



## Religious Presentation in Pakistani TV Dramas: A Comparative Discourse Analysis of Pakistan Television and Hum Television Dramas

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines the discourses, its treatment and dimension in Pakistani television dramas regarding the representation of religion which is considered as the most important phenomenon among all the societies. PTV and HUM TV dramas are selected for exploring the representation of religion and the discourse being constructed by this portrayal. As a quantitative research methodology, the data is collected with the help of content analysis. The researcher draws the sample on the basis of two stage sampling techniques. The stratified sampling technique was considered as sample unit 1 (SU1) while the simple random sampling technique was denoted as sample unit 2 (SU2). The framing analysis (Modigliani, 1989) of religion suggested that most of the dramas were based on social issues rather than religious topics. Furthermore, the postulates of narrative analysis (Riessman, 2005) helped researchers in the construction of coding categories. The results of this research study show that the role of religion as a code of life is very infrequent. Additionally, this project explores the ideological implication of the religious discourses constructed in the dramas within the Pakistani society in the post 9/11 context.*



## Introduction

Media is considered as the most significant instrument of communication and has the control to influence the opinion of common people. As stated by Baran (2004), the media is saturating our everyday lives that we are often unconscious of their existence, not to unveil their influence. Media informs us, entertains us, educates us, and annoys us. Moreover, it moves our emotions, challenges

our mind, and determines our intelligence. It also represents a central mechanism for peoples of different social, cultural and religious groups to learn about each other.

Researcher aims to analyse the plot; character appearances, positive/negative speech and dialogues, their activities, religious identities and visual images to discuss how the drama producers represented the dynamics of treatment of religion, its dimensions, themes, use of religion in different activities. Further, this project discovers the ideological propositions of the discourses constructed in the dramas within the Pakistani society in the post 9/11 context. The time frame of this study is important and have historical context because during this period Pakistanis have involved in a series of debates and national and international policies regarding religious extremism, and media liberalization in Pakistan.

The media representations of religion predominantly its image, discourses, their treatment and dimension has been a trendy and challenged vicinity of research and an important issue in public debate. The way that the media represents religion is a part of Religious' issues. These particular issues in Pakistan continue to feature notably in state policy and initiatives that put emphasis on the point that several issues about religious representation of the any particular topic and disputes regarding gender and over all religious discourses in the past engross constant revisiting to understand the current state in society. This research study concentrates on the representation of Religious Discourses in drama content by looking specifically at how relevant characters, their activities and appearances are portrayed in a sample of Dramas from "PTV Home" and "HUM TV" in order to address the issue of media representation of religious discourses.

### **Religion in Pakistani Dramas**

The drama industry of Pakistan has adopted a new trend in their script of religion in the latest upcoming drama stories. Moreover, every drama on every channel has added an essence of religion in their stories. After the success of "Main Abdul Qadir Hoon" which was on aired on Hum channel on December 18, 2010- May 21, 2011, the storyline of most of the dramas turned towards the religious genre highlighting many religious factors. Furthermore, most of the dramas are influenced and encouraged by the novels. Recently, many dramas are telecasted but not every drama is a quality based drama. Almost every entertainment channel is adopting the religious themes based dramas therefore Pakistani drama industry is boosting up with the trend of "embracing religion."

### **Statement of the Problem**

After reviewing literature of the research articles regarding dramas the researcher came to the view that PTV Urdu dramas are close to our traditional and cultural and religious values, while the HUM TV Urdu dramas are rather modern in their portrayal or religion and are not presenting Pakistani culture. This research aims to discover that how different religious discourses are portrayed on Hum TV and PTV Home dramas. The study needs to ensure that Hum TV dramas represent religion impartially as compared to PTV dramas. Furthermore, this study will examine whether Dramas of above said channels are constructing positive religious discourses or negative religious discourses. It will also identify different frames of religious representation and will find out whether the female characters are portrayed more religious as compared to male characters.

### **Objectives**

- To identify the positive and negative images of religious narratives through selected television dramas.
- To calculate the ratio of religious discourses in PTV Home dramas and HUM TV dramas.

- To examine whether PTV Home Dramas are presenting female characters more religious than that of HUM TV Dramas.
- To investigate whether the religious values other than Islam is invading into our religion in TV dramas.

### **Significance of the Study**

Television is playing a very vital role in the life of viewers. In Pakistan, Dramas are most seen media genre as compared to another broadcast. Such high viewership affects the viewers intentionally or unintentionally. Hum TV network is one of them whom dramas have high rating in public (Bischof, 1992). Pakistan Television Corporation is the major media organization in Pakistan. It is a famous public-sector organization. Basic aim of this research is to investigate the religious practices from drama character presented in Hum TV and PTV Home. Religious behaviors, actions intended to help others, may serve a protective function against association with deviant peers and subsequent delinquent and antisocial behaviors. The present study examined the relations among specific types of religious behaviors, themes and concepts being portrayed in Pakistani television dramas. This study could help in better understating about current religious practice scenario on Pakistani electronic media.

### **Literature Review**

Divorce is considered as a social immorality in almost all societies and in Islam it is considered as an evil act. It is condemned in Islam to divorce without any solid reason. Pakistani dramas include many social issues as their main themes, and analysis of the treatment and direction of such issues can describe that what type of religious discourses, the TV dramas are constructing. A research study regarding the relation of religious portrayal in media and the issues of divorce is conducted by Alberto Chong and Eliana La Ferrara (2010). This investigated the relationship between television and the ratio of divorce. The study was conducted in Brazil and the cultivation effects were analyzed in this study. Moreover, the researchers wanted to find the link between divorce in Brazil and the religious television.

Ibrahim et al (2017) conducted a research on analysis of the dramas and concluded that new terminologies are not only creating the sense of gender globalization but also has sensitized the society, the research said that the reinforcement of the societal characters in the dramas are creating the hindrance in the advancement of Malaysian Women. The researcher also showed that the women are not created friendly by the media in different roles and women are deprived in the sense of her representation. Religion has granted women freedoms in many fields but the dramas with are not presenting that freedom with equal ratio.

Moreover, analysis of the representations of religiously-oriented cultural objects improves the understanding of how to read, or get through, religious content as an ingredient of cultural texts. Since it is analyzed by Jolyon Mitchell, she stated that, "Analysis of representation, caricaturing and stereotyping of religious traditions and figures is a significant part of developing any multi religious approach to media, religion and culture" (2003). The prime objective behind such researches is to become aware to the point that whether the religion receives representation, what ideologies are being sent to us over the air and how they are portrayed. The in hand study also tries to answer such questions regarding the religion.

The television is the most accepted form of entertainment medium (Althied & snow 1979). The researcher has been argued that television is becoming ever more entertaining. Even the television programmes have started including more informative material regarding religious and social issues which confirm to the informative as well as entertaining nature of television (Isotalus, 1996).

Further the researcher stated that television is a remarkable medium; it highlights visually, main character and also the controversies regarding religious discourses (Leiwo 1995). These researches helped the researcher in formulating the categories of her research and also supported in data collection process.

Donald (2012) in his work entitles, “Religion or belief, equality and human rights in England and Wales” stated that the religious literacy has the latent ability to intervene cultural, moral and cognitive differences and to expand intellectual, social and cultural horizons. It can also confront any attempt to close down debates with conversation-stopping convictions and absolutes. Further, it can help the improvement of a level of background considerations, so a person may be able to comprehend the internal meaning of literary works, political events or public actions, or the history which has figured the vigilant public institutions or national religious standards.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The current research study examines the discourses of religion by representing related issues, problems and conflicts in the selected Pakistani TV dramas and the fundamental supposition for the in-hand study is that the entire media discourses are the yields of ideologies, the system of attitudes and thoughts (Stokes, 2012). The researcher draws the research study on the framing theory to understand the ideological underpinning of media discourses about religion.

The primary concept of framing theory is that the media focus consideration on convinced proceedings and then chairs them inside a field of significance. The approach of framing theory is a significant theme since it can have an immense control and therefore the theory of framing prolonged to organizations as well. In addition, framing theory suggests that how something is represented through media to the audience and influences the choices, people make about how to process that information. First researcher who concentrated on framing as a form of communication and a theory as well was Goffman and he described “framing” as a “schemata of interpretation” that facilitates folks to “locate, perceive, identify and label” incidence or life experiences (Goffman, 1974).

The definition was modified by Robert Entman who stated “to frame a communicating text or message is to promote certain features of a ‘perceived reality’ and make them more salient in such a way that endorses a specific problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, media representation, and/or a treatment recommendation” (Entman, 1993, p. 51).

Media representation of religion and different issues in Pakistani TV dramas is creating specific discourses regarding religion. The approaches of framing theory helped Pan and Kosicki (1993), clearly pointed to the investigative character of the experimental part of the work and measured it “an initial step towards analyzing the media discourse process as a whole” (p. 55).

Similarly, the media representation of religion in TV dramas constructs different types of discourses regarding religion and different issues related to religion. These discourses are embedded in the text of the plot of the drama and can be calculated, analyzed and defined by using content analysis. The stories, programmes, dramas and articles are selected through internet, such as key word searches on electronic data bases, and typically serve as the unit of analysis (cf. Tankard 2001, p. 101; Dimitrova et al. 2005). After collecting the data material, coders analyze a sample, identifying the presence or absence of one of the predefined frames in the story or article, drama or the programme.

## Hypotheses

**H<sub>1</sub>:** It is more likely that representation of religious discourse is nominal and less central to the drama plot.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** It is more likely that PTV Home drama characters are associated with positive personality traits as compare to HUM TV

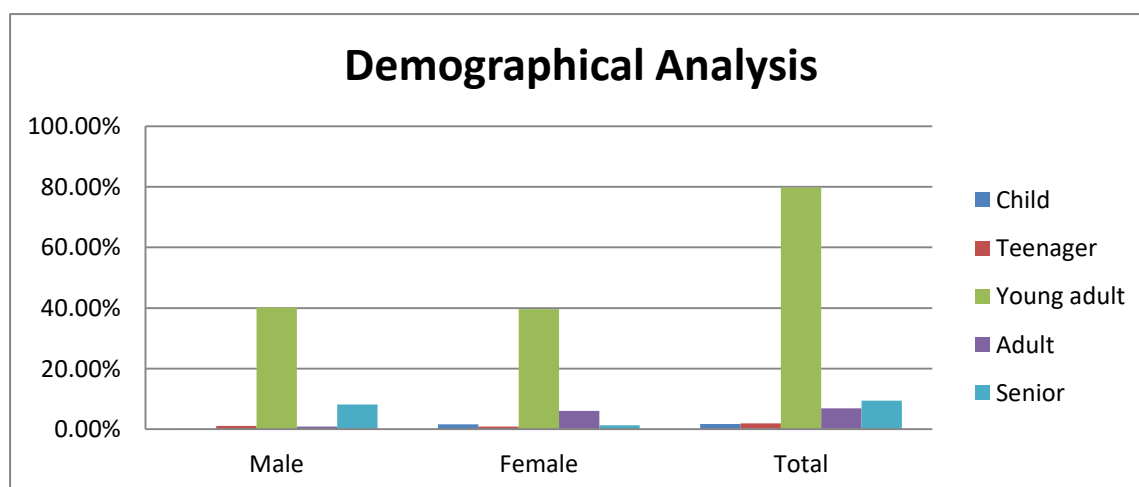
## Research Methods

The current study was done through the quantitative methodology, by the use of content analysis, where the researcher selected dramas of PTV and Hum TV of 2002-2016. According to Berger (1991), “Content analysis is a research technique that is based on measuring the amount of something (violence, negative portrayals of women and religion, or whatever) in a representative sample of some mass mediated popular form of art”.

For this purpose, two Pakistani television channels are selected, PTV Home; to analyze the stance of state own media regarding religion representation in the most viewed genre of media forms while HUM TV is selected due to high rating of its dramas. The population or the universe of the study is all those dramas that are broadcasted during the years of 2002 and 2016. All the dramas that are given during these 14 years on PTV Home and HUM TV are considered as the population. For this purpose, two Pakistani television channels are selected, PTV Home; to analyze the stance of state own media regarding religion representation in the most viewed genre of media forms while HUM TV is selected due to high rating of its dramas. The population or the universe of the study is all those dramas that are broadcasted during the years of 2002 and 2016. All the dramas that are given during these 14 years on PTV Home and HUM TV are considered as the population. Total six television drama serials consisted of 143 episodes and the time duration of every episode is 30-45 minutes; from both of the TV channels i.e. PTV Home and HUM TV are selected for content analysis. Each episode is composed of almost 20-30 scenes. Coding sheet was developed under the consideration of objectives, hypothesis and religious discourse. The coding of complete drama serial included the year of the drama, number of episodes, and type of the issue. The second unit of analysis included individual characters of the selected drama. Data was analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

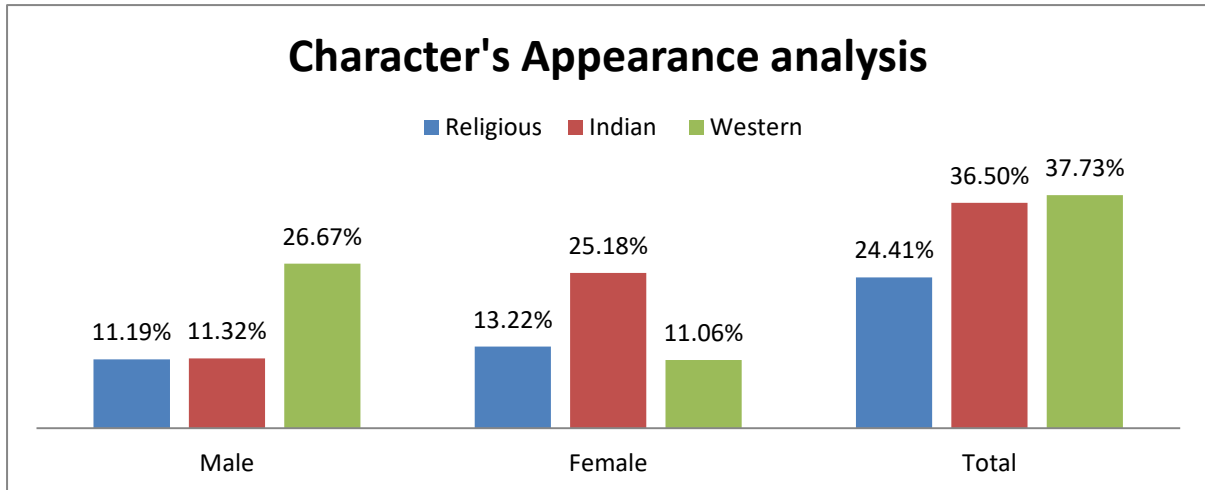
## Data Analysis

**Figure 1: Demographical Analysis of Both Channels**



This table shows the overall comparison of both of the channels i.e. HUM TV and PTV regarding the demographic distribution. This table clearly shows that the number of young male adult characters was more than the number of female character i.e. males are 40.09 per cent while the females are 39.63 per cent. Similarly, senior male character was also high in number as compare to the female. Female child character portrayal is high is number than that of the male child character. Other values also show the significant differences in their distribution.

**Figure 2: Appearance of Character Analysis of Both Channels**



This table shows the comparative analysis of the appearance of the character of both of the channels. It can be seen from the result as mentioned in the table that the religious male portrayal was more in ptv as compare to the hum tv dramas, similarly the western appearance is also high in percentage in ptv dramas which is 14.68 per cent as compare to the 11.99 per cent of hum tv dramas. Indian appearance of male character is more in hum tv dramas. In the case of female characters, the religious appearance in ptv dramas is more with percentage of 7.60 per cent and 5.61 per cent for hum tv dramas. While more females were presented in Indian as well as western appearance in the hum tv dramas while western appearance of female is less in ptv dramas.

**Table 1: Character’s Identity Analysis of Both Channels**

Demography Characteristics	PTV Dramas				HUM TV Dramas				Grand Total	
	Tum Mere Kya Ho	Bechari	KhudaZameen se Gaya Nahi Hay	Total	Aik Pal	Humsafar	Mann Mayal	Total		
Male	Religious	241	104	101	446	249	123	275	647	1093
	Liberal	8%	3.45%	3.35%	1481%	8.27%	4.08%	9.13%	21.49%	36.31%
	Religious	42	136	176	354	15	15	44	74	428
Female	Conservative	1.39%	4.51%	5.84%	11.76%	0.49%	0.49%	1.46%	2.45%	14.21%
	Religious	225	216	101	542	220	253	253	726	1268
	Liberal	7.47%	7.17%	3.35%	18%	7.30%	8.40%	8.40%	24.11%	42.12%
Total	Religious	33	72	22	127	15	46	33	94	221
	Conservative	1.09%	2.39%	0.73%	4.21%	0.49%	1.52%	1.09%	3.12%	7.34%
Total		541	528	400	1469	499	437	605	1541	3010
		17.97%	17.54%	13.28	48.80%	16.57%	14.51%	20.09%	51.19%	100%

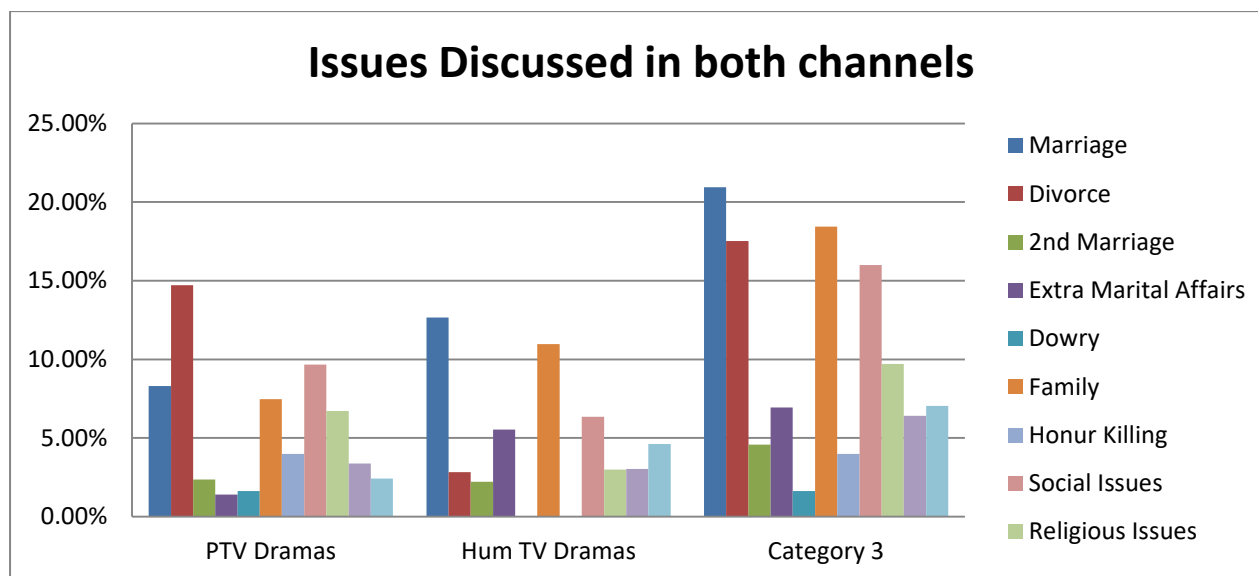
Table 1 shows the comparative analysis of both of the channels and describes that the religious conservative presentation of males is higher in ptv dramas with percentage of 11.76 per cent as compare to the percentage of hum tv dramas that was 2.45 per cent only. Similar is the case with female portrayals, as 4.21 per cent females were shown with religious conservative identity in contrast with 3.12 per cent presentation of female characters in hum tv dramas.

**Table 2: Plot of Scene Analysis of Both Channel Dramas**

Plot of scene	PTV Dramas			HUM TV Dramas				Grand Total	
	Tum Mere Kya Ho	Bechari	KhudaZameen se Gaya Nahi Hay	Total	Aik Pal	Humsafar	Mann Mayal		
Religious	25 0.83%	72 2.39%	160 3.31%	257 8.53%	59 1.96%	23 0.76%	22 0.73%	104 3.45%	361 11.99%
Secular	16 0.53%	16 0.53%	16 0.53%	48 1.59%	103 3.42%	61 2.02%	33 1.09%	197 6.54%	245 8.13%
Social	500 16.61%	440 14.61%	224 7.44%	1164 38.67%	337 11.19%	353 11.72%	550 18.27%	1240 41.19%	2404 79.86%
<b>Total</b>	<b>541</b> <b>17.97%</b>	<b>528</b> <b>17.54%</b>	<b>400</b> <b>13.28%</b>	<b>1469</b> <b>48.80%</b>	<b>499</b> <b>14.91%</b>	<b>437</b> <b>14.51%</b>	<b>605</b> <b>20.09%</b>	<b>1541</b> <b>51.19%</b>	<b>3010</b> <b>100%</b>

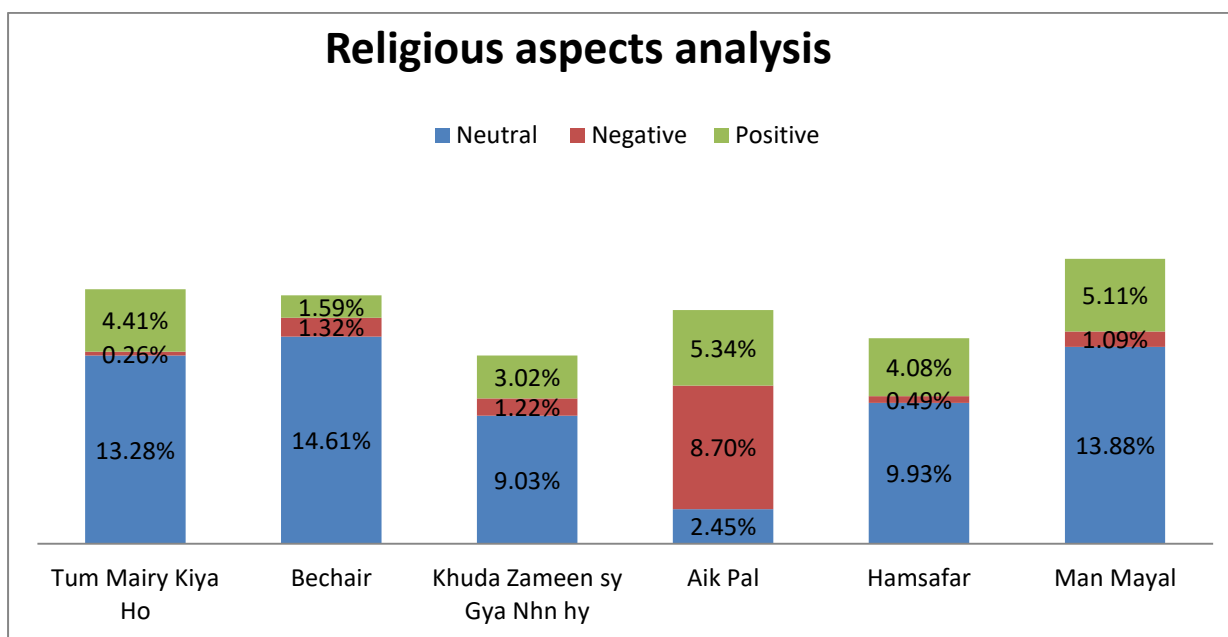
Table 2 shows the comparative analysis of the plot of both channels and describes that ptv dramas were based on religious plot with high percentage as compare to the hum tv dramas and the percentage was 8.53 per cent for ptv while 3.45 per cent for hum tv dramas. The hum tv dramas were mostly based on social plot as compare to the ptv dramas similarly the secular plot was also in high percentage in hum tv dramas as compare to the ptv dramas.

**Figure 3: Issues Discussed In Both Channels**



The above mentioned table describes the results of comparative analysis of both channels and shows that the issue of marriage, extra marital affairs, and family issues were discussed by the characters with hi percentage, 12.65 per cent, 5.54 per cent and 10.96 per cent relatively. While the issues like divorce, second marriage and dowry issues were given more presentation in ptv dramas. Similarly, the ptv dramas gave more presentation to the religious discussion that included the issues like hijab, jihad, terrorism and its false justification in Islam, and murder etc. The issues like honour killing was also not presented in the hum tv dramas while ptv dramas were also giving coverage to the issues like honor killing as it is a social taboo and even no justification in Islam.

**Figure 4: Religious Aspects Analysis of Both Channels**



The above mentioned table describes the result regarding the religious aspect of the scenes in the dramas whether that was positive, negative or neutral. While the results show that the hum tv dramas contained more positive religious aspect as compared to the ptv dramas while the neutral aspect was presented with high percentage in ptv dramas that was 36.94 per cent as compared to the 26.27 per cent for the hum tv dramas. Moreover, the results show that the ptv dramas gave less presentation to the negative aspects regarding the religion while this percentage was high in hum tv dramas with 10.36 per cent and for ptv this percentage was 2.82 per cent.

### Hypothesis Analysis

**H1: It is more likely that representation of religious discourse is nominal and less central to the drama plot.**

**Table 3:**

Plot of Scene	Religious	Secular	Social	Total
Frequency	361	245	2404	3010
Percentage	11.99%	8.13%	79.86%	100%

The results show that the most of the Pakistani dramas are not constructing religion based plots as clearly shown in the results that the plots related to the social issues have larger percentage; 80 percent as compare to the other plots and the results confirm the first hypothesis of the study.

**H2: It is more likely that PTV Home dramas are constructing more positive religious discourse than HUM TV dramas.**



**Table 4:**

Tum Mere kia Ho	PTV Dramas		Hum TV Dramas			Grand Total
	Bechari	Khuda Zameense gayanahi hay	Aik Pal	Humsafar	Man Mayal	
133	48	91	161	123	154	710
18.73%	6.76%	12.81%	22.67%	17.32%	21.69%	100%
	<b>272</b>			<b>438</b>		
	<b>38.30%</b>			<b>61.69%</b>		

The above mentioned table and the graph demonstrate the results regarding the portrayal of positive religious discourses. The second hypothesis says that the PTV dramas are constructing more positive religious discourse as compare to the other channel that is HUM TV but according to the findings this hypothesis is not approved as the religious positivity is 62 per cent in HUM TV dramas.

### **Conclusion**

The facts and figures also shows that the ptv dramas were also presenting the religiously prohibited issue but the percentage was less than that of the hum tv dramas.

The first objective of the study was to identify the dominant theme and the concept of the religious discourses. The findings of the research show that Pakistani dramas are mostly based on social and domestic issues than that of the religious themes. Moreover, if one drama is portraying any of its character as a religious person then that drama must be portraying that character as a conservative, aggressive and egocentric. While the comparative analysis shows that the characters of ptv drama were presented more aggressive as compare to the hum tv drama, 17.63 per cent and 10.31 per cent relatively.

While the factor of nudity was highly presented in hum tv dramas with percentage of 7.09 per cent and 2.58 per cent for ptv dramas. Even the religiously prohibited issues like drug abuse were also openly presented in the dramas hence the proportion was high in hum tv dramas (4.99 per cent) as compare to ptv dramas (0.95 per cent). But it is the fact that both the channels even ptv; considered as the state own channel and recognized as the most religious as compare to the private channels, is also presenting their characters in drama roles that are contrary to religion that's why are not following the religious standards in featuring the themes, concepts and plots of the dramas. The facts and figures showed that almost all of the dramas were presenting the issue other than religion so that the religion was not the main theme of the drama. But the comparison results showed that the ptv dramas were based on religious plots in high proportion as compare to the hum tv dramas, 17.49 per cent and 6.74 per cent relatively. These findings also approved the second hypothesis of the research which was the assumption that ptv dramas are following more religious plots as compare to hum tv dramas.

Appearance of the characters was also analysed demographically and the results show that the religious appearance was reported with high proportion in ptv and less in hum tv. While the Indian appearance was in high proportion in hum tv dramas. It is also a fact that the dramas nowadays are following the Indian standards and styles of dressing in their dramas for both the genders. The reason behind this is that when Islam approached to sub-continent region, its customs blend with Indian social practices by accepting many standards and elements from the Hindu caste system. Consequently, the Hindus who transformed to Islam reserved their own cultural values, counting

with the caste system, although Islam was not in agreement with the caste system. Islam was not friendly with the regional customs, like visiting saint's shrines, Sufi dances and songs, and other cultural practices of these people (Roy, 2004). In previous dramas the clothing styles of women was mostly Pakistani or Indian but the proportion of Indian appearance was very low while in 21st century drama, western dressing was also launched concerning women dressing.

Television is the most significant medium of religious and cultural endorsement as well as for contravention for both. After reviewing the literature another research question was constructed that the ptv dramas are constructing positive discourses for ptv as compare to the hum tv and the findings show that results of the study confirmed that hum tv dramas television channel is not representing the actual religious standards and culture of the Pakistan. The facts and figures also vindicated the research question with the intention that ptv and Hum television are highlighting the gender as well as their issues and problems other than religion in its Urdu dramas. The above finding of the study also supported the theory of framing theory, as majority shared the view that media is exaggerating by depicting the religion and extremism in the television dramas. It is seen that the media coverage of Islam related issues has changed noticeably both in quantity and quality. 9/11 was the incident that push Islam into the global media's front position: not only the coverage of Islam considerably amplified, predominantly in news and entertainment media, but the approach in which Islam was framed by the media changed as well. They portrayed religion Islam as the extremist and terrorist religion of the world. At the moment it is the duty of Pakistani media and the media of other Islamic countries as well as to defend their religion and portray it optimistically through highlighting the positivity with the true soul of Islam. Even regarding the female portrayal, only one aspect was mostly painted that Islam has strict rules only for female gender while males are free to enjoy anything in their lives.

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