

Exploring Public Perception of TV Dramas in Shaping Attitudes towards Loyalty and Betrayal in Relationships

Ghulam Safdar¹, Maheen Kaiser², Andleeb Basharat Abbasi³

¹Senior Lecturer, Department of Communication and Media, Sultan Idris Education University, Malaysia

²MPhil Scholar, Department of Media and Communication Studies, Rawalpindi Women University, Pakistan

³MPhil Scholar, Department of Media and Communication Studies, Rawalpindi Women University, Pakistan

Correspondence: ghulamsafdar@fbk.upsi.edu.my¹

ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: The increasing presence of broadcast and online relationship narratives has prompted concerns about their influence on young people's perceptions of loyalty and disloyalty. This study examines how Pakistani television dramas shape young viewers' attitudes toward trust, commitment, and relational fidelity, drawing on Cultivation Theory to explore links between media consumption and the internalisation of loyalty-related norms among individuals aged 18–30.

Methodology: A quantitative research design was employed using an online survey of (n=262) participants. The instrument included 45 Likert-scale items assessing perceived media influence, attitudes toward dramas, and views on loyalty and betrayal, alongside demographic information, viewing frequency, and exposure hours. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, linear regression, independent sample t-tests, and one-way ANOVA.

Findings: Findings indicate that perceived influence of TV dramas is a strong predictor of loyalty attitudes ($\beta = .60$, $p = .001$) and a weaker predictor of betrayal attitudes ($\beta = .28$, $p = .001$). Females reported higher perception and loyalty scores than males. Viewing frequency significantly shaped attitudes, with infrequent viewers showing stronger relational perceptions. Correlation and regression results confirm that stronger perceptions of drama influence align with higher endorsement of loyalty and heightened perceptions of betrayal.

Conclusion: The study concludes that Pakistani dramas play a meaningful role in shaping youth perspectives on relationship norms. Continuous exposure to dramatized portrayals of loyalty and disloyalty fosters emotional involvement and influences beliefs about trust, faithfulness, and ethical conduct in intimate relationships. The findings underscore the need for media literacy initiatives and more balanced content to support healthier relational perceptions among audiences.

Keywords: Pakistani TV Dramas, Loyalty and Betrayal in Relationship, Youth Perception, Cultivation Theory.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The TV dramas are at the very heart of modern media consumption as they influence the spiritual perception of the social relationships in addition to shaping the entertainment habit. The lines between the fictional works and real-life expectations are frequently erased, especially when the viewers are exposed to the dramatized images of intimacy, loyalty, and betrayal over the course of time. Recent findings have indicated that the audience of any media is gradually equating their own interpersonal lives to the emotional depth of the shows they watch (Khan et al., 2023; Tabassum & Amin, 2023; Nesi et al., 2018). As an example, Chang (2024) state that a large fraction of average drama viewers compares their own relationships to the perfection of the shown romantic scripts on the screen and is often dissatisfied when real lives cannot replicate mediated images. These trends pose some key sociological and psychological challenges: how does dramatized construction of trust, intimacy and disloyalty affect popular expectations, and how long-term exposure to the media alters conceptions of morality based on which people interpret relational behavior?

Cultivation Theory can provide a necessary background to the analysis of these issues. The theory was originally developed by George Gerbner in the 1976 and it argues that sustained exposure to repeated media images over a period influence people to have a certain perception of social reality (Gerbner, 2002). Becoming accustomed to a particular set of thematic patterns through repeated exposure to certain media sources, a viewer might internalize the logics of narration that is introduced on the screen, and start using the mediated representations as the points of reference to assess the relationships of the real world. In the case of aired romantic and interpersonal storytelling, the omnipresent impact of dramatized fidelity, infidelity, and emotional instability can implicitly affect the idea of what is deemed as normative relational behavior. Studies show that the audience that constantly consumes media with a relationship focus tends to become more demanding of loyalty or has unrealistic anxiety about infidelity, projecting fictional relationships to their lives and realities (Bouffard et al., 2021; Brown, Hegarty, 2018; Krans, 2023; Matson et al., 2021).

Television dramas which is a mainstream of mass culture, has significant impacts on the societies in the conceptualization of the norms between people. Dramas do not just entertain but also provide symbolic structures that direct how the audience perceives social life, by predicting relational themes, be it marital faithfulness, friendship struggles, or romantic love. To illustrate, in such global shows as *Game of Thrones*, *Scandal*, and *Breaking Bad*, betrayal is depicted as a dramatic engine, which confirms the point that betrayal is an inseparable part of emotional relationships (Khursheed et al., 2025; Shabir et al., 2013; Konijn et al., 2009). The identification can allow viewers to view their dilemmas within the onscreen characters thus increasing psychological contribution of these narrative decisions. This recognition reinforces the cultivation effect and makes the portrayals mediated more convincing and affecting.

