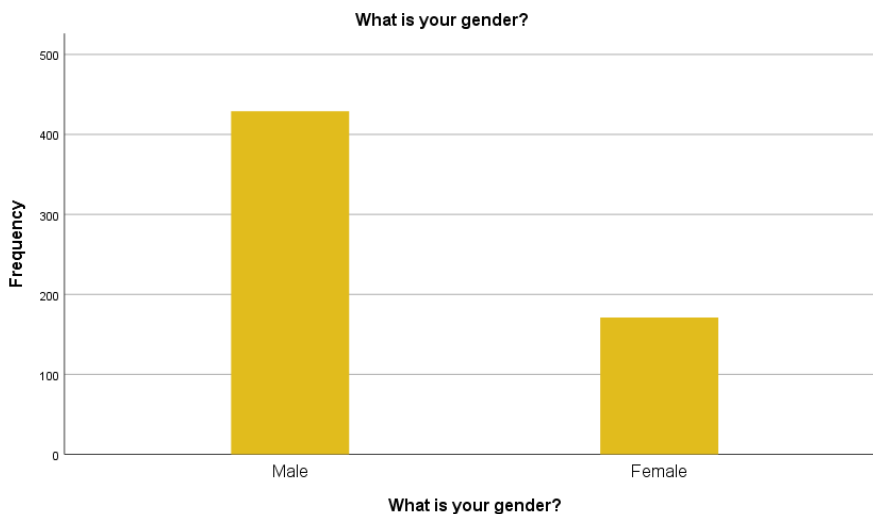


Figure 7.1 Gender Analysis

Above data presents the distribution of a certain characteristic, presumably gender, within a sample size of 600 individuals. The table displays the frequency and percentage of individuals identified as male and female. From the data, it is evident that there were 429 individuals identified as male, constituting 71.5% of the total sample. On the other hand, there were 171 individuals identified as female, making up the remaining 28.5% of the sample.

In summary, the data indicates that within this specific sample of 600 individuals, there was a higher representation of males (71.5%) compared to females (28.5%). This information provides insights into the gender distribution of the observed population.

**Table 7.2** *Have you come across reenactment-based crime shows or crime-related content on social media platforms?*

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Yes</b>	452	75.3
<b>No</b>	142	23.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>99.0</b>

*Crime Re-enactment Shows*

Among the respondents, 594 individuals (approximately 99.0% of the total) indicated that they have exposure to Crime related content on social media platforms. Out of 594,452 respondents (75%) have reported to have seen the reenactment-based crime shows on social media platforms. On the other hand, 142 respondents (around 23.7 % of the total) answered "No" to this question, indicating that they are not amongst the viewers of Crime reenactment shows. It's important to note that the total percentage adds up to 99% which suggest 1% has chosen or skipped the question. A huge number of Youth has been watching these reenactment-based crime shows suggests the importance of this research.

**RQ1:** Is there any relationship between crime reenactment shows and fear amongst youth?

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
Change in Perception of Crime or Safety after Watching Crime Re-enactment Shows	66 (11%)	85 (14.2%)	232 (38.7%)	176 (29.3%)	23 (3.8%)
Likelihood to Avoid Places or Activities due to Fear from Crime Re-enactment Shows:	57 (9.5%)	68 (11.3%)	155 (25.8%)	240 (40.0%)	62(10.3%)
Belief in Increased Fear of Being a Victim of Crime from Crime Re-enactment Shows	33 (5.5%)	57 (9.5%)	198 (33.0%)	226 (37.7%)	67(11.2%)

Doubting or Suspecting Someone due to Crime Re-enactment Shows	47 (7.8%)	116 (19.3%)	204 (34.0%)	187 (31.2%)	32 (5.3%)
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A majority of respondents (38.7%) noticed a change in their perception of crime or safety in their local community after watching crime reenactment shows. A notable portion of respondents (40.0%) expressed a likelihood to avoid certain places or activities due to the fear instilled by crime reenactment shows. A significant number of respondents (33.0%) believe that crime reenactment shows increase the fear of being a victim of crime in society. Many respondents (34.0%) have found themselves doubting or suspecting someone in their mind, relating them to the crimes depicted in crime reenactment shows.

**RQ2: Is there a relationship between the content of re-enactment programs and youth’s inclination towards seductive activities?**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agree
Hard to Discuss or Share Pakistani Crime Show Content on social media due to Vulgar Content	44 (7.3%)	74 (12.3%)	202 (33.7%)	193 (32.2%)	73 (12.2%)
Promotion of Youth's Inclination towards Seductive Activities by Crime Reenactment Shows	28(4.7%)	77 (12.8%)	252 (42.0%)	201 (33.5%)	26 (4.3%)
Changes in Attitude or Behavior towards Seductive Activities	60(10.0%)	107 (17.8%)	239 (39.8%)	141 (23.5%)	37 (6.2%)

*Crime Re-enactment Shows*

after Watching Re-enactment Programs

Perception of Vulgar Content in Crime Enactment Shows for Rating	22 (3.7%)	91 (15.2%)	196 (32.8%)	181 (30.2%)	90 (15.0%)
Inappropriateness of Thumbnails for Pakistani Crime Shows on social media	25 (4.2%)	67 (11.2%)	200 (33.3%)	184 (30.7%)	105 (17.5%)
Frequency of Broadcasting Sexual-Related Crimes in Pakistani Crime Shows	34 (5.7%)	95 (15.8%)	215 (35.8%)	166 (27.7%)	72 (12.0%)
Feeling Uncomfortable or Disturbed by Sexual Content in Crime Reenactment Shows	32 (5.3%)	69 (11.5%)	176 (29.3%)	218 (36.3%)	89 (14.8%)
Comfort in Watching Reenactment Crime Show Along with Mature Family Members	65(10.8%)	160 (26.7%)	224 (37.3%)	103 (17.2%)	30 (5.0%)
Adverse Psychological Effects of Content of Reenactment-Based Crime Shows:	17 (2.8%)	74 (12.3%)	216 (36.0%)	220 (36.7%)	57 (9.5%)

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These interpretations reveal the potential influence of crime reenactment shows on viewers' attitudes, reactions and feelings about crime and safety. The findings highlight the potential impact of the shows on people's perceptions and responses. Many respondents (45.5%) either agree or strongly agree that they don't like to share or talk about the content of Pakistani crime shows on social media with their family because of vulgar content. This could potentially indicate that perceptions about inappropriateness of content could influence their sharing of such content online. Over two-thirds of respondents (75.8%) agree or strongly agree that they think re-enactment programs of crime shows can impact the youth to be more prone to seductive activities. This suggests a generalized view that the shows could influence the attitudes and behaviours of young people.

A significant number (46.0%) either agree or strongly agree that they feel their attitudes or behaviours have changed towards seductive activities as a result of watching reenactment shows. This indicates that some viewers perceive that the shows could affect their own attitudes.

Almost half of the respondents (48.7%) agree or strongly agree that they feel the content of crime enactment shows is mostly vulgar because of channels' desire to increase TRP. This suggests viewers might perceive that sensationalism is occurring to draw attention. Many respondents (50.0%) either agree or strongly agree that they perceive the graphic nature of the thumbnails used for Pakistani crime shows on social media inappropriate. This could indicate that images associated with these shows might be making viewers uncomfortable.

A majority of the respondents (50.7%) agree or strongly agree that they think Pakistani crime shows air more sexual related crimes compared to other crimes. This suggests that viewers think there is an emphasis on this kind of content.

A large number of respondents (44.3%) agree or strongly agree that they have experienced some discomfort or disturbance from the sexual content presented in crime reenactment shows on Pakistani television and social media. This suggests that this type of content may be disturbing to some audience members.

*Crime Re-enactment Shows*

Many respondents (44.8%) either agree or strongly agree that they would be comfortable to watch reenactment crime shows with their adult family members. But the findings also indicate that 37.5% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree, indicating not everyone feels comfortable.

A significant number of respondents (47.8%) either agree or strongly agree that they think content of reenactment crime shows may have a negative (bad) impact on the mental health of viewers. This indicates broad concerns about the possible negative psychological effects of the content.

Overall, the responses indicate a range of views and attitudes towards the content and impact of Pakistani crime reenactment shows. Concerns are related to vulgarity, impact on youth, attitude change, suitability of content and images, and psychological impact. These results suggest that the content and format of these shows are perceived to have an effect on viewers' behaviors, attitudes and psychological health.

**RQ3: There is a relationship between content of re-enactments programs and promoting hatred toward crimes amongst youth.**

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
Belief in Effectiveness of Stricter Punishment in Reducing Crime Rate	21 (3.5%)	39 (6.5%)	150 (25.0%)	188 (31.3%)	177 (29.7%)
Perception of Reenactment-Based Shows and Reporting of Punishment	19 (3.2%)	31 (5.2%)	226 (37.7%)	220 (36.7%)	88 (14.7%)

Promotion of Hatred towards Crime by Content of Crime Reenactment Shows	16 (2.7%)	53 (8.8%)	273 (45.5%)	185 (30.8%)	51 (8.5%)
Effect of "Reporting Punishment" on Promoting Hatred towards Crime:	14 (2.3%)	25 (4.2%)	224 (37.3%)	238 (39.7%)	83 (13.8%)
Appropriateness of Content for Instilling Aversion towards Crime:	15 (2.5%)	40 (6.7%)	332 (55.3%)	164 (27.3%)	27 (4.5%)
Mandatory Reporting of Punishment in Reenactment-Based Crime Shows:?	17 (2.8%)	34 (5.7%)	215 (35.8%)	223 (37.2%)	95 (15.8%)
Emotional Impact of Crime Re-enactment Programs on Anger or Dislike toward Crimes	8 (1.3%)	48 (8.0%)	211 (35.2%)	202 (33.7%)	111 (18.5%)

A large number of respondents (60.3%) either agree or strongly agree that they believe a tougher punishment can help in lowering the crime rate. This showcases a perception of the deterrent effect of harsh punishment.

A significant percentage of respondents (52.6%) either agree or strongly agree that they believe reenactment-based crime shows do not report the punishment of crimes often and are more concerned about the news value of the crime. This implies a belief in sensationalism over legal consequences of the crime.

A significant number of respondents (45.5%) either agree or strongly agree that they believe the content of crime reenactment shows broadcasted on Pakistani TV channels and social media is promoting hatred towards crime. This suggests a significant number of viewers believe these shows may be incensing hatred towards crime.

A large number of respondents (53.5%) either agree or strongly agree that they believe highlighting "reporting punishment" of crime can help in promoting hatred towards crime. This implies that viewers see this as an approach to create hatred towards crime.

The vast majority of respondents (82.6%) either agree or strongly agree that they believe the content of Pakistani reenactment shows is appropriate for instilling strong aversion or abhorrence towards crime. This suggests a strong perception of the capacity of the shows to evoke negative emotions towards crime.

A significant number of respondents (58.5%) either agree or strongly agree that they believe the punishment of crimes should be reported for reenactment crime shows to help deter crime. This implies a belief that the inclusion of the punishment could be a deterrent effect.

Many respondents (52.7%) either agree or strongly agree that they have experienced anger or dislike towards the crimes as a result of crime re-enactment-based shows. This suggests that many viewers have a negative emotional reaction that promotes dislike of crime.

Overall, the survey findings show a variety of views on the effectiveness of punishment, the content and effects of reenactment-based crime shows, and the importance of reporting punishment to promote aversion and deter crime. It appears that many respondents believe that these shows can influence emotions, attitudes, and behaviors related to criminal activities.

## **7.2 Statistical Analysis of Hypotheses**

For the statistical analysis of the data to obtain results, the researcher has applied Pearson Chi-Square.

**7.2.1 Statistical Testing of Hypothesis H1**

**H1:** There is an association between crime reenactment shows and fear in youth of Lahore?

**H0:** There is no association between crime reenactment shows and fear in youth of Lahore?

CHI	SQUARE		TEST
Test (2-sided)	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance
Pearson Chi-Square	30.403 <sup>a</sup>	2	.007
Likelihood Ratio	32.591	2	.003
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.506	1	.220
N of Valid Cases	594	-	-

a. 12 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .06.

**7.2.1 Pearson Chi-Square Test**

The Pearson Chi-Square test yielded a value of 30.403<sup>a</sup> with 2 degrees of freedom (df). The associated asymptotic significance (p-value) was found to be highly significant, measuring at 0.007. This result indicates a significant association between the variables under consideration.

Since the P-value is .007 which is less than the significance level i.e. 0.05. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected and it has been proved that there is an association between crime reenactment shows and fear in youth of Lahore?

**7.2.2 Statistical analysis of Hypothesis 2**

- **H2:** There is an association between the content of re-enactment programs and youth's inclination towards seductive activities.

- **H0:** There is an association between the content of re-enactment programs and youth's inclination towards seductive activities.

### **Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic
Significance (2-sided)			
Pearson Chi-Square	15.243a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	12.521	2	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.067	1	.024
N of Valid Cases	594		

a 1 cell (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.15.

The Pearson Chi-Square test yielded a value of 15.243 with 2 degrees of freedom (df). The associated asymptotic significance (p-value) was found to be highly significant, measuring at 0.000. This result indicates a significant association between the variables under consideration.

The Likelihood Ratio test produced a Chi-Square value of 12.521 with 2 degrees of freedom. The calculated asymptotic significance (p-value) was 0.002, which also indicates a statistically significant association between the variables.

Since P-value is less than 0.05 so the relationship is significant therefore we reject the null hypothesis and prove that there is an association between the content of re-enactment programs and youth's inclination towards seductive activities

### **7.2.3 Statistical analysis of hypothesis 3**

- **H3:** There is an association between the content of re-enactment programs and promoting hatred toward crimes amongst youth.
- **H0:** There is no association between the content of re-enactment programs and promoting hatred toward crimes amongst youth.

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**Chi-Square Tests**

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	Value	df	Asymptotic
Significance (2-sided)			
Pearson Chi-Square	16.907a	4	.002
Likelihood Ratio	16.207	4	.003
Linear-by-Linear Association	15.358	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	577		

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a 1 cell (10.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.87.

Since P-value is less than 0.05 so the relationship is significant therefore we reject the null hypothesis and prove that there is an association between the content of re-enactment programs and promoting hatred toward crimes amongst youth.

The chi-square tests were conducted to examine the relationships and significance of associations between variables. The results indicate that the Pearson Chi-Square test yielded a value of 16.907 with 4 degrees of freedom, and a two-sided asymptotic significance value of .002. Similarly, the Likelihood Ratio test produced a value of 16.207 with 4 degrees of freedom and an associated significance value of .003. Additionally, the Linear-by-Linear Association test resulted in a value of 15.358 with 1 degree of freedom, and a highly significant asymptotic significance value of .000.

These results suggest that there are statistically significant associations between the variables under investigation.

### **7.3 Data Analysis**

Following is the result summary of each hypothesis:

<b>No.</b>	<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
H <sup>1</sup>	There is an association between crime reenactment shows and fear in youth of Lahore?	Accepted
H <sup>2</sup>	There is an association between the content of re-enactment programs and youth's inclination towards seductive activities.	Accepted
H <sup>3</sup>	There is an association between the content of re-enactment programs and promoting hatred toward crimes amongst youth.	Accepted

## **7. Discussion**

Media crime re-enactment shows have become a potent influence on people's attitudes and behaviours related to crime and other issues. The survey responses, from a strong sample size of 600, provide insight into the complex effects of these shows on viewers' perceptions and behaviour.

The survey responses on changes in perceptions of crime and safety following the viewing of crime re-enactment shows evidence a significant change in attitude. A significant [38.7%] of participants expressed shifted perceptions, suggesting the impact of the immersive experience these shows generate. Further, [40.0%] of respondents expressed that they were likely to change their behaviour because of fear resulting from the shows. This highlights a link between television and behaviour in the real world.

The link between crime re-enactment shows and an increased fear of victimisation is evident with [33.0%] of participants reporting this effect. This

highlights the shows' capacity to evoke emotions and elicit fear of personal victimisation. Further, [34.0%] of the respondents indicated they've felt distrust or suspicion towards others based on the crimes portrayed. This highlights how these shows can impact personal relationships and breeding suspicion in the community. The survey also explored broader societal issues. In particular, [45.5%] of those surveyed agreed that crime re-enactment shows can foster hatred of crime. This awareness of the potential influence of media on society highlights the intricate relationship between media and social values. Respondents also provided insights into the significance of reporting punishment in crime re-enactment shows. [37.7%] of respondents agreed that stressing reporting punishment might promote hatred for crime.

This shows a sophisticated awareness of the possible consequences of media representations on public sentiment, with a focus on punishment leading to dislike.

The emotional resonance of crime re-enactment shows is reflected in [35.2%] of respondents feeling angry or disliking the crimes after watching these shows. This highlights the media's capacity to evoke strong emotions and create an emotional attachment to the topic.

Respondents' views on sharing information on social media about Pakistani crime shows also offer some clues. [33.7%] of participants agreed that these shows' graphic nature presents difficulties in sharing with family. This implies that suitability of media content is a factor in sharing and media-related discussions.

Attitudes towards the impact of crime re-enactment shows on young people's propensity to engage in seductive activities were also investigated. [42.0%] of participants agreed that the shows could foster these activities and [39.8%] reported a change in attitude or behaviour towards seductive activities as a result of re-enactment programs. This suggests a perceived relationship between media content and personal perceptions and attitudes.

Respondents' views on the vulgarity of the content for ratings demonstrate consumers' awareness. [32.8%] of respondents agreed that crime

enactment shows include explicit content for higher ratings, and [30.2%] expressed the inappropriateness of the thumbnails used for these shows on social media. These perceptions indicate a discernment of media content and its possible intentions.

As for the regularity of broadcasting sex-related crimes in the crime shows of Pakistan, [35.8%] of the respondents agreed, which can point to an awareness of this aspect. Further, [29.3%] of the respondents felt uncomfortable or disturbed by the sexuality presented in crime re-enactments shows. This indicates the potential for media content to cause discomfort and encourage reflection among viewers.

Attitudes towards being comfortable watching re-enactments crime shows with adult family members were also examined. [37.3%] felt comfortable, while [36.0%] thought these shows' content would have a negative psychological impact on viewers. These survey results highlight the relationship between comfort levels and psychological effects of media exposure.

The respondents' beliefs in the deterrent effect of tougher punishment on crime reflected varied viewpoints. [29.7%] agreed with this statement. Likewise, attitudes towards punishment reporting by crime re-enactment shows were varied. [37.7%] felt that by reporting punishment, it would encourage hatred of crime, while [14.7%] felt that reporting was for news value, not justice.

[55.3%] of respondents acknowledged the potential of crime re-enactment show content to promote dislike for crime. At the same time, [35.8%] felt that mandatory reporting of punishment in crime re-enactment shows could prevent crime, but this suggests a responsibility to promote accountability through media.

The emotional appeal of crime re-enactment shows also included feelings of anger or disgust towards crimes, reported by [35.2%] of participants. This underscores the power of these shows to evoke strong

feelings and potentially promote a greater awareness of the societal consequences of crime.

The detailed survey responses give us a complex picture of the effects of crime re-enactment shows on attitudes, feelings and social values. The shows have the capacity to influence individual attitudes, trigger emotional responses, and potentially contribute to the cultural discourse. The results highlight the intricate link between media representation and the development of individual and collective attitudes, and call for a more critical approach to the media we engage with and its possible impact on society.

## **8. Conclusion**

This study's results highlighted the interaction between the re-enactment-based crime shows and the attitudes, perceptions and behaviours of the youth. This discussion seeks to contextualize the findings in light of existing literature, theories and concepts, and to further understand the nature of the influence of these shows on the youth of Pakistan.

The findings suggest a strong impact of the crime re-enactment shows on the mental health of the youth. Watching violent and extreme shows can result in desensitization and normalization of violence, as per the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977). This vulnerability of the youth to the crime and violence presented by these shows highlights the importance of the Cultivation Theory, which suggests that repeated exposure to media content influences individuals' worldview (Gerbner et al., 1986). The fact that a significant number of respondents reported shifts in their attitudes, fear, and behaviour toward crime and violence suggests the influence of media content on real behaviour, as supported by other studies (Surette, 2011).

This research uncovers a significant pattern in the marketing of explicit, sensational content by re-enactment crime shows. The Bandwagon Effect, which describes how people tend to join a crowd in adopting certain attitudes or actions, may explain the re-enactment-based crime shows' influence (Sunstein, 2002). Sensationalist thumbnails and explicit terms can shape perceptions of social norms, and may challenge traditional ethical norms of

media representation. The Bandwagon Effect might explain why media organizations engage in sensationalism to gain viewers at the expense of a distorted world and the creation of stereotypes (Shi & Lee, 2013).

## **9. Policy & Regulation**

This study's findings have implications for media regulation and production. The ban by the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) of dramas depicting crime is a response to concerns about the potential negative effects of the content on audiences (Dawn News, 2016). The results suggest the need for more rigorous content guidelines to ensure that pornographic content is not used to sell products. Television stations should also take into account the possible impact of media content on society, particularly the young viewers.

## **10. Recommendations**

The influence of crime reconstruction dramas on the attitudes and behaviour of young adults calls for a stronger control on the content broadcasted on TV and online media. Media regulatory authorities such as PEMRA should continue to promote and implement guidelines to avoid crime and graphic content.

The researcher recommends that the media in Pakistan should have in-house training for reporters. Reporters and anchors need to be trained on what they are reporting. Rather than rating techniques, media needs to know about what not to report. Moreover, educational and media organizations should work together to design media literacy programs to educate young people with critical thinking skills that are in line with our social values. These programs should teach viewers how to differentiate between real and fake in crime re-enactment shows, and the possible effect of imitating the behaviour of the characters.

According to the researcher, the aim of Crime re-enactment shows should be to develop hatred of crime. The intriguing interviews of the criminals without knowing the facts and reality cannot be good for profession

and society. Researcher confirms that most of the times crimes are shown but the punishment is neglected.

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4. Authors must adhere to the ethical consideration that the research work submitted to the journal is their original work and is not submitted/presented elsewhere for publication.
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