



**History:**

Received: Sep. 19, 2020  
Accepted: Nov. 23, 2020  
First Published: Dec. 19, 2020  
Collection year: 2020  
Status: Published

**Identifiers and Pagination:**

Year: 2020  
Volume: 5  
First Page: 1  
Last Page: 7  
Publisher ID:10.21065.2520-5986.3.1  
DOI:  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.21065/25205986.5.1>

**Corresponding author:**

Noreen Sultana M.Phil  
(Psychology), Department of  
Psychology, University of Lahore  
(Sargodha Campus) Sargodha,  
Pakistan. E.:  
Noreensultana85@gmail.com

**Citation:**

Noreen Sultana, Kunza Aqdas,  
Sadaf Khan, Sohail Mehmood,  
Shahid Mehmood Psychological  
effects of Pakistani films on  
spectators with special reference  
to the 21st century films. Adv Hum  
& Soc Sci; 2020 (5). 1-8

**Review Article**

**PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF PAKISTANI FILMS ON SPECTATORS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE 21ST CENTURY FILMS**

**Noreen Sultana<sup>1</sup>, Kunza Aqdas<sup>2</sup>, Sadaf Khan<sup>3</sup>, Sohail Mehmood<sup>3</sup>, Shahid Mehmood<sup>4</sup>**

- 1 Department of Psychology, University of Lahore (Sargodha Campus) Sargodha, Pakistan.
- 2 Department of Psychology, National College of Business Administration and Economics, Multan campus, Multan, Pakistan.
- 3 Department of Media Studies, Jinnah University for Women, Karachi, Pakistan.
- 4 Chief Librarian, University of Sahiwal, Sahiwal, Pakistan.

**Abstract**

The aim of present paper is to investigate the psychological outcomes of 21st century Pakistani movies on viewers. The most important four outcomes are as following: (a) Violent behavior (b) Sensuality and Depression (c) Stereotypes (d) Misconception about Islam and Pakistani culture. By psychologically examining the theme of the film, we can take a look at the producer's psychological methods and analyze the performance of the theme in the film. This paper is psychological analysis of five film themes and their carriage in productions. The films under analysis are Khuda Kay Liay (2007), Bol (2011), Bin Roye(2015), Malik (2016) Waar (2013). It is inferred from this study that these films have strong psychological impact on audience's conscious and unconscious.

**Keywords:** Psychology, Violence, Sensuality, Cinema, Pakistani films, Khuda Kay Leay, Bin Roye, Malik, Waar.

**Introduction**

Most of the movies are psychologically alive, and the public who watch them, in the communities who make them, can perceive them from diverse angles. Moreover, films can develop memory by telling us stories about people, showing how their past shaped their present. Movies also have worth in social psychology. Investigators from the field of sociology, psychology, and media studies have traced out a few dynamics that augment the possibility of why teenagers are involved in violent and criminal activities. Movie watching always remains a considerable quotient of the answer.

Unexpectedly and perhaps inadvertently, some of the Pakistani movies produced in the 21st-century hand down the western stereotypes about Islamic values and staunch Muslims in general and Pakistani and Pakistani social values. For instance, this stereotyping involves Muslims' physicality and behavior, Islamic themes like Jihad, and developing its correlation with terrorism and social matters like issues of female honor and its rabid representation as wife-beating. In fact some films aimed to dSomeg a wicked label to Pakistanis Muslims, showing the lower self-esteem or "confused consciousness of self" of film producers. The researcher of the present study tries to analyze the difficulties and blunders that occur when individuals of diverse minds set an effort to produce violent, overtly sexualized, and political

**Funding:**

The authors received no direct funding for this research.

**Competing Interests:**

The authors declare no competing interests

Additional information is available at the end of the article.

movies without observing cultural and ethnic differences and prevalent religious tradition in the context of Pakistan.

