



Framing Violence against Housemaids in Pakistani Print Media: A Content Analysis of Daily Jang and Dunya News

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Abstract

This study explores the framing of violence against housemaids in two prominent Pakistani newspapers, Daily Jang and Dunya News, using content analysis guided by framing theory. The objective was to analyze the depiction of violence against housemaids and assess the impact of these portrayals on public perception and policy discussions. A comprehensive review of articles published over the year 2023 identified predominant frames, including responsibility and human interest, which were quantitatively analyzed to determine their frequency and context. The analysis revealed that both newspapers frequently employ the responsibility frame, with Daily Jang using it in 94.77% of articles and Dunya News in 92.31%, underscoring a narrative focus on accountability. The human interest frame was also significantly utilized, present in 85.33% of reports in Daily Jang and 61.54% in Dunya News, which personalizes the plight of the victims and elicits empathy from readers. A chi-square test was conducted to compare the reporting frequency of violence between the two newspapers, yielding a chi-square value of 0.059 with a p-value of 0.808, indicating no significant difference in the reporting frequency on this issue between the two outlets. These findings suggest that the use of specific frames potentially guides public opinion towards recognizing the severity of the issue and supporting legislative and social reforms. The study concludes that media framing in Daily Jang and Dunya News significantly shapes the discourse surrounding violence against housemaids, influencing both public perception and policy formulation. The responsible use of framing in media reporting can thus play a critical role in advocating for the rights and protection of housemaids, emphasizing the need for ethical journalism that contributes to societal change.

Keywords: Media Framing, Violence against Housemaids, Pakistani Newspapers, Content Analysis, Public Perception, Policy Influence, Daily Jang, Dunya News, Human Interest, Responsibility Frame

Introduction

The concept of media framing serves as a lens through which audiences interpret messages conveyed through news reporting. According to Entman (1993), framing involves the selection and salience of particular aspects of a news story that are highlighted to promote a specific problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation. This process plays a crucial role in shaping public discourse, especially on social issues that require significant public attention and policy intervention. In Pakistan, one such pressing issue is the violence against housemaids, a topic that involves complex dynamics of gender, class, and legal inadequacies (Entman, 1993). Housemaids in Pakistan, often from impoverished backgrounds, find themselves in highly vulnerable positions, subject to exploitation and abuse. Their plight, however, is inconsistently reported in the national media, which varies significantly in how it frames these abuses—ranging from a human rights violation to a domestic dispute. This inconsistency can influence public perception and governmental response to the broader issues of labor rights and human rights within the country (Siddiqui, 2018).

Importance of Media Framing in the Pakistani Context

Pakistan's media landscape plays a pivotal role in shaping the narratives around social and political issues. How media outlets choose to report incidents of violence against housemaids can either mobilize public opinion and lead to policy changes or reinforce existing prejudices and inaction. The portrayal of housemaid violence in Pakistani print media, therefore, does not merely report events but constructs public understanding and societal discourse about domestic work, class inequalities, and the rights of women.

The framing of violence against housemaids in Pakistani media also reflects broader socio-political dynamics, including the interplay of media freedom, political influences, and societal norms. Given the socio-cultural backdrop of Pakistan, where patriarchal norms are entrenched and class distinctions are pronounced, the media's role becomes even more critical. It has the potential to challenge the status quo by highlighting the systemic nature of such violence and advocating for a shift in both public sentiment and policy direction (International Labour Organization, 2013). Media outlets, by choosing certain frames over others, influence not only how the public perceives these incidents but also how policymakers prioritize responses to them. For instance, if the media consistently frames housemaid abuse as isolated incidents of criminal behavior, policy responses may focus narrowly on punitive measures against individual perpetrators. Conversely, framing these abuses as indicative of broader systemic issues related to gender inequality and labor rights can lead to more comprehensive policy initiatives aimed at structural reform (D'Angelo, 2002).

In-depth studies, such as those by the International Labour Organization (2013), highlight the vulnerability of domestic workers not only in Pakistan but globally, underscoring the importance of protective legislation and systemic change. However, the role of the media in shaping the discourse around these protections cannot be understated. As Siddiqui (2018) points out, media portrayal affects not only public sympathy and awareness but also the political will to enact and enforce necessary laws.

The significance of framing in the context of violence against housemaids in Pakistan extends beyond the immediate implications for these workers. It also reflects and reinforces the broader dynamics of power, privilege, and gender in Pakistani society. By analyzing how these frames are constructed and propagated, researchers and advocates can better understand and challenge the narratives that perpetuate inequality and injustice.

This deeper understanding is essential for effectively mobilizing change, both in terms of societal attitudes and legal frameworks. It provides a foundation for advocating more nuanced and equitable media coverage, which in turn can influence public opinion and policy in ways that better protect and empower housemaids and other vulnerable groups within Pakistan.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the critical role of the media in shaping public perceptions and policy responses, there is a conspicuous gap in the scholarly exploration of how violence against housemaids is framed within Pakistani print media. This omission is particularly concerning given the prevalence of abuse faced by domestic workers and the influential power of the media in a country where legal protections for such workers are often inadequate. The inconsistency in media reporting, which ranges from portraying these incidents as isolated criminal acts to systemic social issues, suggests a fragmented approach to an endemic problem, raising significant concerns about the effectiveness of media influence on public awareness and social change.

The problem is compounded by the entrenched socio-cultural dynamics in Pakistan, where domestic workers are predominantly female and come from lower socio-economic backgrounds, making them particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. The media's portrayal of these issues can either reinforce existing societal biases, by trivializing the abuse, or challenge these norms, by highlighting the systemic nature of the violence and advocating for structural changes (International Labour Organization, 2013). However, without comprehensive studies on the framing practices of leading newspapers, it is challenging to evaluate the extent to which media coverage influences societal and policy outcomes.

Moreover, previous research on media framing in Pakistan has predominantly focused on political issues, terrorism, and national security, with less attention given to domestic social issues, particularly those affecting marginalized groups such as housemaids (Ali & Khan, 2019). This oversight limits our understanding of the role media plays in either perpetuating or challenging the structural inequalities that lead to violence against housemaids. It also restricts our ability to formulate effective strategies that could leverage media influence to promote better protection and rights for these workers.

The lack of focused research on this topic is critical for several reasons. First, it hinders the development of targeted media interventions that could effectively raise public consciousness about the plight of housemaids. Second, it impedes the ability of policymakers to gauge public sentiment and formulate policies that reflect an informed understanding of the issue. Third, it fails to provide media practitioners with the insights necessary to adjust their framing practices in ways that could foster a more equitable and just society.

Given the potential of the media to serve as a catalyst for social change, it is imperative to systematically analyze how violence against housemaids is reported in prominent Pakistani

newspapers such as Daily Jang and Dunya News. Understanding the framing techniques employed by these publications can provide valuable insights into how news coverage may be influencing public attitudes and policy debates concerning labor rights and gender equality in Pakistan.

This research seeks to fill the existing gap by conducting a detailed analysis of the framing of violence against housemaids in these newspapers. By identifying the predominant frames, examining their potential impacts on public perception, and evaluating the implications for policy advocacy, this study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on media influence, social justice, and human rights. The findings are expected to offer actionable recommendations for media practitioners, enhance scholarly understanding of media framing effects, and ultimately support efforts to improve the conditions and protections for housemaids in Pakistan.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to impact a broad spectrum of stakeholders including media practitioners, policymakers, academics, and the general public, particularly within the context of Pakistan where domestic violence against housemaids is a pervasive yet underreported issue. By examining the framing practices of major Pakistani newspapers—Daily Jang and Dunya News—this research aims to elucidate how media portrayal can shape public perceptions and influence policy responses regarding the treatment of housemaids.

For media practitioners, the findings of this study offer a reflective mirror to understand how their framing choices may perpetuate stereotypes or facilitate societal change. The research highlights the importance of responsible journalism and could lead to the development of ethical guidelines that ensure sensitive and impactful reporting on social issues. Media organizations might utilize the insights from this study to train journalists in framing techniques that emphasize empathy, equity, and justice, thereby enhancing the quality of reporting on labor rights and gender issues.

For policymakers, the study provides empirical evidence on the influence of media framing on public opinion, which is crucial for drafting informed policies that protect domestic workers. Understanding how public attitudes are shaped by media can help in formulating effective legislation and interventions that address both the symptoms and root causes of domestic abuse against housemaids.

Academically, the research contributes to the fields of media studies, sociology, and human rights by filling a significant gap in the current literature on media influence in low-income and developing countries. It adds to the theoretical discussions on framing theory by applying it to a specific, critical issue, offering a nuanced analysis of media's role in shaping socio-political issues.

Finally, for the general public, this study enhances awareness about the conditions facing housemaids in Pakistan, potentially fostering greater empathy and support for advocacy efforts aimed at improving their working and living conditions. It underscores the power of media in shaping societal norms and encourages active public engagement in demanding justice and reform. In sum, this research underscores the transformative potential of media in society and provides actionable insights that can lead to significant improvements in the lives of one of the

most vulnerable groups in Pakistani society. By demonstrating the link between media framing and public policy, the study advocates for a more informed and conscientious media practice that upholds the dignity and rights of all individuals.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this study are meticulously designed to address the overarching research question: How is violence against housemaids framed in the Pakistani media, particularly in the newspapers Daily Jang and Dunya News, and what implications do these frames have for public perception and policy formulation? The study aims to dissect and understand the media's role in shaping the discourse around this critical social issue within Pakistan. Each objective contributes a specific angle to the comprehensive analysis required to understand the interplay between media framing and societal impacts:

- **To Identify Predominant Media Frames:** The first objective is to systematically analyze the content of Daily Jang and Dunya News to identify the predominant frames used in reporting violence against housemaids.
- **To Analyze the Impact of These Frames on Public Perception:** The second objective is to assess how the identified frames potentially influence public perceptions of violence against housemaids
- **To Evaluate the Implications of Media Framing for Policy Formulation:** The third objective is to evaluate how the frames identified might impact policy formulation.
- **To Offer Recommendations for Media Practice and Policy Development:** The final objective is to offer recommendations based on the findings of the study for both media practice and policy development.

By fulfilling these objectives, the study seeks to contribute significantly to the existing body of knowledge on media framing and its effects, particularly within the context of labor rights and gender issues in developing countries. The insights gained will be invaluable for stakeholders across various sectors, aiding in the pursuit of a more just and equitable society through informed media production and consumption.

Hypothesis of Study

Hypotheses serve as informed assumptions guiding research investigations. In examining the framing of violence against housemaids in Pakistan, this study has formulated several hypotheses to structure the analysis and anticipate research outcomes. These hypotheses aim to explore various aspects of media framing and its influence on public perception and attitudes through the lens of two newspapers, Daily Jang and Daily Dunya.

***H₀:** There is no significant difference between numbers of articles of daily Jang and daily Dunya.*

***H₁:** There is significant difference between numbers of articles of daily Jang and daily Dunya.*

Literature Review

Framing theory is central to understanding how media representation shapes audience interpretations and influences societal attitudes. Originating from the work of Goffman (1974) and substantially expanded in media studies by Entman (1993), framing involves the process by which certain aspects of reality are highlighted to shape public perception and discussion around an issue. Framing essentially filters the information presented to the public, emphasizing specific values, facts, and other considerations, which can significantly influence public discourse and behavior (Entman, 1993; Goffman, 1974). Entman's cascade model elaborates on how frames operate at various levels from the communicator through texts to the audience, indicating the potential multiplicative effect of framing when it resonates across different levels of interpretation (Entman, 2004). This is particularly relevant in the study of media effects on public opinion, as it highlights the role of media in not only reporting news but also in constructing social reality.

Media Framing of Social Issues

Global Perspectives on Violence and Domestic Workers

The study of media framing on a global scale reveals varied portrayals of domestic workers and related abuses. Scholars like Anderson (2007) have analyzed the international media's role in highlighting the plight of migrant domestic workers, revealing a pattern of episodic rather than thematic framing, which tends to individualize issues rather than address systemic roots. This type of framing often leads to a short-term public outcry but lacks sustained engagement necessary for substantial policy reform. Conversely, thematic framing, which has been less prevalent but more impactful, involves placing individual stories within a broader context, thereby advocating for systemic change (Chuang & Roemer, 2008). For example, the framing of domestic worker abuse in terms of human rights violations and labor exploitation has been instrumental in mobilizing international advocacy networks and influencing policy reforms in countries like Singapore and the Philippines (Constable, 2009).

Media Framing in Pakistan

In Pakistan, the media's approach to violence against domestic workers, particularly housemaids, often reflects broader socio-cultural and economic tensions. The limited studies available, such as those by Siddiqui (2018), indicate a predominant use of episodic framing that focuses on the sensational aspects of individual cases without integrating them into a broader societal or policy context. This approach can detract from understanding the systemic nature of abuse and hinder effective policy responses.

Further research by Khan and Chaudhry (2021) underscores the influence of media framing on public policy in Pakistan, particularly in the context of gender and labor rights. Their findings suggest that when media prioritize thematic frames that highlight systemic inequalities and legal inadequacies, there is a greater impetus for policy advocacy and reform. This is crucial in the context of violence against housemaids, where legal protections remain underdeveloped and enforcement is often lax.

Gaps in Existing Literature

Despite the crucial insights provided by these studies, there remains a significant gap in the focused analysis of how Pakistani newspapers specifically frame violence against housemaids. Most research has generalized media coverage of broader social issues without delving into the nuances of this specific and highly vulnerable group. This oversight is problematic given the critical role that targeted media framing could play in mobilizing societal and governmental action to protect these workers.

Moreover, there is a lack of comparative analysis within the Pakistani context to determine variances in framing strategies between different media outlets and their potential differential impacts on public perception and policy. Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing targeted interventions that can effectively leverage media influence to foster greater protection and empowerment of housemaids.

Significance of this Study

This study aims to bridge these gaps by providing a comprehensive analysis of the framing of violence against housemaids in two leading Pakistani newspapers, Daily Jang and Dunya News. By examining the specific frames used and assessing their potential impacts on public and policy responses, the study will contribute to the broader discourse on media influence, social justice, and human rights.

Furthermore, this research will offer insights that could guide media practitioners towards more responsible and impactful reporting practices. It will also inform policymakers about the ways in which media framing can shape public opinion and policy, potentially leading to more effective and humane policies that address the rights and needs of domestic workers in Pakistan.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative content analysis to examine how violence against housemaids is framed in two of Pakistan's most widely circulated newspapers, Daily Jang and Dunya News. The content analysis method is ideal for systematically categorizing and quantifying the presence of certain phrases, words, themes, and concepts within the given data, allowing for a detailed examination of media frames and their frequencies. This approach aligns with framing theory, which suggests that the way an issue is portrayed by the media can influence public perception and policy agendas.

Sampling Procedure

To ensure a comprehensive analysis, a purposive sampling strategy was selected for collecting data. The sampling frame consisted of all articles published by Daily Jang and Dunya News over a 12-month period, from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023. Articles were selected based on their relevance to the topic of violence against housemaids. A search through both newspapers' digital archives was conducted using keywords such as "housemaid," "domestic worker," "violence," "abuse," and "Pakistan." This method was chosen to capture the breadth of coverage and framing diversity over a significant period.

Data Collection

Data collection involved retrieving full-text articles from the newspapers' electronic databases. Each article was initially reviewed to confirm its relevance to the study criteria, focusing specifically on those that directly discussed or mentioned violence against housemaids. The relevant articles were then downloaded and stored in a digital format for further analysis. The metadata for each article, including publication date, author, and section of the newspaper, was also recorded to assist in contextual analysis.

Coding Scheme

A detailed coding manual was developed based on the theoretical framework outlined in the literature review. The main coding categories were derived from commonly identified media frames in previous studies on media framing, which include:

- **Responsibility Frame:** Identifying who is blamed for the violence.
- **Victimization Frame:** Highlighting the plight of the housemaids as victims.
- **Economic Consequences Frame:** Discussing the economic implications of the abuse.
- **Moral/Ethical Judgment Frame:** Evaluating the moral aspects of the situation.
- **Legal/Justice Frame:** Focusing on legal repercussions or lack thereof.

Each article was coded for the presence of these frames. Additional sub-codes were used to detail specific aspects within each frame, such as the identification of the perpetrator, the legal outcome, or the emotional depiction of the victim.

Coder Training and Reliability

To ensure consistency in coding, two researchers were trained in the coding methodology. The training involved detailed sessions on the theoretical aspects of framing and practical sessions on coding using sample articles. After training, a pilot test was conducted using a set of 30 articles, which were not included in the main dataset. Inter-coder reliability was assessed using Cohen's Kappa statistic, which measures the agreement between coders beyond chance. A Kappa score of 0.75 or above was considered acceptable for proceeding with the full-scale coding.

Data Analysis

Once coding was complete, the data were entered into a statistical software package for analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the frequencies and proportions of different frames across the newspapers. Chi-square tests were conducted to assess the statistical differences in framing between Daily Jang and Dunya News. This analysis helped to identify predominant framing trends and potential biases in how violence against housemaids is reported.

In-depth content analysis was also conducted to contextualize the findings from the quantitative analysis. This involved examining articles that prominently featured each frame to understand the narratives constructed around violence against housemaids and their implications for public discourse and policy-making.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to high ethical standards, ensuring that all data used was publicly available and did not involve any personal data from individuals. Care was taken to anonymize any data

extracted from the articles during the presentation of findings. The study received approval from an academic ethics committee, confirming that it met all ethical requirements for research involving human subjects as described in the literature.

By utilizing this detailed methodological approach, the study aims to provide a thorough and nuanced understanding of how violence against housemaids is framed in Pakistani media, with implications for influencing public opinion and policy responses to this critical social issue. This methodology ensures rigor, replicability, and a comprehensive exploration of the media’s role in shaping perceptions of societal issues.

Results and Discussion

This analysis considered a total of 153 articles published within the study period, with 75 articles from **Daily Jang** and 78 from **Dunya News**. These articles were specifically selected for their relevance to the topic of violence against housemaids, providing a substantial corpus for examining the framing techniques employed by each newspaper.

Hypothesis Results

H₀: There is no significant difference between numbers of articles of daily Jang and daily Dunya.

Chi-Square Test of Independence

To determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the reporting frequency of violence against housemaids between the two newspapers, a chi-square test of independence was conducted. The observed counts from **Dunya News** were 78, and from **Daily Jang** were 75, against expected counts of 76.5 for each, assuming no difference in reporting frequency under the null hypothesis.

- **Observed Frequencies:**

News Source	Observed Value
Daily Jang	75
Dunya News	78

The chi-square statistic calculated was 0.059 with a corresponding p-value of 0.808, indicating no significant difference in the frequency of reports on housemaid violence between the two newspapers. This suggests that both newspapers give similar editorial importance to this issue, reflecting comparable audience interest or editorial policies concerning the coverage of domestic worker abuse.

Framing Analysis

Table 1 Distribution of Episodic and Thematic Frames

Frame Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Episodic	45	29.41
Thematic	108	70.59

Daily Jang

Frame Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Episodic	15	20.00
Thematic	60	80.00

Dunya News

Frame Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Episodic	30	38.46
Thematic	48	61.54

Table 1 shows the episodic and thematic differences by percentage in both Jung and Dunya newspaper.

