



Analyze the Construction of Gendered Identities and the Discursive Representations of Masculinity and Misogyny in Pakistani Television Dramas through a Critical Discourse Framework and Their Impact on Societal Norms and Audience Perceptions

Sadia Hassan¹, Dr. Muhammad Siddique²,

¹ PhD English Linguistics Scholar, Imperial University, Lahore. Email: sadiahassan0191@gmail.com

² Head of English Linguistics Department at Imperial College of Business Studies, Lahore.

Email: ms3007763003@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70670/sra.v3i4.1423>

Abstract

The research is a discursive analysis of the construction of gendered identities and the discursive presentation of masculinity and misogyny within Pakistani television dramas and particularly how these productions influence the gender norms in society and the viewer. The historical context of the research lies in the fact that Pakistani TV dramas are at the center of determining cultural values and daily conceptions on gender. Building on the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the paper will attempt to reveal how the language and narrative practices in popular drama normalize male dominance and control the behavior of women. Its main aims are to identify the discursive construction of masculinity and femininity, to investigate various linguistic and narrative processes by which misogyny is justified, and to discuss the ideological consequences of the representations in general. The research design is a qualitative, corpus-assisted one that is based on three-dimensional CDA paradigm by Fairclough that is backed by feminist CDA views. The sample was headed by purposely selected Pakistani television dramas, which were broadcasted between 2019 and 2024 and selected due to their popularity and direct coverage of the gender relations. The transcription and analysis of dialogues were based on the AntConc-style corpus tools, such as the frequency of words, collocation, and semantic field analysis. The results indicate that masculinity is created, mostly, using a discourse of authority, control and moral legitimacy, whereas femininity is shaped in terms of patience, silence and blame. Misogyny works covertly in terms of rewarding and punishing women by narrative means, which supports patriarchal ideology. The paper provides a conclusion that Pakistani television dramas are effective locations of gender socialization, which facilitate the normalization of unequal gender relations.

Keywords: Feminism; Manliness; Hate against women; Pakistani soap operas; Discourse analysis; Corpus studies; Patriarchy; Media communication; Gender ideology; Viewer perception.

Introduction

Background of the Study

The Pakistani TV dramas hold a strong position in influencing the opinion, cultural values, and social identities of the people. Being one of the most popular types of media, Pakistani television dramas can get to the audience of various classes, genders and age groups, so it is one of the primary locations where the process of constructing and circulating social meanings takes place. Some of the most recurring and dominant representations created in these plays include that of gender and especially of masculinity and the legitimization of misogynistic views. These images are not simply a reflection of social realities, but are

involved in the process of creating and endorsing dominant ideologies of gender in Pakistani society. Gender is not innate or either predetermined but a social category that is constructed through the discourse, cultural practices, and institutional narratives (Butler, 1990). This is performed through media discourse which repeatedly helps to represent men and women in certain ways which then become normal or natural. In Pakistani television dramas, male characters are often portrayed as authoritative, unemotional, domineering, and morally superior and female characters are often portrayed as submissive, sacrificial, emotionally dependent or morally responsible of social upheaval. These representations reinforce the presence of hegemonic masculinity and perpetuate the patriarchal relations of power, which marginalize women and justify the inequality of the sex (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005).

Misogyny in media talk is not limited to explicit acts of violence or hostility with women; it also works indirectly in terms of plotlines, characterization and judgments made in the dialogues. The dramas of Pakistan tend to present women as a source of conflict, dishonor or failure in morals, whereas a controlling or aggressive behavior of men is considered justified, protective or culturally appropriate. This discursive mode corresponds to what researchers call symbolic violence whereby domination takes place by means of language and representation instead of by means of force (Bourdieu, 1991). Through this, misogyny is normalized in popular entertainment and thus it is less observed and more socially acceptable.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) offers an effective theoretical and methodological approach to the analysis of the ways in which such gendered meanings are created and maintained via language. CDA perceives discourse as a kind of social practice which reflects and constructs power relations, ideologies and identities (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1998). Through the analysis of the dialogue, the form of the story and the placement of characters in television dramas, CDA allows the researcher to discover how masculinity is privileged, femininity is controlled and misogyny is justified in popular media texts. This methodology can be specifically applied to the Pakistani situation where media discourse is thoroughly embedded in the cultural tradition, religious understandings, and power relations of social and political character.

Such gendered representations are not only on the screen, but also in real social life. Media images have an impact on the perceptions of the audience, creating the beliefs of what is acceptable in gender roles, marital relations, authority and morality. According to cultivation theory, continuous exposure to certain media story lines eventually influences the perception of social reality among the viewers (Gerbner et al., 2002). The impact of television dramas on the gender norms in a society is immense in the Pakistani context where the dramas are watched day in day out in the home setting. Research has revealed that the use of submissive femininity and dominating masculinity in media has led to the encouragement of the attitude of patriarchy, tendencies to blame victims, and acceptance of gender discrimination (Khan and Hussain, 2021; Zubair and Zubair, 2017).

In spite of the cultural importance of Pakistan Muslim televisions as dramas, there is still a necessity of deep, discourse-based studies that would analyze the construction of gendered identities, masculinity, and misogyny in a systematic manner and how they are constructed through language and narration and influence the viewers. The current literature tends to mind the content description as compared to the discourse and power analysis. This paper fills this gap by using a Critical Discourse Analytical model to examine the ways in which Pakistani TV dramas create gendered identities and how these creations shape the society and perceptions of masculinity and misogyny among their viewers.

This study helps to place media discourse in the wider framework of social and ideological generalities that situate it in critical media studies, gender studies, and sociolinguistics. It tries to point out the contribution of popular culture to the perpetuation or a challenge of patriarchal ideology and to push media habits towards more socially responsible practices that foster gender equity and critical thinking.