**Literature review**

The primary conception involving the world-altering into a global Village was provided by Marshall (McLuhan, 2003), but it appears to be the impression of news media in the late 20th century. Films, on the other hand, despite being a significant source of entertainment, since the turn of the 20th century, received relatively less research consideration than news. Still, after observing the excessively tilted content and their impact on spectators, research community was compelled to pay attention. Since then, enormous figures of studies and bodies of knowledge have appeared that show a relationship between movie content exploration and its impacts on individuals.

A meta-analysis (Anderson 2007) illustrates a reliable connection between movies and sensitive behavior problems and violent thoughts and activities. According to him, violent movies lead to aggressive behavior in adults, especially in youngsters/teenagers. It addresses bias, violence, traditional values, persuasion, group communication, governance, and other necessary areas. Carter and Weaver reflect in their studies that movies are the only sole factor for violent behavior (Carter, 2003). The researchers state that film can lead to violent physical simulations, identifying powerful heroes (McQuail, 1994). Hargie, Tourish, and Wilson showed the sensual scenes and other destructive subjects make up an overwhelming part of movie scripts and affect an enormous number of viewers as most of these movies produced globally are designed to quench the appetite of teenagers. They are based on sensual adventure, fear, and so many teenagers' themes (Hargie, 2009). A new unanswered challenge pointed out (Yockey, 2014) is how viewers apply these circumstances to their real lives and what type of content they converse in their peer group.

**Analysis**

The study shows that media employs too much negativity in describing and illustrating an issue, particularly stereotyping religious characters (Chejnova, 2014). Burgoon, Berger, and Waldron believe that sensual and violent movies stimulate harmful and dangerous attitudes such as smoking, drinking alcohol, taking drugs, and abusing others (Burgoon, 2000). Viewers adopt aggressive behavior by viewing violent movies, including whining, rebellion, mistreat, shouting, and rowdy.

In Pakistani films, genders are approached as constitutive of a confident male cultural type. Cultural types such as the nobleman and the angry young man are the central representation of gender in popular culture. They are easily identifiable and summarize a range of attitudes and values without having social exposure (Barth, 1960). Simultaneously, a flirt and addict young boy who doesn't care about any rule and order. He follows the law of pleasure in all the fields of life and portrays Pakistan's exaggerated form. Viewers apply this hero to their real lives and converse in their peer group (Yockey, 2014). Before this, in the initial decades, the representative hero in most Pakistani movies had been portrayed as being educated, Urdu-speaking, soft-spoken, ethically upright, and well-groomed (Gazdar M., 1997). These were talents represented in Pakistani movies, masculinity that summarized the ideas and visualizations of nation-building. The emphasis here was on the inner character with stress on self-control, discipline, and sacrifice. This perfect type of manliness

was perhaps best depicted in the characters and left a positive impact on our last generation's personality. However, the existence and strength of these impacts all depend on the individual. The movies today are way more violent than before. The filmmakers choose these themes, which surprisingly increases their fan following by audience. Films like these display new ways of physical cruelty and torture, inspiring young concentrations to indulge in these actions.

Horror movies can also generate new terrors through association. "These actions as frightening, and then we start to associate horror movies with real-life dealings," said Mathers. This conclusion is called classical conditioning.

Psychologists agree that the effects of films are not always wholly destructive: desensitization. For example, if you were scared of clowns, then experience horror movies about clowns may assist your fear because you are constantly showing it. "Desensitization to violence and other things that may occur when with viewing movies," said Mathers.

Both Mathers and Bialozynski suggest that if a person experiences adverse conditions after watching horror movies, they should stay away. The negative impact could lead to approximately more critical and dangerous. However, if you do not and "seen as an interest, but is not going to affect them negatively, then they could watch them," said Bialozynski.

