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Marital Life and TV Dramas: Depiction and Influence on Perceptions of Married and Unmarried Audience

Master's Thesis

Author: Mujtaba Masood

Academic advisor: Prof. PhDr. Hynek Jerabek

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Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.

2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.

3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on   Mujtaba Masood

2024-30-4

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Abstract

The study aims to close the literature gap, primarily based on Western viewpoints, by focusing on how married and single viewers perceive married life in TV dramas and how that depiction affects their perceptions. This study aims to investigate how TV dramas affect viewers' perceptions while highlighting the negative impact of media on family structures and societal values. Regarding TV dramas, the study focuses on viewers' expectations around marriage. The study intends to evaluate the impact of marital representations, reveal disparities in the married and single population's perspectives, and identify any gender-related changes. We can fully understand the domains of passive and active audience reception of media messages due to the ideas of Cultivation Theory and Social Cognitive Theory. Using a quantitative survey approach, males, women, and elderly single people contribute to the sample of 500 respondents in Lahore. The findings demonstrate that the various degrees of perception are caused by TV dramas, with married individuals and men being among the categories with greater than average levels of perception. These findings contribute to the limited literature on the subject, emphasising the importance of accurate media portrayals to counteract unrealistic expectations and preserve the sanctity of marriage as a social institution. The study underscores the need for targeted interventions to mitigate adverse influences on societal norms and promote a healthier media environment.

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CHAPTER NO. 1

Introduction

Television drama has always been a mirror that reflects society's norms, values, and relationships. In modern entertainment, marriage is one of the topics frequently shown in TV serials. Marital relationships are portrayed on the small screen of television as a powerful emotion that can manipulate perception, stimulate attitude, and, in the process, shape the filter of audiences' psyches. This research will explore the link between marital life representations in TV dramas and the subsequent influence on the perception of the viewers, which will entail sorting out the contrasts in unmarried and married individuals as distinct from men and women (Brandt, 2019).

Like all other forms of entertainment, TV dramas provide viewers with an entertaining storyline that can sometimes be a real-life escape. Arguably, TV dramas are one of the strongest agents of socialisation in today's world. Many TV shows that achieved popularity portray marital relationships as a stone of societal construction, which plays a crucial role in life. This industry serves as a mirror of current societal dynamics and a transmitter of cultural norms and perceptions about marriage (Meyer, 2019). The abundance and access to television make it and the power of TV the most powerful scenario painting how individuals visualise and comprehend marriage.

As customers of TV shows, people do not even notice that they have become an active part of creating the cultural notion of marriage through their involvement in developing storylines. Theatrical art, which contains images, stories, and illustrations about the interactions between a couple, communicates, alongside other media, the picture of relationships that everyone has inside their mind, which is determined by collective experiences and ideas. This research aims to reveal the multi-dimensional impact of TV series on the audience's perception of reality, which is caused by dramas.

Pakistani dramas, also popular as serials, are the kind of TV play that evolved from Pakistan. Although Urdu is the most frequently used language in these dramas, Sindhi, Balochi, and Punjabi are also prominent (Safdar & Khan, 2020). South Asian countries such as India even enjoy these Pakistani serials. Many people from all around the world, including Bangladesh and Nepal, go to see them. Nowadays, it's hard to imagine a Pakistani household without a television (Safdar & Khan, 2020). Watching Pakistani dramas is one of the best ways to pass the time. The female protagonists and supporting characters in Pakistani serials predominate. Society cannot function without women. We see them as spouses, mothers, and sisters in their many roles. While some serials do address gender equality and progressive issues, the vast majority uphold patriarchal beliefs and condemn orthodoxy. The audience is confused and has difficulty understanding when given such mixed signals and material (Safdar & Khan, 2018). Wear and Skillicorn (2009) state that television impacts our cultural values. Television has been the subject of growing academic interest as a vital part of the informal or social curriculum (Cortés, 1979). On average, adolescents in the United States spend 28 hours a week in front of the tube (UNESCO, 2000). How a person acts in society, particularly a woman, reflects her value to society. For a Muslim, understanding Islam is, first and foremost, a question of faith. Believe in the oneness of Allah (the Almighty), in Muhammad's (SAW) status as the last prophet, in the Holy Quran and other Holy Books revealed to the prophets by Allah (swt) from time to time, in angels, in an afterlife, in fate, and the unity of all things. There are many different value systems, including social, moral, religious, and so on (Muhammad, 2021).

Today, men and women are seen as complementary parts of a whole. However, the depiction of women will never be fair. Men are seen as dominating, while women are constantly criticised (Toff & Palmer, 2019). The most prominent aspect emphasised in these dramas is the growing number of divorce cases, namely how couples are being divorced so swiftly despite the fact that they have not done anything wrong. Although women have made great strides in modern society, it is still seen as a sin to have a daughter. Their daughter's birth is the alleged reason for their divorce. In many operas, women's rights are grossly underrepresented; for instance, when women express an interest in love marriage, it is portrayed as a serious offense, and they often face violence

and abuse despite their (Kempe-Bergman et al., 2020). The public's perception of working women is demonstrated. Despite this being a beneficial development, society portrays women's growing independence and self-sufficiency as a negative trait. That women's morality is called into question is completely unjust. People treat their sisters, wives, and daughters the way they do when they watch this kind of drama because it shapes their values and beliefs (Toff & Palmer, 2019). Pakistani drama writers portray women as victims who must endure hardships to protect their homes. They need to quietly endure the violence so they can get their home back on track, or else they will be divorced and treated with no respect. Tragedies depict the ugly truth of men's aggression against women, including the rising number of rape cases. Inspiring dread in the general population, especially among adolescent girls and women, such content demonstrates that the majority of rape incidents involve members of the audience's own immediate family. Additionally, it is demonstrated that a working woman is afraid to leave the house because of sexual harassment (Kempe-Bergman et al., 2020). The marriage rites depicted in Pakistani television shows reflect the cultural influences of both India and the West, according to research by Ahtesham (1998). Simplicity is emphasised in Islam. Dramas on public television have an endless supply of glitz, and they were instrumental in causing viewers to experience psychological problems. A study by Yoshii (2001) titled "Transformation in Media and Society: laying the Ground Work for Cultural Ecology" demonstrated how the spread of new media and changes in communication impact all aspects of society and culture. Thanks to new media, the flow of information is accelerating, and the globe is undergoing unprecedented levels of change. Disclosure will shift the world's value system (Muslim, Sarwar, & Bajwa, 2020). We urgently need to raise awareness about media literacy and ethics since the misuse of new media can exacerbate existing societal problems and widen the wealth and knowledge divide between the well-off and the rest of society. The portrayal of Pakistani culture in Pakistani shows is remarkably accurate. Our culture and society are reflected in these. By demonstrating their way of life and the experiences of people from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, they provide a window into Pakistani culture and the ways in which new social problems impact Pakistani society as a whole. It brings to light the fact that some people are deeply separated by their religious beliefs and sects, particularly regarding

marriage. The Pakistani people internalise the ideals promoted by Pakistani dramas about Indian culture, distorting their own traditions in the process. Their way of life changes in accordance with Western society, and they incorporate aspects of our culture that are not part of it. Even young people are affected negatively by inaccurate portrayals of culture (Muslim, Sarwar, & Bajwa, 2020). Many discouraging things, including Western culture, which has started inspiring our youth, are exhibited alongside the liberties granted to them. Cultural imperialism was the subject of Saleem's (1994) research. Most people enjoy watching Dish Antenna and are regular viewers, according to a case study of the channel's influence on Pakistani society (Tabassum & Amin, 2020). Undoubtedly, ZED TV is the most-watched channel in India. The language utilised in most programs is Hindi and English. Most admirers are female and drawn to the fashions and hairstyles of Indian and Western models. Program themes and production on STN and PTV are also greatly impacted. "An Analytical Study of the Role of PTV Dramas in Educating the masses about women problems (july2001-june2002)" reviewed prime time and Khawateen dramas airing between July 2001 and June 2002, according to Butt and Sehar (2000). Despite their success in bringing attention to women's issues, the study found that PTV plays were unsuccessful in educating the public. The subject matter of PTV dramas has become monotonous and uninteresting. Because of this, PTV's viewership is lower compared to cable TV. Over time, hobbits and their perspectives have evolved due to exposure to different channels (Tabassum & Amin, 2020).

Beginning in the 1920s, the motion picture business has been a driving factor in the process of establishing societal standards. Films/dramas have, ever since they were popular, portrayed young adults with ideals that are extremely unrealistic (Kim, Kim, & Han, 2019). It is somewhat upsetting to be confronted with such idealised images of love and intimacy, especially when one considers that real-life relationships do not like the ones portrayed in dramas. In their article, Lippman, Ward, and Seabrook (2014:138) note the fact that "ninety-four percent of youth surveyed by Bachen and Illouz (1996) indicated that they looked to TV and films for examples of romantic love." This could be problematic if the romantic love that is presented in the media is unrealistic. Young people have access to a multitude of information that has the potential to shape their beliefs and principles throughout this formative period that occurs before they enter adulthood. As

stated by Baran (1976:473), it is possible that the media does have a part in the process of changing how individuals perceive their sexual selves. A movie can provide us with a glimpse into relationships that we have never experienced before, and it is simple to draw parallels between real life and the events told in dramas. Moviegoers are able to strengthen their anticipatory socialisation through the romantic ideals that are portrayed in films/dramas (Kretz, 2019). This is because moviegoers want to connect with the characters they see on screen. As a result of the emergence of new media consumption techniques for the purpose of entertainment, such as streaming video online, the portrayals of ideal intimate relationships in the media have a tremendous impact on the public's opinions of these kinds of relationships.

Through extended exposure to harmful images of hypermasculinity, stalking, hyperaggression, intimate partner aggression, and false depictions of intimacy and romance, viewers' views about what makes a good relationship can be formed and desensitised. This affects the viewers' ability to form and maintain healthy relationships. According to Kretz (2019:27), repetition "can lead to the formation or reinforcement of knowledge structures," which includes concepts pertaining to relationships. It is possible that individuals who watch films/dramas to gain knowledge are more likely to express support for romantic values and perspectives (Kretz 2019).

Most social scientists agree that marital status is a significant factor in determining the level of happiness experienced by individuals, families, and communities (Gottman, 1994; Kim & McKenry, 2002). However, the divorce rate stayed at half the nuptial value, equaling 4.8 per 1,000 people in 1987 and 3.4 per 1,000 in 2009 (National Healthy Marriage Resource Centre, 2012b; National Centre for Health Statistics, 1990; 2010). This is despite the marriage rate declining from 9.9 in 1987 to 6.8 in 2009. In light of this, it is possible that the promise to be married until death has become a thing of the past. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) statistics, the crude divorce rate for women in 2009 was 9.7 per 1,000 individuals, while the rate for men was 10.2 per 1,000 (Kretz, 2019).

When it comes to first marriages, this pattern is consistent. Among the 5,534 first marriages that took place in 2009, the National Centre for Health Statistics (2012) discovered that 1,979 (or 36%) of them resulted in divorce or separation for women, while

1,218 (or 33%) of them ended in divorce or separation for males. It is possible for the newlyweds to remarry in the future. The decision to remarry was made by sixty-five percent of men and forty-four percent of women among those aged 25 and older who had divorced in the year 2007. Nevertheless, the rate of divorce from second marriages is even higher than that from first marriages, growing by 5% in just five years (National Healthy Marriage Resource Centre, 2012a). This is a significant increase from the standard divorce rate.

It goes without saying that the practical implications of a divorce are an established fact. The significance of marital status in "determining family resources, relationships, and processes" (Kim & McKenry, 2002, page 888) indicates that it is a predictor of psychological well-being independent of the relationship's quality. It has been demonstrated through research (Kim, Kim, & Han, 2019) that those who are married are less prone to experience mental health difficulties such as depression. Individuals also receive several benefits from marriage, including financial security, social support, and legal protections and privileges. Given this, it is possible that these rights will be jeopardised by a divorce or separation. The rejection of an intimate partner can lead to a variety of negative emotions, including feelings of inadequacy, failure, low self-esteem, discontent with life, and even health problems (Amato, 2010; Williams, 1988). Children whose parents divorce have a tendency to have poorer mental health, perform less well academically, and suffer more from managing their own relationships (Amato, 1994). On the other hand, children whose parents remain married tend to have better mental health.

Marks (1996) discovered that women who have been separated or divorced have higher levels of personal growth. (Kim, Kim, & Han, 2019)) discovered that divorce can lead to positive changes in identity. Marks (1996) also discovered that divorce can lead to positive changes in identity. Additionally, divorce might present fresh opportunities for personal growth and development. According to Sever, Guttmann, and Lazar (2017), some children actually emerge from the experience of their parents' divorce as more mature and powerful persons, both in their personal and romantic relationships. It is possible that a divorce could serve a redeeming purpose under extreme circumstances, such as when there is domestic violence. On the other hand, when parents go through "severe marital disharmony" but choose not to divorce, it is possible that their children will

have adverse results (Morrison & Coiro, 2019, page 626). On the other hand, even the most liberating divorces are frequently accompanied by feelings of helplessness, animosity, grief, guilt, and loneliness (Angelisti, 2006). Following the initial phase of adjustment, individuals who go through a divorce and end up being alone are more likely to develop major depressive disorder (MDD) that continues for a longer amount of time than was anticipated (Kim & McKenry, 2012). In light of the fact that we are aware of the bad results of divorce but have not witnessed a major drop in the divorce rate, the information that we have regarding marriage and the circumstances that contribute to its breakup begs the concern of why people choose to get married and why they choose to divorce.

Not long before the wedding itself is even scheduled, a lot of people start daydreaming about what it would be like to get married and what they hope to gain from the partnership. The idea of genuine love, which directs our yearnings and energy and elucidates the core causes for our need for companionship, is typically portrayed in these photos. The findings of the study carried out by Levine, Suguru, Hashimoto, and Verma (1995) and Lindholm (2006) indicate that love is necessary to establish and maintain a healthy marriage in Western and Westernised cultures. According to Illouz (1997), the concept of "true love" provides the justification for the occasion of marriage. This is due to the close relationship that exists between the people involved (Wallerstein, 2019).

