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On Crime and Justice System for Crime in Media Industry in Pakistan

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Abstract

This paper investigates the relationship between Pakistan's justice system for crime and crime in the media industry. The goal is to investigate how the public's image of crime is influenced by the media, the difficulties faced by law enforcement, and the function of investigative journalism in revealing illegal activity. Prominent problems like drug cartels are given special attention, underscoring the complexities of organized crime in Pakistan. The study examines the legal responsibilities of electronic media under the PEMRA Ordinance, 2002, balancing freedom of expression with the constitutional protection of fair trial rights and the administration of justice. The study also analyzes the application of the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860, the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, the Qanun-e-Shahadat Order, 1984, the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) Ordinance, 2002, the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016 (PECA), and the Control of Narcotic Substances Act, 1997, which collectively regulate criminal investigations, prosecution, media reporting, cybercrime, and offences relating to organized crime and narcotics. Since the media business is seen as accountable for the character of the younger generation, the study ends with suggestions for enhancing the efficacy of justice system for crime and responsible media reporting. The focus is on how crime-related TV shows affect justice system for crime concerns, such as police attitudes, clearance rates, crime, and victimization fear. This study demonstrated how and to what extent common people of all ages, genders, experiences, and educational backgrounds are perceived differently by these crime plays. The study was directed by the Cultivation Theory (Gerbner, 1960). The study concludes by recommending reforms aimed at strengthening Pakistan's criminal justice system, improving responsible media reporting, ensuring compliance with constitutional guarantees and statutory obligations.

Keywords: Investigation, Narcotics, Cultivation Theory, Criminal Justice, Cyber Crime, constitutional guarantees.

Introduction

Significant changes have been brought about in many facets of society, including the reporting industry, by the advancement of information and communication technology. The media sector in Pakistan is crucial in influencing how the general public views crime and justice. Accurso and Gebhard (2020) state that the media's primary functions are to educate, entertain, inform, and socialize us. Moreover, television's fundamental purpose is to convey stories. In most of Pakistani homes, dramas, TV ads, and news programs create a cogent system of images and messages (Gerbner, 1998).

The media acts as an overseer, but it also has to deal with issues like sensationalism, censorship, and illegal manipulation. Drug trafficking, in particular, is still a major problem that affects the security and stability of society. This study examines the relationship between criminal activity, media coverage, and

the justice system for criminal response, focusing on contemporary problems such as drug cartels, as demonstrated by the recently on aired Pinki Gand case. Both textual and visual narratives contain symbolic depictions of vulnerability, fear, and power that reinforce imaginaries of uncertainty and devastation. The article comes to the conclusion that media coverage does more than just educate; it creates interpretive frameworks that influence how people, organizations, and decision-makers view insecurity by connecting common extortion to more general discussions about social consistency, economic instability, and governance in Pakistan. With significant ramifications for trade and societal stability, the transition from customary drug-related territorial disputes to financial demands highlights a change in the criminal economy. The regulation of electronic media in Pakistan is primarily governed by the **Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) Ordinance, 2002**, which establishes ethical standards for broadcasting, prohibits content prejudicial to the administration of justice, and seeks to prevent sensationalism, misinformation, and the violation of individual rights. Likewise, online and digital platforms are regulated under the **Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016 (PECA)**, which criminalizes cyber-related offences, including the dissemination of false information, online harassment, unauthorized access to information systems, and other cybercrimes that may affect public confidence in the justice system.

This study examines the relationship between crime, media reporting, and Pakistan's criminal justice system, with particular emphasis on media portrayals of organized crime and narcotics-related offences. It also considers high-profile crime reporting, including recent cases that have attracted widespread public attention, to evaluate how intensive media coverage influences public perceptions of policing, criminal investigations, prosecution, judicial proceedings, and confidence in the justice system. The admissibility and evaluation of evidence in such criminal proceedings are further governed by the **Qanun-e-Shahadat Order, 1984**, while constitutional guarantees ensure that media reporting does not compromise the fairness and impartiality of criminal trials.