The effects of fictional stories are even greater when such themes as loyalty and betrayal are prefigured in several seasons or serial episodes. Such representations can eventually re-establish the sense of trust, closeness, and commitment to morals among the viewers. Research indicates that idealized images of loyalty can make viewers think that such relationships deserve the same degree of commitment, which can lead to disappointment or tension in relations when the standards are not followed (Coli et al., 2023; Krans, 2023). On the other hand, exposure to plots involving betrayal on a regular basis could develop a sense of increased distrust in people and thus cause viewers to utilize more cautious or defensive strategies towards interpersonal relationships (Konijn, 2009).

Such effects of the media are not evenly distributed, they are conditioned by the cultural orientations, gender norms, and societal values. Gendered representations usually attribute a woman with an emotional nurturing role in which she remains loyal at all costs, and men are more commonly portrayed as prone to relational offenses because of societal demands or a personal lack of strength (Do Kyun Kim et al., 2009). These representations spread stereotypes of these traditions and determine the way viewers attribute moral agency in the relational terms. In addition, cultural context also contributes greatly in defining the

way loyalty and betrayal are viewed. A society that practices collectivism emphasizes family cohesion and social harmony, and any instances of betrayal can be viewed as gross moral contravention. By contrast, betrayal can be contextualized in individualistic societies as a part of personal autonomy or self-interest (AbouRaihanRinku, 2025).

Due to the increasing popularity of emotionally charged and visually stimulating content, such as aggressive dressing, sexual encounters, and romanticized romance, it has become more important to understand the role television has in influencing the general attitudes of the people. Considering the view of the Cultivation Theory, this paper examines the impacts of repetitive representations of loyalty, betrayal, and mediated intimacy on viewers and their expectations, attitude towards relations, and moral judgment. The societal consequences of such representations form an important field of research debate as content of drama keeps undergoing transformation especially so in the media spaces that strike a balance between the cultural expectations, regulation and commerce. The dynamics can only be understood to understand how the contribution of visual media helps in changing the cultural attitudes towards intimacy, morality, and relations between humans.

1.1 Problem Statement

Young people are becoming encumbered with dramatized and even exaggerated representations of intimacy, loyalty, and betrayal in TV, movies and social media in the modern digital and media saturated environments. These mediate representations often contradict the actual dynamics of relationships, but they have the huge potential of influencing how young people perceive trust, commitment, and moral responsibility in relationships. The continuous exposure to the perfect love, sensationalized adoptions, and camera-provocative materials may damage the expectations of young audiences and make them adopt unrealistic demands of faithfulness or create conditions of unfaithfulness as a usual type of relations. These perceptions that are caused by media can also increase the fear of betrayal and lower the tolerance of imperfection in relationships and lead to the development of new anxieties about intimacy and trust.

Although the dramatic visual media is increasingly becoming influential, especially material, which includes the use of bold dressing, romantic love and involvement in emotionally charged relationships, there is a significant disparity in empirical studies focusing on the role these images play in influencing youth perception of loyalty and betrayal. The research done on the topic so far is more focused on general media impact with little consideration of the role that particular aesthetic and narrative elements play in forming relational expectations in culturally sensitive situations. Thus, the paper will be a critical analysis of the effects of mediated representations of intimacy, brash visual descriptions, and stylized relationship struggles, on the views of trust, loyalty, and commitment by young people. This gap needs to be closed to learn more about the psychosocial and cultural implications of the modern media content concerning youth relationship beliefs.

1.2 Significance

The study is meaningful because it contributes to the knowledge in understanding the influence of modern media, in this case, television dramas that include the use of bold images and close relationships in contacting the perceptions of loyalty, betrayal, and trust in interpersonal relations among the young people. The study can be used to support the wider debate on the psychological, emotional, and social consequences of media exposure among young viewers by exploring how these mediated representations inform the formation of attitudes and expectations.

The results will be useful to educators, parents, and mental health practitioners and provide information that can guide them in their approach to tackle the challenge of instilling healthier and more realistic relational expectations on young people. It is also of practical significance to media practitioners and creators of content by motivating them to create balanced and responsible representations that do not unconsciously develop misplaced or idealistic ideas about intimacy and commitment.

