

## Text and Thematic Investigation of Honor Killings In *The Dawn* Newspaper: Critical Media Discourse Analysis (CMDA)

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### Abstract

*The social custom of honor killings is practised brutally in many societies of the world and the situation of Pakistan is no different. The current research explored the underline objectives associated with such killings in two (2) editorials from 'The Dawn' newspaper published in the English language in Pakistan. The basic descriptive mixed method Critical Media Discourse Analysis (CMDA) was inspected under an operational model combining two (2) theoretical perspectives. First, text analysis was examined in both the editorials under Fairclough's (1993, 2007, 2013) 3-Dimensional Model where lexical items, functional grammar, cohesive devices and text structure were investigated and second, thematic analysis was explored in the light of Kardam's (2005) Dynamics of Honor Killings Model. The findings of the current investigation revealed that The Dawn's ideology aligned with the left-wing tenets and the patterns of portraying honour killings affect the mindset of people and social customs.*

**Keywords:** Critical Media Discourse Analysis (CMDA), Honor Killings, The Dawn, Fairclough's 3-Dimensional Model, Kardam's Dynamics of Honor Killings Model, text analysis, thematic analysis.

## 1. Introduction

The deed of honour killing or shame killing is a willful massacre of the victim (mostly kin) under the belief that the individual is disgraceful for disobeying religious, societal or cultural values (Jafri, 2008). It is a traditional procedure throughout the globe and Pakistan's case is no different (Shah, 2016). Chafai (2014) stated that honour killings are correlated in the East with religious and sociocultural misinterpretation, whereas, Vatandoost (2012) believed that the immigrants exercise the brutal acts of honour killings in the West because of clash of civilizations or multiculturalism. Although honour killing in the world is “now illegal almost everywhere” (Annan, 2000), however, the acts of honour killings are still a customary activity exercised in the different societies of the world (Churchill, 2018).

### 1.1 Research Objectives and Research Questions

This study is based on the concept of Critical Media Discourse Analysis (CMDA) where the text and thematic analysis of the editorials from *The Dawn* newspaper was focused. The key objectives of the current study were to highlight the discourse used in editorials of *The Dawn* newspaper, to reveal the projection of the social issue of honour killings and to explore the patterns of portraying honour killings that affect the mindset of people. The research questions of this research are as follows: First, how honour killing is portrayed in the editorials of *The Dawn* newspapers? Second, what are the themes behind the issues of honour killing? Third, how the media is affecting the mindset of people regarding honour killings?

### 1.2 Problem of Statement and Significance

Honour killing has been practised since the dawn of humanity. Despite the fact that it is a global issue, Pakistan is listed as the world's third most hazardous country for women. People's perceptions toward honour killings are influenced by how they are depicted in Pakistani newspapers. For this reason, a micro-level analysis portrayal of honour killings in the printing press is essential. The topic of this research is specifically delimited to text and thematic investigation of two (2) editorials from *The Dawn* newspaper from July 15, 2016, to July 25, 2016. The study is significant in finding the portrayal of honour killings in Pakistan, exploring the themes and objectives of honour killings and

investigating the role of media while portraying such cases of honour or shame killings.

## **2. Literature Review**

This portion of the research is not essential, but important because it gives an insight into the explanation of key terminologies of the research as well as deals with the information of previous works conducted in the field. The literature review of this research is narrowed down to the explanation of key ideas and the core literature related to this research. For this reason, the literature review consists of two (2) parts: conceptual literature and research literature. The former deals with the explanation of key terms, while the latter deals with the review of related literature from previous studies that were specific to honour killings. Both these portions were important in finding the research gaps of the study. The research gap is discussed at the end of the research literature.