A balanced and healthy movie should not be prohibited, but those who left a long-lasting negative impact on the viewer's minds cannot be allowed. Depression anxiety, violent behavior misconception in religious beliefs, suspicious behavior, and low self-esteem are those constructs that rain the personalities. These negative constructs are the gift of Pakistani movies to our new generation. It is so vital that all interested parties of the Muslim community, parents, teachers, Imams, and Muslim artists, must be aware of their children's mental health issues, understand the negative psychological effects of movies, and make an effort to deal with it. The question remained unanswered. That's why movies are not checked on a psychological level. One psychological committee should be there which approves or disapprove of the film. It should be mandated to support the movie based on positive psychological effects and Islam's real face. Mostly its negligence is the cause of restlessness in loyal Muslims (Carter, 2003).

### **Bin Roye**

This is a romantic movie which shows a sense of wholeness and happiness in a family system. Pakistan is a developing country, and most Pakistani viewers wish to maintain those living standards established in the movie. When they become disappointed, they move to a state of depression, stress, self-blaming, and sometimes violent behavior.

The film addresses specific intimate relations affecting the health and functioning of a family. Viewers learn the dependency on others and to become emotionally violent reactive in family relationships through a difficult period. Researchers argue that the viewer understands the helplessness and self-pity. Sensual scenes make up an overwhelming part of movie characters and leave the outcome on a huge watcher figure (Hargie, 2009). After watching such films, viewers, especially teenagers, only focus on adjusting and strengthening love matters and unconscious communications based on sensual desire. Those parents who don't set appropriate boundaries for their children must know that their children are at a higher risk for suicide and intentional self-harm because of adolescent

behavioral problems, grieving, depression, and anxiety. Girl viewers don't enhance skills required for healthy family functioning, including communication, conflict resolution, and problem-solving, and depend on other persons, which increase their depression and anxiety.

However, improving these skills for each member of the family increases the potential for success in overcoming or addressing family problems. The viewers must focus on providing all family members with the tools they need to facilitate healing. Thus the movie was full of glimmer, high economic status far from practical life. Consequently, watchers are also tried to maintain and apply these circumstances to their real lives. (Yockey, 2014). It shows a loss of control and inability to cope with stressful situations in life. They react overt, unassertive, and impulsive without considering circumstances and examine the situation. So such kind of movies left permanent stress, inferiority complex, and helplessness<sup>9</sup>. Later on, these constructs make the reason for violent and maladaptive behavior.

### **Bol**

Hakim is depicted as a very religious man who has a strong connection with the mosque but has a violent nature. He has been compared with Saqa (Ishaq), who is running a brothel. He tortures Saifi, his son, and kills him with a plastic bag. Circumstances compel him to take money out of the masjid properties. The film is about social cognition, social pressure, social norms, and social roles of Muslim society, and Hakim is representing Muslims. This is a film that is excessively critical of the Islamic 'culture' and values. A Muslim father gives importance to his values over the happiness of his daughters. In Pakistani social circles, he is stereotyped religious Muslim molvi and a masculine father facing financial difficulties. The movie shows a discriminatory attitude towards Muslims and their practices in society. The film shows Masculine. The father (Hakim) refers to dominating male identity.

The persona represents all of the different social masks and the dark side of personalities<sup>10</sup> that, according to them, the Muslims wear among various groups and situations. The picture shows that Muslims use a persona to protect their Ego and negative images. The film shows cognitive dissonance is the mental discomfort (psychological stress) experienced by the father (Hakim), who simultaneously holds two or more contradictory ideas, beliefs, or values (Festinger, L. 1962). This discomfort is triggered by a situation in which a belief of Hakim clashes with Saqa to get a baby girl and keep it. Hakim pleads with Meena to give him the baby to not have to face a terrible future. Hakim, with a very cheap character, is a false representation of Muslims, their mentality, and domestic and social dealing.

