

## **Impact of Divorce Related Content in Pakistani TV Dramas on Marital Life of Viewers in Pakistani Society**

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### **Abstract:**

Television dramas have the ability to educate and influence the viewers, but it has been observed that Pakistani dramas are trending divorce in their stories. As a result of heavy viewership of these dramas, the divorce rate is increasing day by day in Pakistani society. This study attempted to find out how these dramas depict marital family issues and what impact they are producing on society. The focus of this research was divorce depicted Pakistani dramas and their effects on viewers. This research has theoretical grounds in uses and gratification and cultivation theory to examine the gratification needs and the ultimate cultivation effects in TV drama viewers. Sample of 300 married Pakistani drama viewers of Islamabad were surveyed. The study shows that 149 (49.7%) drama viewers frequently watch divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas. Further analysis using appropriate statistical tests indicated that divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas have cultivation effects on viewers. These dramas are popular as people love to watch them. Findings of this study indicated that divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas has less positive and more negative effects on society as majority housewives are regular drama viewers in Pakistan and they learn family conspiracy; also, both husband and wife learn to argue from these dramas. The fantasy lifestyle depicted in these dramas make viewers materialistic. Both husband and wife demand luxuries and all these factors create marital conflicts that might end up in separation or divorce. Overall findings indicated that more exposure to divorce related content by Pakistani TV dramas

create more marital conflicts as these dramas have more negative effects on viewer.

*Keywords:* Television Drama, Exposure, Divorce, Marital Conflicts, Cultivation

### **Introduction:**

Divorce is becoming very common in people's lives. Marriage dissolution is becoming easy today and now divorced folks carry a lower social stigma. As people easily go for separation what else it remains a negative and traumatic experience as both couple and their children affect as well (Harvey & Fine, 2011; Vallgård & Larsen, 2021). Divorce is a single word with the ability to change everything. Common emotions include hopelessness, depressed thinking, grief, loss, and sacrifice. Many items would have to be lost if a married couple decided to divorce, especially if they have a family (Sari, 2021; Shah, 2022). Divorce is not considered as a taboo now, even there is more casual discussion about divorce among married couples happening. However, many couples often do not realize their decision of separation and their marital conflicts will badly impact their children as it will spoil their personality and their lives (Eype, 2016). It is true that unrealistic views of marriage might contribute to lower levels of marital satisfaction (Demo & Ganong, 1994; El-Refaey, 2021). Now the question is what contributes to unrealistic views of marriage, love, and relationships? Mass media is one contributing factor (Segrin & Nabi, 2002).

Television may be the single most common and pervasive source of conceptions and actions related to marriage and intimate personal relationships for large segments of the population" (Signorelli, 1991). Social scientist believes that one of the common reasons for the divorce is young adult enters into the marriage with unrealistic expectation in the marital life. When these unrealistic expectations are not met then it produces

dissonance in their life and results in divorce or separation (Arafat, 2020). In many cases, people's beliefs and concepts of romantic relationships lead to expectations in real life can be affected by the stories portrayed in mass media including books, films, and television programs (Bachen & Illouz, 1996; Cohen & Weimann, 2000; Segrin & Nabi, 2002). These beliefs or expectations are associated with how we form and maintain relationships by influencing whom we choose as our partner and how we manage conflicts in relationships (Knee, 1998; Sprecher & Metts, 1999).

Islam is regarded as a religion that focuses on the importance of family integrity and values. If the family structure deteriorates, the social system faces risk and danger. As a result, Islam has always emphasized the importance of spousal marriage to protect the family and community (Arafat, 2020). Moreover, in case of peak of marital conflicts, Islam officially allows a husband to divorce his wife, but divorce is also considered the most disgusting thing in Islam (Arafat, 2020). According to hadith," the Messenger of Allah said: "The most hated of permissible things to Allah is divorce (Sunan Ibn Majah 2018 - the Chapters on Divorce - كتاب الطلاق - Sunnah.com - Sayings and Teachings of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم), n.d.). Pakistan is an Islamic country where majority are Muslims and follows Islamic rules. On the other side, Television is Pakistan's most widely used mass medium, and the content transmitted on it has a powerful impact on viewers' attitudes (El-Refaey, 2021). In Pakistan, women account for about half of the population, and the majority of women use the media for enjoyment. Furthermore, Urdu drama is the most engaging portion for women (Saleem, 2019).