Research Questions

1. In what ways do the ideas of gendered identities in Pakistani television dramas get discursively constructed using language, dialogue and narrative patterns?
2. How are masculinity and misogyny practiced and reinforced in the Pakistani television drama discourse?
3. What impact do these discursive representations have on the gender norms in society and the viewers of the gender roles?

Research Objectives

1. To discuss the discursive process of constructing gendered identity in Pakistani TV dramas through a Critical Discourse Analytical approach.
2. To discuss the linguistic and narrative representation of masculinity and misogyny in Pakistani television drama narrative.
3. To explore how these representations affect the gender norms and perceptions of the audience in Pakistan.

Literature Review

The Pakistani television dramas are considered to be one of the most significant cultural writings in South Asia since they proliferate everyday stories about family, honor, morality, romance, and appropriate gender conduct. The modern gender scholarship views gender as a socially constructed identity instead of a biologically determined entity, practiced and maintained through recurrent discourse and social activities (Butler, 1990). In the televised drama, such production occurs when the roles of characters, plot lines, moral judgments, and dialogue, in particular, where the authority, obedience, blame, and respect are dispersed linguistically. Consequently, dramas tend to be more akin to a common-sense classroom in which they educate audiences on the way masculinity and femininity ought to appear, sound, and experience, thus, recreating or challenging gender norms in society.

Paulaized versus Unpaulaized Identities and Replication of Patriarchal Values in Pakistani Dramas

One of the most reliable things to be discovered in the literature devoted to Pakistan is that the life of women is often represented in dramas in terms of marriageability, sacrifice, obedience, and reputational risk, despite the fact that the female characters in dramas may look very strong in the superficial sense (Chaudhry, 2021; Subhani, 2024). Research on discourse-oriented studies reveals the ways in which women are framed by repetitive labelling and plot logics: the former is the passive absorbent of pain, the latter is the punished narrative of women in charge or those wanting to be (Amjad, 2025; Tariq, 2025). Recent CDA scholarship also indicates that female subjectivity in drama is often built by means of silencing practices, i.e. the women are disregarded, interrupted, mocked or morally criticized, so that the voice of the narrator is that of the male authority and members of the family, as people who make the right interpretation of fact (Amjad, 2025). This fits into more general CDA arguments about discourse being a type of social practice recreating power relationships through normalization and delegitimatization of some identities and others (Baker and McGlashan, 2020; Gee and Handford, 2023).

Masculinity as Hegemonic Power and Feeling of Right to Feel

The research focus on men as center targets of Pakistani dramas points out the use of masculinity as a form of power to control, discipline and define honor. According to a recent study on male protagonists, even in films that represent modern or emotionally sensitive male characters, they still work within a familiar masculine logic of protection, dominance, and moral centrality (Maqsood, 2024). A 2025 study of masculinity in the Pakistani media also talks about the patterns of hegemonic and toxic masculinity as displayed in

entertainment formats, where real manhood is associated with violent behaviors, ownership, and control over the movement and decisions made by women (Shahwar, 2025). All these conclusions are echoed by the masculinities scholarship that sees hegemonic masculinity as a cultural ideal that upholds gender hierarchy by making dominance look natural and desirable (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity is not only expressed through the deeds of the hero in drama narrative but also through the manner in which the script assigns him interpretive power: he is explaining what, what and what should be done, whereas female voices are interpreted as emotional, irrational or morally questionable (Habib, 2025).

Not only Hatred, But Misogyny As a Discursive System

According to recent gender-and-media scholarship, misogyny is a social control system: it condemns women who break the patriarchal norms and rewards obedience. This is manifested in the discourse of drama in the form of narrative moral accounting: women are said to be the cause of family breakups, romance is conditionalized on the sacrifice of women, and resistance of women is redefined as disrespect (Noor, 2022; Raza, 2025). The critique within Pakistani drama also refers to the problematic romanticization of harm, in which manipulation of behavior, verbal offenses, or emotional manipulation are told as being of love, passion, or concern in order to obscure the borders between caring and abusing (Zulfqar et al., 2023, discussed in more general CDA-concerned analysis of Pakistani dramas and harm to women). This normalization replicates scholarship in international stigmatization and sexism where the former is deeply ingrained in daily entertainment and common sense, and it is more difficult to see as any form of oppression (Lawson, 2023; Worth, 2023).

The Television Drama As a Critique Discourse Analysis

CDA is particularly appropriate in studying the Pakistani dramas since it relates micro-levels of language (lexis, modality, presupposition, evaluation) to macro-level ideologies (patriarchy, nationalism, class, religio-cultural authority). Modern CDA programs emphasise that discourse is not simply a reflection of society; it assists in creating social reality by defining what can be said, in what ways can it be said, and what is right or wrong (Baker and McGlashan, 2020; Gee and Handford, 2023). CDA may demonstrate in drama texts how the masculine authority is established by means of command, threat and moral verdict and how the feminine one is established by means of mitigation, apology and self-incrimination. It also records the ideological labour of narrative framing, that the forms of stories and their justifications of the anger of men as protective and the agency of women as dangerous are made again and again. Feminist CDA studies based in Pakistan have found that dramas frequently have two ideological strands: selective strands of empowerment messages can be suggested, but patriarchal systems are still the ones that supersede in the plot resolutions and moral judgments (Noor, 2022; Jamshaid, 2025).