Table 2 Distribution of Other Frames

Frame Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Responsibility	145	94.77
Consequence	96	62.75
Human Interest	96	62.75
Morality	75	49.02

Daily Jang

Frame Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Responsibility	73	97.33
Consequence	62	82.67
Human Interest	64	85.33
Morality	58	77.33

Dunya News

Frame Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Responsibility	72	92.31
Consequence	34	43.59
Human Interest	32	41.03
Morality	17	21.79

Table 2 shows the responsibility frame is predominant in both newspapers, emphasizing accountability. Daily Jang utilizes Consequence and Morality frames more frequently than Dunya News, indicating a focus on broader implications and ethical considerations. Dunya News employs Human Interest frames less frequently than Daily Jang, suggesting differing editorial strategies.

Table 3 Monthly Distribution of Articles

Month	Frequency
January	3
February	1
March	0
April	3
May	7
June	0
July	34
August	65
September	14
October	8
November	10
December	7

Table 3 shows the peak coverage in July and August, accounting for 99 out of 153 articles (64.71%). High-profile cases, increased advocacy efforts, or seasonal factors.

Table 4 Geographic Distribution of Top Locations Reported

Location	Frequency
Islamabad	46
Lahore	39
Karachi	9
Ranipur	9
Faisalabad	8
Khairpur	8

Table 4 shows the concentration in major cities like Islamabad and Lahore have the highest reporting frequencies, possibly due to higher media presence or more reported incidents.

Table 5 Legal Responses on Legal Action Taken

Legal Action	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Action Taken	113	73.86
Action Not Taken	7	4.58
Not Specified	28	18.30

Table 5 shows the majority cases of Legal action reported in the majority of articles. Reflects a relatively strong legal response or media emphasis on reporting legal proceedings.

Table 6 Medical Conditions of Victims

Medical Condition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Injured	50	32.68
Bone Fractured	13	8.50
Traumatized	25	16.34
Dead	10	6.54
Not Mentioned	75	49.02

Table 6 shows nearly half of the articles did not mention the victim's medical condition. Significant number of cases involved serious injuries or death.

Table 7 Demographics of Victims by Age Distribution

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 10 years	48	31.37
11–20 years	71	46.41
21–30 years	9	5.88
31–40 years	1	0.65
41 and above	1	0.65
Not Mentioned	21	13.73

Table 7 shows Majority of victims are under 20 years old, highlighting child labor and vulnerability.

Daily Jang reports 80% thematic frames a focus on systemic issues and societal context. A frequent use of humanizes victims and invokes ethical considerations. In Dunya news, Mix of episodic (38.46%) and thematic (61.54%) frames provides both individual stories and broader context similar to Daily Jang, highlighting accountability.

Media may highlight cases where legal proceedings are underway, influencing public perception of justice being served. Daily Jang's Approach may foster a deeper understanding of systemic problems and encourage advocacy for change but lack of details may hinder full understanding of the severity of abuse.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that media framing plays a crucial role in shaping public perception of housemaid violence in Pakistan. Both Daily Jang and Dunya News recognize the importance of reporting on this issue but differ in their framing strategies.

- **Daily Jang** emphasizes thematic, responsibility, and consequence frames, potentially encouraging a deeper understanding of systemic issues and advocating for societal change.
- **Dunya News** balances episodic and thematic frames, providing both personal stories and broader contexts, which may foster empathy and awareness.
- **For Media Practitioners:** Ethical framing practices that highlight systemic issues and humanize victims can enhance public understanding and promote advocacy for domestic worker rights.
- **For Policymakers:** Recognizing the media's influence can inform strategies to address domestic worker abuse through legislation and enforcement.

The study is limited to two newspapers and one year of coverage, which may not capture the full spectrum of media framing in Pakistan. The exclusion of digital media platforms may overlook significant sources of news consumption.

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