Drama is a prominent character in Pakistani media. The Pakistani theatre business has had an unexpected effect on people's thinking. Most popular Pakistani channels, such as Geo Entertainment, ARY Digital, and Hum TV, are heavily inspired

by western and Indian television and to compete, they are losing their cultural identity by portraying romance, love, and extramarital affairs in the guise of modernity. The effect is obviously seen in current dramas in the shape of characters' lifestyles, attire, food, language, tradition, customs, beliefs, and religion. The media is now bringing new trends, attitudes, habits, and values for modern living, which has had a significant influence on society (Hussain, 2012, Hussain, 2014). It's a fact that since the arrival of private media industry in Pakistan, news channels are glamourizing celebrity breakups and making it a form of entertainment as rather than shock that amuses the audience. Through television drama series, movies, and celebrity endorsements, the media has given divorce a new favorable image. Though television drama, divorce trend has become so common that it has been openly discussed in our families without any hesitation (Saleem, 2019).

According to Robert M. Liebert, human behavior can be learned and retained through observation. The nature of observational learning is central to the effects of television. This is how adults and children's conduct evolve because of being exposed to other people's behavior. As they get exposed to television content, they can learn new sort of behaviors via incidental or observational learning (1972, p. 3). The same thing is happening in Pakistan these days as almost every drama in Pakistan is focusing on divorce and breakups and people are getting used to of this trend. As more breakups and divorce are shown in Pakistani TV dramas, rise in marital conflicts and divorce has been observed in Pakistani families (Siddiqui, 2020). It has been observed that extramarital affairs and divorce have become top trends of Pakistani dramas. In Pakistani society, the word 'divorce' which was once considered as shame for a lifetime is now becoming the trend. Changing trends of society have caused a strong change in lifestyle and thoughts of Pakistani people ((Hussain et al, 2016; Hussain et al, 2021; Khan, 2017).

If we consider divorce statistics in Pakistan, we can see divorce rate is on the rise. According to the office record of the Chairman Arbitration Council Islamabad Urban, in 2014 from January till October, 12903 women approached different courts to seek divorce from their husbands. Just in September 2315 women applied for divorce. 11375 cases are still pending in the family courts of Islamabad. In 2020 during pandemic, where families were united at homes, the number of women seeking Khula increased by more than 700% in Pakistan. Most cases were filed over domestic issues (Sahoutara, 2021). One reason of popularity of these divorce themed dramas in our society is that television is the leading media platforms in Pakistan, where almost 76.2% mature audience watch TV programs weekly. Though this count is higher in urban (89.3%) than rural (69.3%) areas (Gallup, 2014). In Pakistan, on one side where Television programs especially prime time dramas tend to idealize marriage as truly passionate loving and romantic relationship. On the other side they are likely to influence people's perceptions of divorce (Sahoutara, 2021). However, less is known about how portrayals of divorce in television dramas are associated with perceptions of divorce among married people. Increasing divorce rates in Pakistan is an alarming issue that needs to be solved. There have been solutions to solve the problem of divorce in marriage, such as early education about the importance of marriage in Islam and premarital counseling (Akhter, 2020). But what if that counseling is done by Pakistani drama content, will that affect the perceptions of married couples? All is needed to think about.

**Statement of the problem:**

Television dramas play an important role in setting cultural values of society. These dramas do not actually depict the true culture of society. They transmit cultural values to the audience sitting in their homes watching these drama serials on regular basis and learning family morals and value through these dramas

not by our true culture. It has been observed that these dramas are changing audience perception and attitudes. Nowadays divorce is being portrayed too much in Pakistani dramas. According to Gerbner's cultivation theory of television effects, mass media have the ability to influence the ways people perceive the world. Heavy viewers of these dramas, when exposed to divorce related content they get influenced by the given concept and tend to start practicing in society. Hence this study is an attempt to bring to light the relationship between exposure to divorce related content in Pakistani dramas and marital conflicts. For this purpose, the study is based on audience perception and has been focused on survey techniques.

**Objectives:**

The objectives of this study are:

1. To explore the extent of exposure to divorce related content of Pakistani TV dramas.
2. To examine the level of gratification the audience get from the exposure to divorce related content in Pakistani dramas.
3. To analyze that is there any relationship between exposure to divorce related content on Pakistani TV dramas and marital conflicts.