Method

The questionnaire method is used to collect data for quantitative part of study, which is based on a cross-sectional survey. In order to learn more about the respondents' viewpoints on many areas of the justice system, such as police effectiveness and fear of victimization, as well as their habits of watching crime programs, the random sample technique has been used. 450 Students (under graduate and graduate) who were enrolled in various departments at Capital University of Science and Technology provided the data. The statistical program SPSS is used to analyze the data. To comprehend the effects of these phenomena, we also employ a statutory approach in conjunction with a normative legal method. Broadcast, social media reporting, library research, and regulatory analysis are some of the methods used to gather data. To find legal gaps and the efficacy of law enforcement in this situation, a qualitative and descriptive analysis technique is used.

This study is based on Cultivation Theory by George Gerbner (1998) which describes how viewers' impressions of social reality are shaped by excessive media exposure. This theory is applied in Pakistan's media sector to comprehend how viewers perceive the nation's justice system for crime and crime. These public opinions are greatly influenced by prolonged exposure to sensationalized crime dramas and divisive news coverage.

Results and Discussion

Table 1

Perception of People about the Justice System for Crime of Pakistan

		13.00	26.00	39.00	52.00	65.00	
How many hours a week	1-2	28	15	0	8	31	82
on average do you spend	3-4	77	49	33	47	0	216
watching crime-related							

television programs?	5-6	41	26	21	23	0	111
	7-8	0	21	21	0	0	41
Total		147	111	74	87	31	450

Table 2

The results of the Chi-Square test for the question "On average, how many hours do you watch crime-related television programs in a week?"

	Value	df	Sig (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	243.913 ^a	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	199.189	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.898	1	.024
N of Valid Cases	450		

a. 2 cells (10.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.19.

In contrast to "perception of people about the justice system for crime of Pakistan," people's opinions on the nation's justice system for crime are greatly influenced. People who used to watch crime-related programs more often had unfavorable opinions about the nation's justice system for crime of country, which reduced their trust in the legal system of their country.

Table 3 Perception of People about the Justice System for Criminal of Pakistan (Do you watch programs that report on crimes?)

Response 13.00 26.00 39.00 52.00 65.00 Total

Yes	138	111	74	87	26	436
No	9	0	0	0	5	14
Total	147	111	74	87	31	450

Table 4

Perception of people about justice system for crime of Pakistan compared to those who do not watch.

	Value	df	Sig (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	35.138 ^a	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	25.210	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.936	1	.164
N of Valid Cases	450		

Regarding various issues related to the justice system for crime in Pakistan, there are 0.164 significant differences between respondents who watch crime-related TV programs and those who do not watch. This indicates that respondents who watch crime-related TV programs have a negative perception of people's perceptions of Pakistan's justice system for crime compared to those who do not watch.

Table 5

The unemployment rate in Pakistan across different age group based on available data from recent surveys and report is tabulated below. It is worth mentioning that actual figures may vary depending on the source of data:

Age Group	Unemployment Rate (%)	Notes
15-24 Years	9.2%-12.0%	Youth unemployment tends to be higher due to limited experience and education gaps.
25-34 Years	4.5%-6.0%	Typically, lower than youth unemployment, as individuals gain experience
35-44 Years	3.5%-4.5%	Generally stable employment rates
45-59 Years	3.0%-4.0%	Slightly lower, as many are established in their careers

60+ Years	2.5%-3.5% or semi-retired	The lowest unemployment rate, with many retired
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According to studies from the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), Labour Force Surveys (LFS), and World Bank data, unemployment among young people in Pakistan is a major element in the rise in crime and drug misuse, which is caused by a number of interrelated variables. Financial distress brought on by a lack of work prospects frequently drives young people toward criminal activity and the use of drugs as an escape. Young people may turn to criminal activity and substance addiction as coping techniques due to the psychological effects of unemployment, which include emotions of frustration, hopelessness, and low self-esteem. Peer pressure and the social environment also have an impact in high-unemployment areas; drug use and minor crimes may become accepted among peers, inspiring others to engage. Additionally, young people without jobs are more likely to experiment with drugs and commit crimes due to their lack of purpose and interest. Their vulnerability to criminal activity and substance misuse is further increased by their lack of access to education and knowledge about legal matters, drug risks, and mental health. Reducing the threats of drug usage and criminality requires addressing young unemployment through focused job creation, education, and awareness initiatives. Furthermore, the rising prevalence of psychological disorders including depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems is a major global concern, including in Pakistan, highlighting the need of all-encompassing support networks to enhance societal stability and mental well-being.

