



RESEARCH PAPER

Portrayal of Rape Cases by Pakistani Electronic Media: Analysis of Ethical Dimensions

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ABSTRACT

The paper addresses the violation of ethical guidelines by Pakistani Electronic Media while portraying rape cases. Following the qualitative approach, content analysis was made of a total of 275 news stories on the most highlighted rape cases happened in Pakistan. Based on their target rating point, news stories of the top five Pakistani news channels were examined. Framing theory was used as analytical tool to identify the factors which result in violation(s). The findings reveal that media confirmed an infringement of ethical guidelines, as the stories contained a greater number of unethical practices. Meticulously, the infringements include disclosure of the identity of the survivor, the survivor's family, and accused persons before conviction. Findings also confirm that addresses of survivors and incidents were shared whereas judgmental language was also used. Besides, CCTV footage was aired without considering its sensitivity. Thus, the researcher recommends developing organizational guidelines alongside defined ones for portraying rape cases.

KEYWORDS Ethical Guidelines, Media Content Analysis, Media Ethics, Rape Cases

Introduction

Rape cases are consistently covered and reported by the media. According to a report by *The Current* (Jamil, 2021), In Pakistan, at least 11 rape incidents are reported daily, with over 22,000 cases registered with police in the last six years, which makes media ethics a topic of discussion. Besides, people have, for nearly a century, debated media ethics because media's influence, impact, and existence have developed in popularity, and its moral attitude and adherence to ethical rules have become critical concerns (Ghosh, 2014). The researchers conclude that having faced some issues due to advancement, traditional media has diverted to using innovative news disseminating techniques, which, therefore, relies on dramatic even disgraceful news items. Some issues previously considered bad news items or outside the public interest domain, are now astonishingly touched. In such case(s), ethical considerations and ideals are important (Koopman, Hilscher, & Cupchik, 2012). It is clearly known that there are certain characteristics of news writing such as objectivity, impartiality, precision, and public accountability, however, for certain reasons too, these 'canons of journalism' seem to have been under severe attack. In order to collect newsworthy information for the purpose of dissemination or portrayal to the public, journalists and reporters seem to have been disregarding the code of ethics. Previous research says that Poór, et al.(2015), Idealism and Relativism are very significant principles of ethics in the media. They describe Idealism as the wish to attain philanthropic ideals, whereas Relativism refers to the confidence in one's ability to define what is good and wrong. It is established on one's own abilities and personal rights (Poór, et al. 2015). Ralph (2015) mentions that media ethics is focused on ideals, standards, and regulations that spread over to all forms of media. Existing research says that there are some obvious factors such as continuing to increase readership and viewership, stress from owners, eliciting sensationalist headlines, compulsion from powerful and useful news sources, and discerning diffusion and retention of news items (Minwalla, Foster, & McGrail, 2020).. In order to strike a balance between

citizens' right to privacy and the press's right to information, some international and national organizations have developed some guidelines under Articles 19 and 19A [Freedom of Speech and Right to Information respectively] of the Constitution of Pakistan.

After the creation of Pakistan, there was only Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV) for news, but with advancements and changes in technology, the number of news channels has greatly enlarged. Every news channel tries to cover important news, especially when there is believably a demand or interest from audiences. Nonetheless, to compete, news channels consistently cover politics, inflation, rape cases, child abuse, etc. which are believed to be a source of good viewership that ultimately results in some ethical violations; however, studies lack to be carried out on the relationship of rape cases portrayal and ethics, though, a bulk of work has been done on ethics, but researchers looked mainly or generally for media ethics without having a special concentration on rape cases presentation and ethical violations. The suggested or mutually agreed ethical guidelines for reporting on rape cases not only ensure the privacy of survivors, but also refrain from the potential normalization of rape myths. It is significant to study how unethical reporting of rape cases can result in 'harming' the victims and their family members (Lasson, 2009). This research is to find out how the excessive coverage of rape cases by electronic media in Pakistan results in unethical reporting or the violation of media ethics. The key objective of this study is to find how and to what extent Pakistani electronic media violate the standard ethical guidelines (defined by national and international regulatory authorities/organizations) while portraying rape cases. Therefore, this study is to analyze to what extent and how Pakistani electronic media violate ethical dimensions when they report rape case(s).

Literature Review

After review of major studies in media ethics, Cooper (2009), suggests three main areas of global concern in media ethics. Firstly, it is the quest for truth that refers to media accuracy and objectivity. Secondly, it is the desire for responsibility which means professionalism, justice, equality, source protection, privacy, and secrecy; loyalty to country, peers, and the public. Thirdly, it can be called the compulsion for free expression, which includes the free flow of information, regulation, censorship, freedom of the press, and speech. The researcher believes that since these are suggestive rather than conclusive, these can be further categorized into sub-categories. While reporting on abusive incidents, the media has a substantial societal obligation to preserve survivors' rights. However, previous research says that unethical reporting with little inquiry may change the reader or viewer's mind about the incident, which can also mislead audiences (McIntyre, 2002). Consequently, one of the fundamentals of the Social Responsibility of the Press (SRP) is that the media's right to free expression is not unrestricted (Christians, White, Glasser, McQuail, & Nordenstreng, 2009). In other words, a free press mounts to be accountable to the public. According to McQuail, media bear an essential duty for a democratic society with a contract of social compulsions as media ownership represents public trust. News media must be true, accurate, objective, informative, and relevant. Moreover, media should be free with self-regulation and according to established codes of ethics and professional standards by journalist representative forums and bodies (Anik, et al., 2021).