**Significance of study:**

This study will provide insight into stereotypical portrayal of divorce by these Pakistani dramas where almost every drama is discussing divorce among main or side roles. This study will enrich already existing knowledge available on international level about divorce portrayal by providing research on Pakistani dramas and their effect on the particular audience. This study will be helpful for policy makers in Pakistan and human rights

organization to discourage divorce in society. It will be helpful for the general audience to overcome their marital conflicts. This study will be beneficial for the media owners as they are trend setters of industry and can bring positive impact in society.

**Rationale of study:**

Regular viewers of Pakistani dramas are continuously observing that almost every drama of Pakistan is portraying divorce related content in a society where divorce is not a good thing as Islam discourage it and divorce is the only act that is halal but disliked by Allah and it is forbidden in Islam to give divorce without a valid reason. It has been observed that our Pakistani dramas are dispersing illusions that have little or no connection with the reality and when it comes to divorce portrayal, these dramas are cultivating viewer's conceptions about marital conflicts in society. This study will analyze the gap between portrayal by drama and our society reality. Mainly, the study would draw a link between another critical issue; the high divorce rate in Pakistan and its portrayal in dramas as well as audience perception.

**Research Questions:**

Using the following research questions, this study has explored the relationship between Pakistani TV dramas portraying a more glamorized divorce norm, and married people's perceptions toward marital conflicts and divorce.

**RQ1:** To what extent people in Pakistan are getting exposure to divorce related content in Pakistani dramas?

**RQ2:** To what extent divorce related content in Pakistani TV dramas gratify the needs of the audience?

**RQ3:** Is there any relationship between exposure to divorce related content of Pakistani TV dramas and marital conflicts of the viewers?

**Hypothesis:**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Higher the exposure to divorce related content in Pakistani TV dramas, higher will be the marital conflicts among the viewers.

**Literature review:**

This study is concerned with divorce portrayal in TV drama and marital conflicts in society. Little is known about divorce perceptions of married people before the beginning of written history. According to Punyanunt-Carter and Wagner (2018) a couple of people have both positive and negative reactions towards divorce perception. She suggests that divorce portrayal on media have their impacts on people's perceptions of both marriage and divorce. Baxter et al. (1999) in their study highlighted 15 primary relational turning points; among family conflicts and household crises, divorce was one of them.

In the field of media's divorce portrayal, three different approaches to pragmatic literature have evolved: (i) the dimensions and indicators of divorce portrayal on media (e.g., Den-bulck, H.V, 2011). (ii) The factors that influence television viewer's behavior towards marriage and divorce (e.g., Punyanunt-Carter & Wagner (2018) (iii) media's contribution towards breaking the taboo associated with divorce (e.g., Eype, 2016). Noreen et al. (2021) conducted study on "Modernism in Pakistani Urdu dramas". While in-depth observation of how Pakistani Urdu dramas promote other cultures in their stories, and how changes are presented in the lifestyle, moods, behaviors, physical appearances, religious, social, political, and psychological aspects of the characters in various dramas, it was also found that dramas



in Pakistan are also promoting divorce and extra marital affairs as a part of modernism.

Adams (2007) conducted a study on Framing Divorce Reform: Media, Morality, and the Politics of Family and found the higher level of marital conflict between the former married couples and one of the factors found was influence of media portrayal of divorce. Similar concerns have also been concluded by Arafat et al. (2020). In the study they analyzed Pakistan TV drama before and after the advent of cable and measured the depiction of marital relationships in different Urdu serials in comparison with Islamic objective of marriage. For this purpose, they divided study into pre and post cable era; analyzed 220 episodes of 44 drama serials. A study found that marital relations shown in pre cable era were most positive whereas post cable drama content was much focused on extra marital affairs and marital conflicts.

Rehman et al. (2019) found in their study that in current Urdu drama serials, marital conflict appears to be the most common mode. Marital couples are demonstrated to find love outside of their wedded relationship. According to Demo and Ganong (1994), one of the most pernicious factors limiting marital satisfaction and longevity, is that people start marriage with false, idealistic, and romantic beliefs about marriage. Signorielli (1991) stated that for broad portions of the public, television may be the single most common and ubiquitous source of concepts and acts connected to marriage and intimate personal relationships.

