

**Ethical Guidelines and Practices for Pakistani Television Journalists Reporting on
Domestic Violence**

**Paper presented to the International Communication Association 72nd Annual Conference,
Paris, France, 26th-31 May 2022**

Omer Bin Nasir, PhD Candidate, University of Waikato, New Zealand

C. Kay Weaver, University of Colorado, Boulder, United States

Gareth Schott, University of Waikato, New Zealand

Abstract

Domestic violence is endemic in Pakistan (Baig et al., 2020), yet it took around 66 years of campaigning to acknowledge it as a social problem worthy of legislation. This paper investigates the ethical frameworks in place for Pakistani television news journalists reporting cases of domestic violence. It also examines the provision and structure of training for Pakistani media professionals to support accurate and balanced reporting of such violence. The research for this study comprised in-depth semi-structured interviews with 11 high level television journalists – including news producers. Findings of the study reveal that there were no written ethical guidelines on how to represent incidents of this crime, its victims, or perpetrators. Moreover, due to the paucity of formal professional development opportunities, journalists are mostly limited to on-the-job training in terms of how best to report cases of domestic violence. This also impacts on their approaches to information gathering and dissemination. The research did find that, in comparison to journalists working for national Pakistani news channels, those

associated with international news organizations were more aware of and trained in the need to consider how to cover domestic violence ethically, sensitively and in socially responsible ways.

Key words: Pakistan, domestic violence, journalism ethics, news reporting practices, media practitioners.

Introduction

News reporting of violence against women is considered beneficial as it can highlight and contribute to improvements and change in community's perceptions and reactions to this social problem (Easteal et al., 2021). The media can influence public opinion through what and how it reports (Taylor, 2009), and has been shown to shape public discourse and action around gendered issues (Berns, 2004; Silveirinha, 2007). Audiences have also been found to rely on the media when they lack information about and understanding of any social issue (Brossoie et al., 2012). Therefore, how violence against women is reported matters as the media can educate the public about this issue and especially about abuse that takes place in intimate settings (Gillespie et al., 2013). Media messages about domestic violence can also affect victims and perpetrators as the framing of such violence can influence viewers' perceptions of abusers and victims (Bullock, 2007). When journalists cover domestic violence against women without ethical guidelines, their reporting has the potential to contribute to public misunderstandings regarding the complexities of this issue, and undermine victim's social and physical safety (Lynch, 2002). These further harms victim's mental health (Sutherland et al., 2019). Therefore, ethical guidelines and practices in reporting domestic violence is an important domain of inquiry.

In Pakistan, domestic violence is a criminal offence, yet it remains prevalent with low conviction rates for perpetrators (Perveen, 2021). More than one-third married women participating in national survey reported having experiences of domestic abuse (National Institute of Population Studies, 2019). It includes, but is not limited to physical, psychological, sexual, and economic violence that may occur in intimate relationship. It also covers threats to life, stalking, and cybercrime. Also, sometimes violence can escalate to a point that results in death (Sustainable Social Development Organization, 2022). A rich literature is available on

representations of domestic violence in print and broadcast media especially in the developed world (Berns, 2017; Meyers, 1996; Michelle & Weaver, 2003; Nettleton, 2011; Lloyd & Ramon, 2016; Richards et al., 2014; Schlesinger et al., 1992). However, not much research exists on journalists' own perspective of their reporting of violence against women. Therefore, the aim of this study is to bring forth Pakistani television journalists' reflections on their professional ethical approaches regarding reporting and production of domestic violence news in Pakistan.

In the next sections, we first define media ethics from the perspective of feminist media scholars. Then we give a brief outline of code of ethics and training programs with focus on what is considered best journalistic practices in domestic violence news coverage. We detail the scope of existing ethical guidelines in Pakistan, which is followed by an overview of the state of crime news reporting in Pakistan. These sections are followed by findings, and recommendations-based conclusion.

Media Ethics and Domestic Violence Reporting

Media ethics have been a significant focus of attention among media scholars and communication practitioners (Christians et al., 2020; Wilkins & Christians, 2020). Plaisance (2013) defines ethics as “a form of inquiry concerned with the process of finding rational justifications for our actions when the values that we hold come into conflict” (p. 7-8). Ward (2019) broadly emphasizes the same features stating that ethics involves the “analysis, evaluation and promotion of what constitutes correct conduct and virtuous character in light of the best available principles” (p. 295). He endorsed the idea of media freedom and its application in society in a way that holds journalists responsible for consequences of their reporting.

With a little variation, there is agreement on the basic and broad ethical principles for journalism among media organizations. These principles, among others, include objectivity,

neutrality of reporting and protecting the privacy of news sources (Plaisance & Skewes, 2003; Ross & Cormier, 2010). Detenber and Rosenthal (2014) also emphasized truth telling, accountability, independence, and minimizing harm as basic principles of media ethics. However, these theoretical principles are often not translated into practice as journalists are also likely to be influenced by the commercial interests of the corporate entity that they work for (Vettehen et al., 2008; Callanan & Rosenberger, 2011).

To ensure accurate, and responsible news coverage of domestic violence, media professionals, government regulatory bodies and news organizations in many developed countries have created specific ethical guidelines for journalists reporting on this issue. For example, in 2007, the New Zealand Ministry of Social Development launched a nationwide public communication campaign ‘IT’S NOT OK’ aimed at raising awareness about domestic violence. The campaign also provided training for journalists across New Zealand and formulated ethical guidelines for sensitive and accurate reporting that was designed to dispel myths about domestic violence (Point Research Limited, 2010). Similarly, in 2010, the Australian government started the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Children. One of its aims was to prepare the journalist’s community to deliver better news coverage of domestic violence (Guajardo, 2012).

Broadly, the purpose of these type of guidelines rest on the principle of responsible news coverage to prevent the perpetuation of myths and misconception around domestic violence through developing community intolerance against it (Edmond & Hann., n.d.). They are also intended to ensure the victim’s safety and factual dissemination of information (Sutherland et al., 2016). To positively influence journalism practices, these guidelines recommend that violence

against women needs to be reported within its wider social context while relevant local statistics also need to be included (Ryan et al., 2006).

Research shows that media portrayals of intimate partner violence that contextualize abuser responsibility are more likely to generate public support for victims and encourage those victims to seek help (Carlyle et al., 2014). Adding information that helps humanize victims of domestic violence in news may reduce victim blaming and produce empathy (Palazzolo & Roberto, 2011). On the contrary, reporting practices that dehumanize victims may normalize the violence and hinder attempts to stop it (Anastasio & Costa, 2004). Mediated depictions of domestic and sexual violence pay a key role in shaping public understanding of these issues and can contribute to agencies designing victim support frameworks (Comas-d'Argemir, 2015). In addition, guidelines specific to domestic violence reporting can help with the choice of words that do not trivialize the matter such as “domestic dispute” and “marital discord” (Australian Press Council, 2021).