According to Swidler (1980), the social order in the United States of America is characterised by the presence of an ideology of love. On page 120, he refers to it as "one of the central anchors of our culture's view of adult life." Numerous academics agree that the idea of (real) love is altered over the course of history to conform to the institutionalised image of a society. According to the findings of a study on marital expectancies conducted by Barich and Bielby (1996), the most significant aspects of marriage are love and tenderness rather than a moral and religious unity, maintaining a home, and holding a recognised status in society. In current Western culture, the concept of love is firmly tied to sexuality, and marriage is believed to be "the most socially approved context for sexual activity" (Christopher & Sprecher, 2000, page 1001). This is according to Lindholm (2006), who states that this is the case. Barich and Bielby (1996) state that marriage is "an image suggesting that marriage is considered a haven, the

place of romantic expression, physical attachment, and nurturing, particularly as done by women" (p. 159). This is said to be the case since marriage is perceived as a safe haven. The romantic aspirations and the intense sexual temperament of this individual lend credibility to this idea. Within the setting of such a close relationship, it is normal to anticipate idealism, which is defined as the impracticality that results from viewing things through the prism of ideals rather than their actual forms (Segrin & Nabi, 1992) (Wallerstein, 2019).

The fact that Western culture is overwhelmingly pro-marriage is something that Byrne and Carr (2005) and Felberg and Kohen (1976) bring out. This, in conjunction with divorce data and popularly held ideas about the probability of divorce, suggests that these beliefs are powerful and, maybe, the desire to make expectations come true. In addition to this, they indicate that marriage and remarriage rates are rather steady. It is possible that this is why, to varying degrees, our common understanding of love includes tales about Cupid's arrow or the inseparability of Tristan and Isolde. As a result of the significance that individuals place on love and affection within the context of marriage, traditional Western cultural myths about marriage continue to be utilised as guides in the contemporary day, as stated by Barich and Bielby (1996) (Wallerstein, 2019). According to the consistency of marriage expectancy rankings between their undergraduate groups in 1967 and 1994, institutions and traditions "are not strongly (or at least immediately) influenced by social change" (p. 161). This is the conclusion that can be drawn from the previous sentence. As we age, our concepts of love and passion begin to merge, and we begin to employ those concepts as a basis for our marriage standards and as a means of gaining a better understanding of what marriage should be like. According to Barich and Bielby (1996), our "understandings" of the role that love plays in marriage "create strategies of action or feasible scripts that we can invoke in setting a course of action," whether that course of action is getting married, paying the bills, or ending a relationship (p. 142).

According to researchers from a variety of academic professions, the pleasure that can be derived from relationships is impacted by the false expectations that scholars have regarding sex, love, and marriage. Unrealistic expectations surrounding romantic relationships are characterised by the support of myths and fantastic ideas, attitudes, and

actions concerning a variety of topics relating to romance, ranging from wooing rituals to sexual encounters. These expectations have been referred to as unrealistic, dysfunctional, irrational, idealised, or illogical by several researchers (Baucom & Epstein, 1990; Eidelson & Epstein, 1982; Epstein & Eidelson, 1981; Segrin & Nabi, 1992; Galician, 2004). The cliches associated with love relationships are brought into sharper focus due to the media's tendency to glorify romance. On the other hand, imagination and fancies are frequently likened to "feeling fascination, passion burning, love so strong" and make actual life and love appear dull and unsatisfying (Baucom & Epstein, 1990; Galician, 2004). This is despite the fact that some academics believe that fantasies and fancies can serve practical objectives when they are managed constructively. When these dreams become "wishful thinking," which is an anticipation or belief that is so influenced by one's aspirations that pertinent, consciously known facts are discreetly neglected or altered, the situation becomes problematic. The research conducted by Baucom and Epstein (1990), Eidelson and Epstein (1982), and Epstein and Eidelson (1981) indicates that individuals who possess idealistic aspirations frequently evaluate their love relationships in relation to these standards of perfection. In spite of the fact that these expectations are founded on previous experiences, they fail to consider the reality that relationships need effort and that individuals are flawed (Jones, 2019).

Despite the fact that research indicates that young people from non-Western countries are more likely to embrace a romanticised notion of love in today's society, collective societies continue to have a highly practical perspective of marriage. It is stated by Lindholm (2006) that:

"Conjugal love between husband and wife was considered both absurd and impossible" in the bulk of the complex societies where records of romantic passion survive. These societies include Japan, China, India, and middle eastern countries. The social systems of different civilizations can be compared to provide a framework for understanding this seeming contradiction. The political and economic alliances that were necessary for existence and prestige were provided by the alliances that were formed through trilateral ties. Patrilineal membership was the sole way for men to stake a claim to property or undertake leadership roles. On the other hand, women depended on their patrilineage for both honour and protection. Romantic desire was not a component of the

marriage contract in ancient communities; rather, marriage was regarded as a necessity and a responsibility. On the other hand, lineages were not independent; rather, they were connected to other lineages through the practice of marriage or the exchange of women. (on page 11) (Jones, 2019).

On the other hand, some cultures do not accept sexual activity as a sign of genuine love because they consider it to be humiliating, limiting, "polluting, repellant, and risky" (Lindholm, 2006, page 12). Engaging in sexual interactions, on the other hand, requires a spouse to take time away from their obligations at home. There are tales of romantic love in various cultures; nevertheless, these tales do not significantly influence how people behave in social situations.

There is no denying the irresistible appeal of fantastic love stories. Bachen and Illouz (1996) utilise the phrase "visual affair" in exploring contemporary images of romantic love. They use this term to highlight that pictures can provoke intense emotions in situations where words cannot provide the necessary words. They assert that television, dramas, and ads "evoke strong mechanisms of identification, are intensely realistic, and are the privileged discourse of sexual and romantic desire," which lends weight to their statements (p. 285). According to Bachen and Illouz (1996) and Illouz (1997), several films/dramas feature love tales that take place in ideal circumstances, where the protagonists experience unbounded joy and material success. These ideals have come to represent the accomplishments of both individuals and society. Additionally, "veracious" fictional presentations are imaginative recreations of happenings that actually occurred in the lives of real people. Gerbner (1969) asserts that "representational realism" is the dominant view because people tend to assume that fanciful occurrences on television occur in genuine locales. In spite of the fact that they are uncommon, stories of brief but breathtaking romances do take place (Galician, 2004).

Like this, reality television shows bring "real" weddings and love stories to the general public's attention. This gives the impression that the shows are not subject to any subjective editing, even though investors in the background minimise the significance of relationship issues (Engstrom, 2007b). The pervasive visual imagery in the market, associated with personal fulfillment and happiness in marriage, is incontrovertible evidence that what we seek is genuinely within our reach if we believe and conduct

accordingly. This evidence is provided because the market is filled with visual imagery (Sadeghi, 2019). According to Galician (2004), one of the most compelling selling points of a committed partnership is that such a collaboration does not require individual accountability. Because having sexual encounters is supposed to be effortless and being in a committed relationship is intended to be a literal fairy tale, one must not exert oneself unduly to achieve success. The failure of a romantic relationship makes it very evident that "this one" was not "the one," and it is necessary for individuals to continue waiting for their prince charming or damsel in distress.

The concept of true love has been increasingly influential in shaping people's relationship practices in the United States (Illouz, 1997). This is a direct effect of the media's presentation of romantic relationships. This is the reason why it is essential to investigate the ways in which the media influences the actions of individuals; this is especially true in situations where individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours have a negative impact on their relationships or their physical, mental, and emotional well-being (Baran, 1976a; Baran, 1976b; Beullens & Van de Bulck, 2008; Eidelson & Epstein, 1982; Laner & Russell, 1995). Empirical verification of a trajectory from belief and intention to social conduct is made more difficult by the pervasive nature of media messages and the presence of various influential internal and external factors. This is despite such a verification being necessary (Sadeghi, 2019).

Studies have also been conducted on cinematic depictions and other forms of media that romanticise partners, love, and marriage (Dempsey & Reichert, 2000; Holmes, 2007; Johnson, 2007; Johnson & Holmes, 2009). However, most research conducted in this field has focused on how television can foster unrealistic expectations of romantic relationships (Eggermont, 2004; Radway, 1983; Segrin & Nabi, 2002). According to Galician (2007), both romantic and non-romantic film kinds are equally related to the concept of the false expectation scenario. For this reason, the current research aimed to investigate whether or not there is a connection between the expectations of romantic partners and the kind of films/dramas that people prefer to watch. The first thing we will do is do a literature review in the fields of cognitive therapy, mass communication, sociology, psychology, psychotherapy, and communication and mass media. Following

that, we will discuss the significance of the study's methodology, factors, and findings, as well as the repercussions of those findings.

Everyone carries a different perception regarding love and marriage. Regarding adults, it has been observed that television can be the most pervasive source of expectations regarding marriage. This could be primarily due to the fact that adults have spent a considerable amount of time watching TV Shows in their earlier lives, being children in a time where television was dominant in the households when it comes to media, and are highly likely to cultivate experiences. At the same time, it could also be attributed to romantic themes and marriages being important and almost vital elements of all TV shows and programs aired in Pakistan, creating romantic myths and conventions. Similarly, this fact may also be attributed to the fact that adults find themselves at a stage of life where they are making critical decisions regarding their love and familial lives, making them unusually receptive to the circumstances present at the movement (Wood, Senn, Desmarais, Park, & Verberg, 2002). However, one thing is certain: television consumption is capable of greatly influencing the lives of adults when it comes to their perceptions regarding marriage lives, whether they are married or unmarried (Wallerstein, 2019).

Marriages, as a sacred institution, occupy a central place in our lives and our society, building the foundation for an effective and balanced civilisation. Over centuries, they have legitimised the conception of children formally and led to the continuation of human civilisation. At the same time, they have channeled natural human energy into positive responsibilities and duties, effectively preventing people from succumbing to adultery and other evil activities to satiate their needs. In essence, the importance of marriage in human civilisation cannot be understated. With a mass influx of education and digital literacy, people have started rapidly changing their marriage ideas, often influenced by Western ideals and Eastern values altogether due to a steady exposure (Allendorf & Pandian, 2017). It is a culture that has remained relevant in the lives of our ancestors and shall forever remain critical for the centuries to come by nurturing positive sentiments of commitment and love among partners and legitimising their co-habitation for the conception of children that are the architects of the future (Kretz, 2019).

Divorces carry several detrimental impacts on society, it has been observed that they can permanently weaken the family structure and also seriously strain the lives of both parents and their children, particularly for a region like Pakistan where there are a strict adherence and emphasis on the importance of family and traditional values. In this context, the rising divorce rates that might amount to unfair expectations. Furthermore, there could be other consequences of these unreasonable expectations including a lack of proper awareness regarding rights and obligations, lack of loyalty or devotion to the spouse, and no practical and effective communication and dispute solving techniques. Hence, we can see that television and the media the audience consume can greatly affect their perceptions of marital lives and it could carry serious consequences if not handled properly.

Hence, in continuation of the above-mentioned discussion, the study at hand is intended to understand the perceptions of both married and unmarried couples regarding the depiction and portrayal of marital lives in drama shows in Pakistan. It aims to study if there exists any the perceptions of both married and unmarried audiences when the depiction of marital lives in TV dramas influences them. Similarly, as these audiences have vastly different social roles and understanding on the basis on gender, it also aims to investigate and identify any differences in the perceptions of both male and female audiences influenced by the marital lives that are shown in TV dramas.

As we embark on this exploration, the study aims to contribute nuanced insights into the intricate interplay between media representations of marital life and the resulting impact on the diverse perceptions held by audiences, providing a deeper understanding of the role television dramas play in shaping societal perspectives on relationships and marriage.

1.1 Significance

The research carries significance as it would add up to the limited literature on the topic: Marital life and TV dramas: Depiction and Influence on Perceptions of Married and Unmarried Audience. As mentioned above, there is barely any strong research that has been conducted in the context of Pakistan and the social and cultural values surrounding

marriage and most of the researches have been directed from a Western approach. Due to this disparity in literature, the following research would attempt to bridge the gap by interconnecting the precedents acquired from a Western approach to an unexplored phenomenon in a large dynamic Eastern world. Therefore, the literature gap is considerable enough to justify the significance of the study.

Hence, considering the above-mentioned circumstances and in the consequence of an evident literature gap, this research can be of significant importance to prevent the audience from succumbing to unrealistic expectations that can plague their marital affairs and marriage, ultimately deteriorating the social and familial structure of our society (Kretz, 2019). As the sanctity of marriage as a social institution must prevail in order to ensure the smooth existence of human civilisation and our societies, it is imperative that any adverse influence on it be effectively mitigated and eradicated on a priority basis.

1.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study at hand are:
1. To study the effect of marital lives shown in TV dramas on the audience's perceptions.
2. To investigate the differences in the perception of married and unmarried audiences influenced by the marital lives in TV dramas.
3. To investigate the differences in the perception of male and female audiences influenced by the marital lives shown in TV dramas.

1.3 Research Questions

The research deals with the following research questions:

RQ1: How do the marital lives shown in TV dramas affect the perceptions of the audience?

RQ2: Is there any difference in the perception of married and unmarried audiences influenced by the marital lives shown in TV dramas?

RQ3:   Is there any difference in the perception of male and female audiences influenced by the marital lives shown in TV dramas?

CHAPTER NO. 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

As a first step, we will review the literature on media influence theory, active learning theory, and the possible effects of media-based learning. In this chapter, I look at Cultivation Theory to understand how people passively take in media's idealised depictions of romantic love. After discussing Cultivation Theory's inert perspective of media effects, I turn to Social Cognitive Theory to shed light on how viewers actively absorb messages, participate in meaning-making, and shape their social relationships due to media consumption. I talk about studies examining how media-based learning impacts social relationships. One way to get a better grasp on when kids start processing media messages and making sense of them is to look at the developmental stages of cognition. Children model social action theory by giving meaning to communication and utilising those meanings to interact with the world around them. This research provides the groundwork for that analysis. The impact of internalised media messages on cognitive development is the central emphasis of Social Cognitive Theory. Integrating Social Cognitive Theory's focus on internalisation with Social Action Theory's theory of meaning construction yields insight into how romantically themed media affects children's cognitive development and lays the groundwork for studying children's perceptions of romantic love.