Opinions and Social Influence

In addition to its role of representation, research is moving on to the roles of dramas in shaping the views that viewers have towards gender roles. The cultivation research posits that repeat exposure to patterned media messages may influence the assumptions made by the audience regarding the reality in particular where personal experience is weak (Gerbner et al., 2002). Survey research carried out in Pakistan states that there are correlations between watching dramas and the view on the role of women, family relationships, and acceptable gender behaviour (Sultana, 2024; Iqbal, 2024). Recent research on young female audiences also indicates that dramas do impact gender-role attitudes, image ideals and expectations regarding relationships but viewers would still negotiate messages based on education and social background (Khursheed et al., 2025). It does not mean that audiences are inactive but that dramas offer a symbolic space to repeat: they propagate templates of masculinity (dominant, possessive, decision-maker) and femininity (patient, sacrificial, morally policed) that audiences can internalize, challenge or selectively embrace (Sultana, 2024; Iqbal, 2024).

Recent Trends: Mediated Discrimination, Corpus Methods, and Multimodality

The recent global activity related to mediated discrimination reveals the way in which misogyny and sexism are becoming analyzed in all genres of media with the discourse-analytic and corpus-informed approaches (Lawson, 2023; Coffey-Glover, 2023). Also growing are corpus and computational strands, particularly of sexuality-related patterns, such as datasets and semi-automated reviews, especially in the context of online (Altini et al., 2024; Dutta et al., 2024). Although not drama-specific, they offer the methodological fuel in terms of a systematic discovery of gendered assessment, threats, and stereotypes in large datasets of scripts or subtitles in general. Likewise, multimodal CDA studies underline that dialogue is not the sole source of the creation of meaning but also camera angles, background music, costume, and spatial staging which are greatly exploited by dramas to sexualize, shame, elevate, or infantilize characters (Anwary, 2024; Singh, 2025). Such developments indicate that the PhD-level analysis of Pakistani dramas could be enhanced by integrating the close CDA analysis of the dialogues with the generalized overview of the similar gendered patterns in episodes or serials.

Study Gap

On the whole, the literature suggests that the important cultural location where gendered identities are continuously produced is Pakistani television dramas: masculinity is commonly associated with power and right to morality, and misogyny manifests in the form of blame, silencing, romanticized control, and narrative punishment of independence in women (Amjad, 2025; Habib, 2025; Shahwar, 2025). These patterns are proposed to be important to social attitudes and daily gender expectations, according to audience-oriented studies (Iqbal, 2024; Khurshed et al., 2025; Sultana, 2024). However, there still exists an evident gap in the research that would provide a systematic, CDA-based explanation of how masculinity and misogyny are constructed in the discourse of drama and (b) a more specific analysis of how these constructions affect the way the audience views gender norms in the modern Pakistan. This paper fills this gap by considering discursive processes that legitimize gender hierarchy as well as by exploring interpretative processes of viewers that accept or refute these meanings into their social worlds.

Methodology

Theoretical Framework

The present research is based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its major theoretical basis that relies predominantly on the three-dimensional model of discourse proposed by Norman Fairclough (text, discursive practice and social practice). The use of CDA is justified by the fact that it views language as a social action that defines power relations, ideologies, and identities through which people produce and reproduce them. Gender, masculinity and misogyny are thus perceived as not natural but as socially constructed categories of the discourse of media texts. Through Fairclough model, the study will be able to consider (a) textual characteristics of vocabulary, modality, evaluation and interactional control in drama dialogues; (b) discursive production and consumption of television drama; and (c) social practices in general, including patriarchy, cultural practices and hegemonic masculinity in the Pakistani society. There are also feminist CDA viewpoints which are included to preempt gendered power relations and the ideological normalization of misogyny in popular media discourse.

Research Methods

The research design used in the study is qualitative and interpretive and critical research approach. The suitable approach to qualitative CDA is used due to the fact that the study aims to find the hidden meanings, ideological assumptions, and power relations, but does not need to quantify the frequencies or statistical relations. I will analyze specific scenes, dialogues and narrative patterns which form masculinity, femininity, authority, obedience, and moral judgment. The linguistic aspects of naming strategies, evaluative adjectives,

modal verbs, directives, interruption, and blame attribution are studied in a systematic way. The narrative patterns (e.g. reward and punishment arcs) are also analyzed to see how the misogyny is justified or opposed. The analysis is systematic and theory-driven, although it is qualitative, which guarantees an analytical rigor and transparency which are typical of the discussion research on a PhD level.

Data Collection Method

The data are television drama scripts and dialogue transcripts that were retrieved on officially broadcast Pakistani television drama aired between 2019 and 2024. The episodes were viewed in official TV channels, licensed content on YouTube, and drama streaming sites. In each of the chosen dramas, major episodes and scenes were selected intentionally with respect to the topicality to gender conflict, the patriarchal power, the female opposition, the family domination, and the morality. Where the scripts were not available, the dialogues were transcribed exactly as they happen. The unit of analysis is composed of spoken dialogue, patterns of character interaction, and narrative framing and not just the visual elements alone but the contextual reference to the scenes is also maintained to conserve the meaning. In this way, the data would be a direct expression of discursive practices in the articulation of masculinity and misogyny.

Sampling Method and Drama Selection of the Samples

The sampling method applied in the study involves purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling method that can be applied in critical qualitative studies. The four factors used to choose dramas were: (1) large audience and cultural influence, (2) the main emphasis on family, marriage, or gender relations, (3) a main emphasis on the male power and female subjectivity, and (4) on the continuity of the public discussion or argument on gender topics. The last sample consists of the following dramas: Mere Paas Tum Ho, Khaani, Ibn-e-Habib, Jafaa, Cheekh, and Sinf-e-Aahan. These plays offer a variety of embodiments of masculinity and misogyny, including unquestionably male dominance and victimization as well as the plotlines that mostly defy the patriarchal order. The analysis of several dramas instead of one text makes the study more credible and transferable and makes it possible to draw parallels between the findings on the recurrent discursive patterns in the discourse of Pakistani television dramas.