James (2006) conducted study on Media men and violence in Australian divorce and found that most men get more out of marriage than women and women usually cop better than man after divorce. It was found that Newspaper articles and letters supported men for violence as an act to save their marriages. Segrin & Nabi (2002) explored the relationship between television viewing and society's idealistic expectations about

marriage which often results into high divorce rates in society. The study found relationships among genre specific television viewing, idealized marriage expectations and intentions to marry in result and proved that media do play role in reinforcing and developing audience beliefs about marriage. Chong and Ferrara (2009) investigated the link between the divorce rate and the portrayal of excessive divorce plots in Brazilian soap operas. Study found that media programs have the ability to target certain demographics at cheap cost and might be used as a public policy tool.

**Cultivation theory:**

Gerbner and Gross developed cultivation theory which explains that the more a person is exposed to a message provided by the media, the more likely that person is to believe the message is real (Gerbner & Gross,1976). According to this theory, Mainstreaming is most applicable to the heavy viewers of television. Our purpose of this study to investigate the impact of TV drama on married couples' perspectives about divorce that's why The Cultivation theory of George Gerbner has been applied. The cultivation hypothesis explains why viewers are so reliant on media. According to this theory, people get influenced by media due to part of consumption through which a process of blurring, blending, and bending of viewer attitudes takes place. This system allows for a broad generalization and stereotyping of individuals and practices that have the power to quickly change attitudes and desires of those consumers (Potter, 2014).

Cultivation theory focuses on the television effects and says that movie and drama violence have an impact on our perception of reality. The cultivation theory says that the more TV a person watches, the harsher perception they will have of the real world. According to cultivation theory, heavy viewers of television get high risk of insecurity from television and perceive a mean world as television content usually creates fantasy for the viewers and

bring them away from reality. Gerbner argues that mass production and rapid diffusion of messages contribute to the formation and imposition of collective consciousness (shared meaning) on social connections (Gerbner, 1998). The term "shared meaning" refers to a widely held belief about reality that is based on how much television a person watches (West & Turner, 2007). Thus, a heavy viewer is someone who watches 6 hours or more of television and, as a result, frames their stance on reality around the messages they receive from television, whereas a light viewer does not allow television messages to impact their outlook on reality (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). If you watch television for a long time, the symbolic atmosphere that media creates will most likely nurture a belief that the world is as media portrays it (Mutz & Nir, 2010)

**Methodology:**

**Research Design:**

The nature and requirement of this study demanded for quantitative approach for which descriptive survey research was applied to explore the relationship of married people in result of exposure to the divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas. According to Neuman (2008), the survey research begins with theoretical or applied research problems and ends with empirical measurement and data analysis (p 276). With the help of this technique, it became possible to measure variables under consideration (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011) therefore, to measure the effects on the audience; this research design is based on a survey method using an ideal research questionnaire.

**Population of Study:**

The overall population of this survey-based study includes married people of Islamabad who watch Pakistani TV dramas.

### **Population Age:**

The target audiences of this study were married drama viewers of age 21 to above 60 years. This study included both male and females who were used to watch Pakistani dramas. The goal of choosing different age groups of married people was to see how they felt about the divorce trend depicted in Pakistani dramas. The audience was further categorized in to Heavy and Light viewers as the focus of study was to find out the audience perception regarding marital relation due to exposure to divorce depicted Pakistani dramas.

### **Sampling Method:**

Married Pakistani drama viewers (both males and females) of different socio-economic status and age groups were selected as the target population of this research study. These participants were used to watch Pakistani television dramas and were residents of Islamabad Capital territory (both rural and urban areas). Respondents were requested to fill out an anonymous web-based cross-sectional survey (Appendix B). Prior to accessing the survey, all participants were required to read a cover letter approved by the Allama Iqbal Open University, confirming that they were aware of all survey criteria, guidelines, and expectations.

In this study, researchers have chosen married persons residing in Islamabad through Purposive sampling technique. The purpose of using this type of non-probability sampling technique was that the variables of this research were based on the judgment of the researcher and researcher wanted to focus on the characteristics of the population of her own interest in order to answer her research questions properly i.e. the researcher wanted to study perceptions of television viewers about divorce after watching divorce-based content.