2.1. Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory informs our investigation into the association between media exposure and problematic marital expectations, which posits that television enshrines notions about public interaction. In particular, the theory sheds light on why some individuals cling tenaciously to utopian views of love partnerships, even when faced with relationship difficulties. A word about the effects of mass media is necessary because of the nature of the supposed trajectory from media messages to marital discord. According to Potter (2011), "a mass media effect is a change in an outcome within a person or social entity that is due to mass media influence following exposure to a mass media message or series of messages" (p. 903), which is a formal definition. According to Morgan and Shanahan (1991), the goal of mass media organisations is to keep or increase their revenue while compensating for the expenses associated with drawing in large audiences. Therefore, it is essential for their profit and socialisation that their products be exposed again and regularly (Kretz, 2019).

"Communities cultivate shared and public notions about facts, values and contingencies of human existence" (Gerbner, 1969, p. 138), according to George Gerbner's cultivation theory, which posits that mass messaging systems serve as vehicles for this process (Jahan, 2023). If someone possesses a television, they can reach a large audience regardless of age, race, socioeconomic status, or geographic location. The networks are filled with educational programming, like the evening news, and entertaining shows, like fantasy or escape, so these messages don't have to be completely accurate.

On the contrary, the theory posits that television acts as a cultural gatekeeper, "extending and maintaining rather than to alter, threaten, or weaken conventional conceptions, beliefs, and behaviours" (Gerbner & Gross, 1976, p. 175), thus defining American popular culture. Regardless of how realistic the current system is, various viewing possibilities constantly reinforce certain pictures, messages, and values. In this way, television fosters social awareness by teaching viewers "standards of judgment on which conclusions are based" and "basic assumptions" about the world (Gerbner & Gross, 1976, p. 175). People are able to interact with one another if and only if they hold common assumptions (Wallerstein, 2019).

Television violence was the primary subject of studies that were undertaken in the context of cultivation theory (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Gerbner, Gross, Signorelli, Morgan

& Jackson-Beeck, 1979). Express sorts of people—typically white male "good guy" characters—commit symbolic acts of pugnacity frequently, according to message analysis of several TV shows. People who reported watching a lot of TV were more likely to believe the violent worldview presented on TV than to have a more realistic assessment of the frequency of violent incidents, even after accounting for factors such as education and other relevant traits. The "mean world syndrome," in which people see their environments via heightened senses of fear, threat, and danger, is characterised by the Violence Profile. Because of this "heightened sense of risk and insecurity," people are "more likely to increase acquiescence to and dependence upon established authority and to legitimise its use of force" (Gerbner & Gross, 1976, p. 194).

A growing body of research has examined the correlation between TV consumption and a variety of consumer outcomes, including but not limited to political leanings (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorelli, 1982), sexism (Gross & Jeffries-Fox, 1978; Morgan & Shanahan, 1991), body image in adolescents (Tiggemann, 2005), plastic surgery aspirations (Nabi, 2009), romantic partner expectations (Eggermont, 2004), and marital conduct in the future (Signorelli, 1991). Some academics have considered many forms of media, emphasising how "popular media" (i.e., television shows, movies, novels, magazines, tabloid newspapers, music videos, news programs, etc.) may influence an individual's worldview. Subjects covered in this study include sexual behaviour in adolescents (Brown, L'Engle, Pardun, Guo, Kenneavy, & Jackson, 2006), intentions to engage in risky behaviour while driving (Beullens & Van den Bulck, 2008), and close relationships (Shapiro & Kroeger, 1991). Using the postulates of cultivation theory, a new investigation on online gaming and violent perceptions has also been conducted (Williams, 2006) (Jahan, 2023).

Research spanning decades has consistently shown that people who spend a lot of time in front of the TV and who are highly influenced by conventional media tend to view television as more realistic and real-life events as a reflection of the dramatic interpretations they see on screen (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorelli, 1986). As a result of confusing reality with imagination, people start to behave based on this habitual "wealth of incidental 'knowledge'" (Gerbner & Gross, 1976, p. 179). Three valid criticisms of the idea have gained traction despite its widespread acceptance.

The study addresses how the depiction of marital life in Pakistani TV dramas influences married and unmarried audiences as they consume it seemingly daily. Watching TV programs and drama serials is closely linked with the cultivation theory, as has been observed in a long range of studies related to media consumption (Nguyen, 2017). Researchers commonly believe that those who spend their time consuming media are likely to perceive the world around them in a way that resonates with their observation of the fictional "reel" world they had seen on television. The cultivation theory places its core premise in that television serves as the main source of socialisation for viewers of television dramas. Hence, it can be seen that television brings a coherent and streamlined system of intricate messages into homes, allowing the cultivation of specific and distinct predispositions among those who view the programs (Mairaru et al., 2019).

It has been observed that each program, movie, or show on TV carries its distinct effect based on the nature and content of the program (Morgan and Shanahan, 2010). The messages shared on television often reflect a view or perspective of reality inconsistent with the viewer's objective reality for entertainment and cannot be relied upon for real-life decision-making. Hence, as a result of the cultivation theory, it is generally assumed that people who are viewing these TV programs are highly likely to absorb the social scripts, values, and ideologies that are being shown in the specific program they are watching, leading them to view the world around them using the lens that was provided to them by the TV program (Jones, 2019).

2.1.1. Cultivation Theory and Its Relevance to Research Questions

Cultivation theory, as proposed by George Gerbner and Larry Gross, provides a theoretical framework that is particularly insightful in understanding the intricate relationship between media exposure and the formation of perceptions, especially in the context of marital life depicted in TV dramas. Based on this idea, television, a considerable mass media, has an important impact on society and affects society's implicit ideas, values, and modes of behaviour. Cultivation theory serves as a lens

through which we may study how TV drama changes viewers' perspectives about marital life in the particular situation of the research (Jones, 2019).

RQ1: How do the marital lives shown in TV dramas affect the perceptions of the audience?

According to cultivation theory, mass media serves the role of cultural gatekeeper by transmitting conventional mentalities and behavioral patterns and confirming and sustaining them. The pictures and stories represented on the screen of TV dramas govern the development of certain mental features among the viewers. In the context of marital lives, repeated exposure to idealised or dramatised depictions may lead audiences to internalise certain expectations and norms regarding relationships. Viewers might adopt the attitudes and values presented in TV dramas, influencing their perceptions of what constitutes a "normal" or "ideal" marital life.

RQ2: Is there any difference in the perception of married and unmarried audiences influenced by the marital lives shown in TV dramas?

Culture theory focuses on the additive and long-term effects of media consumption. Marriage/unmarried audiences can vary in their TV drama viewing depth, so the perceptions may differ. These variations in exposure can be confirmed factors in this disparity. However, for example, the relationships between onscreen characters and real-life people are similar in some ways. Therefore, it might change their view of their relationship by comparing what they watch on TV and their life experiences. On the other hand, unmarried individuals may form expectations and attitudes about marriage based on the depictions they encounter in TV dramas.

RQ3: Is there any difference in the perception of male and female audiences influenced by the marital lives shown in TV dramas?

Cultivation theory underscores that television fosters social awareness by teaching viewers "standards of judgment" and "basic assumptions" about the world. Gender roles and stereotypes often play a significant role in TV dramas, influencing how male and female characters are portrayed in marital relationships. As audiences internalise these depictions, they can contribute to forming distinct perceptions among male and female viewers regarding marital dynamics. Television may reinforce or challenge traditional gender norms within relationships.

2.1.2 Nonselective viewing

In addition to having "the effect of fragmenting viewing and thereby reducing the chance that all heavy viewers are seeing the same message," viewing patterns are quite "individualistic" (Potter, 1993, p. 574). Because there are so many options for watching media and new technologies make it possible to immerse oneself in any given genre, some forms of media can rise to the top of the ratings. For instance, people who watch a lot of romantic media could internalise myths about love while keeping a more realistic perspective on local violence based on their own experiences (Mairaru et al., 2019).

2.1.3 Distinct genres

Similarly, academics have argued about a second issue: the careless incorporation of programme diversity into a comprehensive content metric. Quite different cultivations can occur within a single population, and total television viewed is not the only independent variable, according to Hawkins and Pingree (1981), "if differences in patterns of action do exist between types of programmes, and if these mesh with any patterns of viewing" (p. 292). Films are no exception. To demonstrate the absurdity of this assumption, Dill and Dill (1998) draw a comparison between "lumping films/dramas like The Little Mermaid with Pulp Fiction" and the hope that a random "'drama viewing' variable [would] predict increases in aggressive behaviour" (p. 423). While both types of dramas involve physical aggressiveness, the premise here is that children's views on violence will alter depending on whether they watch dramas made for older audiences or

those made for younger ones. Put simply, these metrics disregard the importance of context.

Enculturation of particular assumptions presumably results from heavy viewing of programmes that concentrate on relevant issues, while total viewing will undoubtedly intensify the receipt of mediated messages. To give an example, while there aren't many animated shows that have explicit sexual content, there are a lot of dramas and romantic series that promote idealised sexual connections and are, therefore, more likely to shape viewers' views on sexuality. Watching cartoons all day long might lead kids, teens, and even jobless adults to form opinions about what constitutes normal or desirable sexual behaviour based on factors like their own experiences or the opinions of their peers. Recent studies have used genre-specific viewing metrics in their inquiries (Holmes, 2007; Rössler & Brosius, 2001; Segrin & Nabi, 2002), casting doubt on the notion that messages are consistent (Potter, 1993; Potter & Chang, 1990).

Varieties of listeners. According to Gerbner and colleagues (1986), cultivation is seen as a "gravitational process" wherein messages attract audiences from all walks of life to the "mainstream of the world of television" (p. 24). Critics of the theory argued that it failed to account for audience diversity in terms of the content and the ways intended effects manifest themselves (Newcomb, 1978; Potter, 2011). Mass media influence's circular and unending nature makes causality impossible to infer. Please do not take this message as an attack on the field's decades of work. It is more appropriate to carefully consider how various factors interact with media influence (Potter, 2011). It has been observed that different groups may perceive and react to media messages in slightly different ways. Additionally, groups already inclined towards romanticism may experience varying consequences of cultivation (Baran & Davis, 2003).

2.2. The Theory of Social Cognitive Processes

According to Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), audiences are considered to be dynamic actors in consuming media impact. According to the theory, people actively take in the meanings conveyed by media and utilise them to generate expectations about

what they're seeing. According to social cognitive theory, viewers' constrained social environments might enhance media's influence (Bandura, 1986). That is to say, not only do media viewers let the media shape their expectations of real-life social circumstances, but the media also maintains these expectations without real-life encounters that may change or correct them. Think of a situation when kids are actively involved in watching media with a love theme. In this scenario, kids interpret the mediated message in their own ways, but their romantic fantasies remain unfulfilled due to their immaturity and lack of experience in committed relationships.

According to Social Cognitive Theory, our media intake shapes our understanding and expectations of love. According to Segrin and Nabi (2002), people's expectations of future intimate relationships are positively correlated with the amount of romantically-themed media they consume. However, this does not mean that this amount influences their total relationship expectations. While this may be the case, Rehkoff (2005) found that viewers are likely to have unrealistic expectations of romantic relationships based on how realistically they see them portrayed on television (p. 3). According to Rehkoff (2005) and Sergrin and Nabi (2002), youngsters who watch media depictions of romantic relationships may assume such depictions are true to life and that they may replicate them. The writers concur that viewing media with a romantic subject increases the likelihood of developing inflated expectations about romantic relationships. These excessive expectations stem from media that is purposefully designed to promote a particular narrative. Media exposure is actively internalised, leading to the creation of expectations, according to Social Cognitive Theory, which explains the findings of Rehkoff, Segrin, and Nabi. According to Rehkoff (2005), the more viewers relate to the media model, the simpler it is to form their expectations as a realistic notion within their social relationships.

Rehkoff (2005) posits that the more exposure a person has to media with a romantic theme, the more they will internalise the message. This would align with Social Cognitive Theory, which takes a more active role in internalising media than Cultivation Theory, which argues that simple exposure influences expectations. Where Cultivation Theory leaves off, Social Cognitive Theory continues by examining the impact of romantic messages on participants' everyday interactions and how they express themselves.

2.2.1. Understanding Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory, proposed by Albert Bandura, provides a valuable framework for comprehending the active role of audiences in processing and internalising media messages. Unlike passive receivers, individuals are seen as dynamic actors who actively engage with media content, interpret meanings, and integrate them into their cognitive processes.

RQ1: How do the marital lives shown in TV dramas affect the perceptions of the audience?

Social Cognitive Theory suggests that people process media content actively and draw from it their expectations for their real life. Audiences, as they watch dramas about marriages seen on TV, follow the interpretations of the relationships. This theory states that the audience observes the presentations without reflecting on them; the opposite occurs – they take the messages on board, building the expectations and stereotypes around the concept of marital relationships. Viewers might unconsciously integrate the romanticised or dramatised aspects of TV dramas into their own understanding of what constitutes a fulfilling or ideal marital life.

RQ2: Is there any difference in the perception of married and unmarried audiences influenced by the marital lives shown in TV dramas?

Social Cognitive Theory stresses that individuals' perceptions of real-life situations cannot be taken for granted because they are shaped or adjusted by media messages they selectively use. The attraction of marital lives might differ in the cases of married or unmarried people who may interpret the tv series differently because of their various life experiences and relationship status. A newlywed person may compare his or her actual marriage life with the relationships shown in the movies. An unmarried individual can form upper expectations about marriage based on these flicks. The theory suggests that these

different social contexts function in how the viewers observe and make media information a part of their perception of relationships.

RQ3: Is there any difference in the perception of male and female audiences influenced by the marital lives shown in TV dramas?

According to Social Cognitive Theory, media are seen as a direct cache for constructing meanings and predictions. Within the context of gender differences, TV dramas depict varied roles and marital relations where the roles best suited for men and women are assumed and then fashioned accordingly. The theory proposes that individual audience members project themselves or interpret these depictions in ways driven by individual experiences, beliefs, and societal settings. To explore this, the media frequently depicts marriage through specific gender stereotypes in their TV dramas. As a result, male and female audience might match their existing beliefs to these gender representations or go against them. The presented theory enables us to learn what part media plays in the process of forming a gender-specific point of view on marital lives, which may be more likely.