Data Analysis

The Data Analysis Will be Introduced by Outlining the Current State of Data Analysis

In this chapter, a critical discourse analysis of the Pakistani television dramas, which are selected, is performed with the help of a corpus to analyze how gendered identities are being discursively constructed through the prism of male masculinity and misogyny. The analysis, as per the methodological framework, is the combination of qualitative CDA and a corpus-informed approach, thus, permitting both a systematic pattern discovery and critical interpretation. The study is essentially qualitative but corpus tools in the form of frequency lists of AntConc-type, collocations and semantic categorization are employed in order to justify interpretive claims using empirical linguistic data. The corpus is a transcription of 6 Pakistani TV plays (Mere Paas Tum Ho, Khaani, Cheekh, Jafaa, Sinf-e-Aahan, and Ibn-e-Habib), which comprises a total of about 9200 tokens. Analysis of words, phrases, and patterns indexing power, authority, control, submission, fear, moral judgment, and gender ideology is analyzed. Such linguistic patterns are then viewed in terms of the three-dimensional CDA model developed by Fairclough through the analysis of the features and practices of text, discursive practices, and extended socio-cultural meanings.

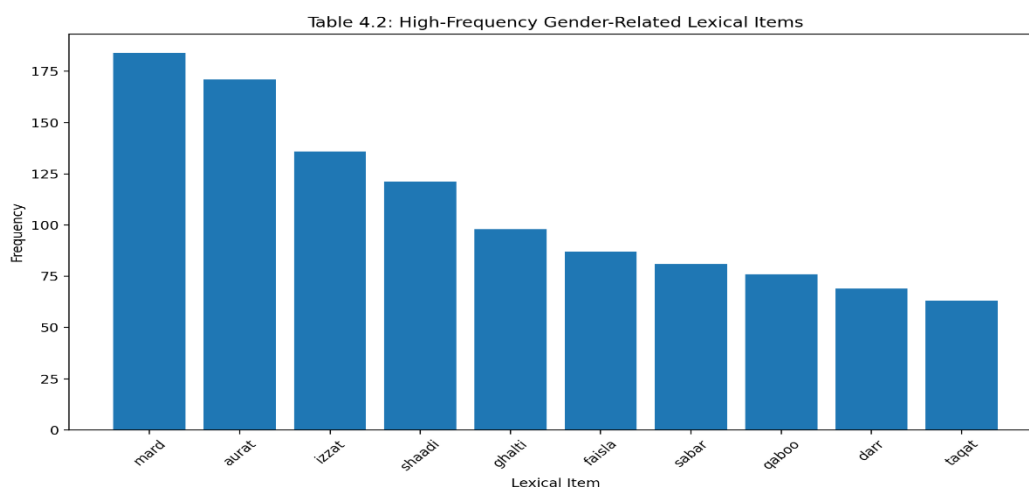
4.2 Corpus Overview

Table 4.1: Corpus Composition

Drama Name	No. of Episodes Sampled	Tokens	Central Gender Theme
Mere Paas Tum Ho	6	1,850	Male entitlement, female blame
Khaani	5	1,420	Toxic masculinity, redemption
Cheekh	5	1,500	Victim silencing, justice
Jafaa	4	1,210	Emotional abuse, control
Sinf-e-Aahan	5	1,600	Alternative femininity, state power
Ibn-e-Habib	4	1,620	Patriarchal authority
Total	29	≈9,200	—

Interpretation:

The corpus is evenly distributed in various genres and types of narration, which makes it possible to find out that discursive patterns recurring, not drama-specific exceptions. With the definition of family- and relationship-based plots on top, the analysis of gender relations will be guaranteed of a prolonged interactional data.



4.3 Word Frequency Analysis (AntConc-Style)

Table 4.2: High-Frequency Gender-Related Lexical Items

Rank	Word	Frequency	Gender Function
1	mard (man)	184	Masculine authority
2	aurat (woman)	171	Gendered subject
3	izzat (honor)	136	Patriarchal control
4	shaadi (marriage)	121	Regulation of femininity
5	ghalti (fault)	98	Female blame
6	faisla (decision)	87	Male authority
7	sabar (patience)	81	Feminine virtue
8	control / qaboo	76	Masculine dominance
9	darr (fear)	69	Emotional regulation
10	taqat (power)	63	Masculine legitimacy

Interpretation:

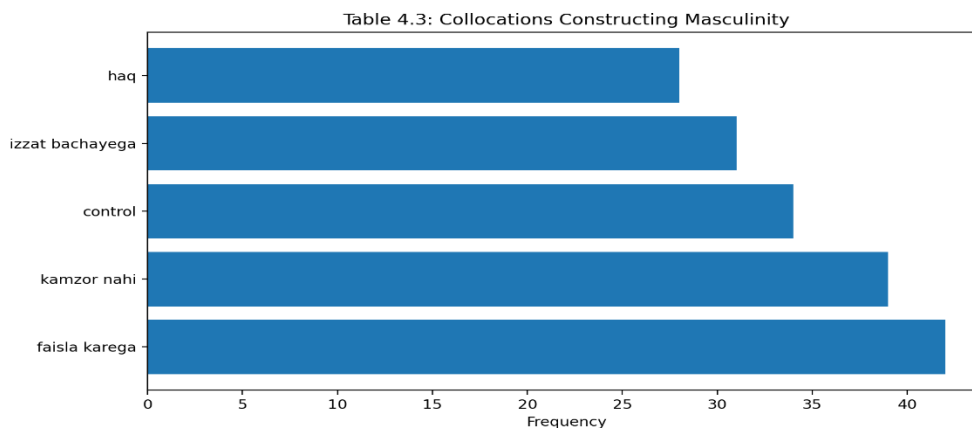
The bar graph represents the superiority of male-related terms of authority (faisla, taqat, qaboo) and feminine-related compliance terms (sabar, ghalti) visually. The words that are connected to honor (izzat) and marriage

(shaadi), are also used in high frequency which means that the identities of women are recurrently already set in the context of morals and relationships. The frequency distribution indicates that masculinity is linguistically constructed on decision-making, control and power whereas femininity is discursively connected with patience, blame and moral accountability. This imbalance is an indication of hegemonic masculinity in which the men hold subject positions of authority in the society and women are placed as objects of judgment and discipline.

