



Representation of Alpha Male Dominance in Contemporary Pakistani TV Dramas

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Abstract

The study investigates the portrayal of Alpha Male Dominance in Pakistani television dramas in the five mainstream broadcasts in 2023. Through a detailed thematic analysis, this research identifies repeated samples of male control, emotional manipulation, economic repression, and romance of toxic masculinity. These plays present a male character as a permanently authorized personalities who dominates through verbal aggression, surveillance, emotional blackmail, and moral policing. The study gives special attention to how such portrayals reinforce the patriarchal values and especially through the glorification of the "angry young man" archetype. This character has been shown as an emotionally unstable but morally superior character, which, despite the abusive actions, has received rhetorical justification and sympathy from the audience. On the contrary, women's characters are often presented as submissive, emotional burdens, with the strengthening of the traditional gender classification. Content Analysis shows how family members, social expectations, and cultural values work together to forgive men's aggression and silence women's resistance in these statements. In addition, emotional and legal risks are often used as tools to maintain power over women, which play an important role in the distorted theory of intimate relationships.

Keywords: Alpha male, domestic violence, Pakistani TV drama, analysis of thematic content, gender dynamics, emotional abuse, intimate partner violence

Introduction

The word 'drama' originated from the Greek language 'drao', which means "to do" or "to act" (Thompson, 2022). Although the perspective of drama has been changed in different forms by the change in society, culture, or technology. Dramas used to guide people about any sort of issues, stories, or emotions that people are suffering in their lives. Some are fiction-based, depicting various hidden or intrusive thoughts of people, but that's not happening in real life (Zia, 2014). In every community, dramas serve as cultural vehicles. Jane and Williamson accurately describe that point in their book, *Religion and Drama in Early Modern England* that early dramas are mostly based on the perception of culture, religion, and social norms, suggesting the concept of developing and enhancing beliefs. Later on, dramas focused on social issues to

mitigate them. When there was a lack of governance on any social issues and a lack of awareness, dramas worked hard to change the perception or opinions of the public by highlighting a particular case in the shape of a story that was played by the characters (Degenhardt & Williamson, 2011). In recent years, people's lives are impacted by dramas in numerous ways. They might affect how viewers feel about crime, violence, and other social issues. The study further shows how those events impacted people's speech, eating patterns, preferred games, and social interactions (Javed, 2023). Social change is the concept of adopting new ideas, perceptions, and behaviors by a heterogeneous and scattered audience (Roberson, 2020). This process takes place in Pakistan as a result of people adopting customs from other nations after being exposed to many cultural elements through the media, and the content often reflects social change by affecting cultural values, practices, and even lifestyle as consumers adopt and incorporate elements of other cultures into their own. (Fatima & Sultana, 2022). Asians purely portray their culture, inheritance, social norms, and beliefs in their dramas. That's how the world knows their identity through their culture and trends (Chan et al., 2021). Mr. Manivendra Kumar pointed out in his research that some social issues, like dowry, are mostly practiced in Asian countries as part of their traditions and, somehow, their religious practices. Later on, dramas became the most successful way to change society's perceptions of dowry (Kumar, 2023). That's how dramas change the culture. The concept of Alpha Male and Sigma Male largely originate from a manosphere viewpoint, where men are inspired by movements that emotionally and mentally encourage them to achieve independence, become leaders, acquire power, and help them comprehend their rights and positions within society. Sigma Males are typically more reserved and sophisticated than Alpha Males (Valdivia, 2023). They have a discriminatory nature but can engage in communication when necessary. They are more self-dependent and diligent. Conversely, Alpha Males concentrate on becoming leaders. They exhibit a more aggressive demeanor compared to Sigma Males and strive for power and control (Pasha, 2022).

Today, the interpretation of Alpha Men is to some extent. In Pakistani television dramas, alpha men are often shown as very aggressive and they crave for domination. They speak in deep voices, showing anger in their impressions and trying to get the lead in different situations (Maqsood & Hashmat, 2024).

Literature Review

Alpha Male in Pakistani Dramas

In the history of the world, when there was no concept of that much technology, dramas played a significant role in developing culture, norms, and behavior. In Chapter 3 of the book *Theater Histories: An Introduction*, the authors highlight the basic stages of drama in history when a storyteller used to narrate stories in front of their audience, when kathputli used as characters in the drama to visualize those stories, and when dramas were played in actual theaters. These all dramas are connected with the viewers / audiences in the sense of relatable stories (Zarrilli et al., 2010). It has been mentioned in the Book "Theory of Modern Drama: A Critical Edition" that, In the early era, there was the concept of theatre plays or dramas, which was popular at the time. With the change in technology, people adopted different ways to portray stories, like radio, where the voice artist narrated or acted out the story for listeners to feel and imagine. Then the television era started, where people visualized the stories on screens at specific times. Now, in the new media era, people can watch dramas, series, movies, or plays anytime and from any country, keeping a watchlist in their hands (Stoett et al., 2024). Dramas are the main source of transmitting ideas from one society to different societies, and those ideas are new for the

societies. Mr. Lucas M. Bietti, Ms. Otilie Tilston, and Mr. Adrian Bangerter have reviewed three basic points regarding the impacts of cross-cultural dramas: a) storytelling in dramas affects the behavior of viewers, b) transmitting ideas into different cultures, and c) frequently watching dramas or shows can create specific social bonds. They pointed out that sometimes, ideas are rejected by another society because they do not align with their norms, values, and religious beliefs, and sometimes societies adopt the behaviors, styles, attitudes, trends, and food culture of the society portrayed in the dramas they are watching (Bietti et al., 2019). For instance, Pakistan adopted Turkish food culture and religious patterns after watching the Turkish drama series *Ertugrul* (Rehan & Shafiq, 2020), and Indonesia's teenagers imitate their Korean role models because they frequently watch K-dramas (Rahmi, 2020). Ms. Kelly Freebody and Mr. Michael Finneran, in their book *Critical Themes in Drama*, focused on the idea that dramas are the main drivers of culture; they can turn the culture towards a different or new idea, and they can motivate people to accept particular behaviors or trends (Freebody & Finneran, 2021).