Moreover, the study can be of use in future scholarly investigations and policy actions to help inform the role of media on relational beliefs and well-being of young people. This research contributes to the necessity of culturally sensitive media literacy interventions and regulation factors by emphasizing the possible long-term consequences of the televised intimacy, dramatized conflict, and symbolic representations of betrayal.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The connection between media exposure and the perception of interpersonal relations among youth has taken a centre stage in the modern communication studies. The extensive literature illustrates the invasive nature of digital and visual media, such as television dramas, movies, and social network sites on the emotional growth, trust development, and relational expectations of adolescents. In a groundbreaking study, the Pew Research Center (2018) found out that Teens, Social Media, and Technology showed that social media is almost a universal possession among teenagers and highly influences their mental well-being, socialization, and perception of relationships. These results highlight the importance of researching the role of mediated content on relational beliefs, such as trust, loyalty, and betrayal.

Studies are growing to show that media outlets are influencing the perception of the youth to understand themselves and others. Lozano-Blasco et al. (2023) discovered that social networking sites have a strong effect on the identity formation, behavioral patterns, and social norms perception of the youth. As indicated by the authors, media literacy interventions are relevant to ensure that young audiences are safeguarded against distorted or harmful effects of online content that is mostly curated.

On the same note, Abbas et al. (2024) investigated the probability of social media use in connection with relational perceptions and the mental health of adolescents. They found out that an overexposure to online relational materials is related to anxiety, unrealistic expectations about intimacy, and sensitivity to conflict in relationships. These consequences depict the psychological frailty of young people that relied on highly dramatised or romanticised images of relationships.

Research has also indicated that consumption of media has direct influence on the way that teenagers cope in the relationship. Dibble et al. (2018) proved that social media can be both good and bad: it helps to maintain communication, intimacy, yet it can also cultivate misunderstandings in relationships and jealousy. Van Ouytsel et al., (2019) also found that digital media often instigates romantic incompatibility, distrust, and emotional insecurity in adolescents, which proves the significance of the comprehension of digital visualization in relational contexts.

Similarly, Quiroz et al., (2024) have determined that there is a close correlation between excessive social media consumption and jealousy in adolescent relationships and that the constant digital monitoring develops possessive habits and unrealistic expectations. These results are consistent with the rest of the larger psychological literature that emphasizes the role of mediate communication in emotion regulation as well as interpersonal conflict.

The dark side of online relationship forces has also been well captured in form of documentation. A systematic review of digital dating violence by Leadbeater et al. (2018) indicated that teenagers have been exposed to emotional and psychological abuse digitally more often. This kind of exposure is highly associated with the symptoms of depression and anxiety, which stresses how serious digital relational risks are.

The study by Garcia and Gutierrez (2023) revealed that adolescents have different ratios of trust in online socialization because of the low level of experience in real-life socialization and the increased vulnerability of adolescents. Their results generalize the necessity of safer digital spaces that can promote healthy relational development and avoid exploitation.

General relational changes caused by the digital technologies have also been researched. The proposed theoretical framework by Kelley and Thibaut (2018) explains how the social media changes the way

teenagers interact, communicate, and experience emotional intimacy with their peers. In their work, they establish a structural change in the way youth establish and sustain relationships in the digital era.

Likewise, Ouytsel et al. (2020) discovered that social media has a drastic effect on romantic relationships, improving communication and, at the same time, allowing misunderstanding, jealousy, and relationship instability. These papers illuminate the two-fold nature of digital environments at once bonding and destabilizing relationships among adolescents.

The meta-analytic and review studies affirm that there are extensive effects of social media on youth behavior and mental health. According to a report by Khan and Khan (2019), social media simultaneously leads to socialization and is a source of emotional issues, depending on the type and the severity of utilization. The Digital Wellness Lab (2022) also stressed that the experiences of high exposure to digital media have a strong impact on the emotional state of adolescents and their social attitudes and behavioral patterns.

American Academy of Pediatrics (2023) also warned about anxiety, depression, poor social skills, and unrealistic expectations of relations as a result of overexposure to social media. Their advice reveals the importance of parental control and media education in reducing the adverse effects.

