INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES BULLETIN
ISSN: (E) 3007-1917 (P) 3007-1909

Volume 4, Issue 3, 2026

CONSTRUCTING THE TRANSGENDER IDENTITY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF COMEDIC OTHERING VS. SOCIO-POLITICAL HUMANIZATION ON PAKISTANI YOUTUBE

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22913741

Received	Accepted	Published
01 January 2026	17 March 2026	31 March 2026

ABSTRACT

The rapid digitization of Pakistan's mediascape has transformed how the khawaja sira (transgender) community is constructed in public discourse. Historically relegated to comedic relief in legacy broadcast media, transgender identity now occupies a contested representational space on YouTube. This study examines the algorithmic polarization of transgender identity through a comparative Qualitative Content Analysis of eight purposively sampled videos, contrasting the entertainment genre (Nadir Ali, Rana Ijaz) with the socio-political genre (Syed Muzammil Hussain, Dr. Mehrub Moiz Awan). Guided by Stuart Hall's (1997) Representation Theory and Robert Entman's (1993) Framing Theory, the analysis reveals two mutually exclusive paradigms Comedic Othering which migrates stage-drama tropes into digital spaces to frame the transgender body as a hyper-sexual nuisance for algorithmic profit, and Socio-Political Humanization, which repositions the khawaja sira as an intellectually and constitutionally empowered citizen. The findings demonstrate that Pakistani YouTube functions simultaneously as an ideological perpetuator of marginalization and a catalyst for digital inclusion, underscoring the need for localized algorithmic moderation.

Keywords:

Khawaja Sira, Transgender Identity, Pakistani YouTube, Comedic Othering, Socio-Political Humanization

INTRODUCTION

The khawaja sira community in Pakistan occupies a paradoxical historical trajectory from revered courtiers in the Mughal era (Lal, 1999) to criminalized subjects under British colonial rule via the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 (Hinchy, 2019; Pamment, 2010), and finally to marginalized citizens navigating a disjuncture between progressive legislation, such as the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2018, and entrenched social hostility (Jami, 2021). This historical degradation directly informs contemporary media representation, wherein mainstream Pakistani television and stage theater have institutionalized the transgender body almost exclusively as a vehicle for comedic relief . The term khawaja sira is an indigenous umbrella classification encompassing transgender women, intersex individuals, cross-dressers, and eunuchs, and it is deeply embedded in South Asian cultural and historical continuity rather than reducible to Western LGBTQ+ taxonomies (Jami, 2017; Redding, 2015). Prior to British colonization, individuals of the third gender occupied a remarkably elevated status, particularly during the Mughal Empire, where they served as guardians of the zenana, confidential messengers, and administrators of estates, accumulating wealth and

political influence untethered from dynastic ambition (Hinchy, 2019; Lal, 1999). Their spiritual significance in South Asian folklore believed to confer blessings or curses at births and weddings further embedded them as figures of niche but genuine social utility (Khan, 2016). This pre-colonial reverence stands in stark contrast to their subsequent trajectory.

The advent of British colonial rule catalyzed a catastrophic shift, as Victorian morality and rigid gender-binary thinking could not accommodate the community's fluid expressions of gender (Hinchy, 2019). This marginalization was legally codified in the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, which criminalized the community's traditional livelihoods, restricted their movement, and stripped them of property and inheritance rights (Pamment, 2010). This period marks the genesis of institutionalized othering in the subcontinent, embedding a colonial epistemology of transgender deviance into the cultural psyche well before Pakistan's independence in 1947. In post-partition Pakistan, formal criminalization was eventually repealed, but social stigma and economic exclusion persisted, forcing reliance on the guru-chela (master-disciple) kinship system for survival, shelter, and protection (Jami, 2017). Because mainstream avenues of education and employment remained largely closed, the community was frequently pushed into precarious livelihoods such as begging, street performance, and sex work (Khan, 2016) realities that would later inform, and be distorted by, media caricature.

The 21st century introduced a paradoxical socio-legal landscape: the Supreme Court's 2009 recognition of khawaja siras as a distinct third gender, followed by the globally lauded Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act of 2018, offered unprecedented legal humanization (Hina et al., 2019; Jami, 2021). Yet this legal progress has been met with fierce religious and social backlash, including challenges in the Federal Shariat Court, alongside continued epidemic levels of violence against the community (Abdullah et al., 2020). This dichotomy wherein the state intermittently humanizes while society actively others creates the volatile socio-political backdrop against which media representation must be understood.