In the television era, Pakistan also watched Indian dramas and dubbed Turkish dramas. Now, it's totally in the viewers' hands to decide what they want to watch—what kind of series or dramas and from which culture, state, or society (Zehra, 2021). Through consuming the media content of different states or societies, it can form cultural diffusion, which is a kind of social change (Muthukrishna & Schaller, 2020). Pakistanis are also forming cultural diffusion by consuming media content from different societies. Essentially, if they see something unique or attractive, they adopt it. Initially, they adopted Indian culture through the high consumption of Indian media content (Siddiqui et al., 2023). In India, there are many films and plays, including *Alpha Male*, *Dominion*, *Kabir Singh*, *Animal*, *Film*, and *Drama Serial*, *Is Pyar ko Kiya Naam Dun*, *Madhubala*, and many other plays (Dildar et al., 2024; Ganguly & Singh, 2019; Patil, 2014). When it became common, Turkish dramas gained hype in Pakistan, and Turkish culture was also somewhat adopted (Saleem & Sadiq, 2021). Moreover, Turkish dramas have also portrayed *Alpha Male* dominance and *Sigma Male* characters, like in dramas: *Aşk Laftan Anlamaz*, *Aşk-ı Memnu*, *Mera Sultan*, and many more (Aziz et al., 2021; Khokhar, 2022). Although Korean dramas mostly depict soft masculinity, if they have to show a strong man, they portray a *Sigma Male* nature character, not specifically an *Alpha Male*. That's why Gen Z and Gen Alpha are gravitating toward soft masculinity (Rahmi, 2020). Now, Pakistanis are watching K-dramas and adopting their culture too (Khalid, 2024). In short, Pakistan's culture is a mixed culture of different states (Makhdoom & Awan, 2020). While perspectives from the manosphere originated in the West as a response to feminist movements, these movements gave rise to portrayals of the *Sigma Male* and *Alpha Male* in films such as *Avengers*, *Joker*, and *Batman*. Young people around the world have become drawn to these films, leading them to adopt traits such as independence, aggression, deep voices, argumentative behavior, and a desire for power and authority (Booth, 2022).

Response of Female Victims towards DV

Many researches depicted the representation of domestic violence in Pakistani dramas in different eras, but there has been limited research on how the victims react towards the domestic violence or what was their response or step they took against the domestic violence. The "First Response to Victims of Crime - Victims of Domestic Violence" manual states that domestic violence is a crime and not a family issue, and that law enforcement should treat it as such (Reno et al., n.d.). According to the BJS, 85 percent of victims of domestic abuse are women, meaning that women are more likely to be in an abusive relationship when they are in their twenties, namely between the ages of 18 and 34 (Huecker et al., 2023). One of the most common

theoretical frameworks in the field of domestic abuse since the early 1970s, the feminist perspective serves as the foundation for several initiatives, advocacy campaigns, programs, and legislative agendas (McPhail et al., 2007). The feminist model is based on the idea that male domination of women in a patriarchal system, where men are the main perpetrators of violence and women are the main victims, leads to intimate partner violence (McPhail et al., 2007). According to a study on the perceptions of victims of domestic abuse, most younger generations surveyed said that violence was a common occurrence in intimate relationships, and community and societal factors have also been found to raise the likelihood that women will experience violence (Spruin et al., 2015). Recent research on domestic violence indicates that, in contrast to earlier times when victims may have felt confined in violent circumstances, modern women are more likely to realize they have choices rather than enduring abuse (Gover, 2019). These emotions follow experiences of violence, threats, and intimidation to which people may respond in a variety of ways; bodily symptoms might include headaches, exhaustion, and stomach issues while psychological symptoms can include feelings of guilt, anxiety, fear, anger, and hopelessness, furthermore, intellectually, these people may feel they have memory loss, are confused, suffer from flashbacks, and may have difficulty in concentration, however, in relationships, distrust of others may be evident; persons often isolate and exhibit hostility toward others. These manifestations may further be demonstrated as isolated behavior, irritability, drug use, and other failures in executing daily tasks and, therefore, are complex issues to deal with. ("Reactions to Violence and Threats within Close Relationships," n.d.)

Research Gap

The role of male protagonists in Pakistani dramas, the representation of hegemonic masculinity, and the portrayal of male dominance are just a few of the important subjects that are thoroughly examined in the literature evaluation that was done for this study. Furthermore, a number of studies have looked on how domestic violence is portrayed in various settings within Pakistani society and its dramas across time. There is a connection between domestic violence and alpha male dominance, two major problems in our local drama industry. In order to bridge this gap, this study will investigate how the narratives of domestic violence in selected Pakistani dramas, shaped by alpha male dominance. Using specific dramas and their character interactions as a focus, the study aims to highlight how these representations affect societal views over masculinity and the normalization of violence.

Research Significance

This study will focus on 2023 dramas to understand the representation of Alpha Male power and its relationship to domestic abuse. Furthermore, this study aims to shed light on the strategies employed by the drama industry in 2023, which may be helpful to future media scholars, social scientists, and psychologists who are studying domestic violence and alpha male dominance in television dramas. The study will look into how these programs' narratives support and encourage spousal abuse. Additionally, this study will look at how the 2023 drama business has treated women and how cultural changes in Pakistan have been portrayed in relation to Alpha Male Characters.