Lastly, Hatamleh et al., (2023) have shown that the trust that adolescents have in digital platforms can help to improve the level of relations and promote healthier relationships. Nevertheless, their results also indicate that this trust has to be based on safe and well-regulated online spaces.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

One of these theories is Cultivation Theory, which was suggested by George Gerbner (1976) according to which the long-term and consistent exposure to the content of the media has a gradual influence on the perceptions of the social reality by an individual. The theory suggests that media has a symbolic creation of the world especially television, and now the digital media that has an unspoken impact on beliefs, attitudes, and expectations of the viewers as time progresses. Cultivation does not have an immediate effect but instead is cumulative where audiences are exposed to the same messages, themes or portrayals in the mediated space repeatedly.

In the framework of The Role of Media in Shaping Youth Attitudes towards Loyalty and Betrayal in Relationships, the framework of Cultivation Theory can also be referred to as highly relevant explanatory context. Modern visual media such as social media, television dramas, films, and online entertainment often portrays relationships in either dramatized, idealized/enhanced conflict-intensified forms. Constant exposure to these images may affect the way that young people perceive commitment, trust, loyalty and betrayal in their daily life.

Indicatively, when the media constantly represents disloyalty as ordinary, typical, or unavoidable, the youths watching might start believing in suspicion, or become more sensitive to the prospect of betrayal. Media, on the other hand, can also offer loyalty as either too idyllic or unrealistic thus causing young people to develop unrealistic perceptions of perfection in their relationships. In the long run, these mediated accounts may misrepresent the understanding of what should be the norm of commitment, good conduct, or even the normal conflict in relationships.

Cultivation Theory can therefore be used to explain how relational scheme of youths are shaped step by step as it shows how their perception of relationship mechanisms, emotional expectations, and social norms are shaped by repeated exposure to media portrayals. The theory highlights the necessity of assessing critically the psychological and cultural consequences of media consumption among the youth in the long perspective.

2.2 Proposed Hypotheses

On the foundation of cultivation theory, following hypothesis are proposed. The researchers test the hypothesis using the appropriate statistical software.

H1: Perception of TV dramas significantly predicts youth loyalty attitudes in relationships.

H2: Perception of TV dramas significantly predicts youth betrayal attitudes in relationships.

H3: The watch frequency of Pakistani dramas significantly influences youth loyalty and betrayal attitudes.

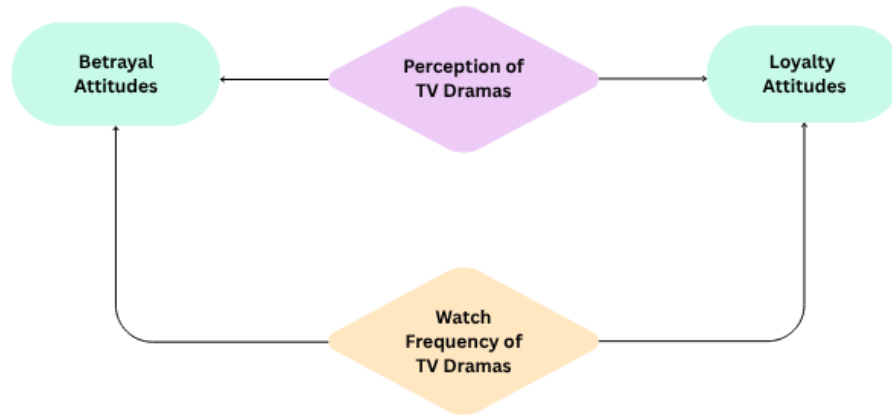


Figure 1: *Conceptual framework*

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This paper adopted a quantitative research design to test how media affects the young people in terms of their attitude towards faithfulness and disloyalty in relationship. The survey-based method was chosen in order to get numerical data that could be considered to be objectively measured, statistically interpreted, and generalizable. The research was not based on qualitative research like interviews or focus groups since the main aim was to measure the patterns, associations and trends within a larger group of people.

3.2 Study Population

The target market was made up of young adults who were between the ages of 18 and 30, a group that is considered to be the most active users of digital media and television dramas as well as online entertainment systems. This is commonly the age group that is exposed to relationship representations in films, social media, and TV contents so that they are the appropriate age group that can be assessed on how media representations influence views on loyalty, trust, and betrayal in relationships between people.

3.3 Sample Size and Technique

Non-probability (convenient) sampling was used as a sampling approach to cover different demographic groups, where a survey-based sampling approach was used. There were 265 respondents who took part in the study. Sample consisted of people of different age groups under the youth category, educational backgrounds and the level of media consumption habits. This variety enhanced the consistency and the application of the results.