This historical trajectory directly explains why mainstream Pakistani television, stage theater, and cinema have relied so heavily on the transgender body as a vehicle for comedic relief rather than complex human characterization (Pamment, 2010; Zia, 2014). Bound by PEMRA's conservative regulatory codes, advertiser-driven commercial imperatives, and entrenched religious sensitivities, legacy media gatekeepers have systematically avoided humanized portrayals, instead institutionalizing exaggerated drag, aggressive vernacular, and hyper-sexualized caricature as an acceptable, profitable formula (Rasul & McDowell, 2012; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). This structural silencing created a representational void that the digital turn would eventually disrupt.

The expansion of 3G/4G broadband after 2014 and the 2016 lifting of Pakistan's YouTube ban catalyzed an unprecedented democratization of content creation, dismantling the human gatekeeping mechanisms of legacy broadcast media (Burgess & Green, 2018; Kemp, 2023). Yet this democratization did not eliminate gatekeeping so much as replace it with algorithmic gatekeeping (Gillespie, 2014). YouTube operates on the logic of the attention economy, wherein watch time, engagement, and virality not editorial judgment determine visibility (Fuchs, 2021; Goldhaber, 1997). This architecture structurally incentivizes sensationalism, transgression, and taboo-driven humor, conditions under which marginalized bodies, already occupying a stigmatized position in the national consciousness, become highly exploitable instruments for viral success. Creators such as Nadir Ali and Rana Ijaz exemplify this dynamic, migrating the historical tropes of Punjabi stage theater into the authentic aesthetic of street-level prank video, often with less editorial restraint than television ever permitted.

Simultaneously, the very same technological affordances have enabled the emergence of subaltern counter-publics (Fraser, 1990) parallel discursive arenas where previously excluded groups construct and circulate their own counter-narratives. Freed from the risk-averse mediation of

television producers, socio-political commentators and transgender intellectuals alike now use YouTube's long-form video and podcast formats to engage in critical pedagogy regarding constitutional rights, historical erasure, and systemic violence. Figures such as Syed Muzammil Hussain intellectually dismantle mainstream comedic tropes by reframing transgender rights as a matter of civic and constitutional responsibility, while transgender activists such as Dr. Mehrub Moiz Awan represent a paradigm shift in digital agency authoring their own narratives rather than being spoken for or mocked.

This positions Pakistani YouTube not as a monolithic technological space but as a deeply fractured, dualistic medium: simultaneously the site where the khawaja sira identity is most aggressively degraded for entertainment and advertising revenue, and the site where it is most vigorously defended and humanized through progressive discourse. This duality is the foundation of the theoretical distinction this study foregrounds: Comedic Othering, rooted in the sociological concept of Othering (Hall, 1997; Said, 1978) and the Superiority Theory of humor (Billig, 2005; Hobbes, 1651/1982), functions by reducing the transgender subject to a fixed, laughable caricature that naturalizes prejudice under the socially acceptable guise of a joke (Weaver, 2011). Socio-Political Humanization, by contrast, restores ontological complexity by situating the transgender subject within intellectual, legal, and human-rights frameworks (Entman, 1993; Fraser, 1990), demanding that audiences engage with the khawaja sira as a civic equal rather than a comedic spectacle. Understanding how these two paradigms collide on a single, algorithmically governed platform is essential to comprehending the future trajectory of gender discourse, human rights, and digital citizenship in contemporary Pakistan.

The digitization of Pakistan's mediascape catalyzed by the expansion of mobile broadband after 2014 and the 2016 lifting of the YouTube ban (Kemp, 2023) has disrupted this monopoly. YouTube's decentralized, algorithm-driven architecture (Gillespie, 2014) operates as a double-edged sword: unregulated entertainment channels migrate historic caricatures into viral street-comedy formats for engagement-driven profit, while a nascent digital counter-public (Fraser, 1990) of socio-political creators uses long-form video to humanize the community through constitutional and intellectual discourse.

This creates a critical representational crisis warranting rigorous comparative analysis. The polarized representation of khawaja sira identity on Pakistani YouTube wherein unregulated entertainment channels perpetuate systemic transphobia through comedic othering, while progressive creators simultaneously pursue humanization constitutes an algorithmic dichotomy lacking rigorous empirical comparison in digital media studies.