Research Objectives

The primary aim of this research is to examine five Pakistani TV dramas from 2023 that aired on the five most popular channels in Pakistan, in order to assess the depiction of Alpha Male dominance and its connection to domestic violence within the drama scenes.

Research Questions

RQ1: How has Alpha Male dominance been portrayed in primetime TV dramas in Pakistan in 2023?

RQ2: What are the tactics of Pakistani TV drama channels in promoting Alpha Male dominance and domestic violence?

RQ3: How are women perceived in cases of domestic violence—as abusers or as victims?

RQ4: Which narrative structures and recurrent themes relate to domestic violence in a few chosen Pakistani television dramas?

Methodology

Research Approach

This study will employ a qualitative thematic content analysis approach to investigate the latent and manifest meanings within the scenes that depict Alpha Male dominance and its connection to Domestic Violence in Pakistani television dramas.

Sampling & Selection Criteria

Five highly-rated Pakistani TV dramas from 2023 will be chosen based on Google Ratings or IMDb ratings.

The dramas selected are

1. Jaisay Apki Marzi (ARY Digital, 2023)
2. Ishq Murshid (HUM TV, 2023)
3. Jannat se Agay (GEO Entertainment, 2023)
4. Razia (Express TV, 2023)
5. Kabuli Pulao (Green Entertainment, 2023)

Themes

To effectively analyze alpha male dominance in selected Pakistani dramas, this study will unequivocally highlight significant themes presented in these shows. The critical areas of focus will include:

1. Male Control Over Female Characters.

Operational Definition: This theme refers to the repeated representation of male characters that dominate, ban, or suppress women's characters in television dramas. This includes steps or dialogue that demonstrates control, speech, clothing, careers, communication, physical sovereignty, or the social interaction of female characters. In this study, for example, where a masculine character limits, commands, or overdoes the choice of a female character, is either coded under this subject, or finally, in the right way. It also includes the social or family reinforcement of such male behavior, thus bringing the women's agency into normalcy.

2. Idealization of the "Angry Young Man"

Operational Definition: This theme is capturing male anger, emotional fluctuations, or aggressive behaviors as a symbol of masculine or moral superiority as a romantic or socially verified reflection. It includes scenes where anger, ownership, or physical aggression are justified, excuses, or love, care, or moral struggle. Pictures of such characters often get rid of dramas, or use rhetorical techniques to create sympathy for the audience, reinforcing the idea that male anger is essential to emphasizing natural, brave or justice, or emotional sincerity. If male aggressiveness was utilized to exalt, justify, or spin the narrative in a positive light without taking responsibility, the episodes were classified under this issue in this study.

To understand the dynamics at play in these stories, requires an awareness of these themes.

Qualitative Content Analysis

Table 1.1: Male Control over Female Characters

S.NO.	Drama Name	Ep No.	Characters Involved	Scene / Dialogue	Sub-Theme	Interpretation
1	Jaisay Apki Marzi (ARY Digital)	1	Sheryar, Aleezay	“Tumhare ghar walon se baat meri marzi se hogi.”	Communication control	Removes her right to maintain personal connections
2		2	Sheryar	Picks her outfit for dinner	Control over appearance	Enforces traditional femininity
3		3	Sheryar	Doesn't allow her to join job interview	Career restriction	Denies autonomy
4		5	Sheryar	“Tumhare liye kaam karna beizzati hai.”	Devaluation	Demeans her independence
5		6	Sheryar	Deletes her contacts	Digital control	Surveillance-like behavior
6		6	Sheryar	Locks her phone in drawer	Restriction of communication	Shows mistrust
7		7	Sheryar	Orders Aleezay not to meet Natasha	Social policing	Monitors her relationships
8		7	Sheryar	Calls her “na samajh aurat”	Verbal dominance	Insults to establish mental superiority
9		8	Sheryar	Stops her from going to lunch with colleagues	Mobility control	Restricts personal freedom
10		10	Sheryar	Tracks her location via phone	Digital surveillance	Treats her as property
11		11	Sheryar	Pushes Aleezay during argument	Physical violence	Uses aggression to dominate
12		11	Sheryar	Accuses her of trying to outshine him	Ego threat control	Feels threatened by her success
13		12	Sheryar	Tells her to wear more "modest" clothes	Moral policing	Reduces her self-expression
14		13	Sheryar	Says “I'll decide what's best for you.”	Paternalism	Infantilizes her
15		14	Sheryar	Calls her office to verify her schedule	Obsessive control	Doesn't respect her privacy
16		15	Sheryar	Tells her mother she's “overreacting”	Gaslighting	Dismisses emotional abuse
17		15	Sheryar	Says “meri izzat ka sawal hai”	Honor-based control	Uses male ego to dominate
18		16	Sheryar	Threatens to leave if she disobeys	Emotional blackmail	Manipulates her through guilt
19		18	Sheryar	Breaks her phone in anger	Destruction of autonomy	Symbolic control
20		20	Sheryar	Yells at her for smiling in public	Policing expression	Controls even minor behavior
21		21	Sheryar	Threatens custody battle	Legal intimidation	Abuses system against her
22		22	Sheryar	Says “apologize in front of my friends”	Public humiliation	Controls her dignity
23		23	Sheryar	Dictates her pregnancy plan	Reproductive control	Denies bodily autonomy
24		24	Sheryar	Uses elders to pressure her into obedience	Social pressure tactics	Uses family as reinforcement
25		25	Sheryar	Throws her	Symbolic	Total control over space

26		Sheryar	belongings out “Tum mujhse behas nahi kar sakti.”	banishment Voice suppression	No tolerance for resistance
27		Sheryar	Locks her in the room	Physical entrapment	Extreme physical control
28		Sheryar	Blocks her number on his phone	Communication silencing	Cuts her off completely
29	Ishq Murshid (HUM TV Drama)	Shahmeer, Shibra	Authority in Morality	Shahmeer tests her moral integrity through actions	He assumes evaluator role
30		Shahmeer, Shibra	Guilt-Tripping	“Tum mujhe samajh nahi paayi...”	Emotional blackmail
31		Shahmeer	Strategic Lies	Continues charade even after realizing her feelings	Power through deception
32		Shahmeer, Shibra	Persistence as Control	Forces multiple emotional confrontations even when she distances herself	Doesn't respect boundaries
33		Shahmeer, Shibra's Father	Role Reversal	Tries to win over Shibra's father,. bypasses her again	Uses patriarchal ties to override female agency
34		Shahmeer, Shibra	Male Apology as Power	His “regret” becomes central, not her pain	His guilt is given more weight than her trauma
35	Jannat se Agay (GEO Entertainment)	Nauman, Jannat	Threatens Jannat's show sponsorship when she challenges his ethical stance	Economic control	Uses financial power to control messaging
36		Farooq, Tabassum	Tells her “Tumse achi host woh hoti jo chup reh jaye”	Silencing her professionally	Restricts her on-screen voice
37		Farooq	Demands Tabassum wear more “respectable” clothes	Appearance policing	Controls her public persona
38		Farooq, Tabassum	Blocks her from attending journalist event	Social mobility restriction	Limits her professional networking
39		Nauman	Objects to Jannat covering female empowerment stories	Message suppression	Uses his influence to shape content
40		Farooq	Tells Tabassum “Tumhara maqasid meri raza ke mutabiq honi chahiye”	Ideological control	Enforces submission through ideology
41	Razia (Express TV Drama)	Raziya's Father	Stops Raziya from attending school	Education denial	Male control rooted in limiting female literacy
42		Raziya's Brother	“Tum larki ho, zyada baat nahi karti”	Silencing girls	Normalizing suppression in domestic space
43		Raziya's Father	Destroys her schoolbooks	Symbolic control	Enforces physical destruction of empowerment
44		Raziya's Uncle	Interferes in her dressing choices	Control over appearance	Policing how girls express themselves
45		Entire Family	Raziya's opinions ignored in marriage discussion	Exclusion from decisions	Decisions made for her, not with her
46		Male	“Izzat ghar ki aurton	Honor-based	Tying family dignity to

			Relatives	mein hoti hai”	control	women’s actions
47	3		Brother	Tells her she cannot leave the house alone	Mobility restriction	Male-enforced domestic captivity
48	4		Raziya's Father	Tells her: “Tumhare faislay hamare nahi ho saktay”	Ownership over will	Women treated as possessions, not individuals
49	4		Raziya’s Cousin	Humiliates her for speaking against elders	Punishment for voice	Speech by females equals defiance
50	4		Male Elders	Force her mother to agree to a decision without consulting Raziya	Patriarchal consent	Male consent overrides all others
51	4		Father	Uses loud voice and slaps to shut her down	Physical dominance	Violence to reassert male authority
52	4 to 6		Raziya's Husband	beats her, did marital rape	physical and mental torture	trying to become the so called 'Male'
53	1	Kabuli Pulao (Green Entertainment)	Haji Mushtaq & Barbeena	He marries her to "protect her", without considering her feelings	Forced marriage	Overrides her agency in favor of male decision-making
54	2		Haji Mushtaq	Insists she work as househelp in Lahore home	Control over her role	Limits her self-determination
55	3		Family (Chammo) & Barbeena	Only refer to her as "servant," not wife	Social identity denial	Suppresses her marital status
56	4		Haji & Barbeena	He refuses to disclose their marital bond to neighbors	Privacy control	Hides her agency in family’s view
57	5		Haji Mushtaq	Directs how she should dress around his family	Appearance policing	Controls her presentation
58	7		Barbeena & Ghaffar		External male pressure	Highlights constraints on her voice
59	8		Haji Mushtaq	Tells her: "Serve silently, remain respectful"	Voice suppression	Enforces quiet submission
60	9		Barbeena interacting	Wishes to live openly as wife but Haji discourages public affection	Public speech control	Regulates her expression of agency
61	10		Haji Mushtaq	He negotiates with inspector to conceal marriage	Institutional control	Manipulates power to control her status
62	12		Haji Mushtaq & Barbeena	Declines to let her meet her extended family	Movement restriction	Policing personal relationships
63	13		Family elders	Place condition: she may stay if she remains househelp	Role policing	Defines her value by traditional roles
64	14		Barbeena	Wants to speak for Afghan refugee rights; Haji sides with elders and shuts her down	Political voice suppression	Limits her advocacy
65	17		Haji Mushtaq	Tells her to apologize after protest to family	Emotional manipulation	Punishes her dissent
66	21		Inspector Ilyas	Checks their marriage certificate; Haji gives vague excuse	Bureaucratic cover-up	Prevents her legitimate identity

The analyzed content represented 66 separate scenes of Pakistani television dramas in the five mainstream broadcasts in 2023, such as *Jaisay Apki Marzi* (ARY Digital, 2023), *Ishq Murshid* (HUM TV, 2023), *Jannat Se Agay* (Geo Entertainment, 2023), *Razia Entertainment* (Express TV, 2023), and *Kabuli Pulao* (Green Entertainment, 2023). Each drama highlights the key characters included in it, direct views or dialogue references, the classified sub-theme, and the main subject of male control and the main topics of domestic control indicate its explanatory compatibility. In the five dramas, a permanent pattern of male characters controls women's roles. These actions are verbal, emotional, psychological, physical, and even legal in nature. The most dominant subtopics include control of communication, career restrictions, outward policing, emotional blackmail, and symbolic control. For example, in *Jaisay Apki Marzi* (ARY Digital, 2023), Shehreyar repeatedly restricts the freedom of Aleezay through digital surveillance, moral policing, and emotional manipulation. In the *Ishq Murshid*, the main character of the man is powerful through fraud, crime, and pureness. in *Jannat se Agay* (Geo Entertainment, 2023), where male characters use theoretical and economic options to suppress the women's agency. *Razia* (Express TV, 2023) illustrates generational control embedded in family and cultural structures, with female voice and movement suppressed through physical and symbolic actions. *Kabuli Pulao* (Green Entertainment, 2023) presents a softer tone of patriarchal protection, where even affection-based control mechanisms, like secrecy, forced roles, and social identity denial, limit the female character's agency. The table forms the empirical backbone of this study, revealing the nuanced yet consistent portrayal of patriarchal control across diverse narratives and genres.