3.4 Data Collection

The questionnaire used to collect data was in a structured format and consisted of self-administered questions that were sent online. The instrument consisted of closed-ended questions, which were used to determine the perceived influence of media on relationship expectations and norms. The attitude towards the statements concerning the loyalty, betrayal, and the influence of the media was measured with the help of a five-point Likert scale, which consisted of strongly agree, strongly disagree, and indifferent.

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

The statistics software SPSS was used to analyse the collected data. The general trends and characteristics of respondents were summarized using descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, and percentages). The relationship between media consumption pattern and the perception of youths towards loyalty and betrayal were studied using inferential methods such as correlation analysis and regression analysis. Such methods of analysis allowed to trace noticeable associations and predictive variables in the data sample.

4. RESULTS

Table 1 show that a total of 262 respondents provided the demographic information. According to the gender distribution, women made up the majority of participants (72.9%), while men made up 27.1%. Age-wise, the largest percentage of responders (35.5%) were in the 18–23 age range, followed by those in the 24–28 age range (33.2%). 16.8% of participants were between the ages of 29 and 33, and 14.5% were older than 33.

Only 11.5% of respondents had a Matric or lower level of education, while the majority (46.2%) had a Bachelor's degree, followed by those with Intermediate (23.7%) and Master's degrees (18.7%). 36.6% of respondents reported watching content once a week, 27.1% occasionally, 18.3% infrequently, and just 17.9% daily. Last but not least, the majority of participants (57.6%) watched for 1-2 hours, followed by 3-4 hours (35.5%) and more than 4 hours (6.9%).

Table 1: Demographics

Sr No.	Questions	Responses	<i>f</i>	%
1	Gender	Male	71	27.1
		Female	191	72.9
2	Age	18-23	93	35.5
		24-28	87	33.2
		29-33	44	16.8
		Or Above	38	14.5
3	Educational Qualification	Matric or Below	30	11.5
		Intermediate	62	23.7
		Bachelor's	121	46.2
		Master's	49	18.7
4	Monthly Income	<=50K	104	39.7
		50K-1L	63	24.0
		1L-1.5L	68	26.0
		1.5L-2L	14	5.3
		Above Two	13	5.0
5	Watch Time	Daily	47	17.9
		Weekly	96	36.6
		Occasionally	71	27.1
		Rarely	48	18.3
6	Watching Hours	1-2 Hours	151	57.6
		3-4 Hours	93	35.5
		4 Hours	18	6.9

Table 2 presents the mean and standard deviation of each group (perception, loyalty, and betrayal). The authors utilized 5-points Likert scale consists of 45 questions, each group having 15 items. All the items were interpreted through SPSS software for the standard and accurate data.

Table 2: *Likert scale (Variables' Questions)*

Variable (Compute)	Mean	Std. D	N (Valid)
Perception	11.5229	2.90023	262
Loyalty	34.4084	7.46879	262
Betrayal	33.6641	6.55201	262

The relationships between perceptions of TV dramas, loyalty attitudes, and betrayal attitudes were investigated using Pearson's correlation analysis. According to the findings in table 3, there was a significant positive association between perception and loyalty ($r = .60$, $p < .001$), indicating that respondents who thought TV dramas were more influential tended to have stronger sentiments regarding loyalty. Additionally, there was a somewhat positive link between perception and betrayal ($r = .28$, $p < .001$), suggesting that acceptance of betrayal motifs is somewhat correlated with higher perception of drama influence. Furthermore, there was a substantial correlation between loyalty and betrayal ($r = .64$, $p < .001$), indicating that people who have strong loyalty attitudes also typically have different opinions on betrayal. At the 0.01 level (two-tailed), every relationship was statistically significant.

Table 3: *Pearson Correlation Test*

		Perception	Loyalty	Betrayal
Perception	Pearson Correlation	1	.600**	.281**
Loyalty	Pearson Correlation		1	.642**
Betrayal	Pearson Correlation			1

**, Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Two simple linear regressions were conducted to assess whether perception of Pakistani TV dramas predicted loyalty and betrayal attitudes (see table 4). The first regression indicated that perception significantly predicted loyalty attitudes, $\beta = .60$, $t(260) = 12.08$, $p < .001$, explaining 36% of the variance, $F(1, 260) = 145.97$, $p < .001$. The second regression also showed a significant but weaker relationship with betrayal attitudes, $\beta = .28$, $t(260) = 4.72$, $p < .001$, explaining 7.9% of the variance, $F(1, 260) = 22.30$, $p < .001$.

These findings suggest that stronger perceptions about TV dramas' influence are connected with higher endorsement of loyalty and betrayal attitudes among youth, with a stronger effect for loyalty.