Social Cognitive Theory points to an interactive quality of media reception, showing that individuals build up meaning from media and store the media messages in their memory. This model provides more insights into how the marriages portrayed in TV dramas affect people's conceptions of how to act, which resonates with the audience as active participants in this process.

2.3. Gratification theory:

The idea that people expect instant gratification goes a long way to reflect how meaningful the impacts of television serial dramas are on their marriage enrichment. Based on this view, the audience will determine the TV series they watch as a result of their desires for pleasure, and these decisions have great implications for how they view married life, according to this argument (Arikewuyo, 2019).

Active and Discerning Audience Engagement: The main claim in gratification theory in conjunction with "Marital Life and TV dramas" is that the process involves the

viewer as an active participant rather than a passive recipient of information (Liu, Min & Han, 2020). People are biased in their TV drama choices and actively choose shows relevant to their hobbies and tastes. As a result, they can meet their marriage criteria.

Social and Psychological Needs Satisfaction: The idea of gratification highlights that viewers watch TV dramas to satisfy various intricately connected psychological and social needs that are complex and related to married life. These demands cover a wide range of desires, such as the need for emotional escape and connection, romantic ideals, relationship advice, enjoyment, and even a sense of validation for one's marriage experiences (Yaman & ÇAKIN, 2021). The primary tenet of gratification theory is that people use media, particularly TV dramas, to satisfy various psychological and social demands linked with marriage. These demands are wide-ranging and include the need for emotional support, the investigation of romantic ideals, the need for relationship counselling, and the basic need for amusement and escape.

Carefully Selecting Media Content: When it comes to how marriage is portrayed, viewers carefully select the TV dramas they feel would satisfy their interests and wants about marriage. For their satisfaction, married people may, for instance, try to look for materials related to their real-life problems and family matters. However, single people can be tempted to paint an imaginary picture of the future relationship in hopes that it will help them understand what they can expect (Mairaru, et al., 2019).

Functional Perspective on Media Consumption: Through its use in the presented case, the situational part of media consumption regarding married life is emphasised as a domain of gratification. It promotes research of TV drama as one form through which a therapeutic device operates, such as emotional release, relationship models, initiating marital discussions, or awakening nostalgia.

Media Addiction and Its Effects: Acknowledging the role of the media by recognising its ability to provide marital support states that people easily get so used to this as their only source of satisfaction, comfort, or emotional support. This dependence may significantly impact their views and expectations of married life, which may affect their actual experiences and choices (Liu, Min, & Han, 2020).

2.4 Consequences of Learning through Media

Media consumption and its impact on meaning-making can be better understood via the prism of social cognitive theory and cultivation theory. Research shows that media can influence viewers' subsequent understandings; for example, Carter (2006) examined how college students perceived love and romance on television and found that, while women felt that love was realistically depicted, men were more likely to think that sex was. Even when looking at different cultures, Eggermont's (2004) research shows that watching modest amounts of romantically themed TV increases the value of physical appearance. Furthermore, a measure of exposure to romantic media was higher among those who firmly believed in unrealistic ideals of personal relationships than those who did not (Carter, 2006; Shapiro & Kroeger, 1991; Westman, Lynch, Lewandowski of Hunt-Carter, 2003). According to Carter's earlier study, married women who watched romantically themed TV were less content in their present relationships (p. 3).

The authors of a different study by Bachen and Illouz (1996) looked at how children's media consumption shapes their cultural models or their ideas of what is usual and desirable in romance via the lens of children's "visual and event schemata and the meanings associated with these structures" (799). "Long before it translates into actual behaviour, children's romantic imagination is affected by the substance and forms the romance assumes in the postmodern nexus of media and the market" (p. 279), according to their study. According to Bachen and Illouz, children's media does shape their ideal romantic relationship expectations. A study conducted by Galician (2007) indicated that "children who perceived themselves to be highly influenced by the mass media held more

unrealistic beliefs about romance" (p. 90). "What the media has promised them and their growing understanding of love" (p. 279) was also linked by Galician (2007). Research by Galician Bachen and Illouz (1996) shows that media messages have an effect on people's lives. According to the authors, Media portrayals of conventional romantic relationships are shaping children's views of love. On the other hand, the writers do agree that kids can form their own ideas about love a long time before they can act out the expectations. These studies illustrate how participants actively translate their passive exposure to expectations generated through Cultivation Theory through Social Cognitive Theory.

Research of this kind clearly shows that regular media exposure (particularly in relationships, romance, and love expectations) significantly influences the formation of romantic relationship prototypes and foundations. Research suggests that media portrayals of romantic partnerships may influence college students' idealised views of love and their beliefs about being in a committed relationship.

On the other hand, the author's opinions on the amount of media exposure necessary to form these connection expectancies are inconsistent. There do not seem to be noticeable variations in how much time boys and girls at the lowest ages spend watching television, according to Rideout, Vandewater, and Wartella's (2003) research on this topic (p. 63). For instance, the research by Bradford, Rhodes, and Edison (2005) examines how the frequent exposure of adolescents to romantically themed media, which often presents unrealistic depictions of partnerships, influences their developing conceptions and expectations of such relationships. Adolescents' romantic relationship expectations may have their roots in the media's portrayal of happy couples since the authors found a positive correlation between regular viewing of romantically-themed TV and idealised views of relationships.

Prior work by Fletcher and Simpson (1999) sought to establish the minimum watching time required to acquire warped relationship conceptions; it was shown that even brief exposure to media with a romantic theme affected the time required to access these constructs. This study casts doubt on the belief held by Bradford et al. (2005) that children need extensive exposure to romantically oriented media to develop a meaningful understanding of love relationships. It appears that consistency, on the other hand, is what really matters when it comes to building expectations. "The habitual use of romantic

and relationship-themed media is related to idealistic relationship expectations" (Sergin & Nabi 2002, p. 248), according to Sergin and Nabi's (2002) comparison of their results with those of Fletcher and Simpson (1999).

Findings from the Bradford et al. (2005) study and those from Westman et al. (2003), who examined the correlation between romantic media consumption and expectation formation, are consistent with one another. On the other hand, the impact of romantically themed media on children was the primary emphasis of Westman et al. (2003). The study's authors concluded that kids whose parents reported a good marriage were more prone to draw unrealistic expectations about romantic relationships from media. According to the research of Westman et al. (2003), there may be a link to how children's social expectations of love are reinforced. Kids may internalise media messages more easily if they see their parents showing physical affection and friendly behaviours towards each other, which supports their media expectancies. This supports the assertion made by Social Cognitive Theories.

2.4.1. Media and the Cognitive Development of Children

Identifying the developmental period at which children are most susceptible to content-specific media is essential for understanding the impact of romantically themed media messages on youngsters. What kids watch is just as significant as the amount of time they spend in front of the screen, according to Kirkorian, Wartella, and Anderson (2008) (p. 40). According to the author, even three-year-olds have shown that they can be engaged consumers of media (Danovitch, 2019).

The earliest possible time for content-specific media to influence children's cognitive development is during the Pre-Operational Stage, which Piaget (1964) characterised as occurring between the ages of two and seven. Piaget posits that pre-operational children go through two distinct stages: the pre-operational period and the intuitive phase. Because children's conception of reality is not deemed solid during this developmental phase, pre-operational children have trouble distinguishing between reality and fiction. Pre-Operational children see cartoon characters as real as their own

relatives and classmates. The kids just don't get the meaning of "pretend" or the fact that the fictional characters don't genuinely reside in the neighbourhood. Children begin to grasp the concept that the media they consume has meanings that differ from reality around the ages of four or five. Nonetheless, they cling to the belief that these fictional figures could materialise at any moment. Because they are still developing their sense of reality, children often mistakenly believe that the pictures they see on screen are real. To clarify, Gusé-Moyer and Riddle (2009) showed that pre-operational children are more influenced by advertisements featuring toy dolls that come to life through animation and cry and talk. This makes sense because pre-operational children believe that this can happen in real life. A Pre-Operational child's comprehension of meaning is based on the characters' physical activities rather than on their personality, morality, or ethics because of their developmental limits (Gusé -Moyer, Riddle, 2019).

The worry about media exposure for pre-operational children stems from the belief that children at this developmental stage are especially susceptible to the fantasy genera, since they do not yet have the cognitive capacity to differentiate between fictional characters and real-life situations. According to Bachen and Illouz (1996), this "postmodern nexus of media and the market shapes children's romantic imagination before it translates into actual behaviour" (p. 279). According to the authors, pre-operational children attribute made-up qualities to their actual social circle, and they also link their cognitive grasp of romantic relationships to the mediated promises of love and passion. Because pre-operational children are more receptive to influence, this bond may have far-reaching effects on the child's future romantic relationships as well as their peer social interactions (Welch et al., 2019).

2.4.2. Forced Marriages

According to Relif (2019), "orphan girls have as much right to choose their marriage partner as other girls, given that they are more likely to be vulnerable to exploitation." This assertion is supported by the Qur'an, which grants orphan girls the same right as other girls. Additionally, "the consent of a bride is a prerequisite to the validity of the marital contract," as stated by the Prophet (peace be upon him). A research

titled "Forced Marriages in Pakistan (From Islamic Perspective)" was carried out by Akhtar (2016). The study's overarching goal is to learn more about the actions of parents who participated in forced marriage as well as the couples who were victims of it. Because parents are the most genuine and sincere people in the world, the study found that Islam allows them to arrange for their children's marriages. Forced marriages and inheritance are widespread problems in Pakistan, according to research by Zaman (2014). In order to put an end to the practice of kidnapping for forced marriage in Bangladesh and Pakistan, Hossain & Turner (2001) found that both the government and voluntary organisations should act quickly and intensively. Forced marriages were examined by Samad and Eades (2002) who looked at the background, problems, and views of the people of Bangladesh and Pakistan. According to the findings, forced marriage is most common in developing nations due to low income, unemployment, and lack of education. According to Reuben Ackerman (2018), Pakistan has not lived up to its international obligations to safeguard minority rights by ending the practice of forced marriages. A study was carried out by Market & Markaz (2012) to examine the radicalisation tendency, domestic violence, and women's rights in Pakistani marriages. Domestic violence and forced marriage are on the rise in Pakistan, according to the study's findings, which coincide with rising radicalisation. However, a study by Haster et al. (2008) failed to find any statistical evidence of a correlation between the age of sponsorship and the number of forced marriage instances. An investigation that was conducted by Myers & Harvey (2011), examined the questions and effects of forced marriage that were employed by children and youths. Some of the forces that spark off this phase include emotional pressures from parents or peers, mental health issues / the death of parents / and the partner's sexual behavior. Girls are forced into marriage because of cultural inequalities, poverty, religious and traditional cultural practices, and in addition, there is neither law enforcement nor effective legislation, this study showed. In turn, quick information deprivation, forceful sexual relations or reproductive health problems, psychological suffering, and social isolation appear. Anitha and Gill's (2017) study says that emotional pressure is significantly more important than physical abuse. It proves that most forced marriage cases in the UK involve emotional pressure either directly or indirectly. Concerning this issue, Anthon (2015) also disclosed in her research

on British newspapers how they exaggerated the issue of forced marriage. The British media portrayed forced marriage as the single major problem affecting British culture, while ignoring other forms of abuse against women. A moral panic ensued in British society as a result of the forced marriage issue. Nancy (2018) examined newspapers to determine how these publications reported on the topic of underage marriages. The results demonstrated that while child marriage is extensively covered in news stories and newspapers, the negative effects of child marriage on the health of young girls are completely ignored. According to Shafiq (2018), the male-dominated society in Pakistan is reinforced by the stereotypical portrayal of "perfect women" in Pakistani television drama serials. The study highlights the need for more efforts by the print media to raise awareness on child marriages. Female characters tended to be those of the upper class, dressed in the most cutting-edge, western-style garments; they were also depicted as being courageous, forthright, educated, and professional. These traits set themas' "imperfect women" apart. In her research, Abbas (2018) looked at Pakistani television shows during the years 1977–1988 from the perspective of the "good and bad" women. Dramas from the Islamisation era, according to discourse analysis of dialogues and female characters, presented extremely traditionalist portrayals of women. Honour difficulties remain the most prominent aspect of a woman's life on film, according to Fatima (2018), even though there has been a growth in female education and modernism.

2.4.3. Marriage in the Face of Unrealistic Expectations

Those who are exposed to societal depictions of marriage and love may have inflated expectations. As stated by Bachen and Illouz (1996), representations and symbols that "mould" a child's "romantic imagination" become "resources" that are utilised in later years to fulfil experiences and influence one's perception of personal relationships (p. 281). Because they are so common, media depictions of love relationships can easily become an audience member's go-to example (Jo, 2020).

Models are always examples of some kind, and when we imitate them, we shape and train ourselves to live in a certain way that is characterised by excellence, as Galician

(2004) pointed out. The love stories that we are fed through media like books, magazines, music, TV, dramas, and the Internet are hegemonic worldview representations that are "mythic, stereotypic and archetypal" (p. 70). Because media outlets "often portray colourful characters and relationships which may be quite unlike the average person or marriage," they provide unrealistic and insufficient examples of healthy relationships (Baucom & Epstein, 1990, p. 56). Mediated depictions of ordinary marriages tend to focus on the romantic side of things, while other, less exciting, but no less important, parts of a couple's relationship get less attention. The media supports "the established order" because it normalises and makes the dominating influence's ideas and assumptions seem like "commonsensical and normal" (p. 85) (Welch et al., 2019).

Remaining steadfast to dysfunctional beliefs has personal and societal repercussions, as Galician (2007) warned. When one's standards for evaluating their spouse or marriage are unreasonable, it can lead to inaccurate or dysfunctional assessments of relationship events. Those who have inflated notions of what it means to be married and in a committed relationship may find it difficult to deal with the inevitable arguments and mundane tasks that come with being in a committed relationship, particularly if these things run counter to their idealised views of love and marriage. Because some people deny the existence of marital discontent, this can amplify marital disturbance, which includes dysfunctional feelings like rage and dysfunctional behaviours like verbal abuse (Baucom & Epstein, 1990). According to Kim and McKenry (2002), a high degree of marital happiness is associated with a lower risk of divorce or separation, while a high level of marital discontent is likely to have the opposite effect (Sadeghi, 2019).