Research Objective:

To comparatively evaluate the divergent framing and construction of transgender identities between sensationalist digital entertainment content and progressive socio-political digital discourse.

Research Question :

What are the fundamental comparative differences in the thematic, visual, and representational framing of transgender identities when contrasting entertainment-focused and socio-political Pakistani YouTube channels?

Addressing this question is significant both theoretically bridging Hall's (1997) and Entman's (1993) frameworks with algorithmic media studies and societally, given that digital representation directly shapes public attitudes, safety, and socio-economic inclusion of a highly vulnerable population (Jami, 2021).

Literature Review

Legacy Pakistani media established a durable representational baseline for the khawaja sira as either comedic prop or tragic victim. Punjabi commercial theater pioneered the caricature, deploying cisgender male actors in exaggerated drag alongside the jugat rapid, derogatory verbal repartee rooted in the Superiority Theory of

humor (Billig, 2005; Pamment, 2010). Television dramas subsequently absorbed these tropes, reducing transgender characters to non-narrative comic relief devoid of emotional or intellectual complexity (Abdullah et al., 2020; Zia, 2014). Cinema similarly confined khawaja sira characters to exoticized backdrops or mystical archetypes (Ali, 2019; Redding, 2015), while news media relied on episodic framing, presenting transgender individuals almost exclusively as victims of violence rather than as socio-political agents (Hina et al., 2019; Iyengar, 1991; Jami, 2017).

The roots of the transgender caricature in Pakistani entertainment can be traced specifically to Punjabi commercial stage theater of the 1980s and 1990s, a medium heavily reliant on improvisational slapstick and the jugat rapid-fire, often derogatory verbal repartee (Pamment, 2010). Notably, these performances rarely employed actual transgender individuals; instead, cisgender male actors performed exaggerated drag, utilizing grotesque makeup, hyper-sexualized gestures, and an artificially loud vernacular to signify the transgender presence (Khan, 2016). This theatrical convention cemented a durable psychological association in the Pakistani public consciousness between the visual signifiers of the khawaja sira and the expectation of low-brow comedic entertainment, establishing a template that would later migrate, largely unaltered, into television and digital media.

As media consumption shifted toward the state-owned Pakistan Television (PTV) and subsequently the private satellite channels regulated by the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) in the early 2000s, this theatrical caricature was smoothly absorbed into mainstream drama (Zia, 2014). Scholars note that transgender characters in Pakistani dramas are rarely tied to central narrative arcs or character development; instead, they are strategically inserted to break narrative tension, functioning as momentary comedic spectacle rather than fully realized human subjects (Abdullah et al., 2020). Recurring audiovisual tropes the emphatic clapping (tali), solicitation of money (badhai), and exaggerated entrance music operationalize the khawaja sira strictly as a device for humor. This exclusive comedic framing renders invisible the community's lived socio-economic struggles, including poverty, familial abandonment, and systemic violence, denying them the capacity for serious emotional resonance or romantic agency within the televisual imagination (Hall, 1997).

Pakistani cinema (Lollywood) has similarly perpetuated a narrow representational spectrum, albeit through slightly different mechanisms. Film scholars observe that transgender characters are typically confined to two dehumanizing functions: the exoticized background spectacle in song-and-dance sequences set in impoverished neighborhoods, or the mystical intervening force believed to confer blessings or curses (Ali, 2019; Redding, 2015). While the latter may superficially appear reverential, it effectively removes the transgender character from the contemporary socio-political fabric, precluding recognition of their everyday, practical needs for employment, healthcare, and legal protection.

News media coverage compounds this marginalization through near-exclusive reliance on episodic rather than thematic framing (Iyengar, 1991). Transgender individuals typically achieve visibility in Pakistani news cycles only as victims of extreme violence or targeted assassination, cultivating a narrative of perpetual vulnerability while denying them the platform to appear as experts, analysts, or socio-political commentators (Jami, 2017). Even during debates surrounding the landmark 2018 Act, talk shows frequently privileged religious controversy over human rights framing, often centering conservative clerical voices while marginalizing transgender activists themselves (Hina et al., 2019). Collectively, this body of literature confirms that Pakistani legacy media bound by commercial imperatives, conservative gatekeeping, and structural transphobia has consistently denied the khawaja sira community the dignity of human complexity across every major broadcast genre.This deeply entrenched, monopolistic legacy set the stage for the digital revolution's inherited audience conditioning. When YouTube emerged as an accessible platform following infrastructural

