

Development and Analysis of Attribution of Responsibility in Honour Killing Scenarios

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Abstract

Honour killing can be traced in almost all parts of Pakistan. The present research has been carried out to develop and measure the attribution of responsibility of people towards honour killing. The present study assessed it through seven scenario based on real incidents reported by the participants in their interviews; and incidents published in newspapers were also used. Interviews were conducted with lawyers, social activists, police officials, journalists, and perpetrators. However, scenarios were administered in a sample of 459 individuals (Male=245; Female=209) of 18-60 years ($M= 28.06$, $SD= 9.63$). Results were carried out to analyse gender and area of residence related differences. The results indicated that men attributed more to victims as a wrongdoer than women and participants living in rural areas justified honour killings as compared to urban population by giving the attribution of responsibility to the victims in the scenarios.

Keywords: Development, Analysis, Attribution, Responsibility, Honour Killings

Introduction

Honour killing is a severe form of domestic violence. Thousands of women have been killed around the world in the name of honour (Rahim, Jahangir, & Holden, 2016). Honour killings are mostly prevalent in honour based cultures. Many Asian countries are considered as honour based societies primarily India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh are societies where honour codes violation results in severe outcomes (Paulsson, 2013) As mostly honour killings are the outcomes of these violations (Şenol & Yıldız, 2013). Protecting honour code requires to not have an extramarital sexual relation, Okyay (2007) said it to be quite offensive for a girl/woman to break honour code by indulging into

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extramarital sexual relationships. Numerous other causes have been identified that are associated with honour killings in honour based societies. Among those causes, choice marriage, marriage outside *bradari* (family clan), love marriages, property dispute, false accusations (Sindhi, 2007), and lenient laws (Haile, 2007) are prevalent in Asian cultures.

Previous research studies suggested that honour killings in Pakistan are strongly linked and endorsed by culture, traditions, and customary laws (Amnesty International Report, 2008; Ali, 2001; Dyer, 2015). Honour killing incidents are not limited to any particular group of people; rather it is substantially present in those parts of the society which is less educated, underdeveloped, and mostly belonging to the rural setup of the country (Shah, 1998; Ullah, 2010).

Honour killings incidents also differ in term of individualistic and collectivistic societies and the latter are more likely to endorse honour killings in a positive manner (Caffaro, Ferrari, & Schmidt, 2014). In collectivistic societies self-image is strictly associated with social image. “*a threat or disrespect to one’s name or social image is a direct threat or disrespect to one’s self-image*” (Guerra et al., 2013). Other than considering those factors associated with honour killings, few researches have made an attempt in investigating the perception of people towards this crime and identified attribution of responsibility directed towards victim in most of the honour killing cases especially in collectivistic societies (Caffaro, Ferraris & Schmidt, 2014). Pakistan is also considered as a collectivistic society where people keep honour adhering attitudes and strictly follow honour codes. In a Scenario based experimental study Vandello and Cohen (2003) on extramarital affair of wife to infidelity of a woman suggested that threat to male honour can operate as a central point for violence against women. It has also been identified in the previous literature that the families who belonged to rural setup and have strong tribal background are reportedly more prone and accepting towards traditional phenomena such as linking women’s sexual behavior with honour and male control over women (Sakallı, Uğurlu, & Akbaş, 2013; Kardam, 2005). Therefore, present study aimed to find out the differences in perception of rural and urban population of Pakistan. Previous researches have shed light on the determinants of honour causes associated with honour killings and attitude of people related to honour killing. Among those determinants’ education is also a significant predictor of honour killing. A study conducted on Jordanian adolescents found out that people with lower education adhere to more positive attitudes towards honour killings than higher education (Eisner & Ghuneim, 2013).

Honour approving attitudes differ across cultures. Research across four nations identified that males were approving of honour attitudes, owing to their

belief that husbands' respect is tarnished and threatened from the infidelity of the wife. Pakistani participants were the most approving and upon endorsing honor-adhering attitudes as compared to other nations (Lowe, Khan, Thanzam, Barzy, & Karmaliani, 2018). Previous studies conducted in different countries have also found out that generally people and particularly men attributed the victim for the cause of honour killing. Female infidelity is a primary reason that made men use of violence to partially redeem their lost honour (Vandello & Cohen, 2003).