A growing body of literature describes that throughout times gone by; societies across the world have witnessed forceful vaginal relations without the woman's approval. Rape, on the other hand, is not merely a crime committed against a female. Rape or even other acts of sexual assault can take place against anyone's will at any time. The victims of rape trauma are also completely different from the victims of other crimes because rape victims go through social shame and embarrassment, particularly in developing countries like Pakistan. Victims are even afraid to disclose it as they are in fear of having a negative societal response and social stigma. According to a report prepared by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, every two hours a woman is raped. Despite 11 reported cases per day, only 10% of rape offenses get reported whereas due to a lack of strong implementation

of the law, only 77 offenders have been sentenced after conviction since 2015 (Yamahata & Mandviwalla, 2021). Correspondingly, in her article Malik (2022), states that it seems to be an unending concern that needs media attention. She adds that it has multiple short and long physical, psychological, and emotional effects on rape victims or survivors, and journalists must realize it (Malik, 2022).

According to Kitzinger (1998), the media is the business of "*recognizing, constructing, and selling "news," which compels "immediacy and drama" over accuracy.* Previous research describes that in order to achieve an insight into how the media covers issues, it must be evaluated through a "*highly interpretative and value-laden process*" based on "*socially produced collective universals and customary understandings*" that frequently signify and reinforce prejudices (Akhavan & Ramaprasad, 1998). The wide-ranging framing of media news items redirects the larger socio-political system's ideology (Souza, 2010).

The existing research says that violation of ethics is common in reporting rape cases. Haque, et al. (2020), for example, assessed 790 articles from four Bengali and two English language newspapers from October to December 2014 for Child Maltreatment (CM). The researchers found that the newspapers not only frequently ignored the ethics for reporting on child maltreatment but also, identified the survivors. Their study also reveals that articles concerning child maltreatment showed no respect for child rights. The researchers believe that instead of giving a solution to how to stop or prevent abuse or its social or individual implications, newspapers tended to discuss the survivors. Similarly, the study conducted by Niner, Ahmad, & Cuthbert, (2013) describes the analysis of Malaysian print media established that it misled the problem by reporting child abuse tales in an episodic format and emphasizing extreme incidents of child abuse. Later, their study was supported by research carried out in Sri Lanka about media reporting child abuse, found that while reporting Child Maltreatment cases, the media dishonored child rights (Thilakarathne, 2016). As for Popović (2021), violation of the victim's privacy, explanation of the facts of the abusive event and usage of sexually explicit material are all examples of dangerous behaviors. He further adds that news disclosed the victim's identity, other information about the victim that included personal history, appearance, or development, and the victim's family circumstances which included the victim's address or photo of victim's home, address, or photo of the location where exactly abused. When it comes to child sexual abuse, the media utilize language that backs victim-blaming and victim-stereotyping. Victim-blaming is a word that refers to the practice of holding rape victims, rather than offenders, responsible for a rape incidence (Michele & Brown, 2012). The use of common phrases (e.g., affair, making love, etc.) to depict sexual assault in the media may perpetuate victim-blaming. Additionally, media coverage may shift blame from the perpetrator to the victim by emphasizing how the victim "*willingly*" met with the culprit or met with them "*several times*" stressing the victim's withdrawal of testifying that the sufferer benefited from the interaction (e.g., taking money, gifts, or behaving problematically), or giving emphasis to how the survivor has long hidden or kept silent about the abuse. The media may reinforce assumptions about victims, such as labeling them "*eternally spoiled*" as a result of the abuse which may deter victims from coming forward with a CSA (child sexual abuse) confession (Sanderson, 2005). According to Abeyasekera & Wijesekera (2017), the media contributes to the perpetuation of rape myths. They add that many newspaper stories suggest that patriarchal norms and gendered scripts have frolicked a key impression in the articulation of rape in discourse. They further find that news reporting appears to cater to a wide range of audiences, while some newspapers cater to a bigger audience; as a result, rape is dramatized. It is clear that women are not treated with honor and respect in news reports on rape globally. A study on sexual assault reported in the *New York Times* carried out by Evans, (2018) finds that the selective media coverage of sexual assault fosters various myths about the crime, sooner or later, boosting rape culture. Despite recommendations from the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), reporters do not follow the code when covering sexual assault. According to the study, journalists, while covering sexual assault cases, must be so heedful of how they frame the facts which must help in avoiding contributing to rape

culture. Conducting research over a rape case happened in Pakistan, Yasmeen, Jafree, & Khan, (2018) found only 5 percent positive or good news stories on the specific case (Kasur rape case). According to them positive or good news is one providing significant information and updates on the case without violation of the victim's and family's privacy. They also count those stories as good ones which give emphasis on the offender and deliver some suggestions for its prevention. They also find that most of the stories not only identified the victim but also, they carried images of the victim and her family members, which is a complete violation of the PEMRA (Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority) code of conduct. Some authors believe that an excellent form of journalism requires a code of ethics which is in no way a hurdle to press freedom. In order to rescue innocent individuals or groups from any harm from news, all media practitioners need to have some kind of ethical guidelines for the basis of their stories and reports investigation (Jafree, et al. 2016). A UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) handbook for journalists states that few journalists are not worried about ethics, and some senior media executives may even impulse them to do so. The inducement is augmented when the fields of action are far away, which can occasionally give journalists a false impression of utter impunity while reporting on rape. The statement is exemplified by some rape cases in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, where reporters even interviewed some females who were victims of rape. UNESCO also acclaims in a handbook for reporting on violence against women and girls that sexual intercourse and non-consensual sexual intercourse are not synonyms for rape or sexual assault. It is advised to practice solution journalism and take the views of experts rather than victims for highlighting the physical, social, psychological, and economic emphasis of rape (Anne-Marie, 2019). A growing body of literature examined that how frequently survivors and culprits of crimes were framed as accountable, such as, portrayal of victims of sexual crimes were uncommonly considered 'guilty'. The findings of existing literature show that stories blame victims due to alcoholic consumption. Similarly, sexual assault offenses are creating headlines in news reports; however, it is simultaneously extremely difficult, and troublesome. Some stories in media with interesting representation are not in support or favor of the victim, and they are presented and perceived in an unflattering light. Literature further stated that the media not only portray these cases but also, discusses them in public places; as a consequence, the conception of rape is accepted as publicly tolerable due to the reporting language (Ali, Youssef, & Qamar, 2020; Bohmert, Allison, & Ducate, 2018). No doubt that reporting on rape is a difficult for journalists. The public interest compels comprehensive coverage of an incident, penalty, and the criminal justice system; however, disclosing certain aspects of rape may further hurt and traumatize rape victims (Johnson, 1999). The researcher further states that rape victims appear to object to the publication of their names. Victims, counselors, and others' concern about the portrayal of the names of victims will result in public embarrassment, isolation, and possible retribution. Johnson's study (1999) suggests that not only the victim but also the suspect or accused should not be named in the stories