Table 4: *Linear Regression Analysis*

Dependent Variable	Predictor	β	t	p	R	R ²	Sig.
Loyalty	Perception	.600	12.08	<.001	.600	.360	<.001
Betrayal	Perception	.281	4.72	<.001	.281	.079	<.001

An independent samples t-test was performed to examine male and female respondents' perceptions, loyalty, and betrayal attitudes about Pakistani TV dramas. The findings showed in table 5 that perception and loyalty differed significantly by gender. Females reported higher perception ratings ($M = 2.97$) than males ($M = 2.60$), $t(260) = -2.33$, $p = .021$, showing that females saw TV dramas as having a greater influence on relationship values. Similarly, females scored higher on loyalty attitudes ($M = 7.73$) than males ($M = 6.53$), $t(260) = -2.00$, $p = .046$, indicating a stronger endorsement of loyalty-related ideals by female respondents. However, there was no significant gender difference in betrayal views ($t(260) = -0.36$, $p = .717$), showing that both genders perceived betrayal themes equally.

Table 5: Independent Sample T-Test

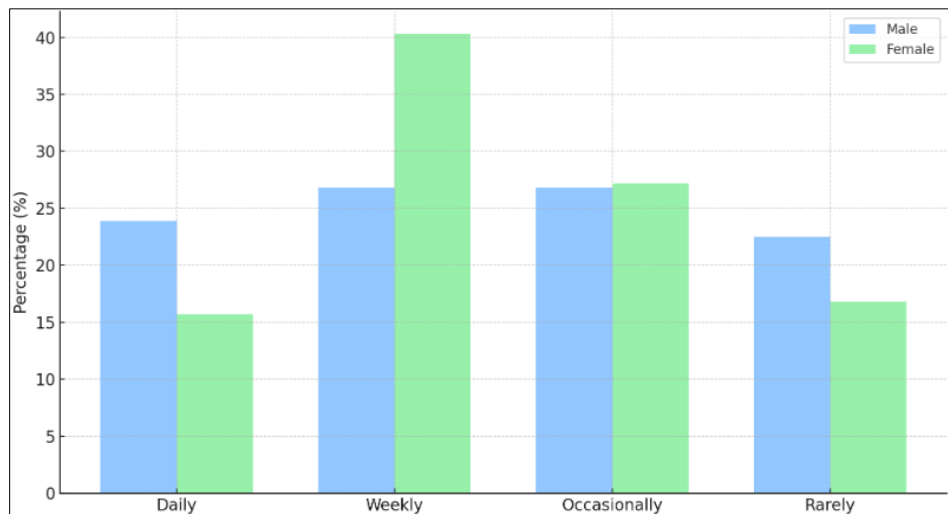
	Male	Female	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Perception	2.60026	2.97119	-2.472	142.105	.015
Loyalty	6.52939	7.73026	-2.163	147.223	.032
Betrayal	5.88378	6.79606	-.388	143.633	.699

In table 6, a One-Way ANOVA test revealed that perceptions of drama influence ($F(3, 258) = 10.31$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .11$), loyalty attitudes ($F(3, 258) = 12.50$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .13$), and betrayal attitudes ($F(3, 258) = 6.16$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$) were significantly impacted by watch frequency. Rare viewers had the highest scores in each instance, suggesting that less exposure to dramas is linked to more severe relationship attitudes and stronger perceptions of media influence.

Table 6: One way ANOVA Test

Variable	Watch Frequency	N	Mean	SD	F(3,258)	p	Partial η^2
Perception	Daily	47	10.15	2.75	10.31	<.001	.11
	Weekly	96	11.18	2.15			
	Occasionally	71	11.79	2.57			
	Rarely	48	13.17	3.89			
Loyalty	Daily	47	32.21	6.46	12.50	<.001	.13
	Weekly	96	32.46	4.97			
	Occasionally	71	35.08	8.21			
	Rarely	48	39.46	8.91			
Betrayal	Daily	47	32.32	6.19	6.16	<.001	.06
	Weekly	96	32.04	4.47			
	Occasionally	71	35.30	8.16			
	Rarely	48	35.81	6.74			

A chi-square test of independence was conducted (see figure 2) to examine the link between gender and frequency of watching Pakistani TV dramas. The results showed a statistically non-significant relationship, $\chi^2(3, N = 262) = 5.50$, $p = .139$, indicating that male and female respondents reported similar viewing frequency patterns. All expected cell counts were greater than five, satisfying the assumptions for this test.