Table 2.1 : Idealization of the "Angry Young Man".

S.NO.	Drama Name	Ep No.	Characters Involved	Scene / Dialogue Reference	Sub-Theme	Interpretation (Thematic Explanation)
1	Jaisay Apki Marzi (ARY Digital)	2	Sheryar	Yells during minor disagreement over dinner. Apologizes but shifts blame: "Tum bhi gussa dilati ho."	Overreaction	Treats minor issues with major emotional reactions.
2		4	Sheryar	Aleezay is shown guilty for making him angry.	Blame-shifting	Blames his partner for triggering his own outbursts.
3		5	Sheryar	Anger followed by emotional softness.	Victim-blaming	Narrative places guilt on the woman.
4		7	Sheryar	Pushes chair violently while walking out.	Redemptive emotion	He gets emotional relief, audience sees softness.
5		8	Sheryar	"Tum jaanti nahi ho mera gussa."	Aggressive exits	Physical movement adds tension and control.
6		9	Sheryar	Aleezay's Mother justifies: "Mard ka	Intimidation	Establishes fear-based respect.
7		10	Aleezay's Mother & Sheryar		Normalization of anger	Society excuses male anger easily.

				gussa toh hota hai."		
8		11	Sheryar	Punches wall in frustration.	Frustration outlet	His actions are justified as stress reactions.
9		17	Sheryar	Smashes phone but is later forgiven.	Rage consequences erased	No lasting accountability.
10		18	Sheryar	Aleezay's fear downplayed in script.	Fear minimization	Female trauma is ignored.
11		19	Sheryar	Framed as emotionally complex.	Complex male image	Depth added to justify toxic behavior.
12		22	Sheryar	"Tumhara liye itna gussa aata hai, pata hai?"	Love through anger	Aggression equated with love.
13		24	Sheryar	Shouts at her but says he misses her.	Emotional confusion	Abuse and affection blend.
14		25	Sheryar	Anger drives plot progression.	Plot driver	Narrative centered around male emotions.
15	Ishq Murshid (HUM TV Drama)	3	Shahmeer	Aggression masked as Love	Gets angry at Shibra's boldness in initial protest	Framed as passion
16		14	Fazal Baksh	Emotional Breakdown	Shouting "main kya bura insaan hoon?"	Drama builds sympathy
17		17	Fazal Baksh	Conflict with Father	Argues about marriage decision	Conflict seen as moral stance
18		21	Shahmeer, Shibra	Controlled Apology	"Main kuch keh nahi saka"	Passive guilt made poetic
19		26	Shahmeer, Shibra	Redemption Accepted	Shibra cries, hugs him, says "tumhare jaisa koi nahi"	All toxic traits forgiven instantly
20	Razia (Express TV Drama)	4	Father	Slaps Raziya over a rumor without listening	Instant reaction = power	No validation of female side
21		4	Cousin	Threatens boy who talks to Raziya	Violence as love	Aggression equated with affection
22		4	Brother	Smashes her books during confrontation	Symbolic destruction	Rejecting her identity to dominate
23		4	Uncle	Justifies his attitude with: "Main chhoti umar mein kamane laga"	Masculinity through struggle	Hardship = reason for controlling nature
24		5	Father	Boasts about "saving the family honor"	Moral policing	Policing women is shown as heroic

25		5	Husband	Justifies hitting her: “Aurat samajhti nahi jab tak zor na ho”	Violence rationalized	Dominance celebrated as tough love
26		5	Father	Cried after punishing her; family praises him	Sympathy diversion	Manipulative emotional image
27		5 to 6	Husband	He did marital rape, beats her for not giving birth a boy.	Marital Violence	society encourage him to do these kind of act because everyone in the family knows that he beats her but no one stood for her.
28	Kabuli Pulao (Green Entertainment)	8	Ghaffar’s wife Chammo	Tells Haji: “Ghaffar ko phir se gussa aaya hai, usne tumhare liye jang jeeti hai”	Romanticizing male aggression	Heroism in rage
29		10	Ghaffar’s friends	Applaud when he shouts at Haji and calls him out in public Says “agar	Peer validation of aggressive honor	Rage reinforced socially
30		11	Chammo	Qayyum gussa hota, sab theek hota” after conflict	Angry response fetishization	Encourages reactive “solution”
31		13	Qayyum	Yells at Ayesha for siding with Barbeena Praise	Aggressive control over daughters	Anger as patriarchal authority
32		14	Neighborhood women	Qayyum’s passionate defense of Barbeena’s honour	Emotional aggression romanticized	Blurred line between defense and violence
33		17	Haji’s sister	Tells Haji: “Qayyum ne gussa na dikhaya hota, koi yakeen nahi karta unka”	Pressure to show anger	Emotion tied to trustworthiness
34	Jannat se Agay (GEO Entertainment)	4	Nauman	Criticizes junior staff angrily in the first team meeting	Anger as power	Introduces dominance through rage
35		3	Nauman	Slams phone while watching	Intolerance of dissent	Normalizes toxic response to critique

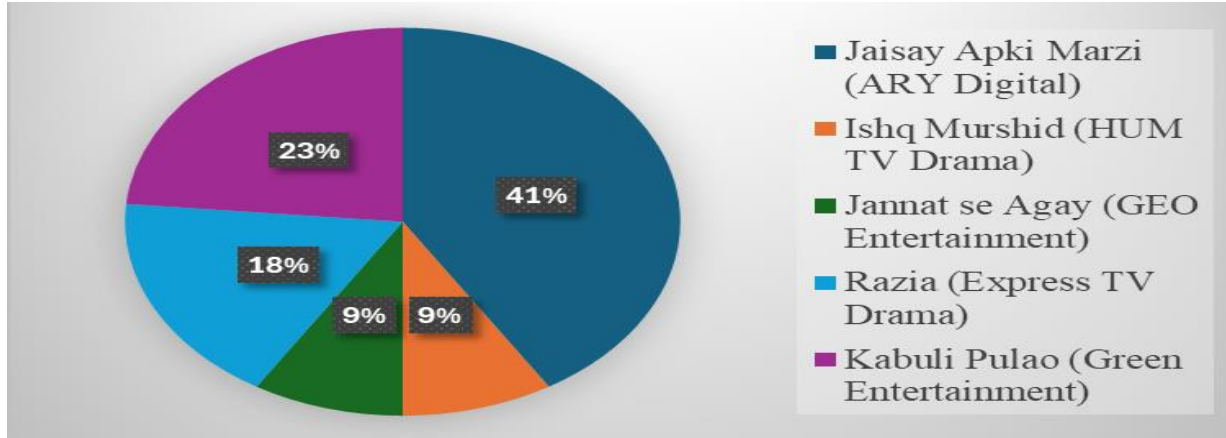
36	11	Nauman	Jannat's show critique Uses angry tone to dominate board meeting Loses temper on her success, shown as jealousy	Loudness = competence	Measured via volume rather than logic
37	12	Nauman	Emotional breakdown where he blames Tabassum	Jealousy coded as love	Frame romanticizes emotional instability
38	20	Farooq		Emotional rage = blame	Projects guilt onto female character

This table provides themes of 38 selected scenes in the five prominent Pakistani TV dramas broadcast in 2023, especially highlighting the representation associated with the "angry young man" archaeological. Through an explanatory lens, the study ranges and analyzes male anger, emotional fluctuations, and how these behaviors are labelled as romantic, legitimate, or even romantic in the structure of the statement. For example, in *Jaisay Apki Marzi*, the man lead Shehreyar exhibits, threats and emotional manipulation, which is repeatedly forgiven or reduced by other characters or by narrative arc.

Moments of anger-such as breaking the phone, screaming, and physical aggression-often after expressing emotional weakness or remorse, eventually describe his psychological behavior rather than abuse. These emotional cycles allow the audience to soften the decision, to empathize with character, and the permanent justification for domination in the guise of love. In the *Ishq Murshid*, the role of Shahmir thus blurred the lines between aggression and love. Its anger, moral superiority, and tripping of strategic crime are kept as evidence of its depth and passion. It's emotionally relieved for manipulation tasks, when making a pair of regrets or charm reinforces the acceptance of toxic masculinity. *Razia* and *Kabuli Pulo* revealed how family and societies actively confirm male aggression. From slapping daughters and eliminating their sovereignty, offering anger as a symbol of reliability or love, the angry man has been shown as both guards and moral compass. In *Jannat se Agay*, the aggression and jealousy of the workplace has been termed as a claim, which reinforces the social fiction of the angry man as an ideal leader. This detailed ranking shows how Pakistani television dramas portray anger and idealize men associated with leadership, romance and moral authority, and contribute to the cultural framework that excuses and glorifies emotional and physical aggression.