### **Sample Size and Area of Research:**

Due to financial and time constraints, it was not possible for the researcher to work on the census and to conduct survey within total population of Islamabad; therefore, the study was focused on a sample size N=300 married people of Islamabad between ages of 21-above 60 years.

### **3.4 Variables of the Study:**

Variables are divided into two categories.

1. Independent Variables
2. Dependent Variables

#### **Independent Variables:**

Independent variable of this study is “Exposure to divorce related Pakistani TV dramas”. It refers to the amount of time people spend watching divorce-related content in Pakistani TV dramas. Therefore, the more time people spend watching these dramas, the more content they are exposed to.

#### **Dependent Variables:**

Dependent variables in this study are the effects as perceived by the respondents of this study. Marriage perception, luxurious lifestyle, gender equality, social reality, materialism, fantasy, all these effects have been operationalized in Table 3.7.

#### **Research Tool:**

In this study, Research questionnaire was used for data collection. Questionnaire was written in English and was comprised of closed ended questions. The questionnaire was divided into four

sections which included demography, exposure to television and divorce specific genres, credibility measures and effects of divorce depicted TV content on viewers. Two key measures were included in the questionnaire: a) TV dramas exposure, b) TV viewer respondent's perceptions about divorce and marital conflicts. This survey included five-point Likert-type statements (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=neutral, 4= agree and 5= strongly agree) about married people's attitude towards divorce and marital conflicts. A total of 35 questions were included in the questionnaire (see appendix B for full statement).

### **Data Collection:**

Under the supervision of the researcher, a questionnaire was uploaded on the Internet and sent electronically to the participants. This survey was anticipated to take 10 minutes or less to complete. Data was collected in two months from July 2021 till August 2021. Once the editing and coding was completed, the received data was processed in the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 21. Furthermore, frequency tables were utilized to look into the demographics of respondents as well as their exposure to divorce depicted on Pakistani television dramas and their perceptions. Data variables were correlated using different test methods to check the effects on viewers.

### **Data Analysis:**

Since the study was conducted using online survey method, in which data about the exposure to divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas has been obtained from a sample size N=300. These respondents were Pakistani TV drama viewers, married only, both male and female, ranging in age from 21 to 60 years old and living in both urban and rural areas of Islamabad. The study concluded many interesting results and facts about to what extent married persons get exposed to divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas and how these dramas impact on viewers.

After the data was collected from the study's sample, it was processed using proper statistics and presented in an appropriate manner. To investigate the responses of survey participants on different variables of the study, descriptive statistics have been used.

### **Sample Characteristics:**

Table 1 indicates demography of respondents. Among the sample N=300, most of the respondents were aged between 31 to 40 years. Most of the respondents 92% were married, whereas 18 participants (6%) were officially divorced and 6 participants (2%) of the study were separated from their spouses due to marital conflicts. Similarly, 49% of respondents graduated and this was majority among all educational levels. Mostly (28.3%) of the target audiences of divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas were housewives. Similarly, majority of Pakistani drama viewers 33.7% were middle class people earning monthly income between 25000-50000 rupees only. Furthermore, 62.7% respondents of the study were married since one to ten years. 24.3% were living a marital life since eleven to twenty years. 7.7% respondents were living together for twenty years and above whereas only 5.3% respondents were newly married.

**Table 1      Demography of the Respondents:**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	115	38.3
	Female	185	61.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age</b>	21-30 years	57	19.0
	31-40 years	177	59.0
	41-50 years	51	17.0
	51-60 years	8	2.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	276	92.0
	Divorced	18	6.0
	Separated	06	2.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
	Matric	1	3



<b>Education</b>	Intermediate	5	1.7
	Graduation	148	49.3
	Masters	105	35.0
	MPhil/PhD	41	13.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Area Residence</b>	Urban area	272	90.7
	Rural area	28	9.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Occupation</b>	Student	46	15.3
	Unemployed	9	3.0
	Government Job	55	18.3
	Private Job	67	22.3
	Housewife	85	28.3
	Businessman	12	4.0

	Professional	26	8.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Marriage Duration</b>	Newly married	16	5.3
	1-10 years	188	62.7
	11-20 years	73	24.3
	Above 20 years	23	7.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Monthly Income</b>	Up to 25000	41	13.7
	26000-50000	101	33.7
	51000-75000	91	30.3
	76000-100000	19	6.3
	Above 100000	48	16.0

**Media Exposure:**

For a number of reasons, considerations about media exposure are critical. First of all, if the media have any impact on its viewers, it must be experienced. There must be some measurement of media exposure to demonstrate or establish these media effects. In order

to check how much divorce related content of Pakistani television dramas has lasting effects or not on its viewers, it was necessary to know for how much time the respondents were exposed to media and to what extent they were used to watch divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas respectively.

Table 2 describes media exposure of the respondents that how much time they spent in watching Pakistani dramas. The time period was categorized in two categories; “weekly drama exposure” and “drama exposure time per day” At first, respondents were asked how many days in a week they watch Pakistani TV dramas? Then they were asked that how much time they spend in watching Pakistani TV dramas daily? In first category, It was noted that most of the respondents 24.3% were used to watch Pakistani dramas 1 day in a week, 23.7% people were used to watch Pakistani dramas 3 days in a week, 18% participants were watching Pakistani dramas every day, 17% respondents were used to watch Pakistani dramas 2 days in a week. 13.7% respondents were watching Pakistani dramas 4 days in a week. 2.7% respondents were used to watch Pakistani TV dramas 6 days in a week whereas only 0.7% respondents were watching Pakistani TV dramas 5 days in a week.

**Table 2: Media Exposure of Respondents**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Weekly Drama Exposure</b>		
1 day in a week	73	24.3
2 days in a week	51	17.0

3 days in a week	71	23.7
4 days in a week	41	13.7
5 days in a week	2	0.7
6 days in a week	8	2.7
Everyday	54	18.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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**Drama Exposure time per day**

Up to 1 Hour	152	50.7
Above 1 Hour up to 2 Hours	28	9.3
Above 2 Hours up to 3 Hours	41	13.7
Above 3 Hours up to 4 Hours	61	20.3
Above 4 Hours	18	6.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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In Category two when respondents were asked about time, they spend in watching Pakistani TV dramas daily. It was observed that most of the respondents 50.7% were used to watch Pakistani TV dramas up to 1 Hour per day. 20.3% respondents were used to

watch Pakistani TV dramas above 3 hours up to 4 hours. 13.7% respondents watched Pakistani TV dramas above 2 hours up to 3 hours. 9.3% respondents were used to watch Pakistani TV dramas above 1 hour up to 2 hours whereas only 6% respondents were used to watch Pakistani TV dramas above 4 Hours per day.

**RQ1. To what extent people in Pakistan are getting exposure to divorce related content in Pakistani dramas?**

Table 2 and Table 3 indicate that people in Pakistan are getting exposure to divorce related content in Pakistani TV dramas. Out of 300 samples, 149(49.7%) respondents answered on high scale that they have frequently watched Pakistani TV dramas. Pakistani TV drama “mere Pass tum ho” was found most popular in viewers as it was found high frequently watched among 198 (66%) respondents. Pakistani TV drama “Raqs-e-Bismil” got the second highest value as 148 (49.3%) respondents preferred to watch it frequently, Pakistani drama “Ghisi Piti Mohabbat” ranked third highest value as 121 (40.3%) respondents were frequently watching it. Moreover, out of 300 samples, 97 (32.3%) respondents preferred frequently watching drama serial “Nand” that story was totally based on divorce and re-marriage concept. Popularity of these dramas among the viewers indicates people in Pakistan are getting exposed to divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas.

**Table 3. Frequency of Watching Divorce Depicted Pakistani TV Dramas**

<b>Pakistani Dramas</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>St. Deviation</b>
Frequency of watching divorce depicted TV dramas	151 (50.3)	149 (49.7)	3.27	1.009
<b>Frequency of watching Pakistani dramas mentioned below</b>				
Mere pass tum ho	102(34.0)	198(66.0)	3.82	1.232
Ghisi Piti Mohabbat	179(59.7)	121(40.3)	2.91	1.658
Kahin deep jalay	243(81)	57(19)	1.86	1.278
Mujhe Khuda p yaqeen hai	257(85.7)	43(14.3)	2.21	1.159
Nand	203(67.7)	97(32.3)	2.85	1.412
Raq e Bismil	152(50.7)	148(49.3)	3.15	1.592
Fatoor	239(79.7)	61(20.3)	2.29	1.299

**RQ2. To what extent divorce in Pakistani dramas gratify the needs of the audience?**

Table 3 and Table 4 indicates 149(49.7%) respondents gave high preference to frequently watching Pakistani TV dramas and 254(84.7%) respondents answered on high scale that there is a greater extent of portrayal of divorce by Pakistan TV dramas. Researcher got the answer to the second research question about the gratification of viewers by watching divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas. These dramas are popular because the audience is used to watch them.

**Table 4**

**Perception of viewers about Divorce Specific Genre**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>St. Deviation</b>
Extent of portrayal of divorce by Pakistani dramas as perceived by viewers	46(15.3)	254(84.7)	4.31	.991
Extent of portrayal of Cultural Values by Pakistani dramas as perceived by viewers	214(71.3)	86(28.7)	2.59	1.068

**RQ3. Is there any relationship between exposure to divorce related content of Pakistani TV dramas and marital conflicts of the viewers?**

Pearson Correlation on Table 5 and Table 6 indicates both negative and positive effects of divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas on viewers. Results indicate that due to exposure to divorce related content in Pakistani TV dramas, both husband and wives demands for luxurious lifestyle. They learn to argue on several issues resulting in marital conflicts. It is also indicated that due to exposure to divorce related content in Pakistani TV dramas, people are becoming more materialistic. Fantasy lifestyle depicted in Pakistani TV and low-income status might become a reason of marital conflicts and divorce, and wives are learning conspiracies against family. The relationship of all variables in this table are proven highly significant ( $p$ =less than .05). Hence it is proved that there is a relationship between exposure to divorce related content of Pakistani TV dramas and marital conflicts of viewers. When it comes to positive effects of divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas on viewers, result indicates that out of 5 variables, 2 variables indicate positive whereas 3 variables indicate negative relationship. It indicates that divorce is social reality and divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas promotes the concept of gender equality. The correlation of “impact viewer’s perceptions about divorce and marriage” is  $-.165$  which is negative. It shows the negative relationship that divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas does not impact viewer’s perceptions about divorce and marriage. There is also a negative relationship of No tolerance for domestic abuse, but it is significant ( $p=.001$ ). This table also indicates negative relationship of “promotes concept of no compromise on unhealthy marriage” ( $r= -.032$ ,) correlation shows there is no significant relationships between these variables. ( $p$ =greater than .05).

**Table 5 Relationship between exposures to divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas and its negative effects on viewers**



Negative Effects	Frequency of watching divorce depicted TV dramas			Relationship
	N	Mean	SD	Pearson Correlation
Wives are learning conspiracies against family	300	3.72	1.01	r = .337
				p=.000
Spouse demands for luxurious lifestyle	300	3.78	1.02	r = .489
				p=.000
Viewers learn to argue with spouse on several issues	300	3.38	1.25	r = .255
				p=.000
People are becoming more materialistic	300	4.02	.912	r = .424
				p=.000
Fantasy lifestyle and low income in reality causes divorce	300	3.56	.988	r = .275
				p=.000

**Table 6. Relationship between exposures to divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas and its positive effects on viewers.**

Positive Effects	Frequency of watching divorce depicted TV dramas			
	N	Mean	SD	Pearson Correlation
Impact on viewer's thinking about divorce and marriage	300	3.31	1.089	r = -.165
				p=.004
Promotes no compromise on unhealthy marriage concept	300	3.34	1.147	r = -.032
				p=.577
Promotes Gender Equality	300	3.75	1.021	r =.109
				p=.058
Divorce is Social reality	300	3.35	1.103	r = .373
				p=.000
No tolerance for domestic abuse	300	3.69	.881	r = -.264
				p=.000

Thus Table 5 and 6 shows that Research Hypothesis “Higher the exposure to divorce related content in Pakistani TV dramas, higher will be the marital conflicts among the viewers.” has been supported. Viewers of divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas are

learning negative attitudes from these dramas. Both husband and wives demand a luxurious lifestyle. They learn to argue on several issues resulting in marital conflicts. Due to exposure to these kinds of dramas, people are becoming more materialistic. Moreover, viewers are learning some positive impacts also but out of 5 positive impacts, 3 were proven wrong and indicated a negative relationship. This study indicates that divorce is social reality and divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas promotes the concept of gender equality, but overall negative impacts of divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas indicated strong significant relationships. Hence the Hypothesis **“Higher the exposure to divorce related content in Pakistani TV dramas, higher will be the marital conflicts among the viewers.”** has been supported.

### **Discussion:**

The participants of current research were married television drama viewers of Pakistan because the researcher believes they can better give response about divorce and marital conflicts. The researcher selected 300 married Pakistani television drama viewers of Islamabad city only through purposive sampling technique. To collect data, a questionnaire was distributed to the sample population. For data analysis, SPSS (Statistical package for social sciences) software was used. In Chapter 4, the data was given in the form of tables. With some personal observations, the researcher organized a comprehensive data analysis.

The purpose of this study was to check the influence of divorce related content of Pakistani TV dramas on the attitudes and perceptions of married people of Islamabad. The researchers were interested to find out are these Pakistani dramas who are making divorce as a top trend by their content have effects on married people of Islamabad or not. The analysis and findings of this study revealed that there are more negative and less positive

effects of divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas on its viewers. These dramas produce very less favorable impacts as they promote concept of gender equality and social reality but divorce related content in Pakistani TV dramas has more negative effects on society as both husband and wife learn to argue from these dramas. The fantasy lifestyle depicted in these dramas make viewers materialistic. Both husband and wife demand luxuries and low-income status in reality all these factors create marital conflicts that might end up in separation or divorce. At one side where these dramas gratify the needs of the viewers, they are popular because people frequently watch these dramas. The divorce depicted content of these dramas cultivates viewer's perception and they often affect their attitudes about marital life and create marital conflicts. Result indicates that more exposure to divorce related content by Pakistani TV dramas create more marital conflicts.

The researchers found that the findings of this research are supporting cultivation theory as majority of the participants indicted the more negative and the less positive effects of divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas. In 2018, a research study was conducted about media portrayal of divorce and perceptions of college students about it. The researchers distributed a questionnaire with open ended questions among the students to check their perceptions about media effects on divorce. The outcomes of a study on the impact of media consumption on the topic of divorce did not totally support the cultivation theory, as nearly half of the participants stated that preexisting beliefs on marriage and divorce had inoculated them. The morality established by their nuclear family, the observation of divorce, or even a set of guiding principles or guidelines on coupling and the ability to uncouple were all mentioned by participants (Punyanunt-Carter & Wagner, 2018).

In 2021, study about "Modernism in Pakistani Urdu dramas" also supported cultivation theory and results indicated that divorce and

extra marital affair portrayal is on its peak to promote modernism and western culture in Pakistan (Noreen et al. 2021).

**Conclusion:**

The purpose of this study was to check the influence of divorce related content of Pakistani TV dramas on the attitudes and perceptions of married people of Islamabad. The researchers were interested to find out are these Pakistani dramas which are making divorce as a top trend by their content have effects on married people of Islamabad or not. By using the technique of purposive sampling, N=300 married Pakistani TV drama viewers were chosen to complete the survey questionnaire. The data collected was analyzed and all possible tests were applied using the spss21 version. The analysis revealed that there are more negative and less positive effects of divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas. These dramas produce very less favorable impacts as they promote concept of gender equality and social reality but divorce related content in Pakistani TV dramas has more negative effects on society. Majority females are target audience of Pakistani Urdu dramas and they are learning family conspiracy from the stories. Due to the influence of these dramas, both husband and wife learn to argue which might result in marital conflicts. The fantasy lifestyle depicted in these dramas make viewers materialistic. Both husband and wife demand luxuries and low-income status, in reality all these factors create marital conflicts that might end up in separation or divorce. At one side where these dramas gratify the needs of the viewers, they are popular because people frequently watch these dramas. The divorce depicted content of these dramas cultivates viewer's perception and they often affect their attitudes about marital life and create marital conflicts. It was concluded that more exposure to divorce related content by Pakistani TV dramas create more marital conflicts.

### **Recommendations:**

This study was limited to quantitative cross-sectional survey research as the purpose of the study was to check impacts on viewers. To analyze the content of divorce depicted Pakistani TV dramas, future researchers should conduct a generalize study on similar topic using content analysis technique.

Furthermore, this study was conducted on married persons of Islamabad city only. Future researchers can conduct this type of study on unmarried persons or students.

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