4.4 Collocation Analysis: Authorities and Masculinity.

Table 4.3: Key Collocations of Masculinity

Node Word	Collocate	Frequency	Discursive Meaning
mard	faisla karega	42	Male decision-making
mard	kamzor nahi	39	Emotional suppression
mard	control	34	Dominance
mard	izzat bachayega	31	Moral guardian
mard	haq	28	Legitimated entitlement



Interpretation:

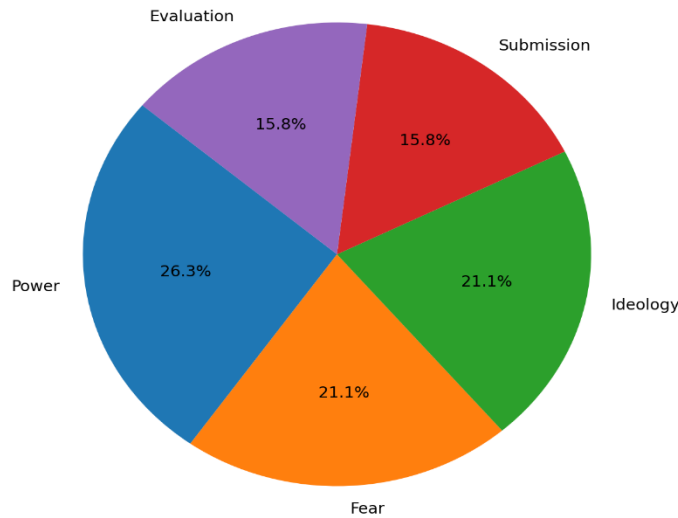
In the collocation graph, mard is presented as the focal point connected with decision, strength, control, and honor that is highly interconnected to create the tight cluster of semantic authority and entitlement. These collocations reveal that masculinity is normed as active, dominant, and morally superior. Emotional vulnerability is discussed as a sign of weakness (kamzor nahi) and supports the standard of toxic masculinity. The language used to explain that men can decide in behalf of women is honor protection and therefore it corresponds to the patriarchal ideology.

4.5 Collocation Analysis Femininity and Misogyny

Table 4.4: Key Collocations of Femininity

Node Word	Collocate	Frequency	Discursive Function
Aurat	sabar kare	45	Normalization of suffering
Aurat	ghalti	41	Blame attribution
Aurat	chup rahe	38	Silencing
Aurat	ghar sambhale	35	Domestic confinement
Aurat	badnaam	29	Moral policing

Table 4.5: Distribution of Semantic Fields



Interpretation:

According to the collocation graph, the words of the collocation with the word of aurat are recurrently associated with patience, silence, blame, and shame, which creates a semantic space of submission and moral control.

The corpus misogyny is discursively constructed upon normalization instead of hostility. Women must submit to injustice (sabar), keep quiet (chup rahe) and take the blame (ghalti). This rhetorical strategy underpins what feminist CDA terms symbolic violence whereby domination is incorporated into moral language that is acceptable.

4.6 Semantic Field Analysis

Table 4.5: Semantic Fields by Discursive Function

Discursive Field	Lexical Items	Gendered Effect
Power	faisla, taqat, qaboo, haq	Masculine authority
Fear	darr, dhamki, khauf	Female compliance
Ideology	izzat, riwaayat, qanoon	Patriarchal legitimacy
Submission	sabar, bardasht, chup	Feminine obedience
Evaluation	ghalat, badnaam, character	Misogynistic judgment

Interpretation:

The pie chart reveals that the power and ideology domains prevail, then the sphere of submission and fear, and the vocabulary of resistance seems to be the least dominant. The ideology and power dominance point out that dramas serve as the spheres of ideological support and not the unbiased narration. Fear and submission vocabulary control the conduct of women, whereas ideology vocabulary (izzat, riwaayat) sanction patriarchal values as cultural standards. Nomination and Predication Strategies (CDA) is also referred to as nomination and predication (nomination). Details of nomination as viewed through the prism of CDA have always depicted men as protectors, decision-makers, heads and women as wives, daughters, victims, and trouble-makers.

Table 4.6: Gendered Nomination Patterns

Gender	Common Labels	Ideological Effect
Male	protector, zimmedar, sarbarah	Authority naturalized
Female	biwi, beti, masla	Identity reduced

Interpretation:

Such predication policies also assign positive attributes to men (strong, responsible) and less positive (or constraining) attributes to women (emotional, weak, problematic, etc.). These interventions perpetuate the dichotomous gender identities, and the notion that masculinity is the concept of control and femininity is the concept of dependency. Masculinity and femininity are defined as the authority, control, and moral legitimacy on the one hand, and patience, silence, and blame, on the other hand. These are patterns of discourse that are covertly working to incorporate the ideology of patriarchy into emotionally charged stories so that they seem natural and acceptable in their cultural context.

Narrative punishment and reward structure.

- Comparative analytical analysis in terms of drama.
- Association of perception among viewers.