The situation becomes even more complicated when one or both partners approve of an unreasonable expectation for the partnership (Baucom & Epstein, 1990). Gottman (1994) found that couples experiencing marital distress are more likely to engage in negative behaviour exchanges, communicate their thoughts and feelings more aversively, and try to change their partners' behaviour through coercion more often than couples who are not dealing with a significant marital disturbance. On the other hand, spouses frequently refuse to budge from their standards, even when doing so significantly worsens marital interactions (Baucom & Epstein, 1990; Ellis, 1986). Couples may decide

to end their relationship or get a divorce as a result of their inability or reluctance to work through marital strain (Gottman, 1994).

According to Kurdek (1993), "a general lack of preparation for or doubtful competency in performing marital roles or resolving interpersonal conflict constructively" (p. 238) is indicated by the relatively stable intrapersonal distal (existing prior to the relationship) risk factor of maintaining dysfunctional expectations. The problem, then, is that media portrayals of romantic relationships and married life are inaccurate, leaving the representations unfit for educational or imitative purposes because of this. Many real-life stories of couples splitting up openly contradict the romantic ideals promoted by media portrayals of happy marriages that last forever. Money, communication, sex, housework, jealousy, friends, professions, in-laws, substance misuse, recreation, children, and religious disagreements are the most common sources of conflict for married and engaged couples (Stanley, Markman, & Whitton, 2002). According to research (Cohen and Finzi-Dottan, 2012; Lawrence & Bradbury, 2001), domestic violence, dwindling love, low levels of trust between spouses, and extramarital affair are all factors that might lead to marital instability. The following factors are listed as the leading causes of marital dissolution in the divorce and separation surveys conducted by Kitson, Babri, and Roach (1985): personality, household dynamics, power dynamics, differing lifestyles and values, disagreements regarding roles and responsibilities, sexual incompatibility, sexual deprivation, extramarital sex, financial issues, mental cruelty, neglect of the home and children, physical abuse, emotional problems, feelings of being "no longer in love," drinking, and a spouse who is overly critical or belittles one's spouse.

These real-life examples make us wonder about the dysfunctional beliefs described by Eidelson and Epstein (1982) and the big mass-mediated myths shown in Galician's work (2004; 2007) (Sadeghi, 2019). How can a couple who has gone through a divorce or separation assert that their love for one other has faded, that they are "no longer in love" or interested in someone else if marriage is a divinely decreed union for all humans? How could one ever accuse their soul mate of being uncaring towards their communication requirements, much alone use this as grounds for a divorce, since this person has an innate ability to understand and respond to their partners' thoughts and feelings? How is it possible for a predetermined couple to experience sexual

incompatibility? Why do so many marriages fail due to adultery if sexual perfection is indeed achievable?

2.4.4. Media Models Who Do Not Represent Their Audience

Admittedly, the media tends to paint love and marriage in a positive light, but how accurate is this portrayal? To be more precise, how do mediated channels depict romantic relationships? What kind of hopes are they likely to have? There are "definite, predictable components" to the ideology that emerges from Romanticism, which is more concerned with mythmaking than with truth (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1993, p. 61). It follows that love mythologies could "serve as a cognitive schema for organising and evaluating one's behaviour and the behaviour of a potential or actual romantic partner" (Sprecher & Metts, 1989, p. 388). Negative evaluations based on unreasonable expectations can cause marital discontent and, eventually, divorce, as already stated (Fisher & Mehozay, 2019).

Myths about love spread by the media. Twelve media myths that support the "romanticisation" of love in intimate relationships were listed by Galician (2004; 2007). Myth #1: "your perfect partner is cosmically pre-destined, and so nothing/nobody can ultimately separate you" and your beloved is widely spread in periodicals, on television, and in both romantic and nonromantic films (Galician, 2004, p. 55). In addition, cinematic portrayals of love breathe life into the Cupid's arrow story (Myth #2). Indeed, "such a thing as love at first sight" does exist in the "reel" realm (p. 55). A brief look shared in the span of a minute signifies a turning point, hinting at the eventual realisation of an ethereal connection between two unknown individuals whose destinies are intricately linked. Visual representations of these two myths frequently highlight the emptiness and loneliness that afflict a person's existence before they meet their "one and only."

At the very bottom of Galician's list is Myth #9, "all you need is love" (as famously lyricised by the Beatles). The mythical aspect of this depiction is the inherent disregard for personal and relational values. As a condition for receiving love and acceptance,

fictional characters in media often compromise or shift their personal belief systems. Sometimes, when tensions are at an all-time high in a relationship, the protagonists decide that love will ultimately prevail. The eleventh myth by Galician (2004), "the right mate 'completes you'—filling your needs and making your dreams come true," implies that without the other's friendship, neither partner would have been whole. "Love at first sight," "love conquers all," "true love is perfect," and "we should follow our feelings and base our choice of a partner on love rather than on other (more rational) considerations" are the four myths outlined by the Galician that define the romantic ideal (Sprecher & Metts, 1989, p. 389). Many people know from personal experience that these assumptions about human love are incorrect since they imply that both giving and receiving love is unconditional and eternal (Villi & Picard, 2019).

In their study, Eidelson and Epstein (1982) found that marital maladjustment and the desire to quit the marriage were associated with dysfunctional ideas about intimate relationships, such as sexual perfectionism and the expectation of mindreading. The media often perpetuates these misconceptions, according to Galician (2004). For example, there's the myth that "your true soul mate should KNOW what you're thinking or feeling (without you having to tell)" (p. 55) and the myth that "if your partner is truly meant for you, sex is easy and wonderful" (p. 55). Since free communication is a key component of intimacy, Galician considers mind-reading dysfunction to be "one of the most destructive in love relationships (and indeed in any interpersonal relationships)" since it promotes refraining from doing so.

The fourth myth is that there is no difference between sex and love in media depictions. Hearst Communications (2012) states that magazines such as Cosmopolitan inundate their readers with sex advice and "ways to look even hotter naked," which is likely to win over any man's heart in a bedroom setting. To a similar extent, terrible sex between onscreen couples is extremely rare, with the exception of comedic situations. As mentioned in Galician (2004), love researcher Robert Sternberg argues that relying exclusively on passion and physical pleasure is insufficient for the creation of solid, long-term partnerships (Villi & Picard, 2019).

Idealised marriages and gender roles. According to Kirkham and Thumim (1993), when masculine traits are cultivated and exhibited, they are both emphasised and

absorbed. Traditionally, prominent males have been expected to exude all the audible and visible signals that confirm their virility and machismo, including their movements, attire, voice, and poise. According to Galician (2004), who used a phrase reminiscent to the title of the book by Kirkham and Thumim (1993), "Me-Tarzan, You-Jane" pairings are typical, with a male hero and a female heroine in a vulnerable position (p. 165). If a relationship is to succeed and the rescue fantasy to be fulfilled, "the man should NOT be shorter, weaker, younger, poorer, or less successful than the woman" (p. 55) according to most mediated portrayals of coupleships. For example, in heterosexual dating scripts, which appear to promote or even prescribe situations where the man "pays" and the woman "owes" (Emmers-Sommer, Farrell, Gentry, Stevens, Eckstein, Batocletti, & Gardener, 2010; Laner & Ventrone, 2000), the media perpetuates clearly defined gender roles and facilitates power imbalances. "The love of a good and faithful woman can change a man from a 'beast' into a 'prince'" (Galician's Myth #7) is another myth that media outlets exploit. A man's inability to control his aggressiveness, while still establishing his rightful power, is the defining characteristic of violent behaviour (Kirkham & Thumim, 1993). This not only makes the "mean or abusive character" innocent of any wrongdoing, but it also makes the wife who is powerless over her violent husband the one to blame (Galician, 2004, p. 179).

Myths regarding love are intricately related to gender norms and expectations. "A woman should look like a model or a centrefold" (p. 55) is the statement made in Galician's (2004) Myth #5. Numerous studies have shown that the media's fixation on women's physical attractiveness has negative impacts, as discussed in The Beauty Myth (Wolf, 1992), psychology (Tiggemann, 2005), and communication studies (Nabi, 2009).

Comparing "real" and "reel" lives. An indication of open communication and intimacy is a healthy polite dispute (Galician, 2004). The misconception that "bickering and fighting a lot mean that a man and women really love each other passionately" is, however, a prevalent trope in romantic comedies and thrillers. Gottman (1994) argues that incessant complaining is an indication of interpersonal disengagement. Partners may not "know" each other and have infrequent contact if there is an excess of unpleasant engagement.

One of the eleven myths told by Galician (2004) states, "In real life, actors and actresses are often very much like the romantic characters they portray" (p. 55). Rock Hudson is a two-word response. Dyer (1993) claims that Hudson is "the last guy you'd have figured" to venture away from his cinema character. In light of Hudson's depictions of traditional masculinity in film, Dyer (1993) clarifies the "surprise" effect that ensued after the actor came out as a "off-screen" gay. Because "there was nothing gay about Rock as performer or image" (p. 28), which is where all this mystery stems from. No, it's not that performers intentionally mislead their audiences. Actually, Hudson's virility was fabricated by his agent, Henry Wilson (Hofler, 2015). However, since media investors have a lot to lose, it's in everyone's best interest to help keep Myth #11 alive. This confusion between fact and fiction, according to Galician (2004), can indicate that people are starting to believe mediated myths more and more.

Lastly, the premise of media effects study is contradicted by Myth #12, which states, "since mass media portrayals of romance aren't'real,' they don't really affect you" (Galician, 2004, p. 55). This myth is essentially refuted by social cognitive and cultivation theories. Cultivation theory (Gerbner et al., 1986) presents television socialisation as an unconscious process, in contrast to social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001) which posits that people deliberately seek out media references and imitate behaviours that yield favourable outcomes. Similar to belief #11, those who believe this belief are easily swayed by media portrayals that are widely disseminated (Gambino, 2023).

A complex web of myth espousal is exposed by Galician's (2004) comprehensive examination of stock media messages. All of the aforementioned depictions of love and marriage hold to an unrealistic notion of what these things should be. I shall explain my evaluation of cinematic portrayals of love, marriage, and sex as significant sources of cultivation in the part that follows.

encouraging the development of overly optimistic goals. We can use Gerbner's (1969) cultivation theory as a starting point to investigate how cinematic images of sex, love, and marriage can socialise erroneous and idealised expectations for romantic relationships. Several studies have investigated the possible impacts of viewing media depictions of idealised love and sexual relations on viewers (Baran, 1976a; 1976b; Holmes, 2007; Signorelli, 1991; Shapiro and Kroeger, 1991). The results of these

research showed that there is a connection between a bias towards romantic media, the belief that mediated depictions are accurate, and the support of unrealistic ideas about romantic relationships by the participants (Gambino, 2023). The same holds true for love relationships and sexual lives; when these ideals are not followed in real life, it can lead to feelings of frustration and unhappiness.

The present investigation of the cultivation of excessive expectations for marriage through dramas is based on the work of Segrin and Nabi (2002). Television shows about marriage, sexual relations, and marital bliss tend to romanticise love and place too much emphasis on perfect physical compatibility, two features of the eros love style proposed by Hendrick and Hendrick (1986). Positive emotions and the ideas of "love at first sight" and physical attractiveness are promoted by television commercials. Researchers referred to these depictions as "idealised images of marriage" (Segrin & Nabi, 2002, p. 249), which are the result of these representations combined with the omission or reduction of a realistic picture of married life. The development of unhealthy and implausible romantic relationship expectations that "accompany, if not propel people into marriage" (p. 247) may result from viewing these pictures. A large number of marriages that will inevitably end in divorce are likely to be generated by hasty and idealistic plans to tie the knot (p. 250) (Jahan, 2023).

Segrin and Nabi (2002) put out two research questions to investigate the possible connection between media consumption, idealistic views about love and marriage, and plans to get married. The first looked at how watching TV might influence one's idealistic views of marriage, and the second looked at how that might affect one's propensity to tie the knot soon after. In this study, 285 undergraduates filled out a questionnaire that inquired about their love fantasies and general expectations about marriage. The survey asked participants to rate their level of agreement with the idealistic expectations for romantic relationships using Tornstam's (1992) "Expectations for Intimacy" scale and the "eros love style" subscale created by Hendrick & Hendrick (1986). Television viewing patterns, genre-specific viewing preferences, perceived correctness of television depictions, and intentions to marry soon and stay married were among the extra questions asked in the questionnaire (Jahan, 2023).

Their research showed that those who watch a lot of soap operas and romantic comedies on TV are more likely to daydream about marriage and having a family. The research identified that trend toward the eros love style, high expectations for intimacy and fast desire for marriage correlates with increased use of these two types of media. They came to the conclusion that media socialisation processes are responsible for the formation of utopian marriage aspirations and subsequent marriage intents. Because dramas are so common, it is possible to draw parallels between the way viewers perceive coupleships and marriage in the films and how those expectations inform the films' content and genre.

The study aims to investigate the influence of marital lives portrayed in TV dramas on audience perceptions, with specific attention to differences among married and unmarried audiences and between male and female audiences. To address these objectives, the research questions (RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3) focus on understanding how TV dramas affect audience perceptions and exploring variations based on marital status and gender (Ibrahim, Amin, & Rehman, 2019).

2.5 Theory connections to research objectives:

Objective 1: Cultivation Theory: Based on this theory it can be argued that viewers can develop certain attitudes and beliefs when they are being exposed to media content that seems to them repetitively and coherently. The Cultivation Theory is applied in your research work when you delve into how the viewers' attitudes modify during the sequential exposure to the display of the life of couples in a TV drama series. As you start, your objective number one is doing a look-in at the extent to which TV dramas affect the spectators' perceptions of marriages. For instance, you may want to dwell on the issue that TV drama fans with positive storylines about marriage generally have positive views of marriage while those watching the drama without such storylines do not maintain a positive view of marriage (Pollock, Tapia & Sibila, 2022).