### **Khuda kay liyay**

Khuda Ke Liye, better known as "In the name of God," is the justification for the mental misrepresentation of facts to take a wrong action to decrease the threatening and frustration (A. Freud, 1936). The movie wants to show that all Pakistanis are rigid and static followers of Islam. The film apparent is a thick description of the narrowness of Muslims. In the context of Khuda ka Liya, Muslim prisoners in the custody of the west are forced to show their relation with Osama bin Laden. Molvi enforces the Muslims to attend a mosque where they deliver Quranic lessons through physical punishment. The film stereotypes the Muslims and their appearance as extremists. This is an ambiguous interpretation of Islam and its practices, especially dealing with females.

People who are brought up in dual culture face a conflictual relationship between the inside

world and the outside world. They do not obtain freedom throughout their lives and are compelled to follow the pattern set by males. This movie is discovering certain fundamentalist's false beliefs circling Muslims and Islam, especially after the 9/11 attacks. It has a fatwa issue about music and marriage of girl dealt with some fundamental maulvis. Music is considered 'Haram' by confident fundamentalist groups, and young generation is trapped by them. Maulvi Tahiri is the symbol of the wrong picture of Muslims and Islam. Here the producer wants to assure us that Maulvi Tahiri is representing one sect, which is, consciously or unconsciously, misguiding the new generation about Islamic beliefs and practices. After 9/11, Muslims are tortured mentally and physically all over the world and perceived as terrorists (Mujahideen). These beliefs or thinking patterns may or may not truly reflect reality (JALAL, 2008). The Muslims' mental health state is at a crisis level and is suffered from stress and anxiety. There are many cases in which Muslims, who have mental health issues, respond violently to the external pressure of non-Muslims. In a vindictive manner, these frustrated Muslims show destructive behavior because of mental health issues. Islam is a component of the current culture of Pakistan, but adult Muslim viewers are facing challenges like depression, anger, and low self-esteem.

### **Malik**

In this film, the skill to participate in violence by Malik is more significant than aptitudes such as loyalty, self-control, and tough efforts for the country. These aptitudes in different contexts at particular times used by him, are making him distinct. He looks to the law and order mechanism to settle the disputes. On the other hand, the superiority of the masculine model has been presented in the film. The opinion has been established that movie presented as a character that has an idealized beginning of the way the world works but does not fully comprehend reality.

The movie depicts that if the soldiers of Pakistan are as Malik, then the young generation will be in safe hands. On the other hand, a corrupt Muslim politician of Pakistan has been shown who satisfies his sexual lust for an innocent tribal girl. In an encounter, the corrupt Muslim politician is killed by the brave Malik. It has been shown that all Pakistani political families are mighty and do whatever they wish without considering law and order. In this way, the film's character represents the corrupt political figures of Pakistan and symbolizes all the most apparent social stresses and challenges faced by loyal Pakistanis.

### **Waar**

Major Mujtaba Rizvi (played by Shaan Shahid) is a former Pakistan Army officer suffering from depression and post-traumatic stress that could trigger the viewer's past trauma. The counter-terrorism action being conducted in the northwestern tribal region of Pakistan the movies can cause a wide variety of side-effects, depending on the individual. It exaggerates violence, however, for the defense of the country but, it may induce 'unpleasant world syndrome' and may spark violent traits among children and youngsters. Movies also may force a cultural dilemma, could relate to current social problems, Political scenarios, but among the audience as the portrayal of characters is sometimes far from reality.

It has influenced the nationalism in Pakistan a lot, along with it a regional stereotype. It is considered to be the best to motivate Pakistani to struggle and achieve a sense of patriotism among the people and achieve national integration emerging as a part of global power



(Chejnova, 2014). Pakistan is a country where poverty is its main drawback. However, still, in terms of Army, it attracted international forces and audience, which is clearly shown in the global awards ceremonies in which Pakistan have won and will continue winning awards for various titles like the bravest Army of the world. It inspires, helps to become psychologically courageous, innovative, and loyal, determined positively.

On the other hand, some specific regions of Pakistan have been stigmatized for Islamic terrorism. Viewer considered these areas are Taliban region, so they avoid going there. This image also affects tourism, domestic, and international.