However, less empirical studies have been conducted in Pakistan and on general population to identify the trend of attribution of responsibility in honour killing incidents. Current paper aimed to fill this literature gap, to find general trend of people attributing the responsibility towards honour killing, and to investigate the gender difference of general population of diverse educational background and also to locate differences as per area of living (rural and urban). As one cannot deny the importance of these demographic in honour killing acts, and hence need to be studied in depth.

Method

Objective of the study

- 1- To develop an indigenous measure of attribution of responsibility towards honour killing.
- 2- To explore the differences among men and women in attributing the responsibility towards honour killing incidents.
- 3- To explore the differences in perception of rural and urban population in attributing the responsibility towards honour killing incidents.

Development of Attribution of Responsibility in Honour Killing incident scale (ARHKs).

The scarcity of an instrument to measure attribution of blame among people in the honour killing incident in Pakistan was the basic motivation behind the development of this measure. It aimed at determining the overall perception of public towards honour killing crime by measuring peoples' attribution of responsibility towards honour killing. The measure has gone through different stages in the course of its development. Scenarios were developed on real incidents reported by the lawyers, police officials, journalists, and perpetrators in qualitative study phase. The qualitative phase of this research was based on semi structured interviews from 33 individuals. Sample consisted of lawyers, social activists (social activists also included NGO workers who are working on women

related issues), Journalists, Religious Scholars, Psychologist, Police officials, and Perpetrators. The interviews were conducted till the saturation of information. Following steps were taken to construct scenarios-based scale.

Scenarios were given to experts with a PhD degree to evaluate the wording and content accuracy. The experts also suggested the response options. After getting the review from SMEs, committee approach was carried out to reach a consensus. As suggested by the experts, scenarios were made brief. and wordings were altered. Moreover, 3-point Likert format was decided as a response format of the scale. The response format included the options of attribution of blame towards the culprit (one who committed murder) the second option was attribution of blame towards the victim (the one who has been murdered) and the third option directed attribution of blame towards both (victim and culprit). High scores will indicate that people blame the victim, whereas low scores will indicate that attribution of blame is towards culprit (the one who murdered). Additionally, response format also contained an open-ended question to allow participant of the study if they want to express and justify their reason for choosing a particular option. Seven scenarios and 3 point Likert scale format were finalized to carry out the study. The score of scale ranges from 7–21 means with higher score indicating responsibility to victim. Internal consistency was found to be satisfactory for seven- scenario scale ($\alpha=.72$)

Nature of Scenarios

Participants were asked to indicate and attribute the individuals they believe were responsible for the incident. The nature of scenarios varied in terms of their stories explained below:

1. In scenario one, a daughter had been killed by her mother for having a second marriage out of love.
2. Scenario two discussed the murder of a daughter by her father for choosing a life partner outside their *braadri* (cast and creed).
3. Scenario three explained the murder of a sister by her brother for her pictures with a religious cleric going viral on social media.
4. In scenario four two sisters had been killed by their brother for having friendship with a guy on telephone.
5. Scenario five is indicating the murder of a sister in law by her brother in law on suspicion of extramarital affair.

6. Scenario six is based on the murder of a wife by husband for developing an extramarital affair.
7. In scenario seven, a sister had been killed by her brother for developing a relationship outside their religion.

Procedure

Questionnaires were distributed among the participants ($N=459$) including Male ($n= 245$) and Female ($n=209$), five participants didn't mention their gender, with an age range of 18-60 years ($M= 28.06$, $SD= 9.63$). sample was approached from different cities of Punjab and Federal (Pakistan) including rural ($n=130$) and urban ($n=299$) residents. However, 30 participants didn't mention their area of residence while filling out the questionnaire. Participants were asked to give their responses for each scenario. The completion of questionnaire that is comprised upon an informed consent, demographic sheet and seven scenarios took approximately 15 minutes. Participants' were briefed that all the information collected through this questionnaire would be kept confidential and would only be used for research purpose.