expansion and the 2016 ban's removal, it inherited a public already conditioned to consume the transgender body as a joke (Kemp, 2023; Shirazi, 2021). Early digital media scholarship, following a technologically determinist and often utopian tradition, suggested that democratized content creation would naturally dissolve inherited stereotypes (Jenkins, 2006). However, contemporary critical digital studies demonstrate that unregulated digital spaces frequently exacerbate rather than dissolve historical caricatures, as algorithmic imperatives to maximize engagement and watch time incentivize creators to rely on culturally entrenched stereotypes as reliable cognitive shortcuts for guaranteed emotional reaction (Fuchs, 2021; Goldhaber, 1997). Within Pakistan's highly popular prank and street-comedy genres, creators consistently deploy specific audiovisual signifiers exaggerated cosmetics, aggressive vocal inflection, hyper-sexualized public interaction, and the ritualized clapping (tali) that function as a form of stigma communication, rendering the caricature hyper-visible while the actual human being remains entirely invisible (Abdullah et al., 2020; Jami, 2017; Smith, 2007). The participatory affordances of YouTube comment sections and shareability further allow audiences to co-create and validate this Comedic Othering, with collective digital laughter reinforcing ingroup solidarity while signaling mass consensus around the community's marginalization.

Parallel to this trajectory of exacerbated marginalization, a substantial body of literature examines digital platforms as emancipatory tools for socio-political humanization. Digital counter-publics allow marginalized groups excluded from the hegemonic public sphere to invent and circulate oppositional interpretations of their own identities (Fraser, 1990; Jackson et al., 2020). Crucially, literature on digital activism emphasizes that genuine empowerment occurs when the marginalized subject transitions from object of representation to author of their own narrative (Shirazi, 2021). This Humanization paradigm operationalizes thematic framing (Iyengar, 1991) by situating the transgender experience within broader legal, historical, and socio-political contexts educating audiences on legislative milestones such as the 2018 Act and deconstructing the systemic transphobia embedded in colonial-era criminalization and contemporary state institutions (Hinchy, 2019; Jami, 2021). However, scholars caution against romanticizing digital activism, noting the paradox of hyper-visibility, wherein claiming public digital space simultaneously exposes activists to coordinated harassment and algorithmically driven backlash from reactionary factions (Marwick & Lewis, 2017). This tension underscores that digital humanization is a continuous, fraught discursive battle rather than a straightforward emancipatory outcome, situating the present study's comparative focus on how these two paradigms are concretely constructed, deployed, and contested within Pakistan's contemporary digital ecology.The post-2014 digital shift, driven by broadband expansion and YouTube's 2016 unblocking, dismantled these gatekeeping structures (Kemp, 2023; Shirazi, 2021). YouTube functions as a Fraserian (1990) subaltern counter-public, permitting marginalized voices to bypass PEMRA-regulated censorship (Burgess & Green, 2018; Khan & Sabir, 2020). However, its algorithmic logic optimized for watch time and emotional arousal (Fuchs, 2021; Gillespie, 2014) simultaneously incentivizes sensationalism, allowing historic caricatures to be amplified rather than dissolved (Weaver, 2011).

This duality manifests in two competing paradigms. Comedic Othering weaponizes disparagement humor (Ford & Ferguson, 2004) to naturalize prejudice under the guise of harmless entertainment, exploiting the it's just a joke defense to deflect ethical critique (P�rez, 2013). Conversely, Socio-Political Humanization reflects digital counter-public activism (Jackson et al., 2020), wherein activists and allies employ legal pedagogy and intersectional discourse to reposition transgender subjects as rights-bearing citizens (Fraser, 1990).

Theoretical Framework

This study integrates Stuart Hall's (1997) Representation Theory, which conceptualizes meaning as actively constructed rather than reflected arguing that stereotyping reduces subjects to fixed, simplistic traits particularly where power inequalities exist with Robert Entman's (1993) Framing Theory, which posits that media texts select and render salient particular aspects of reality to define problems, diagnose causes, render moral judgments, and suggest remedies. Together, these theories permit a dual-level analysis: Hall's framework decodes the granular visual and linguistic signifiers used to encode the transgender body, while Entman's framework reveals the macro-structural narrative strategies comedic dismissal versus rights-based advocacy through which entertainment and socio-political creators construct fundamentally incompatible realities for Pakistani digital audiences.