Theoretical Framework

After attentively going through the literature, the study is supported by 'Framing Theory'. Framing refers to the ways in which media or news disseminators disseminate certain information to audiences. According to the theorist, the media gives special emphasis to specified events and contextualizes them to back or deject definite perspectives. As a result, individuals are selectively influenced (Arowolo, 2017). Thus, this theory offers a very perfect depiction of the relationship between framing rape cases portrayal and media ethics. According to Bateson, the term frame is itself a psychological concept, but alludes to the significance of messages as factors that condition their progress and depiction, rather than a psychological concept: The theorist states that any message that overtly or covertly institutes a frame, gives the receiver instructions, or helps in the endeavor to recognize the messages delivered within the frame. According to framing theory, the audience looks forward to the media for information on certain happenings, and in return, media using frames goes into influencing mode. As a result, it not only has an impact on viewers but also,

gets biased due to certain frames by providing selective information. Furthermore, the media decide what to cover or ignore, which refers to frames while disseminating events. Thus, the concept, though influential, relates to setting the agenda (Vereese, 2005) or second level of agenda-setting (Bajracharya, 2018). According to Goffman, there are two divisions within primary frameworks. Firstly, it is natural frameworks that identify happenings as physical events by taking natural quotes without having attributed any force to the cause of the event. Secondly, it is social frameworks where events are viewed as socially driven happenings. Goffman assumes that whether they are aware or not, individuals can employ these frameworks every day (Scheufele, 1999). Frames are generally cultural in origin, and populaces produce them from a young age. Almost every expression in one's language mesmerizes a frame (Shraddha, 2018). The word rape, for instance, in English invokes the image of violence, force, gunpoint, harm, torture, trauma, etc. Thus, when a sender of a message speaks about rape, the receiver gets an image, these shared points of reference. In the context of the study, even the term portrayal has a frame, and its ingredients comprise of picture, video, name, messenger, receiver, and medium. It has an unexpected effect on viewers. Apart from restraining the facts on which people base their results on events, framing can drive people to make riskier decisions than they would otherwise. Studies have shown that when challenges are depicted destructively, individuals are likely to adopt the riskiest answer. Problems that are framed constructively, lead to harmless conclusions. Communication researcher Shantolyengar in his study on framing has identified two types of news coverage. Thematic coverage links events in a case-study framework, while episodic coverage discourses topics as separate incidents. The most frequently revealed finding is exposure to news coverage, which results in learning that is constant with the frames that form the coverage. If coverage is subjugated by a single frame, especially one instigating from a high-status source, learning will be inclined to this frame (Naveed, 2019). Previous research suggests five standard ways to frame news stories, which are conflict, human interest, consequence, Morality, and responsibility (Entman, 2006). Theorists define two levels of framing as following; frame in communication is made up of communication from numerous actors and news sources. This could be either constructive or destructive, however, frame in thought is an intangible demonstration, elucidation, generalization, and if possible, manipulation of reality. Rape cases are important and requisite illustrations of violence which require some specialized skills for framing such news in order to report them in such way, which must meet the standards or code of ethics because if frames are negative, the audience would react negatively, but if frames are positive, viewers would certainly opt to react positively. For instance, the Kasur rape case [a rape case happened in the Punjab province of Pakistan], was reported in such a way where frame not only ignored ethics but also influenced viewers to the level of incitement that they wanted to publicly hang the accused without even having yet availed the right to free trial. Thus, frames are undoubtedly so sufficient to consider in the portrayal of rape cases.

Material and Methods

Keeping in view the nature of the study, content analysis has been chosen as a research method to critically analyze the selected data quantitatively as well as qualitatively by using priming and framing theories as analytical tools. To addresses the ethical dimensions, researchers have followed different research methods to build their case, however, most researchers deemed content analysis as an appropriate method. Cooper (2009) used the review method for global media ethics concerns. Evans (2018) analyzed articles in the New York Times for a study on sexual assaults reported in the newspaper. Similarly, Abeyasekera and Wijesekera (2017) and Anik, et al. (2021) adopted content analysis for their research on unethical reporting. Thus, for this study content analysis has been considered as a suitable research method, which is an exploratory study with a preparatory research question. Through direct content analysis technique, the data has been collected from the top five TV news channels in Pakistan. Through purposive sampling technique a number of reports/stories/clips were analyzed for the last five years of three most popular rape cases [Kasur Rape Case, Motorway Rape Case, and Islamabad Rape Case],

and each report has been examined in light of the (proposed by PEMRA and other regulatory bodies) ethical reporting guidelines.