Results of the scenario based scale

Table 1
Group Comparisons across Gender for the Scenarios regarding attribution of Responsibility for Honour Killings (N=454).

Variables	Male	Female			95% CI		Cohen's <i>d</i>
	(<i>n</i> =245)	(<i>n</i> =209)					
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>t</i> (454)	<i>p</i>	<i>LL</i>	<i>UP</i>	
Scenario 1	1.88(.84)	1.70 (.80)	2.00	.32	-.08	.23	.22
Scenario 2	1.98(.85)	1.71 (.81)	2.25	.03	.02	.33	.32
Scenario 3	2.17(.74)	1.95(.79)	2.78	.00	.06	.33	.29
Scenario 4	2.19 (.71)	2.04 (.78)	2.21	.03	.01	.29	.20
Scenario 5	1.95 (.91)	1.47(.76)	6.11	.000	.33	.64	.57
Scenario 6	2.28(.66)	2.38(.67)	-1.39	.17	-.21	.04	.15

Scenario 7	2.17(.74)	2.08(.79)	1.44	.15	-.03	.24	.12
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The results in Table indicated significant mean differences for Scenario 2-5, indicating that men have given the responsibility to victims for the wrongdoing and hence justified honour killing for these scenarios.

Table 2
Group Comparisons across Rural and Urban Residence for the Scenarios regarding Attribution of Responsibility for Honour Killings (N=429).

Variables	Rural	Urban			95% CI		Cohen's <i>d</i>
	(<i>n</i> =130)	(<i>n</i> =299)			<i>LL</i>	<i>UP</i>	
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>t</i> (429)	<i>p</i>			
Scenario 1	1.67(.79)	1.84(.83)	-1.06	.29	-.26	.08	.20
Scenario 2	1.88(.86)	1.84(.82)	1.42	.16	-.04	.29	.05
Scenario 3	2.07(.75)	2.04(.77)	.501	.62	-.12	.20	.04
Scenario 4	2.22(.72)	2.07(.75)	2.02	.04	-.00	.32	.20
Scenario 5	1.58(.84)	1.80(.88)	-2.35	.02	-.39	-.04	.26
Scenario 6	2.43(.70)	2.27 (.65)	2.22	.03	-.01	.28	.24
Scenario 7	2.16(.79)	2.13(.75)	.430	.67	-.12	.19	.04

The mean differences in the above table showed that overall; most of the rural sample has given attribution of responsibility to victim as compared to participants residing in urban areas. The significant differences are only found in scenario 4, 5, and 6 whereas in two scenarios rural population attributed more responsibility to victims whereas in scenario 5 the mean differences suggest that urban population have attributed more responsibility to victims.

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to investigate the attribution of responsibility people prescribed to the one who got murdered or the murderer in

the given scenario. All the scenarios depicted the incidents of honour killings. The scenarios were not completely hypothetical in nature rather they were based on real incidents reported by the participants in their interviews. In each scenario there were different relations (male) involved (father, brother, husband, and brother in law) who had killed in the name of honour.

The study found significant gender differences in the attribution of responsibility in the four out of seven scenarios. Men have generally given the responsibility to the victim for honour killing. In Pakistani society men believe that women who exploited and crossed the family values are responsible for bringing dishonour to the family. To restore the lost honour that particular women should be treated with extreme reaction. The gender differences in the present study are also consonant with the other studies which have found out that men mostly have justified honour killing and women are usually the victims, so they are against this act (Rahim, Jehangir, Holden 2016). The previous literature also suggested that in collectivistic cultures, men have given the responsibility to victims for example, Turkish men have blamed the victim (Caffaro, Ferraris & Schmidt, 2014) in honor killing cases. Men have strongly perceived women as a culprit, and they have endorsed honour killing against them. It can be deduced that in Pakistani culture unfaithfulness from the wife is unpardonable. Men take extreme actions on such suspicion because it causes a great threat to husbands' reputation.