One of the most noticeable side effects is anxiety. The severity and prolonged existence of the concern depends on the individual. However, movies end up consuming increased chances of rising anxiety conditions later in adulthood. This is because terror experienced when sighted is stored in the amygdala, a part of the brain responsible for producing emotions. These now-adults cannot raise the memory without inciting trauma and anxiety. Other possibly lasting and dangerous impacts comprise "irrational fears, paranoia, interest in the paranormal, things that aren't psychologically strong for the mind," said Mathers.

However, the existence and strength of this negative outcome all depend on the individual. For a vehicle, which Ehtesham drives away in order to dispose off the bomb. He is killed when the bomb explodes. It would be very dangerous for a person's mental health. "Personal involvements would certainly define how significant side-effects and outcomes become," said Bialozynski. Viewer predisposes the destructive nature will only learn the ways of destruction in the society. Movies maker team must consider all the psychological aspects of one healthy psychological movie and put the peak potential to fulfill its requirement.

### Conclusion

Pakistani movies can play a significant role in our new generations' character and personality building if our filmmakers play a more careful and intellectually enlightened role, mimicking our traditional values and guard our identities. Psychological adverse outcomes and misrepresentation of religion and nationality could prove a new degenerative war against our new generation. As an onslaught of the fifth-generation war, identity and discourse confusion is evident in our filmmakers. They are spreading fatal messages, serving none else but those who are hell-bent on denying us our political existence. For example, Jihad is shown as a political weapon used in movies that threaten believers and unbelievers (JALAL, 2008) alike and hence. We should strive to retrieve our glorious past and high ethical values that are the embodiment of faith (iman) based on Allah's submission through films.

### Reference

- Anderson, A. C., Gentile, A. D., and Buckley, E. K. (2007). Violent video games effects on children and adolescents: Theory, research, and Practice. Oxford Scholarship Online: April 2010, DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195309836.001.0001
- Barth, F. (1960). The system of social satisfaction in Swat, Northern Pakistan. (in R. leach (Ed.) ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN : 978-1-349-11403-0

Burgoon, J. K. (2000). Mindfulness and interpersonal communication. *Journal of Social Issues* 56(1):, 105-27. doi:10.1111/0022-4537.00154

Carter, C., and Weaver, K. C. (2003). *Violence and the media*. Buckingham: Open University.

Chejnova, P. (2014). Expressing Politeness in the Institutional E-Mail communication of university students in the Czech Republic. *Journal of Pragmatics* 60; 175-92.

Chejnová, Pavla. 2014. "Expressing Politeness in the Institutional E-Mail Communications of University Students in the Czech Republic." *Journal of Pragmatics* 60: 175–92. *cultures* 16: doi:10.3983/twc.2014.0506

Festinger, L. (1962). Cognitive Dissonance. *Scientific American*. 207(4):, 93-107. doi:10.1038/scientificamerican.1062-93

Freud, A. (1937). *The Ego and the mechanisms of defense*, London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis

Gazdar, M. (1997). *Pakistan Cinema: 1947-1997*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

Hargie, O, D Tourish, and N Wilson. 2009. "Journal of Business Communication." *Journal of Business Communication* 47 (4): 414–36.

JALAL, A. (2008). *PARTISANS OF ALLAH (JIHAD IN SOUTH ASIA)*. Harvard University Press, doi: 10.1017/S0021911809001089

Macluhan , M. (2003). *Understanding me*. (D. S. Stephanie Macluhan, Ed.) Toronto: MAS. public policy. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.

Yockey, M. 2. (2014). *the Invisible Teenager: Comic Book Materiality and the Amateur Films of Don Glut*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2014.0506>



© 2016 The Author(s). This open access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) 4.0 license.

You are free to:

Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format

Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially.

The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.

Under the following terms:

Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made.

You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

No additional restrictions

You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits