

FRAMING OF HOUSE MAID'S VIOLENCE IN DAILY JANG AND DAILY DUNYA

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Abstract

In the intricate tapestry of Pakistani societal narratives, this study critically examines the framing of violence against housemaids in Pakistani print media, highlighting how this issue is represented in newspapers. Violence against housemaids in Pakistan is an important on-going issue which is strongly connected with idea that how newspapers portray the issue. In society, newspapers play a crucial role in telling stories. They choose which information to include to help us understand what's happening (Entman, 1993; Goffman, 1974). Housemaids, predominantly from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, do important work in many homes. Sadly, they're often treated badly and they have to face verbal, physical, and sexual violence. It's important to see how newspapers talk about this (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2013; Siddiqui, 2018). This research employs content analysis guided by framing theory to evaluate how Daily Jang and Dunya News portray the reports. The analysis is conducted into two parts. In the first part, coding sheets were developed for the reports collected from the newspaper. In the second part, these coding sheets were used in a content analysis to identify the frames employed in the news reports mentioned in Daily Jang and Dunya News. According to framing theory, episodic framing highlights individual incidents, whereas thematic framing focuses on the collective societal understanding. The responsibility frame involves discussions regarding accountability for the violence, while the consequences frame explores the outcomes of such violence. The Human interest frame aims to highlight the personal and emotional aspects of the issue, while the morality frame engages with the ethical dimensions of the situation. This investigation delves into the discursive strategies employed by media outlets and aspires to unravel the mechanisms through which media frames violence and the emancipatory possibilities of conscientious storytelling. Upon applying content analysis, the findings reveal that the responsibility frame is the most commonly used frame in news reports, highlighting discussions around accountability for the violence. Through a critical content analysis, this research contributes to academic discourse, broader cultural understanding, encouraging reflection, challenging stereotypes and advocating for societal change.

INTRODUCTION:

Journalistic media are a part of building and disseminating narratives related to social issues.

News organizations can shape the perception of events through their selection, organization and presentation of information (Entman, 1993;

Goffman, 1974). Some reports provide a description of an incident, while others place an incident in a broader social, historical or institutional context. It is crucial to analyze these representational decisions in order to understand how the media affects the public's perception. Housemaids and domestic workers from poor economic status carry out household duties that are critical to the survival of households and are extremely exposed to exploitation, violence and abuse. They may be vulnerable to unsafe working environments and lack access to protection and justice, due to their socioeconomic status. Representations of violence towards housemaids in newspapers are important because they may be interpreted as an isolated incident or as a social issue (International Labour Organization [ILO] 2013; Siddiqui 2018). The interpretations of abuse are influenced by facts, language, sources and context. Responsible reporting can help raise awareness of the rights and protection of domestic workers. Various framing techniques are used by the news media (Iyengar, 1991; Neuman, 1992). Reports may focus on interpersonal or institutional conflict, emotional issues, economic impacts, moral issues, blame, or calls for remedial measures. These options offer interpretation that social issues are seen through. In this study, a framing theory approach has been used to analyze the depiction of violence against housemaids in the Pakistani newspaper. Framing is the process whereby a media organization chooses some aspects of reality to emphasize and other aspects to downplay or ignore (Entman, 1993). It allows debate for the analysis of how the Pakistani newspapers report violence as an isolated event instead of associating it with the larger issues of social inequality, labour rights, institutional responsibility and lack of protection. A significant consideration of content is examining the newspaper because alternative presentations can foster differing perceptions of the same issue (Neuman, 1992). The study highlights the various methods of reporting and representation in the frame of responsible journalism (Bennt, 1995). Reported cases illustrate the many forms of abuse of domestic workers. The case of Rizwana who was reportedly beaten to a pulp by her employer in