### **2.1 Conceptual Literature**

The act of honour killing or shame killing is a voluntary massacre of the kin under the belief that the individual is disgraceful for disobeying religious, societal or cultural values (Jafri, 2008). Discourse is derived from the Latin word 'discurses,' which means "language in use" (Adjei, 2013; Oxford Languages, 2020). Discourse analysis includes a look at how people communicate. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approaches are applied to texts in the mass media by CMDA. It's a confusing term because it refers to an analytical method that emphasises the function of language and language in social structures. CMDA is interested in how power is exerted as well as how social relationships, knowledge, and identity are preserved. Critical linguistics and poststructuralist philosophy are the foundations of CMDA. CMDA is concerned with verbal and nonverbal aspects of life, as well as spoken and written language. (Cukier et al., 2009).

## **3. Research Methodology**

Newspapers reflect and represent the norms and customs of the society (Chafai, 2010). The canvas to society is the language (Masood & Shafi, 2020b), in particular, the language used in the newspaper editorials reflect the control, culture, norms, ideologies and power (Fowler & Trew,

2020; Hodge & Kress, 1993). CMDA of editorials can reveal the hidden ideologies that are propagated through them (Fairclough, 2014; Jones, 2018). It is observed that even the accidental syntactic mistakes have innate ideologies hidden within their pragmatic discourse (Masood, Shafi, Rahim, & Darwesh, 2020c) and these words express emotions (Shafi, 2019). This research is a basic descriptive mixed method approach where both the qualitative and quantitative research approaches were combined (Durant, 2004; Masood, Shafi, & Darwesh, 2020a; Ullah et al., 2019). This portion gives an insight into the procedures, methods, design and sampling of the research.

### 3.1 Theoretical Framework

An Operational Model was applied in this study which combined the postulates of two theories to explore the research objectives. First, the theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was extracted from Fairclough's (1993, 2007, 2013) 3-Dimensional model that constituted four (4) folds of Text Analysis: Vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and text structure. CMDA utilizing the aforementioned theoretical framework was applied to *The Dawn's* editorials to deeply analyse the text. Second, the postulate of Kardam's (2005) Dynamics of Honour Killings Model was applied to the newspaper editorials to reveal the themes behind honour killings. The former part of the analysis dealt with the quantitative study (text analysis), while the latter part of the study dealt with the qualitative study (thematic analysis). On the basis of the Operational Model, the thematic framework was further divided into five (5) postulates as: Vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, text structure and thematic analysis.

#### 3.1.1 Lexical Items:

It is the most significant component of written speech, according to Norman Fairclough. It is concerned with the manifestations of dominant groups' supremacy, as well as the techniques employed by these groups to control public opinion. Literary tactics such as collocations, repetition, and synonymy are analyzed within vocabulary. (Fairclough, 1993, 2007, 2013).

#### 3.1.2 Functional Grammar

Critical discourse researchers can evaluate if the initiator of action is veiled by passive manufacturing usage or exposed by active production

usage by assessing whether the initiator of action is concealed by passive manufacturing usage or exposed by active production usage. Grammatical analysis reveals the media owners' favoritism, as well as the sociological group that is preferred in their coverage. The focus of this research study is on the active and passive voice creation of sentences. (Fairclough, 1993, 2007, 2013).

### *3.1.3 Cohesive devices*

It's a word for literary tactics that serve to bring the text together. This is shown by the usage of synonyms. To connect sentences in a text, demonstratives, conjunctions, and pronouns are used. These connections are examined in full in the text. (Fairclough, 1993, 2007, 2013).

### *3.1.4 Text Constructions*

It specifies the order in which occurrences appear in a text. Statements that highlight a single ideology's odium, allegiance, or connection are explored. (Fairclough, 1993, 2007, 2013).

### *3.1.5 Thematic Analysis*

The thematic analysis of the research is carried out in the light of the postulate of Kardam's Dynamics of Honour Killings Model. The model states, Although people's views and actions toward honour are built on their religious beliefs, the situation is sometimes conflicting. The emphasis on socioeconomic factors, along with social pressure, as causes of honour killings may inadvertently lead to a lack of focus on perpetrators' guilt, or at the very least induce people to treat culprits with more tolerance. (Kardam, 2005).

## **3.2 Population/Sample**

Only samples from one of the most widely circulated Pakistani English newspapers were used in this study. *The Dawn* published in Pakistan. This convenient sampling was obtained in the form of two newspaper articles from *The Dawn* newspaper from July 15, 2016, to July 25, 2016. The convenient sampling of the research is synchronic to the time where an important incident of honour killing of a famous Pakistani model Qandeel Baloch happened and it was a topic of great concern in Mass Media.

### 3.3 Research Design

This research comes under the discipline of applied linguistics. This study is based on the concept of Critical Media Discourse Analysis (CMDA) where the text and thematic analysis of the editorials from *The Dawn* newspaper was focused. The current study has utilized mixed method analysis where text analysis deals with the quantitative findings and thematic analysis deals with the qualitative findings.

## 4. Findings and Discussions

Two (2) editorials were analysed in this portion keeping in view Fairclough's 3-Dimensional Model and Kardam's Dynamics of Honour Killings Model. These two (2) editorials were extracted from *The Dawn* newspaper from July 15, 2016, to July 25, 2016. The analysis of data gathered from the sources is completed under the theoretical perspective of CMDA. The investigation of editorials is descriptive in nature where the description of editorials in the light of text and themes were the primary concern. It is a basic descriptive applied research where a societal phenomenon is investigated through the description and is also applicable to society. There are three (3) subsections in this part: First, text of first (1st) editorial; second, text analysis of second (2nd) editorial and third, thematic analysis of both editorials. The thematic analysis of the editorials is compiled in the third part of this section as the themes of both articles were parallel.

### 4.1 Qandeel's Murder (July 17, 2016)

“ (for full story see Appendix A) (Editorial, 2016a).

#### 4.1.1 Lexical Items:

The terms "honour killing," "false ideas of honour," and "anti-honour killing statute" appear in the editorial several times. There were three instances of such lexical elements. The repetitions emphasise the seriousness of the situation while also encouraging readers to be aware of honour killings. The writer of the editorial asks two questions: "What is lethargy?" and "What is lethargy?" "What is lethargy?" and "What is lethargy?" "When will parliament be jolted awake enough to pass the anti-honour killing bill?" The goal of these questions was to stimulate memories of previous occurrences related to the text.

Once in the article, the proper noun "Nawaz Shareef" is referenced. This proper term was employed by the editor to accuse Nawaz Shareef for failing to provide security to the media personality. It also found Nawaz Shareef responsible for failing to remove pro-honour killing elements from the criminal law act, which led to Pakistani model Qandeel Baloch's honour killing. The term "disobedient" is used to describe an honour killing victim whose been abused by her male dominant offender, her "brother." Words like "death," "murder," "regressive patriarchies," "murderers," "perpetrator," "crime," "penalty waivers," and "private offence" set the tone for the event and leave a lasting effect on the audience. The terms "murder" and "death" are used in this case.

#### 4.1.2 Functional Grammar

This text consists majority of active arrangement sentences and a minority of passive arrangement sentences. The examples of active arrangement of sentences are:

- i. "The death of Qandeel Baloch conveys an insidious message..."
- ii. "It is regrettable through that the state has weak record..."
- iii. "In her brief moment in the spotlight..."
- iv. "She chose to live life on her own terms..."

The examples of passive arrangement of sentences are:

- i. "Qandeel Baloch, must be condemned in the strongest possible terms"
- ii. "They do not deserve to be murdered for it".

#### 4.1.3 Cohesive devices

There is a surplus of instances of cohesion such as conjunctions were in the majority, pronouns in the second majority and demonstratives were in the least ratio. These are used to reinforce connectivity to text. Seven (7) conjunctions were traced twenty-two (22) times in the text. These conjunctions were "and", "that", "as", "both", "if", "for" and "because". Five (5) instances of three (3) demonstratives were found in this editorial. These were "that", "this" and "there". Twelve (12) pronouns used thirty (30) times in the editorial. These pronouns were "her", "she", "whom", "itself", "it", "which", "themselves", "they", "its", "he", "his" and "who".

#### 4.1.4 Text Structure

The writer disclosed the naked face of Pakistani politicians especially Nawaz Shareef who forgot his vow regarding amending the law of honour killing after the screening of Shameen Obaid Chinoy's famous Oscar award ceremony. The death of model Qandeel Baloch was a bare witness of the ruling party in government for their non-serious attitude towards this grave national issue: honour killing. The text structure of the newspaper editorial informed about the ideology of the newspaper.

#### 4.2 Pro-women Legislation (July 22, 2016)

(for full story see Appendix B) (Editorial, 2016b).

##### 4.2.1 Lexical Items

The statistical data used in any text gives the authenticity of the event penned in any piece of writing, similarly, the writer has used multiple factual data in the text such as **“more than five hundred women are being massacred every year in Pakistan”**. Another instance is of **“19-year-old Maria Sadaqat”**, **“in 2014”** and **“in 2015”** are some numerical examples that signify the writer's authenticity of correct data providing in the editorial. This factual data also forces its readers psychologically to believe what is written in the text. The collocations related to honour word are also used in the text of the editorial. The examples are **“anti-honour killing”**, **“honour killing”**, **“anti honour killing laws”**, **“honour killings”** and **“transgression of ‘honour’”**. There are five instances where these collocations were traced. The average word length is 5.1 letters and the average sentence length is 28.7 words.

##### 4.2.2 Functional Grammar

This article comprises a greater number of active sentences formation and only a few passive sentences formation.

Some instances of active sentence building are as follows:

- i. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz faces mounting pressure.
- ii. A parliamentary committee reached a consensus...
- iii. It is surprising the ruling party has waited so long...



The following are some instances of passive sentence formation:

i. Mariam Nawaz underlined the renewed possibility of such laws being implemented.

ii. It's possible that Qandeel's death acted as a trigger for the government to take action.

#### 4.2.3 Cohesive devices

The text had a lot of cohesion, such as conjunctions, demonstratives, and pronouns, which made it feel more connected. Conjunctions were used for as long as feasible, with demonstratives appearing twice and pronouns were used eight (8) times. Eight (8) conjunctions were traced in the text twenty-six (26) times. The examples of conjunctions were “**where**”, “**that**”, “**for**”, “**than**”, “**both**”, “**and**”, “**then**” and “**but**”. Two (2) demonstratives were observed for one time each. These were “**this**” and “**those**”. Five (5) pronouns were used in this editorial eight (8) times. These are “**it**”, “**who**”, “**one**”, “**they**” and “**their**”.

#### 4.2.4 Text Structure

The author depicts the involvement of parliament and important leaders in amending and enacting anti-honour killing legislation. Politicians such as Nawaz Shareef and Mariam Nawaz's inaction demonstrates their disinterest in the subject of honour killings. The assassination of Qandeel Baloch demonstrates the impossibility of enforcing honour killing laws in the real world. Every month, there are several incidents of honour-related crimes, and the government's failure to respond demonstrates the government's lack of seriousness. These leaders are merely paying lip regard to the Pakistani people.

### 4.3 Thematic Analysis

Fouzia Azeem known as Qandeel Baloch was Pakistan's first social media celebrity who was allegedly killed by her brother in the name of “honour”. Her brother Waseem Azeem confessed that he murdered her sister as she was bringing “disrepute” to the honour of the family. Honour killings are increasing day by day in our society. Whenever a woman does any unethical act, people not only mock that particular girl, but they disrespect the entire family. The same is the case of Qandeel Baloch, her brother killed her and admitted it publicly considering it something heroic

and worthwhile. This was not only the conception of Waseem Azeem rather somewhere the public too had some societal, cultural, religious or moral reasons to justify the murder. This is not only confined to Qandeel Baloch's case but this trend is often seen prevailing in every patriarchal society around the world.

The cases of honour killing are not only confined to the murder of a person but this trend is so severe that the accused ones get sympathy rather than the victims. As found in Editorial (2016b) where (Justice) Maria Sadaqat stated, **“the accused finds much sympathy ... in the criminal justice system.”** This gives the criminals such confidence and support that they sometimes kill someone owing to different social or personal grudges and label it as an honour killing. Murderers know that the label of honour killing would not only save them from the societal condemnation but there are more likely chances that the family of the victim would tend to dismiss the case in order to not to publicize the accused ones. Honour killing acts as a safe and justified way of murder and society accepts this kind of acts of honour killings (Editorial, 2016b).

As said in the Editorial (2016a), **“In her brief moment in the spotlight, she breezily pushed the boundaries of what in Pakistan is considered ‘acceptable’ behaviour by women, and her death highlights the perils that such a path entails”** (Editorial, 2016a). In addition to public, her family also had issues with her public interaction, bold photoshoots, and arguments with religious people and blunt statements. She was also being highly criticized when she started speaking for the rights of women and named Sunny Leone and Rakhi Sawant as her inspiration. Dawn Editorial called her **“outspoken and fearless.”** It was stated as, **“It was the very exaggerated nature of her persona — that many saw as controversial and that she flaunted in her risqué videos — which got the message across: women have a right to be themselves even if they offend conventional sensibilities”** (Editorial, 2016a).

She was supported by her brother until she was providing him with financial services but as soon she got controversies with her brother, her brother killed her labelling as honour killing bearing in mind that most probably her family, as well as the state, would forgive it as is it happens in the majority of the cases. The assassination of Qandeel Baloch delivers a disturbing message that women will be kept under men's control at all costs; they will be assassinated if they dare to dream of breaking the

stereotypes. As a result, her assassination should lay the groundwork for legislators to renew calls for legislation to protect women who are targeted because of false conceptions of 'honour.' Women are killed at any cost if they try to break the social norms (Editorial, 2016a). The perpetrators' guilt is forgotten as the criminal justice system is not capable enough to treat criminal a criminal in the case of honour killings (Editorial, 2016b).

## 5. Conclusion, Implications and Futuristic Vision

Norman Fairclough is the founder of one of the CDA's research divisions. His approach has enhanced CMDA research and is a triple model.. The combination of Fairclough's 3-Dimensional Model with Kardam's Dynamics of Honour Killings Model is best suited for newspaper discourse for investigating the patterns, objectives and themes of honour killings. Filiz Kardam's model is very influential in searching the roots, objectives and patterns of honour killing. The current study showed the hidden ideologies of honour killings promoted through editorials keeping Pakistani culture in mind. It also revealed how the writers of editorials are portraying the female gender. Honour killing is practised in Pakistan as a social norm. The patterns of portraying honour killings in Mass Media affect the mindset of people and they develop or change the social customs and cultural practices.

The Dawn newspaper seems to align with the left-wing ideology. In relation to the unresolved indigenous issue of honour crimes, the liberal Dawn daily examines international standards and institutions. The writer starkly condemns honour killing by using vocabulary that collocates with the word honour and women. The grammar employed in the editorials of The Dawn newspaper shows that active forms are adopted more often than passive forms to make the meaning of the phrase as clear and plain as feasible. Cohesion covers a maximum number of conjunctions and pronouns and a minimum number of demonstratives to connect the text. The text structure in the article has favoured women by vigorously condemning the misogynistic practices of honour killings. Honour killings should be outlawed, and research like this could help women understand their rights. This attitude toward honour killings may be modified if women began to fight for their rights and men stopped partaking in patriarchal misconduct. The media must be used to support women's rights. International lectures should be held at universities to inform men about

their moral responsibilities. As part of gender studies, honour-killing novels should be taught in schools across the country.

Students should be encouraged to research honour killings, blasphemy, and other controversial topics.

The research can be extended to different newspapers, news channels and media reports of different years. This study would further help the students of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Mass Media, Linguistics and Gender Studies in their research by providing a new angle to observe editorials.

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