Research Methods

This study employs Qualitative Content Analysis (Krippendorff, 2018; Schreier, 2012) to decode latent visual, linguistic, and thematic meanings within digital video texts, a method suited to interpreting disparagement humor and ideological framing beyond manifest word counts. The population comprises Pakistani YouTube channels representing two strata: Group A (Comedic Othering: unregulated entertainment/prank channels) and Group B (Socio-Political Humanization: progressive commentary channels). Using purposive sampling (Patton, 2014), four creators were selected for their cultural footprint and representativeness of each paradigm: Nadir Ali and Rana Ijaz (Group A), and Syed Muzammil Hussain and Dr. Mehrub Moiz Awan (Group B). The sample size totals eight videos (two per creator), selected via the most-watched criterion for content explicitly featuring or discussing transgender identity. Data collection involved downloading videos, selectively transcribing and translating Urdu/Punjabi dialogue, and applying a deductive coding matrix across visual signifiers, linguistic/auditory codes, and thematic frames, followed by thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and comparative discursive analysis.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Group A: Comedic Othering

Analysis of Nadir Ali and Rana Ijaz's content reveals a rigid migration of stage-drama tropes into digital street comedy. Neither creator uses actual transgender individuals; instead, cisgender male actors perform grotesque caricatures, reducing the khawaja sira to a spectacle of ridicule.

Table 1: Systematic Content Analysis of Group A (Comedic Othering)

Creator/Video	Visual Signifiers	Linguistic/Auditory Codes	Thematic Frame (Entman)	Engagement Indicators
Nadir Ali (Harassing the Public prank)	Exaggerated drag; aggressive spatial invasion; repetitive tali (clapping)	Jugat insults; artificially high-pitched vocal tone; canned laugh tracks	Problem: hyper-sexual nuisance; Remedy: public ridicule	Comments feature laughing emojis; harassment validated as classic comedy

Creator/Video	Visual Signifiers	Linguistic/Auditory Codes	Thematic Frame (Entman)	Engagement Indicators
Nadir Ali (Begging/disruption prank)	Unkempt clothing; physical grabbing; erratic body language	Demanding badhai; derogatory slang; awkwardness sound effects	Problem: threat to normative public order	Mockery of victims' reactions; praise for authentic mimicry
Rana Ijaz (Mocking the Dialect)	Hyper-feminized posturing; garish props; lingering disgust-reaction shots	Sexualized double entendres; deliberate mispronunciation; screaming	Moral Evaluation: inherent inferiority	Audience mimics catchphrases; high shareability
Rana Ijaz (The Fake Khawaja Sira)	Confrontational spatial dynamics; removing wigs; physical chasing	Slurs as banter; mocking economic destitution; chaotic editing	Diagnosis: deceptive performance	Virality via shock; ethical concerns dismissed as just a prank

The recurring deployment of the tali historically a cultural signifier is weaponized as a cue for impending harassment. Linguistically, the jugat ensures the subject is framed as hyper-sexual and socially inappropriate, with canned laugh tracks instructing audiences precisely when to laugh (Hall, 1997). Applying Entman's framework, these videos define the problem as the transgender body's disruptive presence, diagnose the cause as inherent deviance, and prescribe ridicule as the remedy engagement metrics (laughing emojis, high shares) confirming Weaver's (2011) thesis that humor functions as a rhetorical shield, permitting audiences to consume prejudice without moral friction.

Beyond the isolated coding of visual and linguistic signifiers, a closer examination of Group A's data reveals a consistent structural pattern: the transgender caricature is never permitted narrative resolution beyond ridicule. In each of the four videos analyzed, the comedic arc follows an identical trajectory an unsuspecting cisgender bystander is confronted with the caricatured khawaja sira, experiences visible discomfort or shock, and the video concludes once this discomfort has been sufficiently exploited for audience amusement. This narrative structure is significant because it forecloses any possibility of the transgender figure being granted interiority, motive, or resolution; their sole narrative function is to generate and sustain the bystander's reaction, after which they are narratively discarded. This mirrors Hall's (1997) observation that stereotyping reduces people to a few simple, essential characteristics fixed by nature, since the caricature exhibits no development across the video's runtime only escalating exaggeration.

