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Violence and Gender: A Critical Analysis of Print Media Reportings of Noor Mukadam's Case

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Title

Violence and Gender: A Critical Analysis of Print Media Reportings of Noor Mukadam's Case

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze headlines of print media articles of Noor Mukadam's murder case to understand how it reflected the state of misogyny and patriarchy in Pakistan. The three-dimensional model introduced by Norman Fairclough is used as an analytical framework. The findings of the study have shown the role of print media in portraying a society gasping under the heavy pall of patriarchy and toxic masculinity linked with Noor Mukadam's murder case. Print media chose such titles to provoke thought and discussion to challenge societal norms. The titles suggested a harsh reality where young women were not given the opportunities, respect, or safety they deserved. Print media tried to evoke emotional responses and engage readers. Studies investigating how topics or events are presented are crucial for understanding how media shapes perception by defining issues attributing causes making moral judgments and proposing solutions.

Contents

Introduction

Gender violence is a concern that demands the media's focus and coverage to drive changes in societal attitudes and policies. The portrayal of gender violence in media can greatly impact how the public views this issue. Media holds influence over shaping public opinion and social policies on important social issues and violence is often associated with gender. It is predominantly perpetrated by men with women being the target. However, violence itself is not inherently linked to any gender. Anyone can be a victim when it comes down to domestic violence. Talking about numbers we cannot deny the fact that gender disparity in Pakistan is clear by seeing the country ranking as 141st out of 142 concerning economic opportunities and political participation of women. This disparity undermines the status of women in society and the dominance of men over women. Women globally face a range of acts such as sexual assault by acquaintances, family members, or authorities; and domestic abuse including acts like

spousal homicide, acid attacks, physical harm, threats, and honor killings.

This research sets out an exploration to examine the narrative of print media on conversations specifically regarding gender-based violence in Pakistan. The focus is on how the media covered Noor Mukadam's murder case an incident that shook the nation. Media is often referred to as the pillar of society which plays a role in shaping public opinion.

According to Walby (2012), violence is recognized as a tool used by men to dominate women. Additionally, some men resort to actions to establish their control over women. The patriarchal system necessitates violence for the sake of its existence. Feminist analysis thus states that a patriarchal society is a direct cause of gender-based violence. Pakistan is regularly grappling with gender-based violence. Women and girls experience injustice ranging from abuse to honor killings and sexual harassment. By examining how the print media reported on the Noor Mukadam's case our study will break down the language used in print media titles to understand how these aspects mirror or reinforce views. The analysis framework used in this study is Fairclough's (2003), three-dimensional model.

Media holds influence in shaping narratives including those surrounding gender-based violence. The choice of language used, and the overall presentation can subtly support, or challenge established gender norms thus impacting societal perspectives and behaviors. The extensive reporting on the Noor Mukadam case has sparked discussions nationwide regarding misogyny, patriarchy, and violence against women.

This study goes beyond analyzing media representations; it delves into the influence and accountability of print media and how it shapes the perception of gender-based violence in Pakistan. Through our focus on Noor Mukadams's case, we aim to uncover the interplay among print media, misogyny, and traditional norms providing a nuanced perspective that could guide approaches to addressing gender-based violence. Our goal with this research is to contribute to discussions surrounding gender quality, print media ethics, and social progress.

Statement of the Problem

Media holds influence over shaping public opinion and social policies on important social issues. Gender violence is a concern that demands the media's focus and coverage to drive changes in attitudes and policies. The portrayal of gender violence in the media can greatly impact how the public views this issue. Studies investigating how topics or events are presented are crucial for understanding how the media shapes perception by defining issues attributing causes making moral judgments and proposing solutions. While there have been studies on gender representation, in the media overall there is a notable lack of research specifically addressing print media's influence on readers.

Research Objective

1. To analyze headlines of print media reporting of Noor Mukadam's murder case to understand how these reflect the state of misogyny and patriarchy in Pakistan

Research Question

2. Do the headlines used in print media reporting of Noor Mukadam's murder case reflect the state of misogyny and patriarchy in Pakistan?