**Figure 2: Frequency of watching Pakistani TV dramas**

4.1 Testing Hypotheses

To test the hypotheses, authors ran specific tests using appropriate statistical procedures on the SPSS.

H1: Perception of TV dramas significantly predicts youth loyalty attitudes

Pearson correlation analysis showed a significant positive relationship between perception of TV dramas and loyalty attitudes ($r = .600$, $p < .001$). Simple linear regression further confirmed that perception is a significant predictor of loyalty, explaining 36% of the variance ($\beta = .600$, $p < .001$; $R^2 = .360$). These findings indicate that a higher perception of drama influence is associated with stronger loyalty attitudes among youth, leading to support H1.

H2: Perception of TV dramas significantly predicts youth betrayal attitudes

Additionally, findings support the H2. Perception and attitudes about betrayal had a positive and statistically significant link ($r = .281$, $p < .001$). Perception was found to be a significant predictor of betrayal sentiments, accounting for roughly 8% of the variation ($\beta = .281$, $p < .001$; $R^2 = .079$). This implies that young people's perceptions of drama content have a small but significant impact on how they feel about betrayal.

H3: The watch frequency of Pakistani dramas significantly influences loyalty and betrayal attitudes.

An ANOVA test was conducted to test H3. The findings support the H3 and revealed that the watching frequency had a significant effect on loyalty attitudes, $F(3, 258) = 12.50$, $p < .001$, with higher-frequency viewers showing stronger loyalty scores. Similarly, viewing frequency significantly influenced betrayal attitudes, $F(3, 258) = 6.16$, $p < .001$. These results indicate that how often youth watch Pakistani dramas meaningfully shape both their loyalty and betrayal-related perceptions.

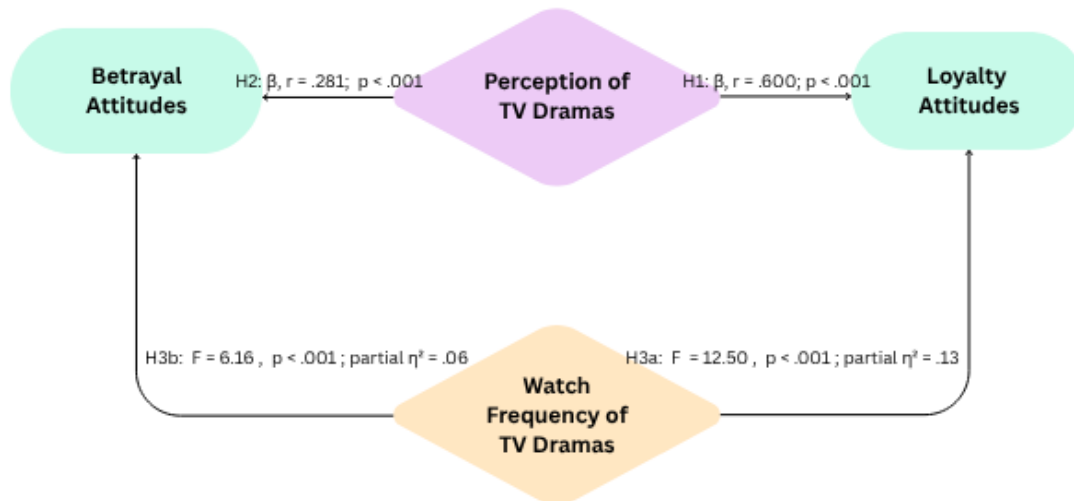


Figure 3: Structural representation of hypotheses with statistical results

Overall, the results provide strong support for the hypothesized relationships (Figure 3) grounded in Cultivation Theory. Perception of TV dramas emerged as a significant predictor of both loyalty and betrayal attitudes, with a particularly stronger influence on loyalty. The watch frequency also showed meaningful effects, indicating that heavier exposure to drama content is associated with stronger relational attitudes. Together, these findings demonstrate that Pakistani TV dramas play an important role in shaping youth perceptions and values related to loyalty and betrayal in relationships. The consistency of results across correlation, regression, and ANOVA tests reinforces the robustness of these associations and sets a solid foundation for the discussion and interpretation presented in the next section.