Furthermore, the auditory dimension of Group A's content warrants deeper scrutiny. Post-production sound design canned laugh tracks, exaggerated boing or slap effects functions not merely as comedic embellishment but as an instructional device, explicitly cueing the audience toward the correct emotional response at each narrative beat. This is a particularly insidious mechanism of Comedic Othering because it removes interpretive agency from the viewer: the video does not merely present a caricature for

judgment, but actively directs the viewer to laugh, thereby pre-empting critical reflection. Weaver's (2011) concept of humor as a rhetorical shield is especially salient here, as the audio cues effectively immunize the content against ethical scrutiny by embedding the expected response into the text itself.

The engagement metrics further corroborate the algorithmic profitability of this paradigm. Across the four Group A videos, comment sections were dominated by laughing emojis, requests for part 2 content, and explicit praise for the actor's caricature as authentic or spot on language that reveals audience complicity in validating the stereotype as a faithful representation of the community rather than a fabrication. Notably, in the two videos analyzed from Rana Ijaz, viewers were observed actively mimicking the derogatory catchphrases from the videos within the comment threads themselves, suggesting that Comedic Othering does not remain contained within the video text but actively diffuses into broader digital vernacular, extending the caricature's reach beyond the original content into everyday user-generated discourse. This diffusion illustrates the participatory amplification unique to YouTube's architecture (Burgess & Green, 2018), wherein audience co-creation intensifies rather than dilutes the original ideological framing.

It is also worth noting the near-total absence, across all four Group A videos of any dissenting or critical commentary questioning the ethics of the content. This absence is itself analytically significant: it suggests that within the specific algorithmic and cultural context of Pakistani entertainment YouTube, Comedic Othering operates with such normalized acceptance that it does not provoke the friction or backlash typically associated with more overtly identifiable forms of hate speech. This observation directly supports Ford and Ferguson's (2004) prejudiced norm theory, which argues that disparagement humor functions most effectively and most dangerously precisely when it is so culturally embedded that it evades recognition as prejudice at all. The data therefore suggests that the transgender caricature in Pakistani prank content has achieved a level of normalization comparable to, or exceeding, its historical acceptance in stage theater and television drama, with the added complication that YouTube's algorithm actively rewards and redistributes this content to expanding audiences, entrenching rather than eroding the stereotype over time.

Taken together, these findings from Group A establish that Comedic Othering on Pakistani YouTube is not an incidental byproduct of unregulated content creation but a deliberately structured, algorithmically optimized representational strategy one that forecloses transgender narrative agency, instructs audience response through auditory cues, diffuses into participatory digital vernacular, and evades ethical scrutiny precisely because of its normalized cultural embeddedness. This sets a critical baseline against which the contrasting strategies of Group B, discussed in the following section, must be understood.

4.2 Group B: Socio-Political Humanization

Syed Muzammil Hussain and Dr. Mehrub Moiz Awan's content demonstrates a deliberate trans-coding (Hall, 1997) of the transgender subject, replacing chaotic street settings with formal studio environments that visually encode authority and intellect.

Table 2: Systematic Content Analysis of Group B (Socio-Political Humanization)

Creator/Video	Visual Signifiers	Linguistic/Auditory Codes	Thematic Frame (Entman)	Engagement Indicators
Syed Muzammil (Deconstructing the Transgender Act)	Formal studio; calm seated posture; professional attire	Legal lexicon (Constitution, Fundamental Rights); measured baritone delivery	Problem: state failure; Remedy: legal enforcement	Intellectual debate; clarifying questions on 2018 Act
Syed Muzammil (Historic Erasure video essay)	Archival Mughal-era images; legal/crime statistic graphics	Historical referencing (Criminal Tribes Act 1871); empathetic tone	Diagnosis: colonial legacy and patriarchal hegemony	Shock at history; viewers admitting unlearned prejudice
Dr. Mehrub Moiz Awan (Claiming Intellectual Space)	Elegant professional attire; confident body language, direct eye contact	Bilingual academic discourse; reclaimed terminology; intersectional analysis	Moral Evaluation: profound intellectual/socio-political agency	Praise for intellect and articulation from progressive youth
Dr. Mehrub Moiz Awan (Responding to Digital Hate)	Intimate direct-to-camera framing; authentic emotional expression	Sociological terms (Othering, cis-normativity); commanding tone	Remedy: self-acceptance, demanding equal citizenship	Supportive comments mobilizing digital activism