Literature Review

Understanding Gender-Based violence

Gender-based violence has emerged as a discussed issue in today's world. To fully grasp the root causes, impacts, and solutions of gender-based violence it is crucial to comprehend the core of the term itself. While gender-based violence is gender-neutral and includes violence based on gender or sexual orientation. The United Nations officials defined "gender-based violence" as any action that leads to or is likely to lead to sexual or psychological harm or suffering for women. Ramzan and Khan (2017) suggested that stereotyped ideologies are exposed with the help of CDA. Ramzan et al. (2020) have confirmed that the manipulation and exploitation of powerful people can be exposed by using CDA in the

language domain. Bhutto and Ramzan (2021) have claimed that the collusive stance of print media is likely to be highlighted by the CDA. Nawaz et al. (2021) explain that power is exposed in CDA. Ramzan et al. (2023) have explained that style matters in literary discourse.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) uses the term gender-based violence to reflect the need that workplace violence should be extended to all targets, irrespective of gender by simply addressing the sexual orientation of either male or female. Gender-based violence is Men or Women acting upon another person or a group of persons on the grounds of their gender is the ILO definition of Gender-based violence It includes violence against women and girls, men and boys, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people, and in many cases other groups of persons whose vulnerabilities are exacerbated by their age, ethnicity, geography, political, economic, social condition or for other reasons.

According to the United Nations Fund for Population Agency, there are distinct phases and types of violence against women starting from before birth to old age. 'Pre-birth: sex-selective abortion; battering during pregnancy: emotional and physical effects on the woman, effects on the birth outcome; coerced pregnancy; mass Rape in war.

Intimate Partner Violence

Is any behavior of a current or former partner that: Results in physical, sexual, or psychological harm. Aggression covers a range of behaviors such as sexual coercion emotional and controlling acts (commonly referred to as domestic violence).

Sexual Violence

Includes one person attempts to start a sexual act against a person's desires, or any other form of coercion regardless of the physical or social context in which it originates.

Sexual Harassment

Often observed in work environments is a type of gender-based violence that involves offensive behavior of a sexual nature towards the recipient.

The Role of Media in Reporting Gender-Based Violence

Noting the role of media reporting in raising awareness of the scale and severity of GBV, reporting on individual forms of gender-based violence dimensions such as domestic violence, sexual violence and harassment, psychological violence, and stalking. Media reporting can differentiate by building resistant efforts via teaching the public about the underlying causes and probability factor being GBV. Like many issues, the media can be the cause, and result, of many of these systemic oppressions, and by addressing root issues like toxic masculinity, misogyny, and power imbalances, it can also be the start of a safer society for all. This knowledge and recognition help in creating awareness, and social pressure towards offenders.

Framing and media frames have gained increasing currency as terms with which to analyze media messages in journalism and mass communication studies, particularly in the past few decades. For instance, Gitlin quoted in has defined a media frame as a persistent pattern of cognition, interpretation, selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol handlers routinely organize, discourse, whether verbal or visual. On the other hand, Litvinenko (2012) says that media frames are not seen as the fundamental unifying clues for news content, which furnish content, and suggest what the issues are with selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration. Meanwhile, he defined the term from the work of Nikonov (2013) which is media frames as the crucial consolidating concepts that journalists routinely utilize in their bids to endow meanings to specific events and issues. Miller & Reichert, (2013) state likewise that media frames are fundamental unifying designs or storylines because they suggest what an event or an issue really entails in a particular society.

This specific approach to viewing a media frame as part of the everyday reality of a given community allows for describing the initial stages of work related to its creation. First, it is important to consider the nature of the community as a constant construct that

is defined primarily by the media framework in place. At the same time, the changing content of this framework because of the ongoing work by the local press shapes the everyday reality of people living in this community. This understanding can be supported by the official definition of news assuming the existence of existing values in the form of media frame characteristics. D"Angelo (2012) describes news as a socio-cultural construct, which is presented to society in the form of the work of journalists and their corresponding media framework. In this way, the latter is actively affecting the everyday realities of millions, and working with any media frame is in many ways an attempt to adjust them, having a set of opposed frames as a starting point.