Social Cognitive Theory: This theory is significant in creating an awareness of what people think of marriage after watching TV dramas. Media, like TV dramas, put a lot of emphasis on social cognitive theory involving the importance of observational learning that is, the ability for people to learn from watching interactions and behaviors of fictional characters. For the first objective, looking at how viewers gain their views and attitudes towards marriages and relationships or change these views through watching couples behaving in dramas is a good aspect too. This could, for instance, describe a viewer of TV shows with a happy and strong married couple who may be inclined to have favorable opinions about marriage in reality (Hoewe & Sherrill, 2019).

Gratification theory is important to be able to rationally understand how TV dramas influence audiences' ideas involving married lives. According to the theory of mass media are selected by viewers only unconsciously and the content should be aware of their social and psychological needs (Steiner & Xu, 2020). The first one is that viewers engage and connect with romantic comedies aiming to satisfy their hedonistic urges. And subconsciously shape their perception of spousal relationships. The idea implies that we consciously feed on content that impacts our views regarding marriage. Thus, media consumption is not a passive process, but a deliberate one.

Objective 2: Cultivation Theory: This theory also explains audience perception differently: Married and single individuals as well as viewers. Technique by Cultivatian theory also makes it possible to see any difference between the perspectives of 2 groups who have experienced media exposure to marital representation by Timmermans et al (2019). For instance, you might find that those who are married and frequently watch romance TV dramas with strange stories of marriage have different perceptions of their relationships as compared to single people who do not do so.

Social Cognitive Theory: This approach is quite clear and may be applied to differentiate marriage's and single viewers' views instantly. One can examine the difference in how married people and single people might adopt observational learning based on various circumstances when put through the representation of married life through television dramas by using Social Cognitive Theory. This can be seen through the fact that you can observe whether viewers who are married are going to build their behavior under the influence of how two people are married on television, which in return

might influence single people who might not have the same life experience as the married people, and as a result might perceive things differently (Bouman, 2021).

Gratification Theory: The gratification theory application serves to evaluate differences in perceptions, particularly between married and single viewers, as a central issue of the study. The artists claim that a viewer is subsequently active in choosing TV dramas, the shows that speak about his desires and life knowledge. Married audiences may be inclined to watch dramas that cherish marital relationships as they try to gain insights into their married life or somehow get a sense of validation. The individual viewers who seek perfect or complete relationship visions could get stuck in the unrealistic representations as a way of the future. Therefore, the theory contributes to goal 2 by pointing out how specific target audience segments utilise the TV as a tool to satisfy their individual needs and norms regarding marriage (Steiner & Xu, 2020).

Objective 3: Cultivation Theory: Once more, this theory is crucial to understanding how audience perceptions may alter based on gender as a result of how marriage is portrayed in TV dramas. You can then determine if men and women are accepting and interpreting these pictures differently by analysing this hypothesis. For instance, it manifests itself in the fact that the women who are the main viewers of TV dramas that feature such male roles ideologies in marriage have different opinions on gender roles in reality, as compared to the men who do not watch such content (Timmermans et al., 2019).

Social Cognitive Theory: This level of thinking provides quite (a bit) of overlap with the Cultivation Theory because of its scope on observational learning. For instance, the show helps analyse how both male and female audiences may unconsciously adopt behaviors and expectations from the gender roles and dynamics they observe in television programs. Males who binge all time on dramatic TV series like those where those male characters behave in a specific way are also considered to portray the same behaviour in their relationships and this is more significant than women who do not have much exposure (Bouman, 2021).

The theory of gratification: provides valuable insights into the gender inequalities in audience views shaped by the portrayal of married lives in television dramas. Watchers

take in media information to fulfill a variety of marriage-related psychological and social demands, some of which are gender-specific. Men may be more interested in areas of entertainment, while women may seek direction in relationships and emotional connection. As a result, this theory supports goal 3 since it recognises that male and female viewers may have different perspectives on married life as they are portrayed in TV dramas, which may reflect different needs and preferences (Riaz, Iftikhar, & Aslam, 2021).

2.6 Literature Conclusion:

The literature review begins by delving into Cultivation Theory, emphasising how individuals passively internalise idealised depictions of romantic love from the media, setting the stage for the study's exploration of the impact of TV dramas on perceptions of marital lives. Social Cognitive Theory is then introduced, highlighting the active role viewers play in absorbing media messages, participating in meaning-making, and shaping social relationships.

Cultivation Theory is employed to investigate the association between media exposure and problematic marital expectations. The theory posits that television shapes public interaction norms, influencing individuals to cling to utopian views of love partnerships even when facing relationship difficulties. Television, acting as a cultural gatekeeper, perpetuates conventional beliefs, behaviors, and values, defining popular culture.

The literature highlights the prevalence of television violence in cultivation theory studies, showcasing its impact on viewers' perceptions of reality. Moreover, it discusses how diverse forms of media, collectively termed "popular media," contribute to shaping individuals' worldviews, influencing political leanings, sexism, body image, romantic partner expectations, and future marital conduct.

The cultivation theory extends to the study's context in Pakistan, emphasising the role of TV dramas in shaping audience perceptions. It asserts that television serves as a

primary source of socialisation, cultivating specific predispositions among viewers. The impact of media exposure on children's cognitive development during the Pre-Operational Stage is explored, emphasising susceptibility to media influence due to the inability to distinguish between reality and fiction.

Social Cognitive Theory supplements the analysis by focusing on the active role of viewers in internalising media messages. The review delves into how media consumption shapes individuals' expectations of love and relationships, with studies indicating positive correlations between romantically-themed media consumption and future relationship expectations. The impact on children's cultural models and expectations of romance is also discussed.

The study's objectives align with prior research indicating that media portrayals of romantic relationships often perpetuate unrealistic and inaccurate examples, contributing to dysfunctional beliefs and expectations. It is emphasised that media depictions can become individuals' reference points, leading to a cognitive schema that shapes behavior and relationships.

The literature review concludes by challenging media myths associated with love and marriage, emphasising the need to debunk unrealistic expectations perpetuated by the media. It underlines the importance of accurate portrayals to counter the potential negative impact of media on individual and societal perceptions of romantic relationships. In light of the literature, the study aims to contribute to understanding how Pakistani TV dramas influence perceptions, offering insights into the complex interplay between media, cognitive development, and societal norms.

CHAPTER NO 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Design

      The study employs a survey design to investigate the perceptions of the male and female adult

      population of Lahore regarding marital depictions in TV dramas. The survey is structured into two parts: one focusing on participant demographics and the other exclusively assessing their perceptions following exposure to TV dramas.

3.2 Survey

      The survey in the study is concerned with the male and female adult population of Lahore and divided into two parts, one relating to the demographics of the individuals and the other exclusively limited to the assessment of their perceptions after being exposed to the depiction of marital lives in TV dramas.

3.3 Selection of Respondents

The sample size is selected using purposive sampling, and participants will be selected in a way that ensures the proper demographic composition is required for the results.

3.4 Sample Size

The sample for this quantitative research study comprised 500 respondents from the population of Lahore and was determined using a quota sampling method to ensure representation across various social groups. The sample size is composed to ensure representation across various social groups. Specifically, the respondents are categorised based on marital status and gender, resulting in four distinct groups: married males, married females, unmarried males, and unmarried females. Each group comprises 125 respondents, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the research questions across diverse demographic segments. The sample distribution aims to capture insights from different perspectives within the population of Lahore, fostering a more nuanced analysis of the research objectives. The study encompasses 500 respondents, providing a significant dataset for the quantitative research endeavour.

3.5 Instrument of Data Collection for Survey

Keeping the target audience for the instrument of data collection, a brief and simple Likert scale survey was designed in English to be provided to the respondents. The aim would be to gather primary research data to assess how consumption of and exposure to marital lives in TV dramas influences the audience's expectations regarding their own marital lives. The questionnaire was kept short and to the point, ensuring the audience could understand the questions and answer to the best of their abilities.

3.6 Data Collection Process

The questionnaires were distributed online to various households in Lahore, using family and friends as focal persons, as the selection was conducted using purposive

sampling. The necessary information was collected online and was compiled into relevant Excel sheets that the researcher later used to utilise in the research.

3.7 Data Analysis

The data is analysed using the SPSS program, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Initially, the data was checked for potential errors or missing values to ensure that it could produce effective results. After doing so, frequencies and percentages were calculated to analyse perceptions of individuals toward marital lives after exposure to TV dramas. Later on, a T-test was used to assess the data.

3.8 T-Test

The T-test serves as a type of inferential statistic that is used to determine if there is any difference between the means of any two groups to test a relation. In simple words, it simply represents the calculated difference represented in the units of standard error. The greater the magnitude of T's value, the greater the statistics would support and provide evidence against the null hypothesis.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to ethical guidelines, ensuring participant confidentiality and informed consent. The survey purpose and potential impact are communicated transparently. Consent is obtained from participants before their involvement, and steps are taken to protect the anonymity of respondents. The research respects the privacy and rights of individuals, prioritising ethical conduct throughout the data collection and analysis process.

CHAPTER NO. 4

RESULTS

Table 1.1. Demographic Statistics

Variables	Items	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	250	49.1
	Female	250	49.1
Age	18-24yrs	91	18.2
	25-30yrs	116	23.2
	31-35yrs	220	44.0
	36-40yrs	35	7.0
	41 and plus	38	7.6
Marital Status	Unmarried Man	125	25.0
	Unmarried Woman	125	25.0
	Married Man	125	25.0
	Married Woman	125	25.0

Interpretation

The presented data provides a comprehensive overview of the demographic distribution within the study sample. Regarding gender, the sample exhibits a near-equal representation, with 49.1% male and 49.1% female respondents. The reason for this mismatch is that 1.8% of the sample's participants either decided not to disclose their gender or identified in a way that was not consistent. Moving to age distribution, most participants fall within the 31-35 years category, constituting 44.0% of the sample. The age groups of 25-30 years and 18-24 years account for 23.2% and 18.2% of the respondents, respectively. The smaller cohorts include those aged 36-40 (7.0%) and 41 years and above (7.6%). Concerning marital status, the sample is evenly divided, with 25.0% each for unmarried men, unmarried women, married men, and married women. This detailed breakdown of demographic variables not only offers insights into the composition of the study participants but also provides a foundation for subsequent analyses, ensuring a thorough understanding of how gender, age, and marital status may influence the study's findings.

Table 1.2. Independent T-Test Analysis on Variables of Marital Status and the Influence of TV Dramas

Group Statistics					
	married/unmarried	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
trqq	married	250	67.6440	4.79345	.30316
	unmarried	250	66.4800	5.73386	.36264

Independent Samples Test		
	Levene's Test for Equality of	t-test for Equality of Means

| | | Variances | | t | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
		F	Sig.						Lower	Upper
trqq	Equal variances assumed	4.2	.04	2.46	498	.014	1.16400	.47267	.23533	2.09267
	Equal variances not assumed			2.46	482.8	.014	1.16400	.47267	.23533	2.09267

Interpretation

The group statistics present a clear distinction in the mean scores for the variable "trqq" between married (M = 67.6440, SD = 4.79345) and unmarried (M = 66.4800, SD = 5.73386) respondents. The t-test results, assuming equal variances, indicate a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of married and unmarried audiences influenced by marital lives in TV dramas (t(498) = 2.463, p = 0.014). The mean difference of 1.16400 suggests that, on average, married individuals have higher perceptions (mean = 67.6440) than unmarried individuals (mean = 66.4800). The 95% confidence interval for the difference (0.23533 to 2.09267) further supports the significance of this distinction, implying that the true difference in perceptions between married and unmarried audiences is likely to fall within this interval. Levene's test for equality of variances, with a significance level of 0.041, indicates unequal variances, prompting the consideration of the results

under the assumption of unequal variances. The t-test results with unequal variances confirmed the significant difference (t(482.831) = 2.463, p = 0.014). These findings provide empirical support for the research hypothesis that there are differences in audience perceptions influenced by the portrayal of marital lives in TV dramas, particularly when comparing married and unmarried individuals.

Table 1.3. Independent T-Test Analysis on Variables Gender and the influence of TV Dramas

Group Statistics					
	gender of the participants	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
trq q	male	250	67.64 40	4.79345	.30316
	female	250	66.48 00	5.73386	.36264

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Si g.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Differen ce	Std. Error Differen ce	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Low er	Uppe r
trq q	Equal varian ces	4.1 99	.04 1	2.4 63	498	.014	1.1640 0	.47267	.235 3	2.092 7

assum ed									
Equal varian ces not assum ed			2.4 63	482. 8	.014	1.1640 0	.47267	.235 3	2.092 7

Interpretation

The group statistics comprehensively overview the variable "trqq" among male and female participants. The mean score for males is 67.6440 (SD = 4.79345), while for females, it is 66.4800 (SD = 5.73386). The subsequent independent samples t-test, assuming equal variances, reveals a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of male and female audiences influenced by the portrayal of marital lives in TV dramas (t(498) = 2.463, p = 0.014). The mean difference of 1.16400 indicates that, on average, male participants have higher perceptions (mean = 67.6440) than female participants (mean = 66.4800). The 95% confidence interval for the difference (0.23533 to 2.09267) supports the significance of this disparity, suggesting that the true difference in perceptions between male and female audiences is likely to fall within this range. Levene's test for equality of variances, with a significance level of 0.041, indicates unequal variances, leading to the consideration of results under the assumption of unequal variances. The t-test with unequal variances confirmed the significant difference (t(482.831) = 2.463, p = 0.014). These findings support the research hypothesis that there are differences in audience perceptions influenced by the portrayal of marital lives in TV dramas, particularly when comparing male and female individuals, with males demonstrating higher perceptions on average.

CHAPTER NO. 5

DISCUSSION

The analysis that has been conducted reveals some useful findings on the connection between audience experience and the dramatisation of marital life in television series by taking into account gender and marital status disadvantage. Among marital status groups, married persons have a statistically significant perception that is different from those who are not married, thus supporting the overall hypothesis of the research (August & Sorkin, 2019). In comparison to those single individuals whose usual perspective was low, the respondents marked higher scores. This situation brings about the impression that TV dramas, in certain circumstances, have a bigger effect on how people see what actual couples are experiencing and can even affect these people's attitudes and decisions toward real-life couples' relationships.