Table 6 Increasing Rate of Psychological Diseases in Pakistan

Mental Issues	Health Estimated Prevalence	Contributing Factors	Notes
Depression	Approximately 25–30% of the population	Socioeconomic stress, unemployment, excessive use of social media, stigma, social isolation	Higher among youth and urban populations
Anxiety Disorders	Around 20–25%	Economic pressures, uncertainty, trauma, lack of awareness	Often co-occurs with depression
Stress-Related Disorders	Rising due to modern lifestyle	Work pressure, family conflicts, insecurity	Underreported due to stigma
Suicidal Tendencies	Increasing, especially among youth	Social pressure, lack of mental health services	Critical public health concern

Critical public health concern

In Pakistan, psychological disorders are becoming more common due to a number of circumstances. One significant problem is the stigma associated with mental health, which causes underreporting and makes people reluctant to get treatment out of fear of being judged by others. This issue is made worse by rapid urbanization, which increases lifestyle-related stress and social isolation as people find it difficult to adjust to rapidly changing surroundings. Since anxiety and despair are frequently brought on by financial instability, economic issues like high unemployment rate and pervasive poverty also significantly contribute to declining mental health. Furthermore, excessive social media use has become a significant factor, particularly for young people; research shows that people who use these platforms for more than three hours a day are twice as likely to have mental health problems. The harmful cycles of comparison, cyberbullying, and sleep deprivation that are fostered by this constant connectivity have a negative effect on mental health. These problems are exacerbated by the shortage of facilities and trained mental health workers, which makes it difficult to give individuals in need the assistance and care they require.

Table 7 Drug Regulation Laws in Pakistan (Based on the Narcotics Control Act and Related

Legislation)

Regulation	Article / Section	Provision	Sanction
Narcotics Control 1997	Act, Section 3	Prohibits manufacturing, production, possession, sale, purchase, transport, and trafficking of narcotics and controlled substances	Imprisonment up to 10 years and/or fine; for trafficking or manufacturing, imprisonment may extend to life imprisonment or death
Narcotics Control 1997	Act, Section 9	Penalizes unauthorized sale or distribution of narcotics	Imprisonment up to 7 years and fine
Narcotics Control 1997	Act, Section 15	Provides authority for search, seizure, and confiscation of illegal drugs	Confiscation of drugs and initiation of legal proceedings
Drug Regulation Act (various provisions)	—	Regulates controlled pharmaceuticals and substances	Penalties include fines, imprisonment, or both, depending on severity
Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF)	—	Provides enforcement powers against drug trafficking and related crimes	Imprisonment, fines, and possible capital punishment for major offences

Core Criminal Justice Laws in Pakistan

Pakistan's justice system for crime is regulated by both procedural and substantive laws. The classification of crimes, the organization of courts, and the national standards for evidence and inquiry are all governed by these statutes.

Table 8

Law / Act	Scope & Description	Key Function
Pakistan Penal Code (PPC), 1860	The substantive criminal law of Pakistan. It defines various offenses (such as murder, theft, and assault), prescribes punishments, and establishes general legal exceptions.	Identifies what constitutes a crime and the corresponding penalty.
Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1898	The procedural criminal law . It governs the machinery for the investigation, apprehension, and trial of offenses, including the powers of the police and magistrates.	Defines how the law is enforced and the rights of the accused.
Qanun-e-Shahadat Order (QSO), 1984	Governs the admissibility of evidence in legal proceedings. It dictates what facts can be proved, the burden of proof, and the competency of witnesses.	Determines what proofs are valid in a court of law.
Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA), 1997	Special legislation designed to prevent terrorism, sectarian violence, and related heinous crimes. It establishes specialized Anti-Terrorism Courts (ATCs) with expedited trial procedures.	Expedites trials for terror-related offenses and public security threats.
Control of Narcotic Substances Act (CNSA), 1997	Deals with the prohibition, control, and regulation of operations relating to narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, and precursor chemicals.	Prescribes harsh punishments for drug trafficking and possession .

Investigation for Fair Trial Act, 2013	Regulates the gathering of evidence in modern, organized, and high-tech crimes. It provides a legal framework for utilizing modern devices, wiretaps, and forensics during investigations.	Legalizes the use of electronic evidence and surveillance for investigations.
Juvenile Justice System Act (JJSA), 2018	Replaces the older 2000 ordinance to specifically address juvenile offenders, establishing a separate justice system, rehabilitation programs, and the prohibition of the death penalty for minors.	Focuses on rehabilitation rather than punishment for children under 18.
Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010	Criminalizes harassment in the workplace and requires organizations to establish internal inquiry committees and a transparent reporting mechanism.	Safeguards employees against workplace harassment .

Media Industry and Crime in Pakistan

In the digital age, social media is one of the most popular digital platforms that has taken the lead in marketing and business promotion (Zulva, 2023). News regarding crime and justice is disseminated through television, print, and internet channels in Pakistan's dynamic and varied media landscape. Numerous criminal networks have been exposed by investigative journalism, yet media organizations frequently face threats, censorship, and skewed reporting (Khan & Qureshi, 2020). By drawing attention to problems like drug trafficking, terrorism, and corruption, the media can have an impact on criminal justice laws. The ability of the media to shape people's perceptions, particularly those of young people, has been studied for many years in media studies. In the past, studies were conducted in a variety of settings, including drug use, criminal activity, and violent and aggressive behavior. Various crime shows, such as modernizations of crime scenes, are produced in Pakistan. These programs' primary goal is to provide an explanation of real-life criminal activity. People who frequently watch crime shows exhibit unfavorable behavioral effects, according to Abdullah and Rehman (2017). Negative behavioral tendencies emerge, particularly in teenagers at their formative period. The media significantly influences public opinion and can shape criminal justice policies by drawing attention to issues such as corruption, terrorism, drug trafficking, cybercrime, and gender-based violence. In Pakistan, media reporting is regulated under several legal frameworks to ensure responsible journalism while protecting national security and public order. The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) Ordinance, 2002 empowers the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority to regulate electronic media content, prohibit the broadcast of material that incites violence, spreads hate speech, or threatens national security, and enforce ethical standards for television and radio broadcasters. Similarly, the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), 2016 provides legal measures to address cybercrimes, including online harassment, cyberstalking, identity theft, hate speech, dissemination of false information, and unauthorized access to digital systems. These laws have become increasingly relevant due to the growing influence of social media in the dissemination of crime-related information. Furthermore, the Constitution of Pakistan (Article 19) guarantees freedom of speech and freedom of the press but allows reasonable restrictions in the interests of the glory of Islam, national security, public order, decency, morality, and prevention of contempt of court or incitement to an offence.

Media's Role in Exposing Crime

Numerous criminal syndicates have been exposed by investigative media, which has prompted legislative changes and law enforcement initiatives. For instance, drug trafficking networks gained national attention as a result of media coverage of the "Pinki Gand" case (Dawn, 2022). Sensationalism, however, can sometimes result in bias or false information that affects public opinion and legal procedures. This study promotes a variety of journalistic categories. Columns, in-depth articles, editorials, and expert assessments can enhance public knowledge by enabling readers to comprehend extortion through the lenses of economics, sociology, and criminology. By allowing citizens to discern between factual reporting, informative analysis, and normative judgment, multi-genre coverage also

promotes critical thinking (McCombs, M.E. et al., 2018).

Due to its valuable position, Pakistan is a major hub for the transportation of drugs, particularly heroin and opium, from Afghanistan to global markets. Corrupt authorities, law enforcement, and political figures are all part of the complex networks that organized criminal gangs' route (Rehman, 2019). The nonstop fight against drug cartels is exemplified by the Pinki Gand case, which involves a reputed drug lord allegedly connected to organized crime and drug trafficking. According to reports, Pinki Gand operated in several provinces and has ties to global drug trafficking networks. The scale of corruption and the difficulties law enforcement organizations confront in breaking up such networks were made public by media coverage (The Express Tribune, 2022). In 2026, this matter is once more being discussed on television and social media. The researcher discusses the topic of "media as a risk factor" in children's development, gives specifics on TV crime dramas that are primarily popular in Pakistan, and draws conclusions from pertinent theories. According to a study, children's behavior is greatly influenced by the media, and how crime is portrayed may raise serious issues (Abdullah & Abdul Rehman, 2017). The general public's view and behavior may be influenced by these crime dramas. Research has shown that youngsters who utilize media exhibit a variety of undesirable behaviors (Ficher, 2012). Regarding violence in the media and its consequences, there are a variety of viewpoints. According to Anderson (2003), there is a suggestion that the impacts of violent media material are just as significant as those of smoking and lung diseases.