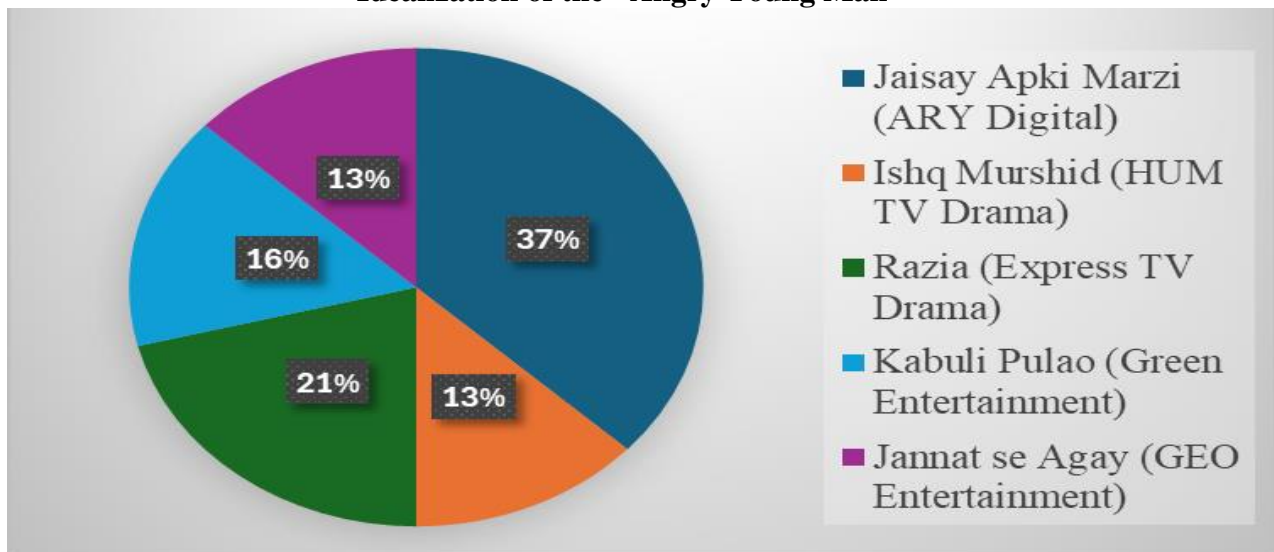
Results

Male Control over Female Characters



An analysis of themes in five Pakistani television dramas has revealed that Drama *Jaisay Apki Marzi* (ARY Digital, 2023) is the highest number (28) under the theme of *male control on women's roles*. This drama shows a very highly rhetoric where male authority appears through physical dominance, oral policing, emotional manipulation and supervision. Male lead Shehryar controls the female main character's dressing style, career selection, social interactions and sovereignty control. In comparison, *Kabuli Pulao* (Green Entertainment, 2023) featured 16 significant instances of male control, particularly through the character of Haji Mushtaq, who positions his control over Barbeena as "protection." Though subtle and wrapped in traditional values, this control mirrors the same foundational ideology of male authority and female submission. *Razia* (Express TV, 2023) presented 12 entries, focusing more on generational and institutional patriarchy, where male figures such as fathers and brothers exercise control through cultural and educational restrictions. *Ishq Murshid* (HUM TV, 2023), and *Jannat se Agay* (Geo Entertainment, 2023) each contributed approx 6 instances, portraying male control through emotional superiority and ideological policing rather than exhibiting overt aggression.

Idealization of the "Angry Young Man"



Under the theme *Idealization of the Angry Young Man*, the same five dramas were examined for patterns where male aggression was justified, glorified, or romanticized. Once again, *Jaisay Apki Marzi* (ARY Digital, 2023) led with 14 entries, showing how the character of Sheryar uses rage as an emotional outlet, a love language, and a justification for abusive behavior. His anger is framed not only as *natural* but often as *necessary*, adding emotional complexity that ultimately redirects audience sympathy toward him. *Razia* (Express TV, 2023), with 8 entries, prominently features male characters whose outbursts are normalized or applauded by family members. Notably, in one storyline, physical assault and marital rape are even disregarded under the guise of masculine frustration and family pressure, setting a risky precedent for the exaltation of toxic masculinity. With 6, 5, and 5 entries, respectively, *Kabuli Pulao* (Green Entertainment, 2023), *Ishq Murshid* (HUM TV, 2023), and *Jannat se Agay* (Geo Entertainment, 2023) come in close proximity. Male rage is associated with their positions as moral leaders or guardians in these myths. For example, in *Kabuli Pulao* (Green Entertainment, 2023), characters like Qayyum and Ghaffar are appreciated for their aggressive defense of women's honor, conflating emotional instability with social justice. The pie chart visualization reinforces that while *Jaisay Apki Marzi* is the most consistent in romanticizing male anger, all dramas to some degree equate male emotional volatility with depth, heroism, or moral clarity.

Discussion

Intimate partner violence

On social media, the ideas of Alpha Male and Sigma Male have become very popular. The Alpha Male is frequently perceived as more assertive, while the Sigma Male is thought to be more calm and logical. On X, when a man expresses a confident perspective, he is frequently labeled as a Sigma Male (Valdivia, 2023).

The results from the analysis of the themes of five Pakistani television dramas (such as *Jaisay Apki Marzi*, *Ishq Murshid*, *Jannat se Agay*, *Razia*, and *Kabuli Pulao*) revealed the repeated images of Alpha Men's dominance and the intimacy of partners. In all dramas, male characters used physical control over their female counterparts permanently psychological, emotional, economic and sometimes. These practices were often developed under socially accepted principles, either by anxiety, love, or moral superiority. In particular, *Jaisay Apki Marzi* exhibited more than 30 incidences of male control and emotional manipulation, while *Kabuli Pulao* has offered more patriarchal Authority issues under the guise of protection, but still offered a permanent reinforcement.

The theme of the "angry young man" was just as commonplace, not as a red flag, but as an essential expression of masculine and moral struggle. These statements not only reinforce the traditional gender classification, but also assist in the broader cultural acceptance of domestic and intimate partners' violence, which echoes documentary global patterns through the study of the World Health Organization and local gender. In addition, it affects the pictures on how the audience, especially women, feel abusive - sometimes normalizes the relationship as an essential part of relationships or women's goodness (WHO, 2024).

Several renowned television dramas have discovered the disturbing dynamics of male aggression and control in domestic relations globally. For example, Turkish drama *Fatmagül'ün Suçu Ne??* In the central statement, women are systematically and in society, women are systematically silent and dominated. Similarly, the British series *Luther* has complex male roles, whose control over women's counterparts are often related to emotional and psychological manipulation. Plays

like Kankar illustrate how dominance and violence are accepted in Pakistan under the disguise of cultural norms. The remarks critically show how, in many cultures, violent masculine behavior is not simply romantic or an excuse, but is also reinforced by fear, silence, and tradition, creating an environment where women's sovereignty is frequently restrained (Babar & Abbas, 2024; Booth, 2022; Saleem & Sadiq, 2021).

This dominant behavior leads to intimate partner violence. If their partners are not on the same page as they are, then usually domestic violence occurs in these types of scenarios. The term 'domestic violence' (DV) is used when there is a close relationship between the culprit and the victim. People around the world have wrong perceptions about DV, thinking that women are only the victims in some situations, but in fact, men also become victims. Males in heterosexual relationships are probably victimized by women sometimes, "DV is the pattern of behavior that harms the partner or family members psychologically, physically, and sexually" (Nations, 2022)).

Although there are many types of household aggression, Tanjir and Ashiq ur Rehman simplify the types of DV in their research. DV has simple types such as physical, psychological, sexual, economical, and last but not least, harmful traditional practices that include home violence, domestic abuse, and partner violence. Household aggression is not only between married couples; it could be done by the in-laws and other family members (Rashid Soron et al., 2021).