Moreover, the employment of Levene's test, which demonstrates uneven variances, plays the role of a signal for a researcher that the existence of heterogeneity within the study sample must be taken into account. Furthermore, the results exceed the robustness of the analysis conducted. The evidence is now clearly confirmed with unequal variances, offering a much wider error margin and ensuring a more reliable outcome. A quantitative assessment of the effect magnitude is given through the mean difference, which also suggests that the perception difference is great between the two groups (Gwadah, 2020).

As for gender-based research, the findings facilitate the investigation of the respondents' meaning in favour of the research hypothesis since there was a statistically significant gender-based difference in their opinions on this matter. Responding to the depiction of married lives in television dramas, males, on average, exhibited higher perceptions than females did. This was the case when compared to females (Muffuletto, 2018). A range of values within which the actual difference in perceptions is expected to fall is provided by the confidence interval for the difference, which is 95%. This range helps to strengthen the credibility of the effect that was seen.

In this study, we have observed how the role of media portrayals of married life impacts the viewers' consciousness. The audience, which is married and single, as well as male and female, is influenced by the media portrayals differently (Mehra, 2019). For example, married individuals and females with higher perception levels paint a picture that these subgroups may be more responsive or prone to the influence of TV dramas that they use to change their perspective regarding relations. This is one facet that will influence the people who create content, those who generate media, and those who teach. It is imperative that the messaging be tailored to suit the unique kinds of responses that are present within the target audience (Mehra, 2019).

Realising the limits of the research being conducted in a unique setting of television dramas with the potentially active contribution of other variables that were not considered within this analysis will be necessary. Although the described results fit the research hypotheses well, it is important to remember that this study also has some limitations. The T-test is expected to be used for data from probability sampling, which we don't have. This is a limit, and telling the readers you know it would be good.

Further investigation into how media portrayals influence views could be conducted. This investigation could investigate the impact that individual qualities and the larger sociocultural milieu play in this phenomenon. Considering everything, these findings offer a strong basis for expanding our understanding of the intricate relationship between the depictions of marital lives in the media and the audience's impressions of those lives (Bates et al., 2020).

Commitment to an enhanced romantic relationship will persist in that state, with the stipulation that an individual's contentment with the existing partner and connection is stronger than the appealing alternatives portrayed that they witness outside of the partnership (Osborn, 2018). Individuals who engage with television programs that promote a romanticised perspective of relationships experience lower satisfaction and commitment levels due to their involvement with these programs.

CHAPTER NO. 6

IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS & CONCLUSION

6.1. Implications

The objectives and the topics of the research are dedicated to observing the ability of television dramas to induce an attitude shift in a target audience regarding their perceptions of matrimonial lives, with special emphasis on the ways the perception differs depending on marital status and gender relationship. The research results can be viewed through many diverse interpretations. Media portrayals firstly being a meticulous research have a profound influence on the creation of individual's views about their lives, such as about love and romance of their most desired relationship style. As such, it becomes

apparent with the attention that this assumption commands that more intricate comprehension is needed towards media impact on the relationships that exist in real life.

Moreover, the study shifts considerations to the mismatches in appearance that exist in perceptions between married and unmarried viewers. These helpful data may help show the possible disagreements between the two sides regarding how they interpret and internalise the phenomenon of 'marriage' in television dramas. Audiences that are made up of particular demographics will be of high importance to such producers, legislators, and educators who are mainly concerned with tailoring content and interventions.

Hence, the research also addresses gender disparities in the opinions of marital experiences in television dramas by acknowledging the fact that varying viewpoints should be given consideration. Through the knowledge of how men and women are affected differently by the images of relationships as portrayed in the media, it becomes possible to set up relationship media literacy programs that are more targeted and effective, to improve relationship expectations.

According to the findings of the study, academics and practitioners should go beyond basic measurements of relational attitudes and investigate the specific effects of media on actual relationships. This is suggested by the findings of the study, which are presented in a broader perspective. This shift in focus has ramifications for the design of future studies and interventions that are focused at improving relationship dynamics that are influenced by media intake.

According to the Social Cognitive Theory, which asserts that "children can learn social roles and behaviours solely by watching real or fictional models, although not all learned behaviours will necessarily be enacted (modelled) without reinforcement; in other words, many mass media messages offer considerable inducements and rewards related to specific ideas, feelings, and behaviours" (p. 83), this study also illustrates the participants' current level of media influence. This theory is consistent with the findings of this study. The concept of commitment may be further reinforced due to the fact that sixty percent of the participants' parents are married. Disney provides positive reinforcement through the use of happy endings following marriage. Moreover, according to Social Cognitive Theory, "exposure to mediated models of...coupleship should promote related

attitudes and feelings and, under certain conditions of reinforcement, related behaviours" (p. 84). This is a proposition that is supported by numerous studies. Bandura, on the other hand, does not answer the question of how much exposure to messages in the media is required in order to successfully create social roles. This gap is acknowledged in the research conducted by Gerbner (2004), which investigates this as well by examining the media as a socialising agent. The study asks, "whether or not television viewers come to believe the television version of reality the more they watch it." This study found that 97 percent of the participants had seen the movie that was provided to them, which is in line with both the Social Cognitive Theory and the Cultivation Theory.

According to research conducted by Osborn, 2018, watching romantically themed television series is a substantial predictor of anticipated challenges and commitment. This was found to be the case. According to Gwadah, 2020, those with higher levels of belief in the images of relationships that are seen on television are more likely to perceive their relationships as being more difficult than those with lower levels of belief in similar depictions. According to Anderegg et al., 2018, individuals who are in romantic relationships are dependent on maintenance behaviours to maintain their relationships.

Auters report showed that in the case of TV drama movies, TV comedies featured more often such connection conservation behaviours during the whole show. As Anderegg et al. (2018) define it, common conducts and activities through which an individual tries to keep a certain relationship to come to an end are what is referred to as relationship maintenance. Following the class of interpersonal connections, numerous actions are performed to lead to the expected end. Yet another group, Anderegg et al., 2020, paid attention to seven items in the relational maintenance behavior measure (RMBM), which was among the aspects of relationship maintenance. The first of these variables is positivity, which is concerned with the behaviour of the user if he or she engages in activities that can create positive emotions and joyful feelings. Thirdly, apologising to each other, not judging a person, and being reluctant to forgive are the major part of understanding. Finally, promises may be direct or indirect expressions of interest in getting closer, discussions concerning the future direction of the relationship, and any evidence that the person loves, cares for, and is committed to the other person.

According to Anderegg et al., 2019, the fourth benefit of self-disclosure is that it encourages individuals to talk about their thoughts, feelings, and worries.

According to Anderegg et al. (2014), individuals have several opportunities to see the behaviours of others through the medium of television. As a result, they are more likely to form erroneous beliefs about the marriage union and achieve low levels of commitment to their marriage. The authors Anderegg et al. (2014) pointed out that the images that individuals see on television have the potential to influence how they see romantic relationships and how they replicate the behaviours that they see. Observing many characters exhibiting maintenance behaviours similar to one another can lead to an increase in the value levels that the viewer places on the behaviours and lead to the inspiration of reproduction. As was mentioned earlier, the research conducted by Osborn (2012) found that individuals who were married and who watched depictions of romantic relationships on television and who believed those depictions to be accurate had lower levels of commitment to their partners and viewed alternative romantic relationships as more appealing than those who did not believe the depictions to be accurate. Therefore, according to the findings of Anderegg et al. (2014), the continuation of romantic relationships is dependent on the companions' utilisation of interpersonal preservation behaviours that may be adopted from the viewing of television depictions; otherwise, the relationship may be dissolved as a result of dissatisfaction from the companions' experiences. On the basis of the research conducted by Røsand et al. (2014), it has been determined that dissatisfaction in relationships, particularly with women, is a strong predictor of the relationship terminating. It was shown that the correlation between men expressing unhappiness and the termination of a relationship was not as significant as it was with women. These guys also predicted the end of a relationship. The romanticised view of relationships that is created by idealised depictions of partnerships is that they cover the complete spectrum of feelings and emotions that are associated with new love, as well as the commitment and sacrifice that are associated with long-term relationships. 2014 research by Lippman et al.

In their study, Lippman et al. (2014) found that the majority of romantic comedies focused on freshly developing relationships and offered a lot of behaviour characteristics that simulated the stage of "falling in love." According to the findings of Lippman et al.

(2014), a significant amount of time spent watching romantic-themed and sub-themed (RTST) films is associated with a higher probability of believing that "love finds a way." Additionally, a significant amount of time spent watching reality television shows about marital unions was associated with a greater likelihood of believing in "romanticism" and "love at first sight." Additionally, according to Lippman et al. (2014), viewing a significant number of sitcoms was associated with having less faith in the concepts of "romanticism" and "one and only." As a result of the way that television portrays romantic relationships rather than showing the obstacles that partnerships face in reality, Leite (2015) observed that the viewing of television has the potential to shift beliefs surrounding the way that individuals perceive a relationship. This is because of the way that television portrays romantic relationships.

A significant connection between romanticism and interpersonal intimacy was found to exist, according to the findings of research conducted by Leite (2015). The research also found that watching television is significantly associated with romanticism. In addition, the consumption of cable television came close to being a significant indicator of the degree of interpersonal proximity. The parties in the relationship do not communicate with one another in an effort to improve the relationship's quality, except for watching television together (Leite, 2015). However, couples that watch television programmes together may consider it a method to become closer to one another. Therefore, viewing television is considered to be a means of spending time together as a couple, but it is not considered to be a source of information regarding the expectations that are associated with a relationship. Additionally, romanticism was related to an individual's elevation of love and fondness for a romantic companion. The romanticism views that someone adopts as a result of watching television can have a major impact on the degree to which they are satisfied with their romantic relationships, as various studies have demonstrated.

However, romantic influences have the potential to not only influence change in an individual, but also can affect the relationship's relevance for personal change (Viejo et al., 2015). In essence, romantic influences can potentially influence change in an individual. Galloway et al. (2015) demonstrated that romantic influences can either benefit or harm relationships. One example of this is the fact that young adults who watch

romantic films are more likely to take part in romantic partnerships. This includes young adults' views and expectations regarding love and marriage (Galloway et al., 2015). Romantic films have an effect on the persons who see them, including the beliefs and expectations themselves. According to Driesmans et al. (2016), many people experience these influences as youngsters. Furthermore, as individuals enter their teenage years, their interest in romantic relationships is significantly higher than when they were children.

6.2. Limitations

Although the study provides insightful contributions, it is vital to acknowledge the study's limits. First, the findings are based on a particular sample of married people, which restricts the extent to which the findings may be generalised to larger populations. In the future, studies should collect samples from a wide range of people to improve the findings' external validity. The sampling procedure should be, in the optimal case, probability sampling, the best-stratified probability sample.

In addition, the research concentrates exclusively on the influence of depictions on television, making it possible to overlook the influence of other media types, such as social media or streaming platforms. Given the changing nature of media consumption, it is necessary to conduct a more in-depth investigation into the many media sources and how they interact to influence how people see relationships.

Besides, most of the research is based on self-report methods, which in turn makes the issue of social desirability bias or memory distortions possible. By combining qualitative and quantitative research methods, we could better understand how people react and how they are affected when they consume certain media depictions.

6.3. Conclusion

In conclusion, the results provide significant insights into the complex link between audience perceptions and television dramas' depiction of marital lives. The focus is on the significance of gender and marital status in the marital relationship. The results corroborate the assumptions of this investigation, showing that there is a substantial proportion of the views between married individuals and non-married ones, as well as between males and females. Married people are more likely to have good social perceptions on average. This ability of TV drama to influence expectations of and judgments of real-life relationships is said to have more impact, particularly on this set population. In the same manner, males had increased perceptions compared to females, which indicates gender preference in how people perceive and react to how a married life is portrayed in TV series.

Incorporating Levene's test into this study takes sophistication to a different level by including unequal variances as a possible element of heterogeneity within the sample. When the effects are uniformly found to exist and also different under the premise that the case is otherwise, the dependability of such effects further improves. In addition to providing quantitative estimates of effect sizes, the estimated mean differences and confidence intervals at 95% give additional support for the practical significance of the findings.

Besides, these outcomes underscore how complex and multi-dimensional this media portrayal may sometimes be and how crucial it is to focus on the nuances to adjust the messaging to demographic characteristics. To recognise the many responses within the audience and develop information that resonates with particular subgroups, content creators, media producers, and educators may all profit from these insights. This study provides empirical support to the knowledge of how television dramas alter perceptions of married lives, so providing a platform for future research endeavours that may be undertaken.

From general measures of relational attitudes to potential impacts of viewing on actual relationships (particularly marriages), this study aimed to take a step towards transitioning research on the correlations between television viewing and relationships away from general measures of relational attitudes. These discoveries, which add clarity to this area and offer unambiguous guidance for future directions, were disclosed by the

results, which revealed several more intriguing conclusions. Specifically, the amount of time that individuals spent watching programs with romantic themes was a far weaker predictor of people's expectations for partnerships and evaluations of their marriages than the amount of time they spent watching television portrayals of romantic relationships. Viewing and belief both predicted a series of negative evaluations, which included a reduced commitment, higher costs, and views of more attractive alternatives; however, there was no correlation between these factors and a decrease in marital engagement. These findings underscore the necessity of employing multiple assessments of relationships, gaining an awareness of the nature of television relationship portrayals, and gaining a more comprehensive comprehension of how viewers interact with these portrayals in future studies. Given that these findings were derived from a sample of married people, it is vital to have a deeper grasp of these areas to improve our overall comprehension of the potential effects that various forms of media may have on persons attempting to sustain long-term relationships.

To appeal to contemporary society, traditional folklore has been reimagined. Historically, the purpose of writing classic folklore was to impart a moral lesson to the reader and to provide direction in the reader's social life. A modification has been made to the concept of duty and honour, typically linked with folklore, to depict romance and genuine love in impractical packaging. The purpose of early literature was to mirror the popular canon of the time and to guide society to socially acceptable behaviour. However, the new Disney fairytale formula converts ancient folklore into unrealistic images of love and romance.