Challenges in Combating Drug Cartels

Corruption, a lack of funding, and political interfering hinder efforts to stop drug trafficking. These problems are frequently brought up in media reporting, which advocate for changes to the criminal justice system (Khan & Ahmed, 2021). Procedural delays, corruption, and poor infrastructure are just a few of the issues Pakistan's criminal justice system must deal with. Strong offenders typically go unpunished because law enforcement organizations are unable to successfully challenge organized crime (Siddiqui & Malik, 2020). The promotion of judicial reforms and anti-corruption initiatives has been supported by media campaigning. Public support for more robust enforcement measures has been sparked by high-profile incidents like Pinki Gang.

Recommendations

Enhancing law enforcement agencies' capacity and upholding the rule of law are crucial for effectively addressing the issues of drug enforcement and justice. This entails offering sufficient tools, instruction, and legislative frameworks to guarantee effective and equitable law enforcement. Promoting ethical and responsible reporting is equally important since it builds public and media confidence and responsibility, all of which are essential for making well-informed decisions. Additionally, strengthening international cooperation in the war of crime and on drugs can result in more coordinated operations, intelligence sharing, and coordinated efforts all of which are essential in combating transnational drug trafficking and related crimes. Putting judicial reforms into effect to expedite justice is essential to guaranteeing prompt case resolution, lowering case backlogs, and maintaining the integrity of the legal system, all of which strengthen public trust in the pursuit of justice. Enhancing law enforcement agencies' capacity and upholding the rule of law are crucial for effectively addressing the issues of drug enforcement and justice. This entails offering sufficient tools, instruction, and legislative frameworks to guarantee effective and equitable law enforcement. This requires providing adequate financial resources, modern investigative technologies, specialized training, and the effective implementation of the **Control of Narcotic Substances Act, 1997 (Sections 6, 7, 9, and 14)**, which criminalizes the production, possession, transportation, import, export, and trafficking of narcotic drugs. Law enforcement agencies should also strengthen financial investigations under the **Anti-Money Laundering Act, 2010 (Sections 3 and 4)** to identify, freeze, and confiscate the proceeds of drug-related crimes.

Promoting ethical and responsible reporting is equally important since it builds public and media confidence and responsibility, all of which are essential for making well-informed decisions. Promoting ethical and responsible journalism is equally important, as it enhances public trust, accountability, and informed decision-making. Broadcast and digital media should comply with the **Pakistan Electronic**

Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) Ordinance, 2002, particularly the **PEMRA Electronic Media Code of Conduct**, which requires fair, accurate, and responsible reporting and prohibits content that glorifies criminals, prejudices ongoing investigations, or undermines the administration of justice. Online reporting should also comply with the **Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016 (PECA)** where applicable.

Additionally, strengthening international cooperation in the war of crime and on drugs can result in more coordinated operations, intelligence sharing, and coordinated efforts all of which are essential in combating transnational drug trafficking and related crimes. Putting judicial reforms into effect to expedite justice is essential to guaranteeing prompt case resolution, lowering case backlogs, and maintaining the integrity of the legal system, all of which strengthen public trust in the pursuit of justice.

Conclusion

In Pakistan, the public's perception of crime and justice system for crime is significantly influenced by the media. Effective action is hampered by structural problems in the justice system for crime, despite the circumstance that investigative journalism has exposed criminal networks such as drug cartels. The media, law implementation, judiciary, and civil society must work together to address these issues. Additionally, set up awareness campaigns through various media outlets and educational institutions.

Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated approach involving media organizations, law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, government institutions, and civil society. Responsible and ethical media reporting can promote accountability while avoiding sensationalism that may influence public opinion or interfere with judicial processes. Strengthening the implementation of relevant legal frameworks, including the Control of Narcotic Substances Act, 1997, Anti-Money Laundering Act, 2010, National Accountability Ordinance, 1999, and other criminal justice laws, is essential for improving enforcement and ensuring equal application of the law.

Furthermore, awareness campaigns through television, digital media, newspapers, and educational institutions can play an important role in developing public understanding of crime prevention, legal rights, and the consequences of criminal behaviour. By encouraging critical media literacy and cooperation among key institutions, Pakistan can move toward a more transparent, effective, and trusted criminal justice system. A balanced relationship between investigative reporting, legal enforcement, and public awareness is necessary to combat organized crime and strengthen the rule of law.

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