Globally, about one-third of all women have suffered physical or sexual violence, and in some regions, that number increases to 38 %. About 70 % of Pakistani women are victims of domestic violence. The common forms of violence include honor killings, abuse of spouses such as marital rape, acid attacks, and burning by family members. Abuse with spouses is rarely seen as a crime until it increases to the extreme, such as attempts to kill or murder, which can be from driving to suicide or accident. The reason for violence against women is that human behavior is formed by its social environment (WHO, 2024)

Response of Female Victims Towards DV

In a study investigating the perceived impacts of violence against women depicted in Pakistani television dramas (Hum TV dramas), Saleem et al. (2021) reported that the majority of their respondents believed that viewers were experiencing anxiety, despair, and insecurity as a result of violence against women in television dramas (Rawan & Amjad, 2024).

In fact, Hussein (2018) theorizes on the representation of the South Asian woman in neoliberal media and literature. Hussein describes a "new woman" who is self-made and possesses a unique, intersectional identity with agency. This new woman advocates for equality and freedom of choice but does so within reason, only seeking rights that do not negatively impact Pakistani women (Hussein, 2018, p. 82).

Modern Pakistani dramas portray women as empowered and capable of making choices, challenging the traditional dichotomies of "traditional/backward" versus "western/modern" (Khan, 2020). According to Khan's study, which explores at how globalization changes gender roles in Pakistani TV dramas, young women create their identities through asymmetric cultural power dynamics inside patriarchal systems, being an engaged audience, they frequently recognize the difference between reality and media representations (Zubair, 2016, p. 30).

But these heroines are often portrayed as "good women" who value family over jobs, devotion over vanity, and tradition over modernism (Khan, 2020). This conformity to prevailing notions is indicative of feminist groups in Pakistan, which generally refrain from questioning customs, religion, and the family. These dramas continue to be an important area for feminist investigation of Pakistani domestic and family structures, even though more ethnographic and audience response research is required (Khan, 2020).

Suggestions for Future Researchers

This study opens several routes to explore more. Future research may include audience reception studies to explore how viewers understand masculine painters and how they understand the effects of their real life. A comparative analysis between Pakistani dramas and international content may reveal whether toxic manhood is a local or global trend. Researchers can also extend the scope by checking digital content such as web series or social media platforms. In addition, the television statement can find a more balanced view of male hunting and its absence. Analyzing the Tulani studies, how this image is produced over time will also be valuable.

Limitations

Despite the consequences, this study has limits. It focused on dramas from 2023 to five Urdu language plays, which cannot reflect wider trends in areas or platforms. As all of the most informed research, the subjective interpretation includes subtle decisions. This study did not include audience opinions, which limits the vision of the effects of these pictures. Also, it excludes technical aspects such as visual or sound, which can affect the impression. These limits recommend the need for a wider, more comprehensive future study.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to examine how alpha male dominance and intimacy between partners are represented and normalized by Pakistani television dramas broadcast in 2023. Using the five famous dramas' thematic content analysis *Jaisay Apki Marzi*, *Ishq Murshid*, *Jannat se Agay*, *Razia*, and *Kabuli Pulao*, this study criticized two important topics: the theory of male control and angry young man on female characters.

The results show a repeated pattern of dominance, where male characters control the decisions of female characters, movements, careers, speeches and even the bodies. These actions are often presented as common, romantic, or morally justified, thus reinforcing the traditional gender classification. For example, *Jaisay Apki Marzi*, the control and malicious treatment of the main character of the man is regarded as anxiety or an emotional problem, while the resistance of the role of women is silenced or punished. Similarly, in *Kabuli Pulao*, masculine patronage is hidden in moral duty, and the female agency masks the agency's elimination. Crossing the selected plays, male control is not only carried out but also reinforces family, religion and social verification. It appears that the media reflects and reprises the structural roots of gender inequality.

The second topic, the representation of the angry young man, reflects on how the male aggression and anger are treated as a characteristic of power, bravery or love. Emotional provocation, ownership, and even physical violence is often shown as a dramatic impression of deep love or internal conflict. These pictures are particularly dangerous because they cultivate sympathy for male characters, while their women relieve the emotional and psychological trauma of the victims. In the *Ishq Murshid* and *Razia*, the male characters are offered or treated as emotionally complex, which relieves the audience's attention from their harmful behavior. The subject reinforces the cultural rhetoric that men's emotions justify their violence, while women are expected to tolerate, forgive or adjust.

These results are relatable with global and local literature, which highlights how domestic violence is normalized by everyday language, cultural rules and entertainment media. The study also confirms previous research (e.g., Khan, 2020; Saleem et al., 2021), in which the double picture of women is noted in the Pakistani media: while some of the characters appear to be empowered, they are often imprisoned within the acceptance of piety, tradition and sacrifice.

Despite the symbols of the progress of feminism in the content of the drama, theoretical basic patronage values are engulfed.

These results have significant implications for media producers, screenwriters and policy makers. Love, dramatic behavior, and control as anxiety, can have serious psychological and cultural consequences, especially for viewers. The media is not just a reflection of society - it is also a teacher, which makes the public an understanding of gender roles, relationships and ethics.

Finally, Pakistani television plays continue to play a powerful role in the formation of a social statement around masculinity and violence. Although they occasionally introduce progressive female characters, these statements often fail to challenge the infrastructure that enables male domination. There is a dire need to tell a moral story, where male characters are held accountable and female characters are allowed to be disturbed and compromised. Since domestic violence is affecting millions globally and locally, the media industry will have to take responsibility in eliminating or maintaining this cycle (Ali & Khalid, 2021; Ashraf et al., 2017; Madhani et al., 2017; Naz, 2023).

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