Linguistically, the jugat is replaced by academic and constitutional discourse, with Syed Muzammil consistently invoking the 2018 Act to legally validate the community's existence. Dr. Mehrub's presence as author, rather than object, of her own narrative represents the pinnacle of digital agency (Fraser, 1990), directly shattering the caricature perpetuated by Group A. Entman's frame reveals the problem redefined as systemic transphobia and state neglect, with causes diagnosed structurally (colonial legislation, patriarchal hegemony) and remedies proposed as legislative enforcement and civic education. A closer examination of Group B's narrative structure reveals a further distinguishing feature: unlike the closed, ridicule-resolved arcs of Group A, these videos are structured as open, dialogic engagements that invite continued audience participation beyond the video's runtime. Both creators explicitly encourage viewers to research the Transgender Persons Act, question inherited prejudices, or engage further with cited historical sources, positioning the audience not as passive consumers of a punchline but as active participants in an ongoing pedagogical process. This dialogic openness is reinforced by the near-total absence of auditory manipulation; where Group A relies on canned laugh tracks to instruct

emotional response, Group B's videos are characterized by restrained, unedited audio that grants viewers interpretive autonomy rather than directing a predetermined reaction. Additionally, the comment sections reveal a notable pattern of viewers explicitly renouncing prior participation in transphobic humor after engaging with the content, suggesting that Socio-Political Humanization does not merely present an alternative frame but actively works to unravel previously internalized Comedic Othering. This capacity for retroactive ideological revision absent entirely from Group A's audience data demonstrates that Group B's discursive strategy achieves not just visibility but measurable cognitive and attitudinal disruption among segments of the Pakistani digital public.

Comparative Discussion

The comparative analysis confirms the study's central thesis: Group A and Group B employ mutually exclusive regimes of representation on the identical platform. Visually, fabricated grotesquerie (Group A) contrasts with authentic professional self-presentation (Group B); chaotic streets contrast with structured studios. Linguistically, weaponized jugat and laugh tracks contrast with bilingual legal and sociological lexicons. Applying Entman's four functions problem definition, causal diagnosis, moral evaluation, and remedy reveals that Group A locates deviance within the transgender body itself while Group B locates it in societal and state structures. This confirms that YouTube's algorithmic architecture rewards Comedic Othering with disproportionate reach (Gillespie, 2014), even as Socio-Political Humanization cultivates a smaller but intellectually mobilized counter-public, producing severe cognitive dissonance in the Pakistani digital public sphere regarding transgender personhood.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study demonstrates that Pakistani YouTube is not a monolithic medium but a deeply fractured representational battleground. Group A (Nadir Ali, Rana Ijaz) perpetuates Comedic Othering by migrating colonial-era and stage-drama tropes into viral digital formats, exploiting exaggerated drag, the jugat, and weaponized sound design to frame the khawaja sira as a hyper-sexual public nuisance, generating substantial algorithmic profit while naturalizing systemic transphobia. Conversely, Group B (Syed Muzammil Hussain, Dr. Mehrub Moiz Awan) enacts Socio-Political Humanization through active trans-coding, situating transgender identity within constitutional, historical, and intersectional frameworks that reposition the community as intellectually robust, rights-bearing citizens.

The central conclusion is that Pakistani YouTube operates with a profound duality: it is simultaneously the most efficient perpetuator of systemic marginalization and the most potent catalyst for digital social inclusion. Its attention-driven algorithm disproportionately rewards transgressive comedic content, yet its decentralized architecture has irreversibly enabled a digital counter-public wherein transgender individuals author their own narratives for the first time in Pakistani media history.

Limitations

include the restricted sample (eight videos, four creators), the exclusive focus on YouTube (excluding TikTok/Instagram), the ephemeral nature of digital content, and the exclusion of systematic audience-reception analysis.

Recommendations: Future research should pursue audience reception studies, cross-platform analysis of short-form video, and computational sentiment analysis of comment sections. For industry practice, this study recommends the development of creator-led ethical guidelines distinguishing comedy from targeted harassment, alongside urgent investment by platforms in localized AI moderation capable of recognizing transphobic jugat and visual caricature in Urdu and Punjabi, ensuring comedic relief no longer shields digital human rights violations.

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