Overall, there are 4,062 licenses issued by PEMRA in Pakistan which include Entertainment Channels, Health Channels, Languages Channels, Sports Channels, Education Channels, and other subject specialized channels. Among these, at least 30 news channels are licensed by PEMRA with Satellite TV License (Uddin, 2021), and these 30 news channels are the population of the study. According to a PEMRA (Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority) report (Tahir, 2020), it is revealed that Geo News, ARY News, SAMAA News, Dunya News, and Express News are the most popular news channels among both male and female viewers, and these top five news channels are the sample size of the study. As far as rating is concerned, these top five news channels comparatively have much more viewership, and it is due to the news portrayed on the screen being believably of public interest (Leshner, 2013). The study looks for ethical dimensions in the portrayal of three prominent rape cases, i.e., Kasur Rape Case, Motorway Rape Case, and Islamabad Rape Case, because all these not only caught headlines, but these cases were believed to have been over-covered and sensationalized. These cases have been chosen through purposive sampling technique. The data were collected from verified YouTube channels of the selected five news channels from last five years January 2018 to March 2022. Total news, beepers, stories, reports, videos, or clips portraying the selected three rape cases (Kasur Rape, Motorway Rape Case, and Islamabad Rape Case) collected from five news channels are 275 in numbers.

Results and Discussion

The data were collected from verified YouTube Channels to obtain findings and results from it through manual analysis to know how and what ethical dimensions are violated or ignored while portraying rape cases in electronic media in Pakistan.

According to Jamil (2021), at least 11 rape incidents are reported on a daily basis in Pakistan, with over 22,000 cases registered with police in the last six years. A report by the first-ever digital news startup to be funded by Google, Pakistan has reported 1,040 rape cases in one year (from 12th Oct 2020 to 12th Oct 2021). Among these, 685 cases took place against minors, 351 were against adults and four transgender people were also victims of rape. The data also confirms 69 deaths of rape victims (Jamil, 2021).

Table 1
Details of Rape Cases happened from 12 October 2020 to 12 October 2021

12 October 2020 to 12 October 2021		
Regions	Rape Cases	Rape Attempts
Sindh	60	10
Punjab	936	44
Baluchistan	11	
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	20	2
Islamabad	13	
Azad Kashmir	0	1
Total	1040	57
Against Adults	351	
Against Minors	685	
Against Transgender	04	
Total Deaths of Rape cases	69	
Sources	E-Papers: Tribune, The Nation, Pakistan today. Daily Times, Nawa-e-Waqt, Daily Jang	
	Websites: ARY, Geo, Dunya, Samaa, Aaj, The News International, Dawn	
	Source: https://thecurrent.pk/data-one-year-of-rape-cases-in-pakistan/	

Description of Rape Cases

For this study, the following three rape cases have been chosen purposively.

Table 2
Description of Selected Rape Cases

1	2	3
Kasur Rape Case	Motorway Rape Case	Islamabad Rape Case
In Lahore, Punjab, a seven-year-old girl went missing from her hometown of Kasur on 4th January 2018 while she was going to seminary. Five days later, her dead body was found in a heap of trash near Lahore city. Postmortem report confirmed that she was raped, and then strangled to death by 24-year-old Imran Ali who was later identified as a serial killer (Abid, 2019).	On 9th September 2020, a woman whose identity remained undisclosed in the whole case went short of fuel on a motorway towards Lahore. On the advice of her relatives, she made a call to a motorway emergency number for help. While staying on a motorway, two men broke into the car and raped her in front of her children who were with her on travel. Before escaping, the rapists also took away the money and jewelry she had on her (BBC, 2021).	On 20th July 2021, a 27-year-old girl was raped and then murdered by ZahirZakir Jaffer in the upscale F-7 in Islamabad, the Capital City of Pakistan. According to the police, a person whose name is a secret called them about the crime in the said area. Noor Muqaddam was dead before police reached the crime scene. Police revealed that she was made hostage for two days by the culprit, and during her hostage, she unsuccessfully tried twice to escape. The killer once confessed to police that the incident happened because she was not willing to marry him (Jaffery, 2022).

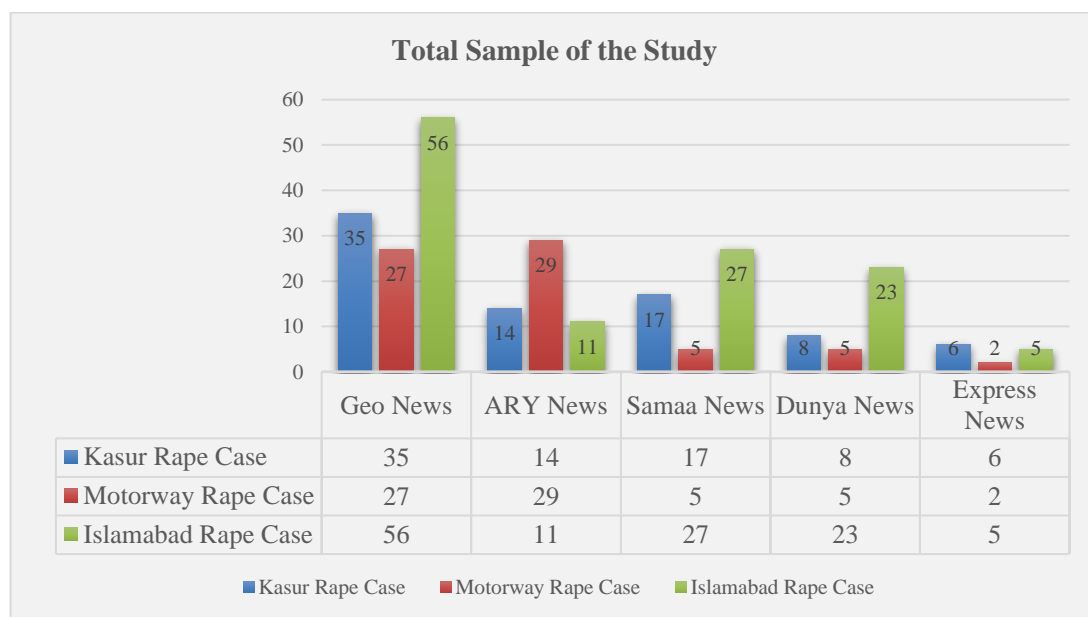


Figure 1Details of the cases chosen for the study

Indicators of Ethical Violations

After going thoroughly through ethical guidelines defined by international and national organizations and bodies mentioned in the part of literature review, in the light of those guidelines, the following indicators as ethical violations which shall determine the findings and results of the study. Any of the following portrayed without having been blurred by the sampled news channels shall be considered an ethical violation.