5. DISCUSSION

The study results present empirical evidence to the hypothesis that the Pakistani television dramas play a big role in influencing the youths in their perceptions about loyalty and betrayal in romantic relationships. The positive relationship between the perception of drama influence and the attitude of loyalty ($r = .600$, $p < .001$) is strong, which demonstrates that the repetitive involvement in relational narratives supports the loyalty as a fundamental relational value. This correlates with the Cultivation Theory (Gerbner, 2002), which theorizes that the accumulated time of exposure to mediated storytelling has the effect of building norms and expectations of real-life social interaction(s). Past research also supports the fact that the expectations of commitment, fidelity, and trust are ingrained with repeated exposure to dramatized relationship content (Morgan and Shanahan, 2010; Nabi and Clark, 2008).

The role of perceived media influence on attitudes towards betrayal with a relatively smaller value ($r = .281$, $p < .001$) points to the fact that dramatized images of deception, jealousy, and conflicts indirectly influence the attitudes of the viewer's towards the elements of betrayal. This is evidenced by the previous research which demonstrated that media images of infidelity make young viewers suspicious and anxious of relationships (Keren Eyal, and Te'eni-Harari, 2013; Ward, 2003). Khadim et al., (2023) also stress that content-laden with the conflict raises the anticipation of the viewer's towards the instability in relationships, which is also consistent with the results of the current research.

In addition, the findings of the study are consistent with the findings of research by Naz and Mahmood (2019) who claim that televised emotional manipulation and dishonesty image makes distrust a norm especially among young and immature viewers. Nabi and Keblusek (2014) also discovered that the emotively stimulating drama content enhances thought by increasing exposure to emotional events on the screen, thus the more the relational betrayal seen on the screen, the more memorable and effective it becomes on future attitudes.

Regression analysis also shows that the explain the 36% variance in the attitude of loyalty and 8% betrayal attitudes in that the perceptions of drama influence are significant predictors of relational meaning-making by the media. Busselle and Bilandzic (2008) believe that narrative transportation increases the level of emotional engagement, leaving viewers more vulnerable to the internalization of relational scripts. This process seems to be obvious in the Pakistani setting, where emotional conflicts and betrayed feelings are major plot devices (Do Kyun Kim et al., 2009). The study has also revealed gender differences, which make the discussion interesting. The female respondents scored much higher in the perception and loyalty measures and this shows greater emotional attachment to relational programming. Along those lines, Hartley et al., (2014) and Kontolatou (2025) observe that women are more prone to media-formulated relational cues, since they tend to be more empathetically involved with character-based stories.

According to the results of ANOVA, the perception of media influence and a stronger attitude to loyalty and betrayal among the infrequent viewers of dramas were the highest. This rather counterintuitive result can imply that the less frequent the exposure, the more emotionally impactful it is, because the occasional viewers of the episode perceive each episode of viewing more severely. This follows the conclusions of Nabi and Green (2015) who state that attitudinal effects of selective, yet emotionally intense engagement may be powerful even in the cases of media exposure that are not voluminous.

Lastly, the result is consistent with the Cultural Imperialism Theory, with changing representations of intimacy, clothes, and relationship conventions in Pakistani dramas tending to adopt more and more of an international media aesthetic. This confusion of cultural signals affects young people in anticipating romantic patterns and morality, which is a similar issue that Tomlinson (2001) and Straubhaar (2007) say that media globalization, affects local values of relationships.

On the whole, the discussion indicates that Pakistani dramas are an effective symbolic space that influence attitudes, expectations, and emotional processes of making sense about loyalty, trust, and betrayal among young people.

6. CONCLUSION

This research illustrates that media is a significant factor that influences how the youth perceive loyalty, trust and infidelity in a romantic relationship. The trends that have emerged in the statistics imply that habits of exposure to televised and online relationship information determine the expectation that young people have and how they perceive relationship practices. The viewer's absorb the emotional qualities, struggles, and images of dedication they see on screen and pass them onto the real world perceptions and attitudes among the young viewers. The findings also indicate the varying effects of media engagement on these perceptions by different levels of media engagement, as it reveals that media does not influence all the youth similarly. Also, gender difference suggests that representations of relationships make different impressions on male and female viewers that further highlight the multi-facetedness of media effects on individual beliefs. Comprehensively, the research highlights the fact that there is need to create more awareness about the effect of dramatized relationship material on the young people. It also stresses the need to help young people to have more realistic, healthy and balanced expectations of trust and loyalty. The results give educators, parents, mental health practitioners, and media producers an avenue through which they can learn the implication of relationships representation in the current media settings.

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Conflict of Interest

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ORCID iDs

Ghulam Safdar¹  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5152-0052>

Maheen Qaiser²  <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-1238-8662>

Andleeb Basharat Abbasi²  <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-8366-7965>

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