



Unveiling Child Abuse: An Analysis of Newspaper Coverage in Lahore, Pakistan (2020-2023)

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Abstract

Media coverage plays a critical role in shaping public understanding of child abuse and neglect, often influencing societal perceptions and policy responses. This study examines the portrayal of child abuse in newspapers in Lahore, Pakistan, focusing on the years 2020-2023. Employing a qualitative research design and content analysis methodology, the study analyzes how newspapers frame and report incidents of child abuse, particularly child sexual abuse (CSA). Findings reveal patterns in coverage frequency, framing, and narrative presentation across English and Urdu newspapers. The analysis highlights both the strengths and shortcomings of media reporting on child abuse issues, including sensationalism, lack of sensitivity, and politicization. Despite these challenges, media coverage serves as a crucial platform for raising awareness and prompting societal dialogue on child protection. The study underscores the importance of ethical reporting practices, collaboration between media, government, and civil society, and the implementation of preventative measures to address child abuse effectively. Recommendations include enhancing journalist training on ethical reporting, promoting collaboration between media and child welfare organizations, and advocating for stricter reporting standards to protect victims' privacy.

Keywords: Child sexual abuse (CSA), Media coverage, Newspapers, Framing and Priming, Preventative measures