In Pakistan, empirical evidence indicates the scarcity of emphasis on codes of ethics in media organizations, specifically related to domestic violence (Ashraf & Arshad, 2014; Riza & Taj, 2017). This could explain why sensational depictions of domestic violence are common in Pakistan, why the issue is treated as a ‘private matter, why its coverage tends to reinforce gender stereotypes, victim blaming and why it is given limited coverage (Estes & Webber, 2017; Fatima, 2017; Niaz, 2003; Savage et al., 2017). A report of UNESCO and Media Action Against Rape (2021) on press and electronic media of neighboring country India revealed the similar challenges regarding the lack of ethical guidelines for news reporting there. From the journalists’ interviewed (N = 257) in India, around 14% said they did not have access to any kind of guidelines at all, while only 13% respondents reported they had access to written editorial

guidelines. Verbal instructions were regarded as editorial guidelines by 41% of respondents whereas 14% have had developed their own informal guidelines according to their professional experiences. Also, in Bangladesh, the majority of media organizations do not have any written ethical guidelines while some media outlets practice their own internal codes (El Bour et al., 2017).

In the next section, we discuss legal guidelines for broadcast media pertaining to news and crime depictions, formulated, and monitored by government regulatory authorities in Pakistan. Codes of ethics, where available regarding crime news coverage practiced in private news channels are also outlined, as are any relevant guidelines drafted by non-governmental media development organizations.

Existing Code of Ethics in Pakistan

In 2002, the Pakistani government adopted a policy of supporting a relatively independent and liberalized media. Through enactment of the Freedom of Information Ordinance 2002, two independent regulatory bodies were set up: The Press Council of Pakistan, and the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA). PEMRA was created to facilitate and regulate private media channels in Pakistan and has been mandated to monitor and ameliorate broadcasting standards of media broadcasters and cable television operators.

PEMRA has revised its code of ethics twice, first in 2009 and later in 2015. The last revision comprised 14 pages and 24 main clauses and several subclauses. Despite these revisions, PEMRA has never provided guidance on reporting violence against women. Its code of ethics does, however, address portrayals of crime and violence in broad and generic perspectives. Table 1 below details PEMRA rules pertaining to television news broadcast in relation to crime and violence.

Table 1

Relevant Clauses in Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority's Code of Ethics (Ministry of Broadcasting and National Heritage, 2015)

Clause (Subclause)	PEMRA Guidelines on Television News
4 (4)	News shall be clearly distinguished from commentary, opinion, and analysis.
4 (5)	Unnecessary details and footages [sic] of gory scenes including bloodshed and dead bodies shall not be aired.
8 (3)	Scenes with violence or suffering such as close-up shots of persons brutally tortured or killed shall not be shown.
8 (6)	Identity of any victim of rape, sexual abuse, terrorism or kidnapping or such victim's family shall not be revealed without prior permission of the victim or victim's guardian where victim is a minor.
8 (13)	Licensee shall provide necessary protection gear and training to its reporters, cameramen and other crew deployed for coverage of any crime incidents or conflict zone.
20 (2)	Licensee shall arrange for regular training of its employees that may be helpful in performing their duties better.

Besides the government regulatory body PEMRA, four major media organizations of Pakistan, namely Geo Television Network, Dunya TV, Dawn Media Group and the Express Media Group have code of ethics detailed on their respective websites as a demonstration of their public responsibility. However, these codes of ethics address the reporting of crime incidents in general rather than focusing on domestic violence specially. In addition, the Federal Union of Journalists, Broadcasters Association of Pakistan, Coalition for Ethical Journalism, Press Foundation of Pakistan, Press Council of Pakistan, and Agahi have laid-out professional code of ethics through consultation with journalists' representing numerous media enterprises. They broadly cover professional integrity, unbiased and accurate reporting, working for public and state interest and crime reporting. Again, none of these codes of ethics are specifically concerned with the reporting of violence against women. Rather, the emphasis is on not showing faces and

revealing names of victims of crime and violence, especially in cases of sexual violence. Table 2 below outlines the ethical guidelines related to crime reporting by one association – the News Broadcasters Association - and the four media groups - Geo Television Network, Dunya TV, Dawn Media Group and Express Media Group.

Table 2

Ethical Guidelines Related to Crime and Violence Coverage in Pakistan

News Broadcasters Association	<p>In reporting of violence (whether collective or individual) the act of violence must not be glamorized, because it may have a misleading and desensitizing impact on viewers.</p> <p>News channels will ensure that no woman or juvenile, who is a victim of sexual violence, aggression, trauma, or has been a witness to the same is shown on television without due effort taken to conceal the identity.</p> <p>In reporting all cases of sexual assault, or instances where the personal character or privacy of women are concerned, their names, pictures and other details will not be broadcast/divulged.</p>
Geo Television Network	<p>Violence in any form will be discouraged, or condemned, and where not possible to do both, we should rather be silent about propagating violence.</p>
Dunya TV	<p>H(d) We will not use Dunya screen to create a traumatic, desensitizing or dehumanizing effect that could lead to psychological disorders or unsocial attitudes or behavior, particularly among minors.</p> <p>I(c) Close camera shots which focus on and highlight of gory images of bloodshed, corpses and human organs and severely injured persons, live and or edited will be avoided.</p>
Dawn Media Group	<p>A journalist shall not glorify the perpetrators of any illegitimate acts of violence committed under any grab or cause, including honour, and religion.</p> <p>A journalist shall not print or upload gory images of violence, mutilated bodies, and victims of any tragedy unless this is inevitable and in the public interest.</p>
The Express Tribune (Express Media Group)	<p>The press must not identify victims of sexual assault or publish material likely to contribute to such identification unless there is adequate justification, and they are legally free to do so.</p>

In the next section, we review literature relevant to Pakistani journalists training and styles of news reporting in Pakistan.

Journalists' Training and Style of News Reporting in Pakistan

Feminist media scholars stress the importance of training programs for journalists to improve domestic violence reporting practices (Simons & Morgan, 2018; Sutherland et al., 2017), as media practitioners are likely to be influenced by unconscious gender biases (Easteal et al., 2015). However, a survey of 365 Pakistani journalists identified an overrepresentation of young inexperienced news reporters, who did not have training in reporting even general news while lack of professionalism was cited as a major challenge for media industry (Pintak & Nazir, 2013).

Indigenous literature also shows a tendency of sensational reporting in Pakistan. Ashraf & Arshad (2014) argue that due to lack of organizational checks in Pakistani media, news is not only dramatized but also designed to grab audience attention. Media outlets often focus on attention-grabbing or hyped topics regardless of their importance to public (Yousaf et al., 2019). Mezzera and Sial (2010) argue that “The Urdu media greatly relies on sensationalism... In the electronic media landscape, this trend of sensationalism can also be explained by the pressing need to be the first to deliver breaking news, thereby getting better ratings and winning popularity” (p.39). Pakistani crime news and shows are especially presented in a way that makes it difficult to differentiate between entertainment and reality (Abdullah, 2017). Features such as the re-enactment of events, fast paced editing, eyewitness camera perspective, zoom in camera lens movements, use of music, high-pitched reporter, and voice over narration are common (Hassan, 2018). Within the context of Pakistani media, limited to no research has focused on the use of sources, training provided to journalists and ethical guidelines for reporting on domestic

violence. Therefore, to further understand Pakistani television journalists' ethical perceptions and practices in domestic violence reporting, the following two research questions were investigated:

RQ1: What professional ethics are followed by Pakistani television news journalists while reporting incidents of domestic violence?

RQ2: How are Pakistani television news journalists trained to report on cases of domestic violence to ensure factual, fair, and ethical representation of this social problem?

Method

Preliminary Content Analysis

To guide the research inquiry, a preliminary content analysis of Pakistani news stories was undertaken to examine reporting of domestic violence in Pakistan. Content analysis examines the text to determine frequency of topics and information occur within the texts (Graneheim et al., 2017). This technique focuses on sequence and language of the text to highlight key themes (White & Marsh, 2006). For this purpose, news archives were requested from two Pakistani news channels. Express News provided archived 9 pm news bulletins for the entire month of September 2019. Archives that Geo News provided included domestic violence news stories from various bulletins between January to October 2019. This material provided us with valuable insights into the reporting practices in terms of what type of crime, content, sources, and visuals are used in domestic violence reporting stories on Pakistani television channels. The findings from the content analysis were not a focus of this article, but they did inform the questions that we posed to journalists in addressing our research questions.

In the content analysis of the two television channels reporting of domestic violence (see Table 3), we found that more than 80% news stories revealed the identities of the victims and abusers. Furthermore, in more than half of the news stories, their faces were shown and not

disguised in anyway. Only 3.2% of the news stories mentioned sources of social support, and only 22.5% outlined the legal aid available to victims. None of the stories included local/national statistics of domestic violence. In some cases, domestic violence news was reported in the news headlines, but then no space was given to the story in the rest of the news bulletin.

Table 3

Ethical Issues in Domestic Violence News Reportage, 2019

Ethical issues	Percentage of domestic violence news stories (N = 31)
Identity revealed	80.6
Victim	0
Perpetrator	12.9
Both	80.6
Mention of police report	90.3
Mention of court proceeding	67.7
No visuals blurred	51.6
Parental guidance advised	6.4
Mention of social support	3.2
Mention of legal support	22.5
Mention of medical report	29.0
Mention of DV statistics	0

Interview Schedule, Recruitment, Interviewing and Data Analysis

To examine the ethical practices of Pakistani television journalists' in covering domestic violence, we developed a semi-structured interview. A semi-structured interview has been found useful in facilitating discussion between the interviewer and participant (Galletta, 2012), giving interviewer flexibility to ask follow-up questions based on participants' responses (Polit & Beck 2010; Kallio et al., 2016). We based the semi-structured interview schedule on the findings from the preliminary content analysis of Pakistani news stories on domestic violence, and broadly it

addressed how Pakistani television journalists cover domestic violence news stories and inquired about the reasons for identified patterns of reporting.

The interview schedule comprised of 18 questions and covered the topics of code of ethics, news presentation and representation of domestic violence, reporters' views on domestic violence as a social issue, and the effect of gender on reporting, as well as recommendations for improving coverage of domestic violence. It is important to mention here that this study is part of a larger research project that examines domestic violence representations in Pakistani news media (see Nasir et al., in press) and the imperatives that surround the reporting of this significant social issue. In this paper we specifically address issues of ethics around domestic violence news reporting in Pakistan. Specific to which, journalists were asked about what kind of professional, legal, and ethical aspects are followed in reporting on domestic violence news stories, and what are the consequences of deviations from these?

Since the content analysis identified that only a small number of news stories on domestic violence included domestic violence statistics, health services and support network for victims, questions were asked about this in the interviews. We also inquired about the inclusion of domestic violence news stories in headlines but not in the extended news bulletins. Other relevant questions regarded news production elements used in treating visuals and whether reporters had received professional training. The interview schedule was written in both Urdu (Pakistan's national language) and English, to give respondents choice of expression and aid their understanding and interpretation of the question being posed.

The study included 11 journalists (7 males and 4 females). Recruitment began with informal correspondence between the first author and with Pakistani television news journalists in November 2019. The first author's experience as a television journalist in Pakistan from 2007

to 2017 and acquaintance with media professionals enabled a tentative list of interviewees to be identified and potential participants were contacted through emails and telephone. Interviewees were selected following a purposive sampling approach that focused on achieving participation from the variety of levels of those involved in news production, from director news / head of news to producers/ in charge of newsrooms, and crime/social reporters. This selection was guided by professional experience of the primary author that all ethical and journalistic practices pertaining to news gathering and dissemination are formulated and enforced by news directors in their respective organizations, and producers and reporters would fall into line with these expectations in newsrooms and in the field. Early conversations with potential interviewees explained the research project and sought to determine their general willingness to participate. After conducting two pilot interviews via Skype, the primary researcher travelled from New Zealand to Pakistan to interview the participants. All interviews were conducted in person between February to April 2020.

Seven male and one female journalist who agreed to participate in the research belonged to six Pakistani national news channels. Three additional female journalist participants were affiliated with the British Broadcasting Company (BBC), and Voice of America (VOA). Participants were between the ages of 33 and 55 years and all had between 13 years and 25 years' experience working in news. Two participants had completed an MPhil degree, while eight participants held other masters degrees. One male interviewer was enrolled in a PhD. Interestingly, two prominent female journalists declined to participate in the study. One was serving as the head of news and current affairs at state run television channel, while other was working as the only female bureau chief in the city of Peshawar when approached to participate.

Seven interviews were recorded in the city of Lahore and four in the Capital of Pakistan-Islamabad, all in the journalists' offices. Before each interview, participants signed consent forms and were explained their rights as research participants. Every interview was audio recorded with the participant's permission. Minimum and maximum duration of interviews were recorded to be between 25 to 47 minutes. All interviews were transcribed from Urdu (National language of Pakistan) to English, producing 46,582 words and 182 pages of transcripts

To identify key themes from the interviews, a thematic analysis was employed manually using both a pen and paper technique and applying computer software NVIVO 12 Plus. Thematic analysis involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting central themes emerging through qualitative data (Braun & Clark, 2006). It focuses on anything that carries meaning including textual and visual material (Silverman, 2020). The transcribed interviews were read multiple times to gain familiarity with the wider underlying meaning. Then, after an initial coding, refined codes were developed, which were further collated to generate potential themes in the interviews. After comparing, and refining eight themes, we progressed to name, define, and explore the underlying meaning emerging from transcribed interviews. In the next section, we will discuss findings of the study related to domestic violence reporting practices in Pakistan.

Findings and Discussion

This analysis identified five dominant themes and three sub themes related to the ethics of domestic violence reporting on Pakistani television news channels: editorial guidelines and code of ethics, journalist's professional training, Impact of normative reporting practice, undermining the sources, statistics, experts, and avenues of support. In presenting the findings, we discuss each theme separately by quoting excerpts from the interviews and then unpacking

them. Our findings aim to illustrate ethical issues concerning information gathering for news stories, its production and broadcast.

Editorial Guidelines and Code of Ethics

When asked about ethical guidelines, eight participants from the national news channels were unable to identify the existence of written rules and principles to cover domestic violence reporting. There were some contradictions in their responses, however, especially relating to the matters of revealing or concealing the identities of victims and/or perpetrators. For instance, one male participant explained that “we do not have any carefully drafted ethical guidelines... Usually, we do not disclose victim’s names and avoid showing their faces as it may put them at further disadvantage or in risky situations” (Senior Producer B, Male). However, one female interviewee said that “in domestic violence stories, victim’s name and face are shown to establish torture” (Producer A, Female). The interviewee explained that this meant victims’ faces were shown to highlight physical injuries and to alert the audience to the intensity of the abuse, and that this resulted in the visual identity of the victim being revealed. A male participant presented a different view of this stating that “we don’t hide names but if bruises on body parts are shown in visuals, then we blur it, and in case of blood, we turn the footage into black and white” (Controller News, Male). Interestingly, participants mentioned instances when journalists’ decisions were overridden by their supervisors in relation to ethical reporting practices. One interviewee explained:

I do consult and try to convince my seniors ... not [to] reveal ... names and faces of victims of domestic violence. Sometimes, they do agree with me and sometimes they do not. So, there are no written ethical guidelines that exist in black and white. Therefore, it depends on person to person and varies from organization to organization. (Senior Producer B, Male)

The interviewee did not elaborate on the circumstances under which his managers would decide to reveal the identity of the victim. However, it can be speculated based on the interviews that media organizations are more concerned about not revealing the identities of victims of sex crimes compared to victims of domestic violence as there are clear legal guidelines from PEMRA concerning the former. A female journalist, who had experience working for both national and international media organizations was critical of this lack of ethical guidelines in Pakistani news reporting. She said:

In national television news media of Pakistan, ethics are only discussed in debates but not practiced. They vary from news to news and event to event. And ethics can also be molded as per one's convenience. There are just [a] couple of basic understandings that bloody visuals will not be shown. Or if someone's nose is cut off, then visuals will get blurred. Otherwise, no ethics are followed. (Reporter B, Female)

Unlike journalists working in national news channels, the three interviewees affiliated with international broadcasting networks were comparatively better informed about their organizational guidelines and code of ethics. However, they did not have a set of journalistic ethical guidelines specific to domestic violence reportage. Rather, they have some broadly defined principles to guide them through the coverage of familial matters and issues concerning minors. A female reporter from the BBC stated:

We have editorial guidelines which are available on Google as well. It is a big fat book, sort of a public document around 700 to 800 pages. So, in [the] BBC, editorial guidelines are reinforced consistently. Although, they are not directly related to domestic violence, rather they revolve around [a] range of issues like how to cover rape cases, and how to work with families and children. These guidelines guide us through almost all sorts of things. (Reporter D, Female)

In summary, the responses of interviewees that Pakistani journalists working in national news channels demonstrate a lack of concrete professional guidelines to refer to when covering domestic violence. This is likely to influence their journalistic practices, and lead to idiosyncrasies or different ethical standards being employed. This research also identified

differences of understanding between journalists associated with national and international news organizations in terms of domestic violence reportage. In the next sub-section, the focus is on the theme of consent that was significant in the findings by its absence.

The Concept of Journalistic Consent

Asking for consent before reporting on domestic violence cases from victim(s) did not appear to be a priority among eight interviewees representing the Pakistan's national news media. Only two female reporters who were working for international media organizations described the importance of consent in their practices. One of these respondents stated that "In [the] BBC, first, we ask for consent. Because in [the] BBC, we must work according to international journalistic standards as consent is very important for filming, featuring, or profiling someone's story" (Reporter D, Female). Another female participant who had worked in various national news channels also reflected on the lack of any practice of asking for consent while reporting on domestic violence incidents. She commented:

If I took the consent before reporting an incident of domestic violence, another reporter from a different news channel who is in hurry and could not contact the victim or his family to ask for consent is likely to rely on my report and pass it on to his news channel. This can be damaging for them [reporters and/or victims] sometimes. (Reporter C, Female)

From the response of this interviewee, it was evident that some reporters simply do not see the need to gain consent from those involved in a domestic violence incident before it is reported. Furthermore, many of the interviewees said that if a victim of domestic violence has shared his/her story with one reporter then it might be shared with or picked up by other media organizations as well, and in most cases, without victim's consent. Others do not interview the victim(s) and/or affected families in gathering information about a case and simply pass the details to their news channels. These kinds of practices fail to give victims a chance to tell their own stories as they have experienced them. In addition, the opportunity to contextualize the

incident within the broader social context is lost as minimal background information is gathered about anyone about the case. This practice of using content gathered by another reporter in a news story is referred to as journalistic plagiarism, which is discussed in the next section.

Journalistic Plagiarism

In the interviews Pakistani crime reporters in general were criticized by senior newsroom staff members for what they described as journalistic plagiarism. Journalists were accused of using the same content and visuals of domestic violence stories in their reporting which had been gathered by other reporters, sometimes without the source news channel's consent and acknowledgement. For example, one interviewee stated, "crime reporters have made WhatsApp groups on their smart phones, and they share stories on these groups. That is why every other channel is showing the same content and visuals of crime stories" (Director News B, Male). Another interviewee openly blamed the crime reporters for not investigating crime stories properly and attributed it to their 'laziness':

Frankly speaking, reporters do not go to crime scenes... They remain in offices and file news stories from there. This is a very serious issue. Only if people from newsroom push reporters to go out and find something then they might do it and bring hidden angle on the surface. Otherwise, the whole coverage will be limited to that incident only (Controller News, Male).

It is also interesting that when interviewees talked about these practices, their concern was primarily related to not *seeking another media channel's consent* to reproduce its content. They did not highlight how it might be unethical to share stories of victims with other channels without the consent of the victims themselves. Nor did they comment on how victims could be distressed to find out their personal stories getting shared across multiple platforms and how this could lead to increase the feelings of shame and vulnerability on the part of those victims.

In terms of international journalistic practices, journalistic plagiarism is considered a serious violation of journalistic ethics and fundamental principles (Wasserman, 2006). However, from the accounts of two respondents, it is evident that information gathering and sharing through smart phones and other digital devices is frowned upon but is not penalized or regulated in Pakistan. It could be a lack of will as one respondent pointed out, but the lack of proper editorial guidelines and deficiencies in training opportunities could also be implicitly encouraging such news gathering, and dissemination practices. We will explore the issue of training in the next section.

Journalists' Professional Training

Section 20 and Clause 2 of Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) code of conduct (2015) states, that the “licensee shall arrange for regular training of its employees that maybe helpful in performing their duties better” (p. 8). However, eight interviewees said that they had not received any kind of professional training from their respective news organizations during their journalistic careers. One interviewee (Director News A, Male) described such training as a “luxury”. Another respondent (Director News D, Male) described the situation as a “sad part” of Pakistani journalism. It was also stated that the normal training for a newly hired journalist is typically on-the-job learning regardless of whether individuals have been hired as a reporter or to serve in the newsroom. One respondent stated, “I do not know if any news channel has arranged professional training for its employees” (Senior Producer C, Male). Similar experiences were shared by a female reporter:

I have worked in two national news channels for years. I can assertively tell that no refresher (initial training) courses were organized there. It is quite rare or once in a blue moon kind of a thing for news organizations to train reporting staff through seminars, workshops, or refresher courses, unless, they have received funding from somewhere else, which is highly unlikely. (Reporter B, Female)

Contrary to participants from national news channels, three female participants from international news organizations, shared different experiences. They stated that the BBC and the voice over America (VOA) offer a variety of skill development and career enhancement training courses on rolling basis to all employees relevant to their specialization. They revealed that they have had spent several hours in paid skill enhancement training courses. A female reporter put it this way:

In Voice of America, we must enroll ourselves into various online training programs, which are counted as our normal working hours. These training programs are online because our head office is in Washington, and we are scattered in different parts of the world. Training topics are wide ranging, from copy write issues to ethics and around ongoing and unfolding happenings. (Reporter C, Female).

These contrasting accounts of journalists working in national and international news media indicate the discrepancy in the quality of journalism practices in Pakistan. Despite the national media regulatory body, PEMRA's clear instructions for arranging regular staff trainings, this legal obligation has been grossly overlooked.

In the next section, we discuss how this lack of journalistic training, and unfamiliarity with a professional code of ethics can lead to serious problems in the way that domestic violence is reported.

Impact of Normative Reporting Practices

Some of the research interviewees did reflect on how a lack of training and understanding of news reporting ethics could lead to irresponsible practices that can put the lives of people at risk who reach out to the media for support. For example, a director of news recounted an incident in which identity disclosure in news reporting led to the murder of a couple:

A young couple got married out of love, against the will of their elders and spent three years in hiding from one place to another because of life threats. Then they came to media and news channels gave them coverage but also disclosed their identities. As a result, the couple got police protection and reconciled with their threatening families. Not ten days

had gone by when both the husband and wife were shot dead. In this case, in my opinion, media and the couple, both were responsible for whatever happened. (Director News B, Male)

This tragic example reflects the consequences of journalists and news organizations not considering societal norms while reporting domestic violence. In this case, the couple had been receiving threats to their lives before they approached media for help. However, discounting threats to the couple, and ignoring the fact that love marriages are considered a transgression against family honor by some conservative sections of Pakistani society, their identities and whereabouts were broadcast on national news. The same director of news responded that “media and the couple, both were responsible for whatever happened” (Director News B Male). In blaming the couple, he was referring to their decision to reconcile with their hostile families who subsequently shot the couple.

In another example, a female interviewee from the Voice of America recounted how she had been forced by the newsroom of a national news channel to invade the privacy of the victims of domestic violence in hospitals:

On multiple occasions, when victims were lying on hospital beds in extremely vulnerable conditions and their family members were in shock, I was directed to talk to victims and their families. I was even forced to get undercover to gain information from hospitals. These are not ethics but insensitive demands of newsrooms. (Reporter B, Female)

This example highlights the gaps in understanding the severity of domestic violence and sensitivity needed to cover it, not only among reporters but among wider newsroom staff in relatively senior decision-making positions. Moreover, requiring reporters to go to hospitals to gather information without consent of those involved will likely add to the distress of the victim and their family and invade their personal space. Such practice also sets the wrong precedent for reporters to follow in future. In relation to insensitive reporting, another female reporter from the BBC who had been working in national news channels stated:

Due to lack of ethical practices in our local news channels, this kind of coverage can be expected. Because media persons are very insensitive, and they are quite unaware about that. They think that they are helping victims by raising their voices. (Reporter D, Female)

These examples highlight that sometimes, newsrooms push reporters to get involved in unethical and irresponsible journalistic practices. On other occasions, reporters may make irresponsible decisions independently. It is not to imply that their intentions are bad. They can be misguided because they lack training in how to appropriately represent those associated with news about domestic violence. Next, we will discuss how lack of ethical reporting practices also manifests in the visual representation of domestic violence incidents.

Treatment of Visuals

Nine interviewees talked about the scarcity of any existing rules or principles relating to how incidents of violence against women are represented in television news. In relation to this, most of these interviewees talked about the blurring of victims faces and the non-disclosure of their names as the most common ethical practices adopted by Pakistani journalists. Nonetheless, inconsistencies and errors were highlighted by respondents in relation to this. For example:

In visual presentation of domestic violence stories, if victim is severely tortured then blood is not shown. In some news organizations, victim's face is also blurred. This is considered as the most careful and sensitized presentation of such stories. Other than that, no extra care is practiced. Disclosing victim's name is considered as a normal thing. And in most of the cases, victims' faces are easily recognizable even in blurred footage. (Reporter B, Female)

This was in line with the findings of our preliminary content analysis of 31 domestic violence news stories from Pakistani news broadcasts. That analysis found that the identities of both the victim and perpetrator were revealed in over 80% of news stories and that their faces were shown in full in more than half of the news stories (see Table 3 for details). As detailed above, such disclosure of identities can put victims at increased risk of harm from their abuser and lead to further social stigmatization and marginalization. In addition, it may discourage other victims

from seeking help for fear of being identified. Another interviewee recalled a harrowing incident of intimate partner violence that was insensitively reported:

I can never forget the way we did broadcast visuals of a burnt wife who gave statement to police on hospital bed that it was her husband who did this to her. Ignoring all precautions, we did on-air that visual statement of a burnt woman as it is. That incident was very unfortunate as the woman could not survive and expired in the same hospital bed. (Director News D, Male)

Another female reporter was equally critical of domestic violence reportage and raised concerns about the effects of dealing with this with insensitivity:

Domestic violence stories are shown in a sensationalized way, in terms of language and visuals. Because journalists are very insensitive again and they are unaware about how much they should or should not show. Being insensitive, they even tend to overlook its social impact on victim as if the person is not even a human being and all they do care about is the story. (Reporter D, Female)

These excerpts from the interviews suggest that victim safety and wellbeing are very commonly sidelined when reporting violence against women. The only ethical measures taken are the occasional blurring of faces and hiding identities; and even this is not consistently practiced. This also demonstrates a very limited understanding of the impact of that insensitive reporting practices can have on victims and on news audiences. In a traditional conservative society like Pakistan, where sharing personal information is not appreciated, revealing the identities of domestic violence victims can lead to backlash from their families. It can also hurt their prospects in terms of marriage and employment. In the next section, we explain the circumstances that might influence Pakistani journalists' practice of ignoring authorized and authentic sources, and instead, relying on their own journalistic instincts.

Undermining the Sources

Mostly, domestic violence incidents take place in private settings. Journalists are therefore extremely unlikely to witness these domestic violence incidents. Apart from

interviewing victims, their relatives, or neighbors, journalists may require evidential factual confirmation gained through police, hospitals, or the courts about the incident. However, in Pakistan, where the police are reluctant to register cases of domestic abuse and sometimes even ask for a bribe from victims to register the case, journalists tend to initially report on these stories based on their own investigation of circumstantial evidence. It is not the case that journalists completely ignore the involvement of authorized sources. Rather, a significant proportion of interviewees (n = 9) confirmed that they reported domestic violence incidents without engaging with authorities such as hospitals, police, and courts. For instance, one interviewee stated:

In some cases, if bruises on victim's body and circumstantial evidence is clearly seen then reporter(s) may take the lead to report the incidents even without waiting for police to get involved and register the case in the first instance. In such a situation, any other news channel would also be doing the same thing. (Director News B, Male)

This quote indicates the intention to be the first to report a crime news. This raises the question of how and why such reporting practices are not viewed as unethical by Pakistani journalists?

Why would Pakistani journalists not seek official corroboration before reporting on a domestic violence case? One respondent shared his reflections on this as follows:

We act swiftly and try to report such incidents even before police... media criticism brings police under pressure and sometimes courts will take *Suo Moto* [on its own motion] notices on such cases. I think due to media; many police reports have been registered and victim women got the justice they deserved. (Producer A, Female)

Here, it appeared as if the journalists' perception of ethical coverage of domestic violence is positioned within the concept of exposing the violence and drawing police attention to it. This could be considered a form of media activism which has its own set of ethical guidelines. Interestingly, such "media activism" may hold a different meaning for some journalists due to the absence of concrete journalistic code of ethics. For some, interrogating the police department was

seen as a form of ethical media activism, though others might view it as interference in police business. One interviewee stated:

In most cases police do not register cases; either they demand bribe from the victim, or they try to settle the matter by dealing with an influential perpetrator. And quite frankly, it happens most of the times and then we forget about that news story after its police report gets registered. Because we have always got a huge news flow to look after. (News Controller, Male)

In this excerpt, the interviewee is highlighting corruption in the criminal justice system and disclosing his news channel's inconsistent patterns of not following up on domestic violence stories. Such inconsistent approaches may contradict the principle of media activism that should preferably involve an ongoing focus on the case.

In the next section, we look at the use of other sources which could potentially provide a wider contextual understanding of domestic violence in news reporting, but who are generally muted or underutilized.

Statistics, Experts, and Avenues of Support

Seven interviewees talked about ignoring the inclusion of the latest statistics (regional and/or national) and avenues of support for victims while covering domestic violence news stories. They also reflected on the practice of ignoring the opinion of experts to help contextualize such incidents. As a result, domestic violence is very rarely presented in its broader social and cultural context in Pakistani television news reporting. Not including information about where they can find support prevents victims accessing important sources of help. One interviewee said, "this is unfortunate that neither media organizations provide such information, nor we do have any research about it" (Director News D, Male). Another interviewee recounted: "we don't mention these details in all stories as domestic violence story is usually 30 seconds long" (Producer A, Female).

Our preliminary content analysis found no mention of domestic violence statistics in any news reporting, while avenues of support and the use of experts to contextualize violence were included in less than 5% of the domestic violence news stories (see Table 3 above). However, one respondent mentioned the possibility of incorporating these details by saying that “Yes, we do it only when we do have time, and we want to project and highlight some issue then we do add this information in content” (News Controller, Male). The practices reported by those working in international news channels were very different. For example, one stated:

In Voice of America, we do include these elements. That is the reason, we frequently talk to Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and Punjab Commission on the status of women to get latest statistics and figures for our reports. Punjab government has also launched 1043 free helpline for women. We also include legal information such as relevant laws and applicable clauses in such news stories (Reporter C, Female).

In summary, local journalists are far more likely *not* to provide contextualizing statistics, incorporate expert opinion, or provide information about support available to victims in reporting on domestic violence, unless they were planning a special report on the issue. Yet these are standard news reporting practices for media practitioners from international news organizations operating in Pakistan.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is clear from the responses of research participants that domestic violence news stories are normally reported in Pakistan without taking any ethical guidelines into consideration. Due to a lack of written editorial policies, Pakistani television journalists working in the national news channels do not have any clear guidelines to follow. Journalists tend to restrict themselves to the code of ethics provided by the regulatory authority PEMRA. At most, the emphasis is on hiding identities, blurring faces, and not showing graphic images, though these practices were generally only followed in the reporting of sexual abuse. In case of violation of these ‘standards’, media

organizations and regulatory authorities are not proactive in dealing with such deviations. Training is mostly on-the-job in national news channels. The lack of available training opportunities and ethical guidelines not only hampers journalists' understanding of how best to report domestic violence, but it also leads to irresponsible and insensitive reporting practices.

The widespread lack of adherence to the code of ethics around news gathering and reporting of domestic violence in Pakistani national news channels can have serious consequences. Not gaining the consent of domestic violence victims before covering their stories, intruding into their private spaces, and broadcasting sensitive information can further endanger already vulnerable and at-risk individuals. The failure to provide information on help seeking resources may further isolate and marginalize victims. Additionally, with many journalists having cultivated a "journalistic tradition" of not including regional and/or national statistics, and experts' opinion in their reporting, means that domestic violence is not contextualized as a significant social problem. Consequently, limited reportage of domestic violence tends to reinforce stereotypical narratives, negating the efforts of promoting intolerance against this endemic problem and help-seeking behaviors among victims and their families.

It is important to mention that this study is limited to the responses of 11 Pakistani television journalists. Future studies should include more participants and an equal proportion of female journalists to produce more generalizable results. Future research might also include print media journalists; this could provide a broader understanding of how domestic violence is reported in the news media. To address the ethical issues identified in this research around domestic violence, PEMRA should emphasise developing specific guidelines around reporting of violence against women. This may help inspire private news channels to allocate resources for

staff trainings and to develop their own code of ethics for more ethical, and responsible journalism practices specially in relation to the reporting of domestic violence.

References

- Abdullah, M. (2017). Exposure to television crime shows and crime learning behaviours among juvenile delinquents in Pakistan. *Unpublished PhD Thesis. University Utara Malaysia.*
- Abdullah-Khan, N. (2019, April). Changing Gender Norms by Applying a Relevant Theoretical Discourse for Ending Violence Against Women in Kuwait. In *ICGR 2019 2nd International Conference on Gender Research* (p. 1). Academic Conferences and publishing limited.
- Anastasio, P. A., & Costa, D. M. (2004). Twice hurt: How newspaper coverage may reduce empathy and engender blame for female victims of crime. *Sex roles, 51*(9), 535-542. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-004-5463-7>
- Ashraf, S. A. B. N. (2014). Journalism ethics: Evidence from media industry of Pakistan. *Global Media Journal: Pakistan Edition, 7*(2), 25-36.
- Australian Press Council. (2021) *Advisory guidelines on family and domestic violence reporting.* https://www.presscouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Advisory_Guideline_on_Family_and_Domestic_Violence_Reporting_09072021.pdf
- Berns, N. (2017). *Framing the victim: Domestic violence, media, and social problems.* Routledge.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brossoie, N., Roberto, K. A., & Barrow, K. M. (2012). Making sense of intimate partner violence in late life: comments from online news readers. *The gerontologist, 52*(6), 792-801. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gns046>

- Bullock, C. F., & Cubert, J. (2002). Coverage of domestic violence fatalities by newspapers in Washington State. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 17*(5), 475-499.
<http://doi.org/10.1177/0886260502017005001>
- Bullock, C. F. (2007). Framing domestic violence fatalities: Coverage by Utah newspapers. *Women's Studies in Communication, 30*(1), 34-63.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07491409.2007.10162504>
- Callanan, V. J., & Rosenberger, J. S. (2011). Media and public perceptions of the police: Examining the impact of race and personal experience. *Policing & Society, 21*(2), 167-189. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2010.540655>
- Carlyle, K. E., Scarduzio, J. A., & Slater, M. D. (2014). Media portrayals of female perpetrators of intimate partner violence. *Journal of interpersonal violence, 29*(13), 2394-2417.
<http://doi.org/10.1177/0886260513520231>
- Christians, C. G., Fackler, M., Richardson, K. B., & Kreshel, P. J. (2020). *Media ethics: Cases and moral reasoning*. Routledge.
- Comas-d'Argemir, D. (2015). News of partner femicides: The shift from private issue to public problem. *European Journal of Communication, 30*(2), 121-136.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323114544865>
- Dawn. (n.d.). *Code of media ethics*. <https://www.dawn.com/code-of-ethics/>
- Detenber, B. H., & Rosenthal, S. (2014). Changing views on media ethics and societal functions among students in Singapore. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics, 29*(2), 108-125.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08900523.2014.893776>
- Dunya TV. (n.d.). *Internal code of conduct: editorial guidelines and best practices*.
<http://mediacredibilityindex.com/code-of-ethics/media-entities/dunya/>

- Easteal AM, P., Blatchford, A., Holland, K., & Sutherland, G. (2021). Teaching journalists about violence against women best reportage practices: An Australian case study. *Journalism Practice*, 1-17. <http://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2021.1886866>
- Easteal, P., Holland, K., & Judd, K. (2015, January). Enduring themes and silences in media portrayals of violence against women. In *Women's Studies International Forum* (Vol. 48, pp. 103-113). Pergamon. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2014.10.015>
- Edmond, S., & Hann, S. (n.d.). *Putting Family Violence in Perspective – a project to promote better news reporting of family violence in New Zealand media*.
https://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/fms/Colleges/College%20of%20Business/Communication%20and%20Journalism/JEANZ%202007/papers_abstracts/edmondsfinal.pdf
- El Bour, H., Frey, E., & Rahman, M. (2017). Media landscape in Bangladesh, Norway and Tunisia.
- Estes, M. L., & Webber, G. R. (2017). “More closeted than gayness itself”: the depiction of same-sex couple violence in newspaper media. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 088626051773627. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517736271>.
- Family Violence – It’s Not OK! (n.d.). *Reporting domestic/ family violence guidelines for journalists*. <https://silo.tips/download/reporting-domestic-family-violence>
- The Express Tribune. (n.d.). ***Editor's code of ethics***. <https://tribune.com.pk/code-of-ethics>
- Fatima, A. (2017). News as Infotainment: A Discourse Analysis of Top Pakistani Cable News Channels. *FWU*, 9, 127-138.
- Galletta, A. (2012). Mastering the Semi-Structured Interview and Beyond: From Research Design to Analysis and Publication [Elektronisk version].
- Geo TV Network. (n.d.). *Geoasool*. <https://asool.geo.tv/>

- Graneheim, U. H., Lindgren, B. M., & Lundman, B. (2017). Methodological challenges in qualitative content analysis: A discussion paper. *Nurse education today*, 56, 29-34.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2017.06.002>
- Guajardo, C. (2012). Council of Australian Governments (2010) The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022.
- Hassan, A. (2018). Language, media, and ideology: Critical discourse analysis of Pakistani news bulletin headlines and its impact on viewers. *SAGE Open*, 8(3), 2158244018792612.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018792612>
- Hodgetts, D. J., & O'Neil, D. (2001). Men's family violence: A comparative analysis of news reports and accounts of violent men. *Communication Journal of New Zealand-He Kohinga Korero*, 2(1), 3-23.
- Kallio, H., Pietilä, A. M., Johnson, M., & Kangasniemi, M. (2016). Systematic methodological review: developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 72(12), 2954-2965.
- Lari, M. Z. (2011). *A pilot study on 'honour killings' in Pakistan and compliance of law*. Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation.
<https://archive.nyu.edu/handle/2451/33807>
- Lynch, K. L. (2002). *Children exposed to domestic violence: Resiliency and the mother-child relationship*. University of Montana.
- Lloyd, M., & Ramon, S. (2016). Blame the victim? Domestic violence as covered in The Sun and The Guardian. *The Conversation*.
- Meyers, M. (1996). *News coverage of violence against women: Engendering blame*. Sage Publications.

- Meyers, M. (1997). News Coverage of Violence Against Women: Engendering Blame (Book Review). *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 74(3), 652.
- Mezzera, M., & Sial, S. (2010). Media and Governance in Pakistan: A controversial yet essential relationship. *Initiative for Peace Building*.
- Michelle, C., & Weaver, C. K. (2003). Discursive manoeuvres and hegemonic recuperations in New Zealand documentary representations of domestic violence. *Feminist Media Studies*, 3(3), 283-299. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1468077032000166522>
- Ministry of Broadcasting and National Heritage (2015). Electronic media code of conduct – 2015. <http://www.moib.gov.pk/MediaLaws/coc2015.pdf>
- Nettleton, P. H. (2011). Domestic violence in men's and women's magazines: Women are guilty of choosing the wrong men, men are not guilty of hitting women. *Women's studies in communication*, 34(2), 139-160. <http://doi.org/10.1080/07491409.2011.618240>
- Palazzolo, K. E., & Roberto, A. J. (2011). Media representations of intimate partner violence and punishment preferences: Exploring the role of attributions and emotions. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 39(1), 1-18.
<http://doi.org/10.1080/00909882.2010.536843>
- Perveen- Rakhshinda, RP. (2020). *Violence against women & girls in the times of covid-19 pandemic*. Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation.
<https://www.af.org.pk/PDF/VAW%20Reports%20AND%20PR/VAWG%20Report%202020.pdf?msclkid=cfb9a304b81411ec9121ea5831f4b39e>
- Pintak, L., & Nazir, S. J. (2013). Pakistani journalism: at the crossroads of Muslim identity, national priorities, and journalistic culture. *Media, Culture & Society*, 35(5), 640-665.
<http://doi.org/10.1177/0163443713483654>

- Plaisance, P. L. (2013). Media ethics. *International Encyclopedia of Ethics*, 1-11.
- Plaisance, P. L., & Skewes, E. A. (2003). Personal and professional dimensions of news work: Exploring the link between journalists' values and roles. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 80(4), 833-848.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/107769900308000406>
- Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2010). Generalization in quantitative and qualitative research: Myths and strategies. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 47(11), 1451-1458.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2010.06.004>
- Riaz, S., & Taj, S. (2017). Media Ethics in Pakistan: Exploring Stake Holders' Perceptions. *Global Media Journal*, 10(2), 1-29.
- Richards, T. N., Gillespie, L. K., & Smith, M. D. (2014). An examination of the media portrayal of femicide–suicides: An exploratory frame analysis. *Feminist criminology*, 9(1), 24-44.
<http://doi.org/10.1177/1557085113501221>
- Ross, R. D., & Cormier, S. C. (2010). *Handbook for citizen journalists*. National Association of Citizen Journalists.
- Savage, M. W., Scarduzio, J. A., Lockwood Harris, K., Carlyle, K. E., & Sheff, S. E. (2017). News stories of intimate partner violence: an experimental examination of participant sex, perpetrator sex, and violence severity on seriousness, sympathy, and punishment preferences. *Health Communication*, 32(6), 768–776. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2016.1217453>.
- Schlesinger, P., Dobash, R. E., Dobash, R.P., & Weaver, C. K. (1992). *Women Viewing Violence*. London: British Film Institute; Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

- Silveirinha, M. J. (2007). Displacing the “Political” The “personal” in the media public sphere. *Feminist Media Studies*, 7(1), 65-79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680770601103720>
- Silverman, D. (Ed.). (2020). *Qualitative research*. sage.
- Siraj, S. A., & Hussain, S. (2019). Journalism in Pakistan: Practice and Function.
- Sustainable Social Development Organization. (2022) *Tracking number state of violence against women & children district wise analysis*.
https://www.ssdo.org.pk/_files/ugd/5668b5_1c339bce7ee4432f8b486379ce103104.pdf
- Sutherland, G., McCormack, A., Eastal, P., Holland, K., & Pirkis, J. (2016). Media guidelines for the responsible reporting of violence against women: a review of evidence and issues. *Australian journalism review*, 38(1), 5-17.
<http://doi.org/10.3316/ielapa.276437205812252>
- Sutherland, G., Eastal, P., Holland, K., & Vaughan, C. (2019). Mediated representations of violence against women in the mainstream news in Australia. *BMC public health*, 19(1), 1-8.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-6793-2>
- Taylor, R. (2009). Slain and slandered: A content analysis of the portrayal of femicide in crime news. *Homicide Studies*, 13(1), 21-49. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1088767908326679>
- The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2013 Sindh (Pakistan).
- The Balochistan Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2014 (Pakistan).
- The Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Act 2016.
- The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Domestic Violence Against Women (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2018.
- The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2020, Islamabad (Pakistan).

- Towns, A., & MICP, P. D. C. P. M. (2005, June). Violence against women: Beyond silence. In *Invited paper presented at The Women's Convention, Wellington, New Zealand, June* (pp. 3-6).
- Tunio, N. A. (2020). Domestic violence amid COVID-19 pandemic: pakistan's perspective. *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Health, 32*(8), 525-526.
<http://doi.org/10.1177/1010539520962965>
- Vettehen, P. H., Nuijten, K., & Peeters, A. (2008). Explaining effects of sensationalism on liking of television news stories: The role of emotional arousal. *Communication Research, 35*(3), 319-338.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650208315960>
- Ward, S. J. (2019). Journalism ethics. In *The handbook of journalism studies* (pp. 307-323). Routledge.
- Wasserman, E. (2006). Plagiarism and precedence. *Media Ethics, 18*(1), 16.
- White, M. D., & Marsh, E. E. (2006). Content analysis: A flexible methodology. *Library trends, 55*(1), 22-45. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lib.2006.0053>
- Wilkins, L., & Christians, C. G. (Eds.). (2020). *The Routledge handbook of mass media ethics*. Routledge.
- Worden, A., & Berns, N. (2004). Framing the Victim: Domestic Violence, Media, and Social Problem.
- Yousaf, Z., Yasmeen, G., & Ali, E. (2019). Sensationalizing the News Events by Pakistani Media. *Journal of Media Studies, 34*(1).