- Name of Survivor

- Picture of Survivor
- Identity of Survivor’s Family Member [it may include name, picture and interview of survivor’s parents, siblings, and maternal and parental uncles]
- Identity of Accused [it may include name, picture, video, CNIC copy and interview of the person who is accused of the crime, but not proven guilty in any court yet]
- Location or Address of Survivor
- Location of Incident
- CCTV Footage of Incident [it refers to any movement of accused or survivor projected by installed security camera(s) in the residence or streets that helped in tracing the case]
- Use of terminologies (e.g., Use of word victim instead of survivor).

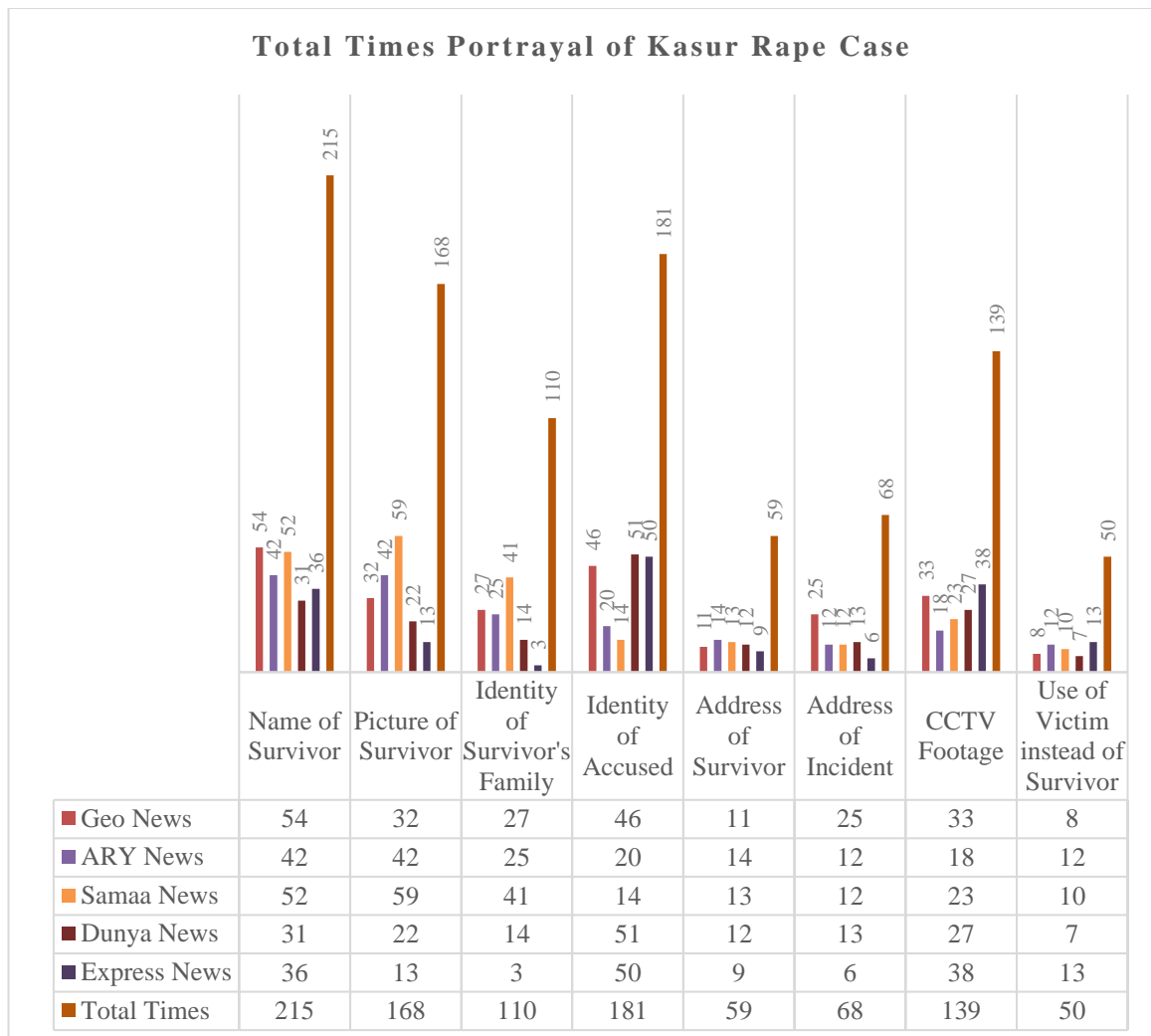


Figure 2 Portrayals of the Kasur Rape Case on Geo, ARY, Samaa, Dunya, and Express News)

Figure-2 shows the total count of portrayals of the Kasur Rape Case on all sampled channels. It mentions that survivor was named the most, which is 215 times in 80 stories, which is followed by the disclosure of accused identity with 181 times. Furthermore, all channels jointly shared the picture of the survivor 168 times, which is higher than the identity of the survivor’s family shown 110 times. All channels used the word victim instead of survivor 50 times in 80 reports, which is the least.