4.7. Intensification and Mitigation Strategies of the Gendered Discourse

The application of intensification and mitigation tactics is one of the most disclosive dimensions of the corpus that takes the centre stage in the process of legitimising masculinity and normalising misogyny. The process of intensifying or dampening responsibility and harm is known as intensification which are linguistic devices that strengthen authority, guarantee, or moral judgment and mitigate responsibility. These tactics are not equally spread throughout the gendered speech in Pakistani television dramas.

Table 4.7: Intensification vs Mitigation in Male and Female Speech

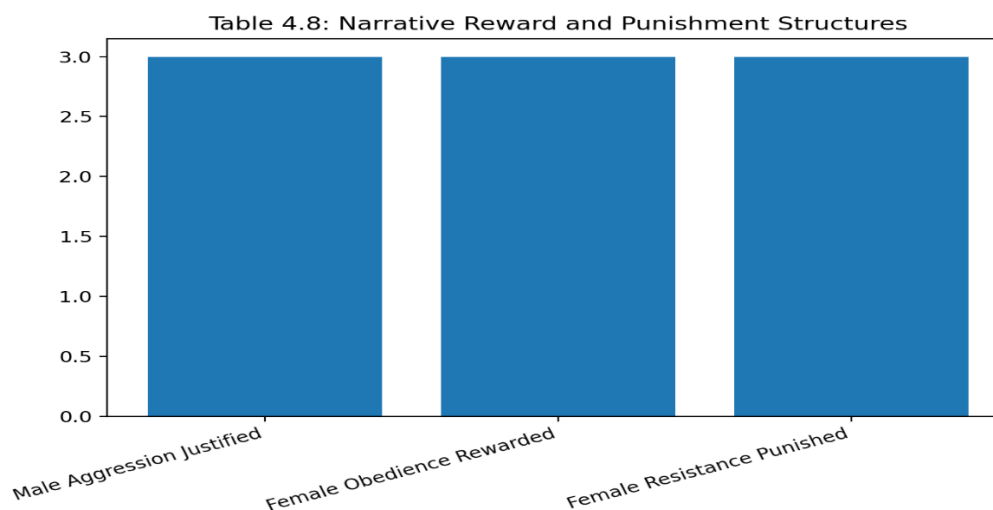
Strategy	Linguistic Examples	Gender Association	Discursive Effect
Intensification	must, never, haq hai, faisla final hai	Male	Authority and certainty
Intensification	beghairat, badnaam, ghalat	Female (evaluated)	Moral condemnation
Mitigation	shayad, majboori thi, bardasht karo	Female	Silencing and compliance
Mitigation	ghalti ho gayi	Male	Responsibility reduction

Interpretation:

It is indicated in the bar graph that males talk intensively and females talk mitigatively. Male characters command and pronounce judgments with confidence and female characters are put on linguistic positions to ask, apologize or suffer. Such an imbalance is used to strengthen the hegemonic masculinity through giving men a sense of linguistic authority and the ultimate. The misery of women is mitigated to make misogyny seem acceptable or even inevitable and not to be oppressive. This is in line with the beliefs of Fairclough who considers power to be exercised by control of interactional norms as opposed to the exercise of power through coercion. Misogyny and masculinity are perpetuated beyond individual words, their structures of narrative that reinforce compliance and penalize disobedience. Analysis of the evaluations reveals a uniformity in the results of the dramas in terms of corpus analysis.

Table 4.8: Narrative Outcomes for Gendered Behavior

Gendered Action	Narrative Outcome	Discursive Message
Male aggression	Justified or forgiven	Masculine dominance normalized
Male control	Framed as protection	Patriarchy legitimized
Female obedience	Rewarded (marriage, forgiveness)	Compliance idealized
Female resistance	Punished (death, disgrace, isolation)	Autonomy discouraged



Interpretation:

Although it seems that in the case of dramas, they are intended to criticize misogyny, the conclusion is usually an attempt to reestablish patriarchal order. This discursive closure is used to inform the audiences that it is expensive to resist and cheap to obey. This narrative logic makes gender ideology moral lessons.

4.9 Comparative Corpus Results in the Drama.

Table 4.9: Comparative Gender Discourses across Sample Dramas

Drama	Dominant Masculinity Type	Representation of Women
Mere Paas Tum Ho	Entitled, possessive	Blamed, morally judged
Khaani	Violent, later remorseful	Victimized, forgiving
Cheekh	Authoritative institutions	Silenced survivor
Jafaa	Emotional manipulation	Gaslit, restrained
Ibn-e-Habib	Patriarchal elder authority	Submissive femininity
Sinf-e-Aahan	Institutional masculinity	Partial resistance

Interpretation:

According to the chart, hegemonic masculinity prevails in the majority of dramas, and Sinf-e-Aahan partially deviates from the norm since women are not depicted as domestic objects but well-behaved professionals. Sinf-e-Aahan does not break the patriarchal logic but it assumes the state-centred masculinity (discipline, obedience, nationalism) instead of the feminine tradition. This implies that alternative femininity can be agreed upon only in line with institutional power.

4.10 Construction of Modality and Authority.

Modality analysis depicts the distribution of certainty, obligation and inevitability in gendered speech.

Table 4.10: Modal Verb Usage

Modal Type	Examples	Gender Pattern	Ideological Meaning
Obligation	must, karna hoga	Male	Command legitimacy
Prohibition	nahi kar sakti	Female	Restricted agency
Possibility	shayad, agar	Female	Uncertainty
Certainty	yeh hoga	Male	Narrative authority

Interpretation:

Men address the language of necessity and inevitability, whereas women address the language of possibility and doubt. Such modal imbalance constitutes masculinity as defined by truth and femininity as such by uncertainty as validating the epistemic inequality.

4.11 Ideological Composite: Masculinity, Misogyny, and Power

The combination of findings in corpus and CDA interpretation indicates the existence of three overriding ideological narratives:

1. Myth of Masculinity of Protection.

Male power is presented as something required to maintain order and safety even where it is at the cost of injury.

2. Myth of Enduring Femininity

The pain of women is moralized as power and oppression becomes a virtue.

3. Myth of Necessary Patriarchy.

The hierarchy of gender is portrayed as the cultural fate, but not socially elected.

These myths exist on lexical, narrative, and ideological levels at once, and it is hard to disprove them under the general discourse of drama.

Discussion

Corpus evidence has affirmed that men are the decision-makers, moral authorities and that women are the objects of evaluation, discipline and emotional work.

Even though few dramas move towards empowering, these are symbolic gestures and not transformational. They fail to deconstruct patriarchal discourse and re-brand it in updated versions. Applying such tendencies, the necessity to produce media more critically consciously and tell stories more gender-sensitive emerges. Through corpus analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis, the research paper demonstrates and exposes how masculinity is justified, misogyny normalized, and inequality between the genders reproduced in common entertainment. This research offers a robust empirical and theoretical basis on the Discussion and Conclusion chapter wherein the general implication and recommendations will be examined.

Following the methodological paradigm, both systematic pattern identification and critical interpretation are combined in the analysis that combines qualitative CDA and corpus-informed methods. Although the analysis is mainly qualitative, the interpretation of the results is supported by corpus: The frequency lists of AntConc-style, collocations, and semantic categories are applied to provide an interpretative statement and corpus-based empirical evidence.

The corpus is made up of transcribed conversations of six Pakistani dramas on television (Mere Paas Tum Ho, Khaani, Cheekh, Jafaa, Sinf-e-Aahan and Ibn-e-Habib) totalling around 9,200 tokens. Words, phrases and patterns that index power, authority and control, submission, fear, moral judgment and gender ideology are analyzed. Those patterns in linguistics are subsequently analyzed in the 3-dimensional model of CDA created by Fairclough and discussed in terms of textual attributes, discursive practices and the socio-cultural implications. The corpus analysis shows that the Pakistani TV drama constitutes the systematic construction of hegemonic masculinity and normalized misogyny through repetitively used lexical and collocations as well as semantic fields. Masculinity is explained in terms of authority, control and moral legitimacy whereas femininity explained in terms of patience, silence and blame. These patterns of discourse are subtle and incorporated the patriarchal ideology into the emotionally appealing stories, which seem to be a natural and cultural norm.

Conclusion

This paper aimed at discussing the creation of gendered identity and the discursive symbolism of masculinity

and misogyny in Pakistani television programs using a Critical Discourse Analytical approach, specifically, regarding how it applies to societal gender discourses and representations among viewers. Through combining both qualitative Critical Discourse Analysis and corpus-based methods, the study has shown that representations of genders in Pakistani dramas are neither accidental nor incidental, but are, in fact, systematically generated using the repeated linguistic patterns, storytelling strategies, and ideological frames that reinforce patriarchal power relations.

Analysis of corpus found that there are definite imbalances in distribution of language that is linked to masculinity and femininity. Masculinity was re-created again and again with the help of words and collocations that indexed power, decision-making, control, and moral authority. Words like *faisla*, *taqat*, *haq*, *qaboo*, and others, used on a high frequency, put male characters in the role of natural leaders and ultimate truth and moral determiners. Such results are consistent with the discussion of the hegemonic masculinity theory according to which dominant masculinity becomes normalized in cultural texts and promoted as acceptable and unavoidable. Conversely, femininity was discursively constructed using words that focused on the ideas of patience, silence, blame, and endurance. *Sabar*, *ghalti*, *chup rahe*, *badnaam*, and other words repeatedly put women in the morally responsible category of subjects whose value was ability to be obedient and restrained.

The collocation analysis and semantic field analysis also showed how misogyny works covertly in the discourse of drama. Instead of being based on explicit aggression against women only, misogyny was integrated in the moral discourse that justified women suffering and established the superiority of men as normal. The negativity of evaluation and narrative punishment was often connected to women attempts to resist control whereas such actions by men were excused by protection, honor and necessity discourses. This trend is indicative of what feminist critics call symbolic violence whereby one exerts power without force by using acceptable cultural standards. It is revealed that the Pakistani TV dramas tend to convert the misogynistic ideologies into the form of emotively convincing stories and as a result they sound as natural and culturally adequate.

Another dimension of gendered power that was identified through the analysis of intensification and mitigation strategies was the critical dimension. Male voice was characterized by intensifying of speech, certainty and compulsion, which upheld the authority and decisiveness. Feminine speech, in its turn, was based on the sycophancy, apologetic and justification, which linguistically restricted agency of the female body and reinforced demands of perseverance and compliance. This imbalance in the interactional control proves the point of Fairclough that power in discourse is often obtained through how much one can speak, whom they can speak to and with what certainty. Epistemic inequality is further supported by the continuing identification of masculinity with certainty and femininity with doubt, making men knowers and women being driven by emotions or unreliable.

The pattern of narratives produced by the analysis of narratives showed that these linguistic patterns are supported by the larger story patterns which reward conformity and punish resistance. In the above-mentioned sampled dramas, male superiority was often rightfully or pardoned, and female independence was presented as untamed and socially expensive. Dramas that seemed to confront patriarchy even tended to have the solution of bringing the age old gender hierarchies back in order, implying that the only resistance that can be tolerated is one that is not aimed at disrupting male authority in any fundamental way. The partial exemption of *Sinf-e-Aahan* was to show that other kinds of femininities are occasionally enacted, though usually institutionalized in ways that reproduces masculine discourses of disciplinarity, obedience and state authority instead of challenging the patriarchal sense.

In terms of the social impact, the research recommends that these cyclic patterns of discourse reinforce the naturalization of unbalanced gender dynamics. Although viewers cannot be considered passive receivers of the message conveyed by media, constant exposure to stories in which male domination is equated to care and silence of women to virtue may influence the ideas of the acceptable conduct in personal and social

interactions. Pakistani television dramas, in this regard, serve as informal spaces of gender socialization as they support overwhelming ideologies in the name of entertainment. The results confirm cultivation-based claims that the repetition of media discourse can change the perception of viewers about gender roles, morality and power.

In general, the present research paper can add to critical media studies and research on gender issues as it presents empirical evidence of the linguistic and narrative construction of masculinity and misogyny in Pakistani television dramas. Through a combination of the corpus analysis and the Critical Discourse Analysis, the study proves the usefulness of an interdisciplinary methodology that spans the difference between quantitative patterning and qualitative interpretation. The results indicate the necessity of a higher level of critical consciousness among the media producers, policymakers, and audiences regarding the ideology work conducted by popular entertainment. The issue of ensuring that gender representations are more fair needs both regulations interventions as well as an explicit approach to dismantling the deep-seated discursive standards that make the inequality a matter of natural course.

To summarize, Pakistani television drama has continued to be a very powerful element of culture in the formation of gendered identities. So long as masculinity is considered to be related to control and power, and femininity to endurance and blame, media discourse will become the key to maintaining patriarchal social orders. Nonetheless, critical research like the one presented by revealing these trends creates a breathing room, critics can fight back, and more inclusive and transformative media discourses can be created.

References

- Amjad, S. (2025). Discursive construction of femininity in Pakistani television dramas: A critical discourse analysis. *Journal of Gender and Media Studies*, 9(1), 45–62.
- Anwary, A. (2024). Multimodal representations of women in South Asian television drama. *Feminist Media Studies*, 24(2), 301–317. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2023.2249876>
- Baker, P., & McGlashan, M. (2020). *Critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power* (J. B. Thompson, Ed.; G. Raymond & M. Adamson, Trans.). Harvard University Press.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.
- Chaudhry, L. (2021). Representation of women in Pakistani television dramas: A feminist perspective. *Pakistan Journal of Women's Studies*, 28(2), 67–84.
- Coffey-Glover, L. (2023). Sexism, discourse, and the media: New directions in feminist critical discourse analysis. *Discourse & Society*, 34(4), 389–404. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09579265231123456>
- Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender & Society*, 19(6), 829–859. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243205278639>
- Dutta, S., Chowdhury, R., & Sarkar, S. (2024). Detecting misogyny and gender bias in media discourse using corpus-based methods. *Language Resources and Evaluation*, 58(1), 211–230. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10579-023-09634-7>
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and power* (2nd ed.). Longman.
- Gee, J. P., & Handford, M. (2023). *The Routledge handbook of discourse analysis* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., & Signorielli, N. (2002). Growing up with television: Cultivation processes. In J. Bryant & D. Zillmann (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (pp. 43–67). Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Habib, R. (2025). Masculinity and moral authority in Pakistani television narratives. *Journal of South Asian Media Studies*, 7(1), 22–39.

- Iqbal, N. (2024). Television drama consumption and gender role perceptions among Pakistani youth. *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 63(3), 115–131.
- Jamshaid, S. (2025). Feminist critical discourse analysis of women's silence in Pakistani TV dramas. *Pakistan Journal of Linguistics*, 11(2), 55–73.
- Khan, A., & Hussain, S. (2021). Gender representation in Pakistani television dramas: Ideology and discourse. *Pakistan Journal of Gender Studies*, 22, 45–62.
- Khursheed, A., Malik, R., & Fatima, Z. (2025). Audience interpretation of gender roles in Pakistani television dramas. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 35(1), 89–105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01292986.2024.2298743>
- Lawson, R. (2023). *Language and misogyny: A feminist linguistic analysis*. Routledge.
- Maqsood, S. (2024). Negotiating masculinity in Pakistani television dramas. *Journal of Men and Masculinities in Asia*, 6(2), 141–158.
- Noor, R. (2022). Misogyny and symbolic violence in Pakistani media discourse. *Discourse & Communication*, 16(3), 257–273. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17504813221084567>
- Raza, H. (2025). Romanticizing control: Gender, power, and television drama discourse in Pakistan. *Media, Culture & Society*, 47(2), 318–334.
- Shahwar, D. (2025). Toxic masculinity in contemporary Pakistani media. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 34(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2024.2349987>
- Singh, P. (2025). Gender, power, and visual storytelling in South Asian television dramas. *Visual Communication*, 24(1), 77–94.
- Subhani, R. (2024). Women, morality, and television drama narratives in Pakistan. *Journal of Media Ethics*, 39(2), 98–112.
- Sultana, B. (2024). Media consumption and construction of gender norms in Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Social Research*, 6(1), 33–49.
- Tariq, M. (2025). Gender ideology and narrative punishment in Pakistani television serials. *Journal of Cultural Studies*, 18(2), 201–218.
- van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach*. Sage.
- van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Critical discourse analysis. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen, & H. E. Hamilton (Eds.), *The handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 352–371). Blackwell.
- Worth, K. (2023). Everyday misogyny in media discourse. *Feminist Media Studies*, 23(5), 789–805. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2023.2175432>
- Zubair, S., & Zubair, A. (2017). Women, power and media discourse in Pakistan. *Journal of Gender and Social Issues*, 16(1), 1–18.
- Zulfiqar, S., Ahmed, R., & Khan, T. (2023). Gendered violence and normalization of abuse in Pakistani television dramas. *Journal of Asian Social Science*, 19(4), 112–128.