Within the framework of Cultivation Theory, it is possible to investigate the reimagined Disney fairytales and how their conceptualisation influences and moulds the new reality that youngsters experience. The findings indicate that children's created meanings about love relationships can be determined through classic Disney images, which act as the medium. The findings contribute to the cultivation theory by demonstrating that children can merely transmit their cultivated meanings about love by viewing a Disney icon.

The passive approach of cultivation theory is addressed by Social Cognitive Theory, which takes Cultivation Theory one step further and fills the gap from that

approach. According to the social cognitive theory, the viewer of the media internalises the message conveyed by the media to form an expectation regarding the message. Because the young participants have observed the media messages, internalised their meaning, and can respond to the question, "What does love mean?" with their anticipation of a love connection, the findings provide evidence that social cognition theory illustrates the phenomenon.

A contribution that Social Action Theory makes to Social Cognitive Theory is that it focuses on individuals' actions after internalising the message they have received from the media. The findings of this research will be expanded upon by social action theory, which will encourage a longitudinal study that investigates how the kid participants' media exposure influenced their behaviour in romantic relationships. Combining these three theories, which range from passive observing to social behaviour and action, it would be possible to understand how the children's created meanings influence their interactions with people of the opposite sex.

These discoveries contribute to the field of research by offering a research road map that can be used to investigate the process of meaning construction in youngsters. In particular, future research in child development should concentrate on younger participants to better understand the age at which a child can be before they can cultivate and internalise messages from the media. More specifically, research involving younger participants may eliminate the need to consider a large number of external influences on particular media messages. Regarding the second point, doing a longitudinal study that follows the children through their pre-adolescent and adult years would offer a one-of-a-kind opportunity to investigate how the child's internalised meanings influence their decisions regarding romantic relationships. When teachers have a solid grasp of the youngest age at which children begin to cultivate meaning, they can adjust electronic educational material and media awareness to meet the cognitive level of learning of the kid.

Parents who are not affiliated with academic institutions could use this research to understand better the impact that exposure to themed media has on the development of their kid's meaning and the age at which they should have clarification conversations about what their child is watching in the house. Consequently, this will prepare the child

for the same conversations that will take place in their media awareness class, which will ensure consistency in all of the child's social and educational situations.

Accordingly, this research exemplifies the modernisation of the oral heritage of folklore, which ranges from the moral themes of honour and responsibility intended to teach the lessons that will guide youngsters into adulthood to the Disney formula of love at first sight leading to romantic love. The incorporation of folklore stories in this manner results in the creation of a new field of inquiry that may be used to investigate the potential influence and implications of Disney films on children's perception of love relationships. The significance of this study lies in the fact that it has been discovered that children form meanings when exposed to media with a romantic setting and that this influential media affects how children form meanings regarding their social environment. The significance of children being influenced by this medium has been discussed in this thesis, along with how these meanings are recognised and internalised and how children express their beliefs regarding romantic love.

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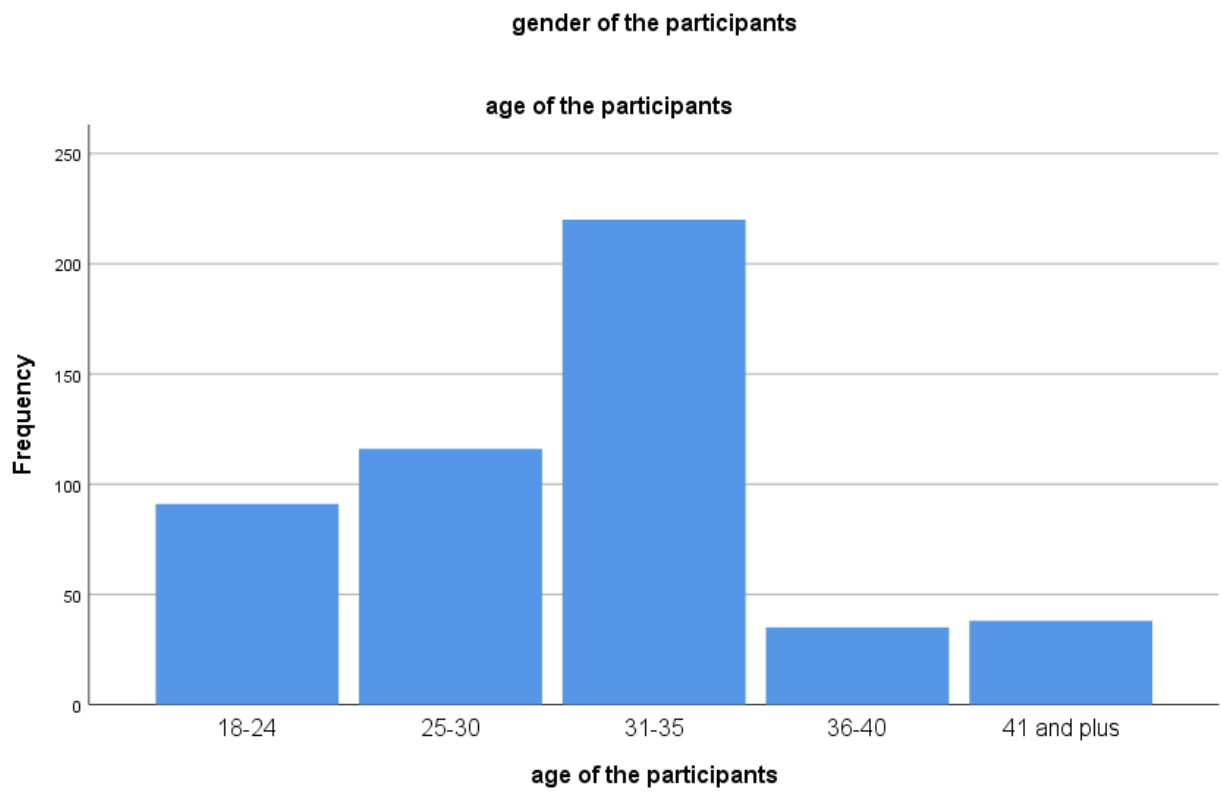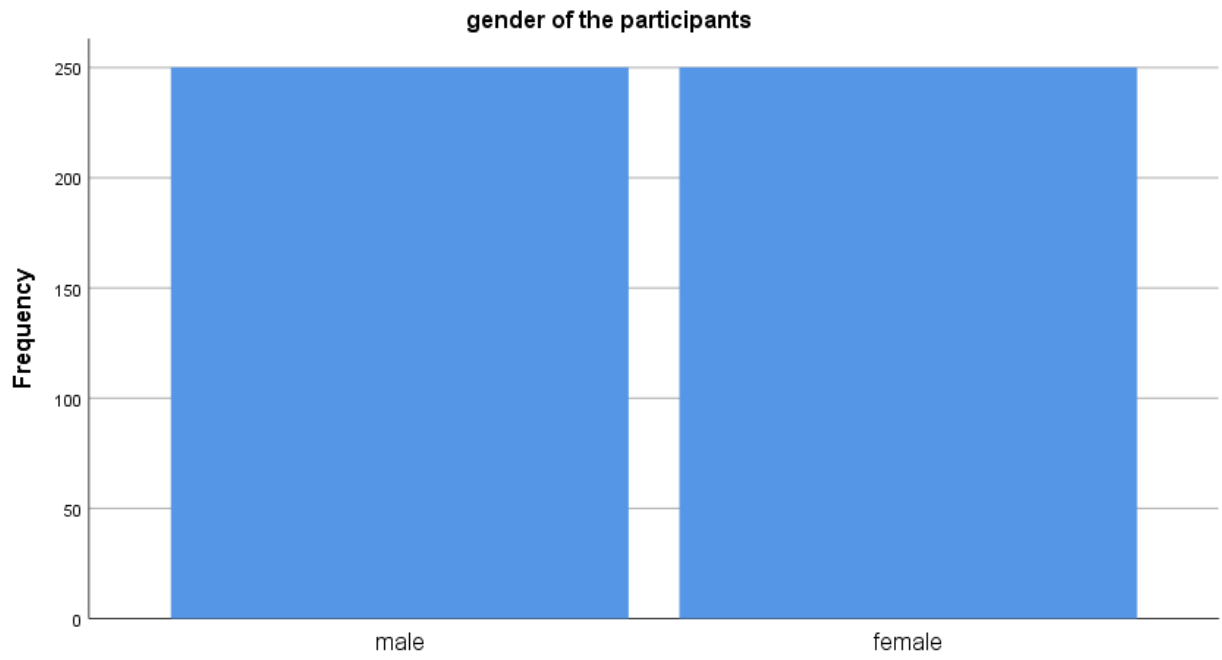
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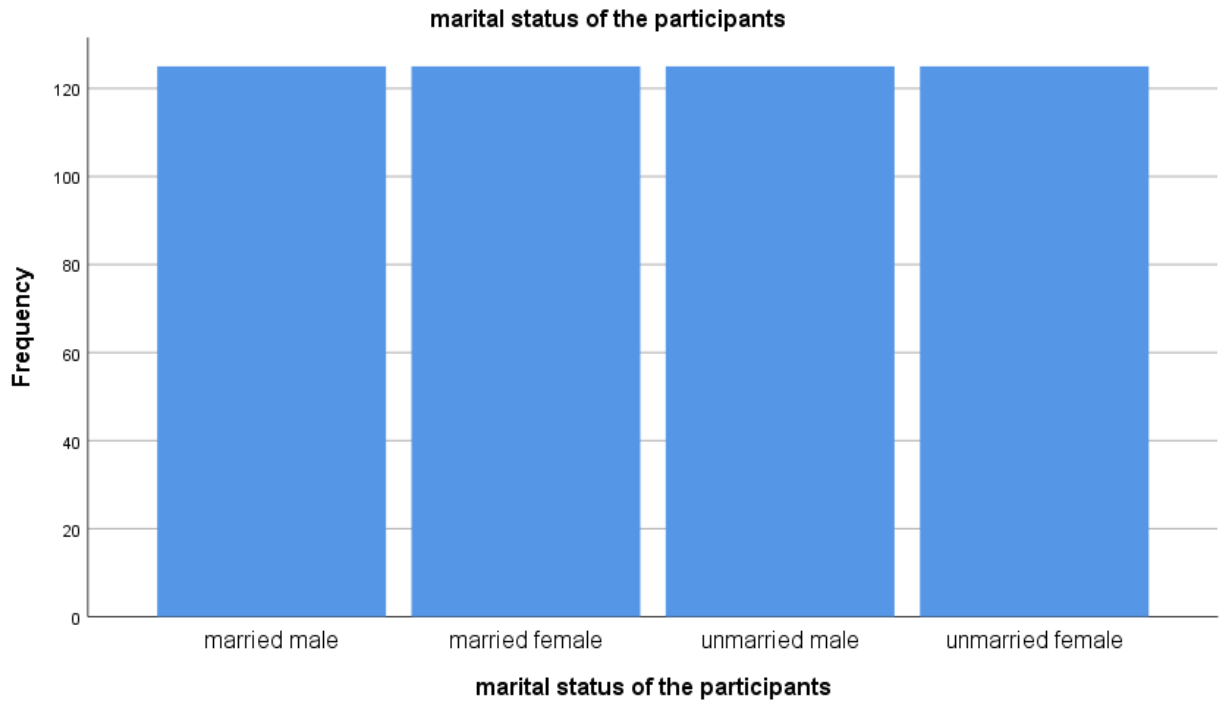
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Appendix

gender of the participants

gender of the participants

age of the participants

age of the participants

marital status of the participants

Questionnaire: Impact of TV Drama Portrayals on Audience Perceptions of Marital Lives

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking part in this research study. Your responses will help us understand how TV dramas influence perceptions of marital lives. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements using the Likert scale (1-5), where:

- 1: Strongly Disagree
- 2: Disagree
- 3: Neutral
- 4: Agree
- 5: Strongly Agree

Demographic Information:

1. **Gender:**
   - Male
   - Female
   - Other (please specify): _____

2. **Marital Status:**
   - Married
   - Unmarried

Perceptions of Marital Lives in TV Dramas (RQ1):

3. The portrayal of marital lives in TV dramas influences my perceptions of real-life relationships.
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

4. TV dramas provide a realistic depiction of marital challenges.
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

5. TV dramas influence my expectations of marriage.
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

6. The portrayal of marital lives in TV dramas aligns with my personal experiences.
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

7. TV dramas affect my attitudes towards commitment and relationships.
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

8. TV dramas present an idealized version of marital life.
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

9. Watching TV dramas has influenced my communication style in relationships.
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

10. TV dramas have shaped my views on gender roles within marriage.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

11. I find TV dramas to be a reliable source of insights into marital dynamics.

    - 1
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4
    - 5

Differences in Perception Based on Marital Status (RQ2):

12. The portrayal of marital lives in TV dramas is more relatable to my own marital experiences.

    - 1
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4
    - 5

13. Unmarried individuals may interpret TV drama portrayals of marital lives differently than married individuals.

    - 1
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4
    - 5

14. TV dramas have influenced my perceptions of marriage differently based on my marital status.

    - 1
    - 2
    - 3

- 4
- 5

15. I believe that marital experiences shown in TV dramas are applicable to both married and unmarried audiences.

    - 1
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4
    - 5

Differences in Perception Based on Gender (RQ3):

16. The gender roles depicted in TV dramas influence my perceptions of marital relationships.

    - 1
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4
    - 5

17. I think that male and female audiences may have different interpretations of marital lives in TV dramas.

    - 1
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4
    - 5

18. TV dramas reinforce stereotypical gender roles within marital relationships.

    - 1
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4
    - 5

Personal Reflections on TV Dramas and Marital Lives:

19. TV dramas have influenced my personal beliefs about what constitutes a successful marriage.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

20. I feel that TV dramas accurately represent the complexities of married life.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

21. The portrayal of marital lives in TV dramas has affected my relationship choices.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

22. I believe that TV dramas provide valuable insights into maintaining a healthy marriage.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

23. I discuss the marital scenarios from TV dramas with my friends or family.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

- 5

24. TV dramas accurately represent the diversity of marital relationships.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

25. I find myself comparing real-life relationships to those portrayed in TV dramas.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Thank you for your valuable input! Your responses contribute to our understanding of the influence of TV dramas on perceptions of marital lives.