Islamabad, a case of a 14-year-old housemaid, is a prime example of the understated severity of violence (Nabila Feroz Bhatti 2023). Assault, confinement, intimidation, poisoning, torture, non-payment of wages, exploitation and verbal harassment have been reported (Dawn, 2019; Daily Times, 2022; The News, 2021; Pakistan Today, 2023). The plight of young domestic workers has been brought to light in the case of Saima and Tayyaba (The Nation, 2018; Pakistan Today, 2016). Other incidents reported involve burnings, sexual harassment, arrest without family members being let in, and violence in connection with the accusation of theft or non-payment of wages (Dunya News, 2019; Dunya News, 2023; Daily Jang, 2023). Media can contribute to this kind of conversation by reporting the incident(s) and institutional actions (Smith, 2023). It may draw attention to gaps in protections for domestic workers and prompt legal and policy dialogue (Jones and Brown, 2022). By systematically analysing the framing of newspaper articles, it is possible to identify the forms of framing the articles (individual events, conflict, emotions, responsibility, morality, economic consequences, structural conditions), which can help in understanding the extent of media representation, ethical journalistic practices, public awareness and domestic workers' rights. This study is relevant in Pakistan where domestic workers might be excluded and news coverage can shape citizens' perception of accountability, protection, and institutional reactions to violence against domestic workers.

Domestic workers are part of the international workforce and work in the household. Females are mainly engaged in household duties. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) there are at least 67 million domestic workers in the world, of which 80% are women. Many are from marginalised groups. In Asia, cultural norms, economic conditions and migration shape domestic labour. Women are mostly drawn to domestic work due to lack of good opportunities and poverty to choose from. Migration policies, recruitment process, and family expectation are factors that affect the experiences of Asian domestic workers as discussed by Huang and Yeoh

(2019). Many jobs in the home are underpaid. In Pakistan the position of housemaid is a disadvantaged one and she can be a victim of exploitation. According to Riaz and Qureshi (2021), some issues that domestic workers face are long hours of work, low wages, lack of formal contracts, physical and emotional abuse. Low status of domestic work is reinforced by cultural attitudes that devalue it. The framing theory is a tool that can be used to analyze representations of violence against housemaids in the media. According to Entman (1993), framing is the choice of elements of an issue to be included, the way elements are emphasized, and the minimization or exclusion of other elements, all of which affect how the issue is interpreted. A number of frames emerge when considering domestic worker abuse. When analyzing domestic worker abuse, scholars have discerned several frames. For Garcia and Martinez (2018) and Brown & Johnson (2019), the dynamics of family power and socioeconomic inequality are key to understanding abuse; but for Lee and Chen (2017) the cultural norms and gender relations are central. Johnson et al. (2020) discuss abuse in terms of an infringement of labour rights and human dignity with a focus on gender, race and class intersections. Newspaper reporting can focus on specific events or deal with more systemic issues, such as insufficient legal safeguards and enforcement. Smith and Jones (2018) suggest that framing varies according to the culture and political climate at certain places and times, with certain media coverage reinforcing stereotypical or victim-blaming narratives, while other coverage is promoting reform. Domestic worker protection becomes part of human rights debates in the context of ILO Convention No. 189 & the UN SDGs. Kumar et al. (2021) link violence against MDWs to transnational migration and globalization. Cultural, economic and institutional factors are identified from Asian research. Domestic Workers' Vulnerability in China has been attributed to Chinese culture and a lack of legal protection by Li and Wang (2019). The factors of poverty, gender inequality, and social norms are highlighted in the case of Bangladesh by Khan et al. (2020), whereas

migration and urbanization are noted in Vietnam by Nguyen and Tran (2018). Tanaka and Lee (2019) explore the policy measures related to migrant labour and informal employment in Malaysia and Singapore. Economic dependency reduces legal options (Sinha & Mishra, 2021), informal employment reduces regulation (Lim & Park, 2020), hierarchical employer-worker power dynamics exacerbate power disparities (Rahman & Islam, 2018), and devaluation of domestic work (Chowdhury & Das, 2017). Ali and Khan (2019) and Mahmood et al. (2020) report physical violence, sexual harassment, verbal abuse, and exploitation for Pakistan. Legal measures include the Domestic Workers (Employment Rights) Act, 2019 (Government of Pakistan, 2019), the Punjab Domestic Workers' Welfare Policy and the Sindh Domestic Workers' Welfare Bill (Punjab Labour and Human Resource Department, 2020, Sindh Assembly, 2021). But lack of awareness and monitoring reduces implementation (Khalid & Ali, 2021). Knowledge on workers' experiences and access to justice is still scarce (Khan et al., 2021), and there is little research on longitudinal changes and regional variations (Ahmed & Haq, 2020). Islamic teachings focus on justice, dignity, timely payment of wages, rest and good treatment (Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim). Islamic law also emphasises on equality and avoiding being exploited (Shahbaz, 2020). Saudi regulations ensure that female workers are protected with regards to rest, labour, and health and welfare (Saudi Ministry of Labor and Social Development, 2021); meanwhile, the OIC promotes women's rights regarding women in the workforce (OIC, 2020). The research gap has to do with the newspaper framing of violence against housemaids, and the episodic and thematic approaches in particular. Episodic framing highlights specific cases while thematic framing puts violence in the context of socioeconomic structural inequalities, cultural norms, and institutional situations. Analysis of these frames can shed light on newspaper construction and will guide interventions, policy responses, and awareness campaigns.

Statement of the Problem

Violence against housemaids in Pakistan is a widespread issue that affects women from marginalized backgrounds, subjecting them to various forms of abuse, including physical and psychological torment (ILO, 2013; Siddiqui, 2018). Print media, such as newspapers plays a significant role in highlighting these abuses, shaping public perception, and sparking social discussions (Entman, 1993; Goffman, 1974). The framing of incidents in the coverage of housemaid violence is crucial, as it greatly influences the narratives surrounding this issue and shapes public understanding and responses. Sensationalized reporting in print media can perpetuate harmful stereotypes, encourage victim blaming attitudes, and reinforce gender and class biases (Arif, 2016). Some media outlets tend to portray housemaids as deserving of the abuse they endure, deflecting blame from perpetrators and minimizing the seriousness of these offenses. Despite these challenges, there is an opportunity for positive change. Newspapers can advocate for positive change by featuring stories of domestic workers who have experienced abuse and by showcasing the efforts of organizations and activists working to improve their rights. This research aims to address these critical gaps.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study include:

- 1) To analyze and identify the dominant media frames utilized by Daily Jang and Daily Dunya in their reporting on violence against housemaids, in order to understand how these newspapers, shape public perception and discourse on this issue.
- 2) To identify and analyze recurring themes, narratives and frequency in the reporting of housemaid violence in two major Urdu newspapers, Daily Jang and Daily Dunya, in order to understand how the issue is portrayed in the media and whether there are any significant differences in the coverage between the two newspapers.

Research Questions

- 1) Which frames are commonly used by daily Jang and Daily Dunya for coverage of violence against Housemaid?
- 2) What patterns emerge in the coverage of housemaid violence in Daily Jang and Daily Dunya newspapers?

Significance of The Study

Understanding and dealing with violence against housemaids in Pakistan, as shown in newspapers is very important for many reasons.

- Understanding how the media presents stories about violence against housemaids helps people learn more about the issue and become more caring. This knowledge also helps advocacy groups, NGOs, and activists work better with the media to talk about the issue. It leads to better discussions and campaigns to improve the rights of housemaids (Gillespie & Smith, 2016).
- Understanding how the media tells stories about violence against housemaids helps promote fair and truthful journalism. It discourages making stories sensational and ensures that housemaid violence is represented accurately. The findings can help media companies improve their reporting practices and fight against harmful stereotypes (Gillespie & Smith, 2016).
- Discovering how the media shapes discussions about housemaid violence helps policymakers create better laws that tackle the bigger issues. Recommendations based on evidence can help make sure there are strong laws in place to protect the rights of domestic workers (Strobl, S. 2009).
- The research shows how the media influences how people see things, highlighting how framing strategies can make incidents seem isolated or part of a bigger problem. This adds to understanding of how the media works and gives useful information for future studies on media, social issues, and public opinion (Leah McCabe, 2021). While this study concentrates on Pakistan, its findings could provide insights relevant to similar situations worldwide. This could help start conversations across different cultures about how the media talks about violence against domestic workers.

Hypothesis of the 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.

Methodology

This study employed quantitative content analysis to examine the representation of housemaid violations in Daily Jang and Dunya News during 2023. Relevant reports were collected, screened, and coded using a structured coding sheet. The unit of analysis comprised news reports concerning housemaid violence in Pakistan. The sample consisted of 153 reports, including 78 from Dunya News and 75 from Daily Jang. Articles were selected according to predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Four framing categories—responsibility, morality, human interest, and consequences—were adapted from Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). Printed editions supported reliability and systematic analysis of framing, language, victims, perpetrators, and contextual representation.

Table 5: Distribution of Frames Used in Daily Jang and Dunya News

Variable	Percentage
Episodic	29.41%
Thematic	70.59%

Table 6: Distribution of Frames Used in Daily Jang and Dunya News

Variable	Percentage
Responsibility Frame	94.77%
Consequence Frame	62.75%
Human Interest Frame	62.75%
Morality Frame	49.02%

Table 7: Distribution of News by Type of News Frame

Variables	<i>Daily Jang</i> (n = 75)	<i>Dunya News</i> (n = 78)
Episodic Frame	20%	38.46%
Thematic Frame	80%	61.54%

Seasonal Trends in Media Coverage of Housemaid Violence

Detailed Analysis of Monthly Reporting Distribution by Daily Jang and Dunya News

Table 8: News reports and their percentage of occurrence according to dates

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

Media coverage of housemaid violence varied considerably across 2023, with relatively limited reporting early in the year, a sharp increase during May, no reports in June, and the highest coverage

in July and August. Coverage subsequently declined and stabilized toward year-end, indicating that reporting was influenced by news cycles and specific incidents.

Geographic Distribution of News Coverage on Housemaid Violence in Pakistan

Table 9: Demographics of news reports

Location	Percentage
Lahore	39%
Islamabad	46%
Karachi	9%
Multan	2%
Faisalabad	8%
Khairpur	8%
Ranipur	9%
Sargodha	2%
Sukhar	1%
Rawalpindi	3%
Not Specified	21%
Larkana	2%
Gujranwala	3%
Rahim Yar Khan	1%

Geographic coverage varied considerably, with Islamabad and Lahore receiving greater media attention, highlighting regional differences in reporting patterns.

Legal Response to Housemaid Violence in News Reports

Table 10: Distribution of legal action mentioned in news reports

Legal Actions	Percentage
Legal action taken	74%
Legal Action Not taken	4.6%
Not specified	18.3%.

Legal action was reported in 74% of cases, while limited or unspecified intervention highlighted gaps in documenting and addressing housemaid violence.

Medical Conditions of Victims in Reports on Housemaid Violence

Table 11: Distribution of medical condition of victim mentioned in news reports

Medical Condition of Victim	Percentage
Injured	33%
Bone Fractured	8.5%
Traumatized	16%
Dead	6.5%
Not mentioned	49%

Victim conditions included injuries, fractures, trauma, and deaths, while nearly half of reports omitted medical details, limiting assessment of severity.

Content Attributes of Housemaid Violation News Reports

The analysis identified sensationalism, victim vulnerability, and negative perpetrator portrayals as prominent content attributes. Reports often emphasized graphic details and emotional narratives, potentially simplifying complex cases. Victims were commonly presented as helpless, while perpetrators were portrayed negatively, with limited attention to broader socioeconomic, cultural, and systemic factors underlying domestic worker abuse.

Demographic Analysis: Age of Victims in Housemaid Violation Reports

Table 12: Age of the victim

Age of Victim	Percentage
Below 10 years	31.37%
11 – 20 years	46.41%
21 – 30 years	5.88%
31 – 40 years	0.65%
41 and above	0.65%
Not mentioned	13.37%

Victims aged 11–20 were most frequently reported, followed by children below 10, while older groups received limited coverage. Missing demographic details indicate reporting gaps. Media language often portrayed victims as helpless and perpetrators negatively. Episodic framing emphasized individual incidents, whereas thematic framing connected abuse with broader social and systemic concerns.

Media framing of domestic worker abuse can influence policy discussions by emphasizing either systemic causes or individual incidents. Thematic coverage may encourage attention to structural protections, while sensational reporting can prioritize punitive responses. Daily Jang predominantly used thematic framing, whereas Dunya News combined thematic and episodic approaches, reflecting differences in contextualization, accountability, and human-interest reporting.

The comparative findings show that Daily Jang relied more extensively on responsibility, consequence, human-interest, and morality frames than Dunya News. These differences indicate distinct approaches to domestic worker abuse coverage, with Daily Jang emphasizing accountability, consequences, and ethical dimensions, while Dunya News provided comparatively greater contextual variation. Such framing may shape public understanding, emotional responses, and policy discussions.

Discussion

Common Frames in Media Coverage

This study examined the framing of housemaid violence in *Daily Jang* and *Dunya News*, focusing on responsibility, consequence, human-interest, and morality frames. The findings indicate that *Daily Jang* relied extensively on responsibility, consequence, and human-interest frames, with greater thematic contextualization than episodic reporting. Such framing connects individual incidents with broader social consequences and structural concerns, consistent with the concept of thematic framing (Iyengar, 1991). The emphasis on responsibility also directs attention toward

accountability and possible institutional responses.

Similarly, *Dunya News* frequently employed responsibility and human-interest frames. Human-interest framing emphasizes victims' experiences and emotional consequences, potentially increasing audience attention and empathy (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). The prominence of responsibility framing suggests an emphasis on identifying perpetrators and institutions associated with addressing abuse.

Patterns and Implications

The comparative findings demonstrate differences in framing intensity between the two outlets. *Daily Jang* showed stronger use of consequence and morality frames, linking individual cases with broader ethical and societal implications. *Dunya News*, meanwhile, combined responsibility and human-interest elements to emphasize accountability alongside victims' personal experiences. These differences illustrate how media selection and emphasis can shape the interpretation of social problems through framing (Entman, 1993).

The findings also demonstrate the relevance of framing theory to domestic worker abuse in Pakistan. By emphasizing particular aspects of violence, news organizations can influence which causes, consequences, responsibilities, and solutions receive public attention (Entman, 1993). Thematic coverage may encourage audiences to consider structural dimensions, while human-interest framing can make individual experiences more visible (Iyengar, 1991; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

Implications for Journalism and Policy

The study highlights the importance of ethical, balanced, and contextualized reporting on domestic worker abuse. Media organizations can strengthen coverage by avoiding unnecessary sensationalism and incorporating information about legal, social, and institutional dimensions. Such reporting can contribute to informed public discussion and support evidence-based policy

responses concerning prevention, protection, accountability, and workers' rights.

Future research should examine how digital and social media platforms frame domestic worker abuse and influence public perceptions, particularly among younger audiences. Comparative studies should also investigate differences between urban and rural media coverage, identifying variations in media consumption, framing practices, public responses, and geographic inequalities to strengthen understanding of how contextual factors shape perceptions of domestic worker abuse.

The study is limited to Daily Jang and Dunya News, excluding digital and social media. Consequently, findings may not represent Pakistan's broader media landscape, framing practices, audience responses, or contemporary public perceptions.

Conclusion

This comprehensive analysis of the media portrayals of domestic worker abuse in Pakistan illuminates the intricate dynamics at play in how these stories are told and received. Researcher has have identified a prevalent reliance on sensationalism, which, while effective for capturing immediate attention, often overshadows the need for a sustained and in-depth examination of underlying causes. Simultaneously, this study has revealed the strategic use of various news frames and discussed the implications of these practices for shaping public opinion and influencing policy. This analysis underscores the imperative for ethical journalism and robust public engagement in advocating for the rights and dignity of all workers, including domestic workers. It highlights the media's power and responsibility in fostering a more informed and equitable society. To further enrich this discussion, future research should expand into diverse media formats beyond traditional news, integrating direct narratives from domestic workers themselves. Such inclusion would provide a more holistic view of the challenges faced by this marginalized group and contribute to more comprehensive and empathetic policy solutions. By embracing a broader spectrum of voices and

perspectives, researcher can better understand the complexities of domestic worker abuse and move towards effective and lasting reforms.

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