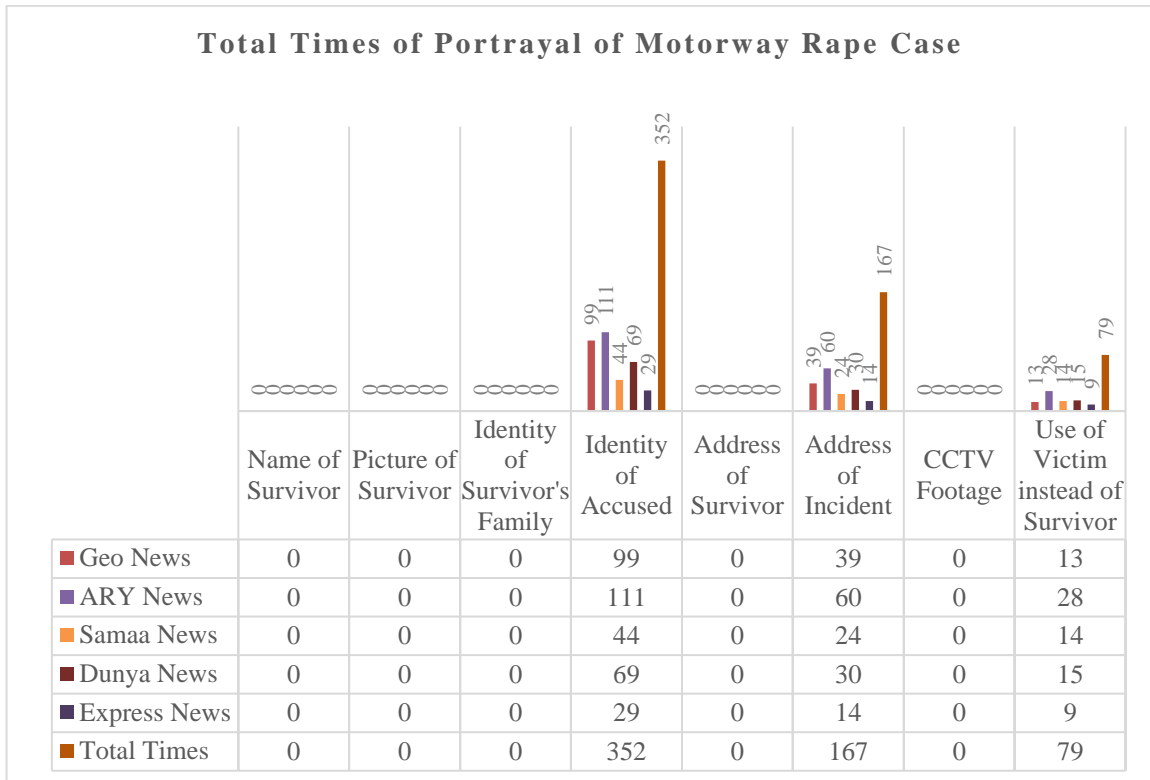


Figure 3 Total Times of Portrayal of Motorway Rape Case

Figure 3 explains the total count of portrayals of Motorway Rape Case across all sampled channels. It mentions that the accused's identity was disclosed the most; even though he was not yet convicted. All channels jointly identified the accused 352 times in 73 stories, which was followed by sharing the address of the incident. All sampled channels showed the incident address 167 times. Furthermore, all channels mutually termed survivor as victim were 79 times. On one hand, none of these channels unsurprisingly mention the name of the survivor, picture of the survivor, address of the survivor, and CCTV footage of the incident, but it could not be mentioned because these channels, in fact, could not get all these at any point. On the other hand, when all these news organizations could not get anything about a survivor's identity, the main focus remained on the address of the incident and the accused. Most importantly, these news channels also used judgmental language about the accused by terming the accused as 'beast', 'most wanted criminal', and 'most dangerous criminal'. While conducting the analysis, the researcher found that these news organizations shared the accused person's address and interviewed his family members without any reason. Even these channels interviewed self-called eyewitnesses and disclosed their identities as well. Anchors also asked to 'eye-witness' about the identity of the survivor and culprits. Though Lahore High Court had also particularly ordered not to air the identity of the accused and survivor and their family members, the media ignored the court order.

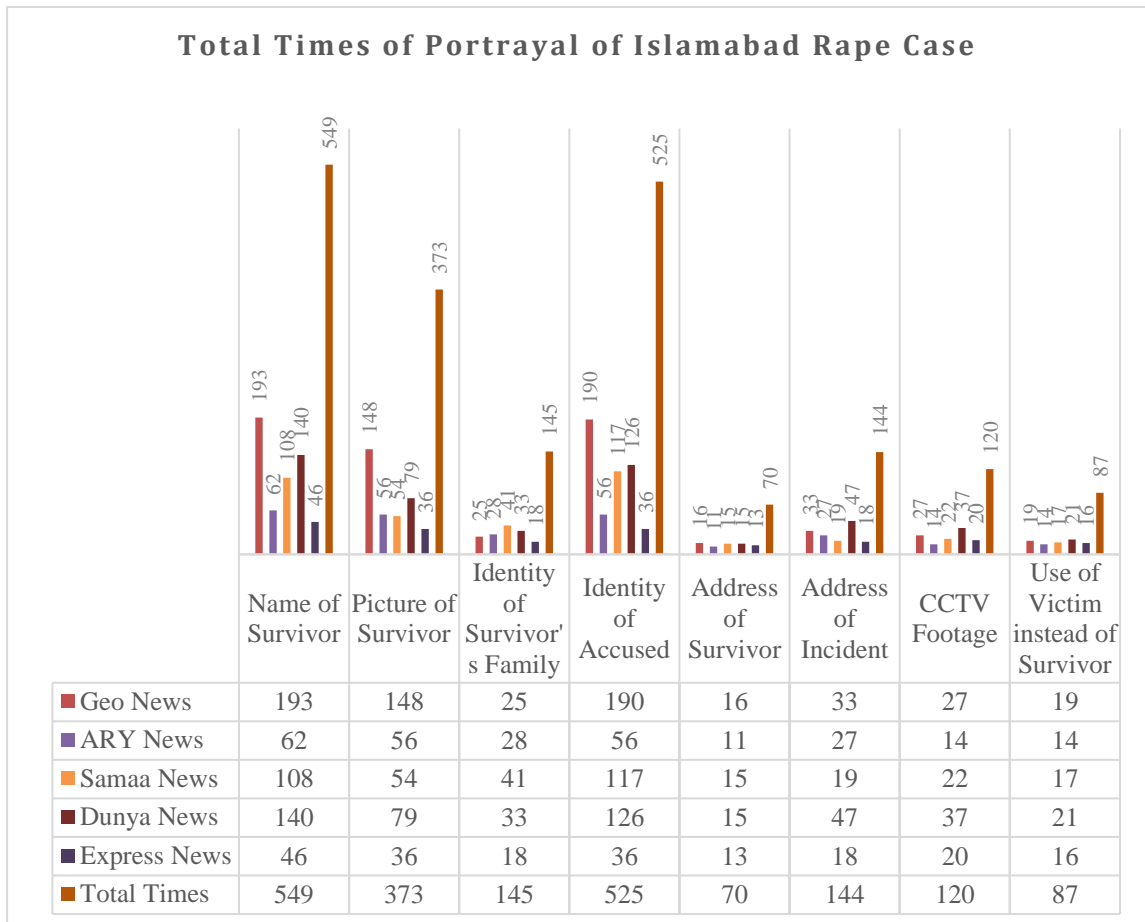


Figure 4 Total Times of Portrayal of Islamabad Rape Case

Figure 4 explains the total portrayal of the Islamabad Rape Case covered by all sampled news channels. In a total of 122 videos, the channels jointly disclosed the identity of the survivor, which was 549 times followed by the identity of the accused who was identified 525 times. All channels conjointly shared the picture of the survivor 373 times which was followed by 145 times identity disclosure of the survivor’s family. The address of the incident was brought on screen 144 times, and CCTV footage was played 120 times. These channels used the word victim 87 times, and the address of the survivor was shared 70 times which was the least. While analysis, victim-blaming has also been observed because the survivor was related to the accused through living relationships. Besides, the family of the accused was unnecessarily brought on screen. Importantly, some channels initially even blurred survivors’ pictures, which show their realization of guidelines; however, they later showed without considering any guidelines.

Results and Discussion

There are several types of rapes such as, acquaintance or date rape, drug facilitated rape, blitz rape, spousal rape, group rape. To study about ethical guidelines for media outlets from multiple sources, the guidelines of given organizations (Society of Professional Journalist’s (SPJ), UN Ethical Guidelines for Journalists, Romania Code: The Journalists Code of Ethics, Reporting on Sexual Violence, A Dart Center Europe Tip Sheet, Press Council of India Ethical Guidelines, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) Code of Conduct) were evaluated to set a parameter for this study. Previous research studies (Ali, Youssef, & Qamar, 2020) finds eight ethical guidelines for reporting on sexual assault, which are helpful for journalists to understand the phenomena, inform the public, and reduce sexual crimes, and 10 well-known bodies or organizations (namely the Society of Professional Journalists, National Union of Journalists, Global Protection Cluster, Womankind Worldwide, Women Media Center, Minnesota Coalition against Sexual Violence,

Canadian Association of Journalists, International Women's Forum, Aurat Foundation, and UNICEF) have mutually agreed upon these guidelines as well (Ali, Youssef, & Qamar, 2020). The said guidelines are:

- Do not disclose the victim's identity.
- Do not use the word "alleged" because it gives a boost to uncertainty.
- Use word rape instead of sex.
- Do not use terms such as friend, beast or monster.
- Use survivor instead of victim
- Do not publish survivor's or incident's photograph
- Use details for helplines
- Do not tend for victim-blaming

The main objective of the study was to find out how the media violated ethical guidelines while portraying rape cases. After analysis and discussion of the collected data of sampled news channels, the research states the following findings.

1. Overall, the name of the survivor was mentioned 764 times in total 202 reports of Kasur Rape Case (80 clips) and Islamabad Rape Case (122 clips) which is a core violation of ethical guidelines as all international and national organizations' guidelines, rules and laws agree upon the non-disclosure of survivor's name. Survivor was named 215 times in Kasur Rape Case and 549 times in Islamabad Rape Case.
2. In 202 stories of Kasur Rape Case and Islamabad Rape Case, the media, as a result of negligence towards ethics, portrayed the picture of the survivor 541 times [168 times in Kasur Rape Case and 373 times in Islamabad Rape Case]. It is a crucial violation of ethics, as no code of ethics ever allows framing of a survivor's picture at any stage.
3. Under ethical guidelines, disclosure of a survivor's family identity does not make any sense, but the study finds that the family of survivors was projected 255 times [110 times in Kasur Rape Case and 145 times in Islamabad Rape Case].
4. In 73 videos of Motorway Rape Case, the survivors name, picture and family's identity did not appear on any channel is not due to responsible journalism, but it is just because of government officials who never let any reporter or journalist get all these, because her identity and her family identity were always kept secret.
5. As per many organizations or bodies' guidelines, projecting an accused before conviction is also unethical. However, in these three rape cases of all sampled channels, the accused was named 1058 times in all 275 videos. The most (525 times) projection to the accused before the conviction was given in Islamabad Rape Case. The accused was also projected 352 times in Motorway Rape Case and 181 times in Kasur Rape Case.
6. In 202 reports of the Kasur Rape Case and Islamabad Rape Case, the CCTV footage of the incident was brought to the audience 159 times, which is never even thought to be shared due to its sensitivity. In 73 videos of the Motorway Rape Case, CCTV footage was not available; that's why it did not appear on media.
7. Portraying the address of a survivor is another ethical violation as it gets to the identity of the survivor. All channels portrayed the address of the survivor 129 times in 202 videos of the Kasur Rape Case and Islamabad Rape Case. The Motorway Rape Case again did not get any chance to disclose the survivor's address. In Kasur Rape Case, the address of the survivor was shared 59 times, while 70 times in Islamabad Rape Case.
8. Framing the address of the incident is considered sensitive and unethical, but all channels showed it 379 times in all cases. The incident location of the Kasur Rape Case was shared 68 times. In the Motorway Rape Case, the location of the incident