In the present study "scenario five" showed strongest significant gender difference where men scored high on attributing the responsibility to victim. It can be inferred from the findings that although cause of murder was extramarital affair which is equivalent to infidelity with the husband. Moreover, in the particular scenario brother in law who was also a caretaker of a mosque killed his sister in law on the suspicion of extramarital affair. In "scenario six" which was also related to extramarital affair but non significant differences found in that scenario indicating that both male and female participants equally blame the victim These findings were also aligned with other studies that found both males and females equally blame wife for infidelity (Lowe, Khan, Thanzami, Barz, & Karmaliani, 2018). A similar study conducted on four nations also explored that Pakistani participants have the most favourable attitudes towards honour based violence against their wives. Sheikh et al. (2010) concluded that more than half of the females approved husbands' honour killing against an unfaithful wife in Pakistan. So it can be concluded that extramarital affairs are not just condemned by males rather both genders in different studies. They perceived it in terms of adultery which is discouraged in collectivistic cultures that carries a particularly harsh stigma in honour (Vandello and Cohen, 2003).

In scenario two, three and four male participants have given the responsibility to victims and justify the act of honour killing against them. The rest of the three scenarios do not show any gender difference. Several studies of similar nature found out that no significant gender differences for several reasons are reported, that justified honour based violence. Reason ranged from disobeying a father, marrying someone unacceptable, or wanting to end marriage (khan, 2017).

The result of the present study also found out that there is a significant impact of area of residence on the beliefs of people. There were least significant differences found out in the perception of rural and urban population. Overall, mean differences of five scenarios signify that rural population in the data has attributed more responsibility to the victim as compared to urban population. It can be deduced that people living in rural setups are more collectivistic in their living. People living in rural areas in Pakistan have more traditional approach. They have more closely knitted family systems so their reputation in their vicinity is of great importance and whenever their repute and respect is threatened they take such extreme actions. Due to collectivistic setup they feel more peer pressure in such incidents. A study conducted in turkey found out that the honour attitude of academics who believed violence towards women as only solution to regain honour are mostly those academicians' who have lived the longest in a district or a village as compared to those who have lived the longest in a cities (Çalik, Demirbag, Bulut, & Demirdag, 2017).

Present study was attempted to develop an indigenous measure of attribution of responsibility towards honour killing. There is a dearth of scales available in Pakistan measuring attribution of responsibility towards honour killing scenarios. Scenarios were developed to measure the response of the participants. Moreover, the present study also investigated the gender differences and differences in perception of rural and urban population. By comparing the differences in terms of gender and area of residence, we sought to identify the perceptions of male and female participants and also the differences in perception of participants living in rural and urban setups.

Overall, the findings of the present research could be helpful in understanding the beliefs of participants suggesting that men and women of Pakistan both share and endorse almost the same beliefs towards honour killing. The responses of male and female differed in different scenarios. It can be deduced that both men and women may hold the belief that women are supposed to tolerate male aggression and violence and men can use violence to control women. Whereas, other analyses were conducted to evaluate the perception of rural and urban population in honour killing scenarios. Collectively, the results

signify that majority of the rural population attributed the blame towards victim as compared to urban population. People living in rural areas are not very highly educated. Less education is also a reason that the attitudes of rural population towards women are not egalitarian. People living in rural areas are also under great influence of society. Literature has established that social pressure is also a major contributor in developing a belief that considers marriage out of choice as unforgiveable.

Overall, the findings of the present research could be helpful in understanding the beliefs of participants that either their beliefs revolve around victim blaming or perpetrator blaming.

Practical implications

The study also has practical implications, such as the results highlight the need for interventions that may reduce the victim blaming. Moreover, attitude change of people is also required on this issue that would help in reducing the number of killings in the name of honour every year in Pakistan.

Limitations

The sample is not representative of the perception of honour killing of the whole Pakistani population. Larger representative sample from different provinces of Pakistan should be collected for future studies. The sample was not diverse in terms of religion. Perception of people belonging to different ethnic and religious backgrounds can be explored in future studies as well. The sample of the present study was also not equally distributed specifically when it comes to rural and urban population.

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