Critical Discourse Analysis Approach in Print Media Studies

Communication is considered an activity because it is an active process, which needs to be acted upon. Thus, language use as a form of communication can also be referred to as an activity, a social act, or even a practice Richardson, (2007). The medium of one's use of language becomes either spoken or written discourses, which Gee and Green ([1998](#)) in Odebunmi and Ajiboye ([2016](#)) stated that news is written to do something. A media discourse is an interaction, whether it is spoken or written, and whether is done on a broadcast medium in which; the discourse is aimed at a non-present to the readers, listener, or spectators. Even though the discourse is aimed towards the recipients, very often the audience usually pays or cannot answer back the discourse producers, but this again is also changing due to new media technology.

Critical discourse analysis is a central part of media discourse research investigating "taking a critical stance relative to media discourses." It is essential to be critical of the messages we receive from our fabricated mass media or print media on a continuous basis. Given that media discourses are public, it is no wonder that so many conversation analysts concentrate on investigating media talk as a kind of institutional talk that is similar to other instances of talk, both mundane and institutional. The very fact that media talk is

recorded is what appeals to discourse analysts, and that appeal increases with the increase in the availability of newspapers, radio programs, and television broadcasts on the Internet.

Print Media and Noor Mukadam's Case

The print media painted the portrait of a society gasping under the heavy pall of patriarchy and toxic masculinity with its coverage of Noor Mukadam's murder case. The media noted that among the lessons women are taught in Pakistani society is the duty to submit to men, who are held to be superior to women in the family. A window into overarching societal ills in Pakistan was tied back into how this was a relevant case to use to talk about how pervasive violence against women was and how little movement had been in solving this case. The print media had some folks cover up the Noor Mukadam case as a mirror of the widely spread patriarchy and misogyny in Pakistan. Noor Mukadam was butchered to death and her murder was emphatically presented as an expression of the deeply entrenched misogyny rife in Pakistan. The media has also underlined violence against those women, who raise their voices for their rights. The case led to widespread protests in Pakistan and was described as the latest incident in a "gender terrorism epidemic" at the time.

The print media took its time to draft the long story of the tragic sequence of events that led up to the brutal killing of Noor Mukadam. To the nightmares and to the travesty of justice, the public response, the grisly events of the incident, the hearing, the investigation, the government. It was publicized as a prime example of the violence and harassment endured by women in Pakistan. The incident, moreover, made the media wonder if Noor would have caught the attention of the national media if she had not been born into an influential family or if her father had not been a diplomat. The case was also cited to highlight the culture of high-handedness of influential people who live above the law in Pakistan would justice be served this time, the local media asked. To conclude, the print media did a major favor when it made the case to provide a means to get the case under wider attention for the public; right in

considering the wider Indigenous issue of the patriarchy and the misogyny belt which has also brought the detailed study about the case that had happened.

Gender–Neutral Violence

Gender-neutral violence is the kind of violence that deals with human beings of any gender. This consists of any sort of violence, physical or emotional, mental, or sexual, perpetrated on someone but not on the grounds of their gender even if the term is used in a 'gender-neutral' way, the impacts and repercussions of violence can be significantly shaped by gender stereotypes which are prevalent within a society. Historically we have discussed violence with women as the central focus, while too women have to acknowledge them. But it is equally crucial to keep in mind that political violence is gender-blind. Violence may not necessarily be gender-related but the manifestations may be diverse, from physical abuse, and emotional abuse to sexual abuse. This can include environments such as homes, workplaces, or in the public and they may be the work of individuals or groups.

When we better recognize and address gender violence we can take steps towards creating a peaceful society for everyone. This involves challenging norms and stereotypes that justify violence, such, as the misconception that men are not victims of violence or that certain forms of violence only affect women.

It is important to note that advocating for awareness of gender violence does not mean disregarding targeted interventions for types of gender-based violence. Instead, it should complement these efforts by promoting an understanding of violence and its impact on individuals of all genders. In essence, gender-neutral violence affects everyone equally highlighting the need to address it collectively. This is a stride, towards a world where nobody lives in fear of such harm.

Role of Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a system of society or government in which men hold power and women are largely excluded. Violence in patriarchal societies mainly takes the form of expressions of power and control, especially in the hands of men over women. It reinforces ideas that create a culture in which violent oppression can be viewed as both inevitable and as the least disruptive means of asserting control, enabled by and leading to acts of violence ranging from abusive to harassing to assaultive behavior. But it is important to realize it is not only women who suffer under patriarchy that also force men into rigid masculine expectations. Societal expectations to manifest 'manliness' can morph into toxic masculinity, where aggression, hyper-emotional unavailability, and dominance build up to a frustration skip and explode in a fury of violence.

Role of Matriarchy

Matriarchy refers to a hierarchy in which women hold primary power, a definition that differs from some cultural and academic interpretations of matriarchy. Matriarchal societies are indeed a rarity at present cues point to their increased presence coming just over and above the horizon. In such societies, women usually had the last word in the running of the community, and family structures were based on matrilineal descent. Indeed, there can still be violence within matriarchal societies, but the dynamics of violence might be changed. Having said that, I do think it is important to also note here that matriarchy does not in this case mean male subjugation. In fact, it looks toward an egalitarian society where power is equally distributed. Gender-neutral violence is possible in both patriarchal and matriarchal societies. The violence is not endemic to either system, but rather inherent in the power imbalances & improperly used authority. The solution to gender-neutral violence is a path to gender equality in society, respecting all social classes, and confronting the toxic culture of oppression.

Research Methodology
Research Design

Qualitative research design is used to analyze the role and functions of the print media discourse on reportings of Noor Mukadam's murder case. For data collection titles of five internationally published

articles are used. These include *The Guardian, T-Magazine, Arab News, Think Global Health, and Narratives.* The print media role and building narrative in each of these articles were analyzed using Fairclough's (1989) Three-Dimensional approach to Critical Discourse Analysis. These articles were selected based on accessibility, availability, regularity, distribution, and contents that are relevant to the subject matter under study.

Sampling

According to Mason ([2010](#)), sampling is a principle and procedure through which a researcher identifies and chooses the relevant data source from which they can generate data by using the chosen methods. This study follows a qualitative research method in which data is collected through convenience sampling with non-probability. Instead of choosing participants or content randomly or in a systematic way, convenience sampling is based on accessibility and ease of inclusion.

Data Collection Tool

A data collection tool is a method or tool used to collect information from a person or place. The data was collected from online print media. This type of method involves systematically examining forms of communication to document patterns objectively.

Data Collection Procedure

For data collection titles of five internationally published articles are selected which include: *The Guardian, T-Magazine, Arab News, Think Global Health, and Narratives.*

Data Analysis Method

The quantitative data is applied to analyze print media articles by using Fairclough's (2015), three-dimensional model.

Data Analysis

This chapter offers a close analysis of the titles of print media text. Analysis has been concerned with the language in use and the patterns involved in socially constructing the version of reality. Discourses are hidden and disseminated in texts. By applying Fairclough's three-dimensional model researchers have analyzed the text through description, interpretation, and explanation.

Description

The analysis of the text itself, including grammar, syntax, lexicon, phonological features, literary devices, and images. Description First, consider what the text itself deals with, and what is the language like. Is it emotive, persuasive, friendly, or demanding? Or have any literary devices been used? Or what is the headline? A type of examination that aims to depict the characteristics of a specific language without passing judgment on its correctness, clarity, or persuasive nature. Description typically serves as a step in critical discourse analysis preceding *Interpretation* and *Explanation.*

Table 1

Sample	Article	Title
1.1	The Guardian	Pakistan reckons with its 'gender terrorism epidemic' after the murder of Noor Mukadam
1.2	T-Magazine	Where vicious misogyny rules the roost
1.3	Arab News	No country for young women
1.4	Think Global Health	Pakistan's Femicide Crisis
1.5	Narratives	A Femicide Epidemic?

(Sample 1.1, *The Guardian*) The sentence "Pakistan reckons with its 'gender terrorism epidemic' uses the pronoun 'its' to refer to Pakistan. Such pronoun is used to indicate possession or association. In the next phrase "gender terrorism epidemic" is a metaphor. Further in the sentence writer does not explicitly contain modality which refers to the expression of possibility, necessity, or ability. However, the surrounding context and the use of phrases like "reckon with" and "after murder" convey a sense of urgency and necessity in addressing the issue of gender-based violence. In this title (reckons, gender, terrorism, epidemic, murder) are considered nominalization.

In (Sample 1.2, *T-Magazine*) uses the metaphor "rules the roost" comparing it with the image of a bird ruling its roost to describe the dominance and control of vicious misogyny in Pakistan. In this title (vicious, misogyny, rules) is the nominalization.

In (Sample 1.3, *Arab News*) the sentence itself can be considered a metaphor. "No country for young women" is a figurative expression. The modality in this sentence is implicit.

In (Sample 1.4, *Think Global Health*) the term "Femicide Crisis" is a nominalization. It transforms the verb "kill" from the root of "femicide" and the adjective "critical" from the root of "crisis" into nouns.

In (Sample 1.5, *Narratives)* the term "Femicide Epidemic?" is used as a metaphor.

Interpretation

During the interpretive stage, the aim is to understand the metaphor's meaning and its intended purpose. So, interpretation is generated through a combination of what is in a text and the analyst's interpretative procedures. Fairclough ([1989](#)) lists six types of interpretative procedures where each result in different yet related types of interpretation: (1) social orders; (2) interactional history; (3) phonology, grammar, and vocabulary; (4) semantics, pragmatics; (5) cohesion, pragmatics, and (6) schemata.

 (Sample 1.1, *The Guardian*) In "Pakistan reckons with its 'gender terrorism epidemic' after the murder of Noor Mukadam" the writer tries to deliver the notion that Pakistan is facing extreme violence towards women. Declaring a state of emergency and alarming situation. An uncontrollable act of violence Pakistan is dealing with after the murder of Noor Mukadam.

In (Sample 1.2, *T-Magazine*) "where vicious misogyny rules the roost" underlines the prejudice towards women, immoral behavior, and dominance over women. "rules the roost" compares it with the image of a bird ruling its roost to describe the dominance and control of vicious misogyny in Pakistan.

In (Sample 1.3, *Arab News*) "No country for young women" is a figurative expression portraying that the society is unsafe, dangerous, or discriminatory towards young women. The use of "No Country for" sends a concrete and strong statement that the specific country is not for young women to live in. Although it does not directly show the action to any specific subject. However, the phrase "No country for young women' refers to a societal or systemic agency that discriminates or marginalizes young women.

In (Sample 1.4, *Think Global Health*) the term "Femicide Crisis" is a nominalization. It transforms the verb "kill" from the root of "femicide" and the adjective "critical" from the root of "crisis" into nouns. The writer tries to sum up the action and its critical nature into a single concept. Again, the statement credits the crisis to Pakistan as a country by declaring that the issue is a national one.

In (Sample 1.5, *Narratives)* the term "Femicide Epidemic?" is used as a metaphor. Epidemic word is generally used for the widespread of a disease, but here it is used to imply the widespread killing of women. "Femicide" is defined as intentional killing by an intimate partner. Here writer uses the question mark to express doubts or uncertainty about the actual situation.

Explanation

The explanation is the third and last stage of Fairclough's model in CDA which comes after description and interpretation. This stage attempts to focus on social and cultural practices responsible for producing a particular text. It deals with the relationship between social context and interaction

with social determination, and their social effects (Fairclough, 1989; p. 26)

"Pakistan reckons with its 'gender terrorism epidemic' after the murder of Noor Mukadam" In (Sample 1.1, *The Guardian*) the statement declares that Pakistan has entered the phase of a gender terrorism epidemic after the murder of Noor Mukadam. The writer conveys a whole negative image of Pakistan with its gender discrimination and by (gender) here they mean woman who is the target of terrorism. Noor Mukadam case is quite controversial, and it is linked with other murder cases that happened in the same week where the spouse was the murderer, which flamed the entire world on national and international levels.

In the following (Sample 1.2, *T-Magazine*) "Where vicious misogyny rules the roost" the writer also tries to show patriarchy in Pakistan and how women treated horribly by always blaming women no matter what the event is the thinking that women would always have done something wrong. Pakistan is again targeted, and the equality system is again questioned. The writer tries to build a narrative on how women in Pakistan face inequality and prejudice not just today but in a misogynistic mindset that has so deeply rooted for many years.

In all of the headlines i.e. of samples 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, *Arab News, Think Global Health, and Narratives*, one thing is common and that is Pakistan is not a place to live for women. The title written by *Arab News* "No Country for Younger Women" is a powerful statement to draw attention to issues of gender inequality, discrimination, or violence against women particularly younger women in Pakistan. Several reasons can be highlighted to decode the agenda of the writer. The writer chooses such a title to provoke thought and discussion to challenge societal norms or to draw to overlooked issues. The title suggests a harsh reality where young women are not given the opportunities, respect, or safety they deserve. The writer tries to evoke emotional responses and engage readers. "Pakistan Femicide Crisis," and "Femicide Epidemic?" both these titles refer to the intentional killing of women because of their gender. The addition of 'crises' indicates that the situation is severe

and does require urgent attention and action. The lack of accountability for perpetrators, societal norms that give the right to gender-based violence, and the failure of the justice system.

Conclusion

Based on Fairclough's Three-dimensional Framework, the study analyses the headlines of print media reporting on Noor Mukadam's murder case. The print media painted the portrait of a society gasping under the heavy pall of patriarchy and toxic masculinity with its coverage of Noor Mukadam's murder case. Pakistan was declared as no more safe country for a young woman to live in. All the headlines used in these articles are sending an extremely dangerous image of Pakistan, globally. Pakistan's current population of 240 million of which 117 million exactly half of the population are females which means all these women are unsafe and deal with brutality every day. While some label this as an 'epidemic' or 'femicide,' it is important to delve deeper into such cases to understand the complexities involved.

It is shown in a report that perpetrator Zahir was previously involved in several sexual harassment and rape cases which led to his deportation from the UK. Zahir Jaffer has shown violent behavior multiple times in court as well. It is argued that Zahir is mentally ill, and his violent behavior is because of his mental illness. In Pakistan, overlapping legal systems are riddled with loopholes. The phrase "Justice delayed is justice denied" is absolutely relevant in this case. The murder occurred on July 20, 2021, and despite the high-profile case, the legal proceedings have been slow leading to public impatience and frustration. Pakistan ranks 153 out of 156 countries on the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap index in 2021, which shows the disparities in access to justice, education, and employment. The horrific nature of the Noor Mukadam case illustrates why Pakistan's criminal justice system needs drastic reforms. Authorities need to show that they are serious about combating violence against women and that begins with stepping back from the yet-again swiftness and finality of the death penalty. Rather, we must ensure

that crime prevention and response happen better at each moment.

Limitations and Delimitations

This research has some significant limitations due to the narrow scope of sources used for analysis. Only five published articles were included in the study which may not provide a comprehensive view of the subject matter. This limited data restricts the ability to draw general conclusions. As a result, the outcome of this research should be seen through the lens of limited sample size and the risk of sampling bias. The delamination of the study lies in its focus on the headlines of the articles without analyzing the whole text interpretation and explanation of the article. By excluding these aspects, the research aims to deal with headlines of print media articles of Noor Mukadam's murder case to understand how it reflects the state of misogyny and patriarchy in Pakistan.

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