was projected 167 times. In Islamabad Rape Case, the address of the incident was framed 144 times without any realization of its sensitivity.

9. Somebodies and organizations consider it unethical to call a survivor a victim, but in the study, the researcher finds that the survivor was termed as a victim 222 times in all cases.
10. None of the total 275 stories or reports has shown why a rape case occurred and how to prevent such an incident in the future.
11. The researcher through observation has found that none of these news channels have internal guidelines for covering rape case(s).
12. The researcher found in the motorway rape case that when the media could not get any information about the survivor, they focused on the accused and their families, which is, under ethical guidelines, again so unethical reporting.
13. The researcher also observed that through unethical reporting, the media not only trailed accused persons, but it also put extra pressure on the judiciary for their conviction.

Assumptions of Framing Theory

The following assumptions (CommunicationStudies.Com, 2022) have been associated with the framing theory:

- Media or journalists decide what and how to cover. It has a great influence on issues that viewers consider and how they reflect them.
- Viewers take information to their own mean according to their frames which may have similarity or difference with the frames media employed.
- Every time a frame gets invoked, constructively or destructively, it is protected.
- Building frame can happen over time as it is a systematic process.

The data describe that the reporting or portrayal of rape cases with ignorance of media ethics worsens the pain the survivor has experienced as a result of rape. Furthermore, the unethical representations of rape survivor, the victims along with the family members, suffer social embarrassment and shame. Consequently, such victims are discouraged from reporting such incidents in the future.

The study examined that there is a problem with reporters and journalists that they cannot feel comfortable or easy without naming the victim as they want viewers to refer to cases easily. For this purpose, reporters, journalists, or anchors should use pseudo-names. As happened in Islamabad Rape Case where the media tried to show the relationship between victim and perpetrator which sounds very unethical, that is why journalists should avoid such practice even if it is real. Furthermore, the media must fulfill one of the main principles of journalism, i.e., to educate. Almost every aspect of a rape case is covered, but there is nothing on prevention or causes of such cases, so media organizations must give more coverage and portrayal of what can help in preventing such crime. Moreover, it is evidently proven that if the police show some responsibility not to disclose the survivor's name at any stage, as has happened in motorway rape cases where the name of the survivor has never been disclosed, journalists cannot easily reach such an identity. So, police must never tend to unearth a survivor or accused's identity. It is also pertinent to mention that some journalists lack knowledge about ethical guidelines, so journalists must be trained and given awareness sessions. Importantly, strong, and strict enforcement of laws related to the protection of a victim's identity is the cry of the day.

Conclusion

This study analyzed the news media portrayal of rape cases under mutually suggested ethical guidelines by national and international organizations or bodies. The findings of the study revealed that while portraying rape cases, Pakistani electronic media

breached ethical guidelines. It is evident that not only a rape survivor or his/her family is not given due respect in media due to violation of ethics, but the media also ignore the due rights of the accused. Sensationalism, speculation, and the use of unsuitable words for the survivor, family, and accused were the most common. The news channels do not adhere to ethical reporting and discord to indoctrinate some positive morals. The study also emphasized the effects of unethical reporting that can not only cause further harm to survivors but can also misguide and mislead verdicts and legislators. The post-rape situation becomes stimulating for those who have experienced sexual assault as victim-blaming, societal-shaming and deep queries come their way. In such situations, media portrayal requires following a code of ethics and degrading and preventing rape cases because the selection of inappropriate portrayals and frames can encourage culprits and others as well as victim-blaming. It is also generally very common that violence can go further, if the media does not tend to follow ethical guidelines. It is clear from the literature that disclosure of a survivor's identity is a crime, and the person who discloses it, can be punished under section 376A of the Pakistan Penal Code. Media professionals and practitioners must be aware of it. Alongside, some strict editorial policies regarding rape reporting must be implemented. Thus, to prevent rape in society, the media must come forward to play its vital role, and it is not possible without following ethical guidelines or a code of ethics. It is also believed that more studies are required to be carried out to set some important standards of ethical reporting and that organizations need to develop some internal guidelines as well. This research has some obvious limitations. Firstly, the selected news channels might not be representative of all news channels. So, the findings and results might not be general or universal. Secondly, the time period for the study might not be the same as at the time of research. Thirdly, the selection of more channels and more content might give a bit clearer picture of the situation in reporting on rape stories. Fourthly and finally, no in-depth interviews with journalists have taken place for the study to find or know the potential risk factors and causes of such unethical portrayal. Further studies can be done by sampling headlines, talk shows, and newscasters' expressions. The language or terms or words used or uttered by reporters, journalists or newscasters can also be considered as a sample for the study. It can also be brought into consideration as research to study if these cases' portrayal can result in desensitization rather than sensitization of viewers. In addition, through in-depth interview methods, Director News of these channels and Assignment Editors can be used as samples as they are considered actual gatekeepers. So, it can be investigated why such an ethical violation is reported despite having some experts in the most important positions.

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