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Media's Role in Combating Animal Cruelty in Pakistan: A Survey of Pet Owners

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Abstract

Animal cruelty is a global issue, impacting animal welfare and societal value. In Pakistan, abusive sports like dog fighting, cockfighting, and pigeon flying are prevalent. Cultural norms and lack of legal protection contribute to this issue. This study investigates the media's role in raising awareness and combating animal cruelty. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 500 Pakistani pet owners, and a self-constructed questionnaire was distributed among participants. Convenient sampling was used for data collection, and SPSS (Version 26) was used for data analysis. The study reveals that media coverage positively impacts public responses to animal cruelty. Print media, particularly magazines, increase knowledge about animal cruelty, while radio and electronic media raise awareness about animal rights and prevention. Social media, particularly Facebook, is more effective. The study emphasizes the need for strategic media interventions to foster a more compassionate society, and recommends the government to ensure proper implementation of laws in Pakistan.

Keywords: animal cruelty, convenient sampling, media coverage, public perception

Introduction

Animal cruelty is widespread around the world, even in Pakistan. Different reports have revealed extensive animal cruelty through animal fighting subcultures (e.g., dog fighting, hog-dog fighting, badger baiting, and cockfighting). Certain kinds of hunting are also extremely brutal to animals, such as bear or bobcat hunting with dog packs, a practice known as hounding, and coyote and fox penning, which involves trapping wild foxes and coyotes in pens and releasing hunting dogs on them. Bullfighting, pigeon shoots, circuses, and bestiality or zoophilic pornography are other

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types of pleasures that entail purposeful animal cruelty (Thompson, [2014](#)). In the 18th century, animal cruelty, mistreatment, and abuse emerged as socially significant concerns in Western industrialized societies (Mota-Rojas et al., [2022](#)). Depriving an animal of food, water, shelter, socialization, and veterinary treatment, while torturing, punching, hitting, kicking, maiming, mutilating, killing, and sexually assaulting the animal is considered intentional cruelty or abuse (Aji, [2019](#)).

Bull racing in Pakistan, a centuries-old sport, involves pairs of bulls running on wooden frames with a jockey behind. Attracting thousands of spectators, it's a thrilling spectacle (Hurriyet Daily Pakistan, [n.d.](#)). In Pakistan, in a cultural event, men bet on a bull-cart race, and this whipping and forcing bulls to race each other in sweltering heat is an example of animal cruelty ("Cruelty to animals", [2016](#)). Pigeons are the oldest domesticated birds. Doping in pigeon racing is a common practice of giving performance-enhancing drugs to avian racers (Moussa, [2021](#)). Cockfights in modern times take place in pits surrounded by spectators, gamblers, trainers, and owners. Two roosters of equal size are placed in the pit to battle. For generations, this kind of animal conflict, in which gamecocks battle to the death, has been immensely popular globally (Darden & Worden, [1996](#)), especially in Pakistan.

Dog fighting and other types of animal fighting are popular in Pakistan's rural areas. Covered in blood and limping from injuries, the specially trained dogs tear into each other as their owners urge them. The animals are pulled apart from each other and then thrown back together as spectators goad them into a frenzy before one eventually emerges as the winner (Daily Mail, [2011](#)). Camel fighting and racing have been practiced in Cholistan (Pakistan) for centuries. Currently, more than 1 million monkeys are subjected to cruelty by Pakistani people, and more than 1 billion domesticated and wild animal populations are subjected to cruelty. Humans have domesticated some animals over the millennia (Awan & Rahim, [2018](#)). Although animals often suffer at the hands of human beings, it is equally important to acknowledge that people are also capable of profound kindness toward them. All creatures have ethical rights due to their cognitive, emotional, and social lives, and humans treat animals like children, valuing their love and affection as the strongest sentiment (Lu et al., [2013](#)). Animal behavior has captivated human attention for thousands of years, attracting love, loyalty, devotion, and companionship in exchange

for their actions (Munro, [2022](#)). Animal rights activists educate the public about animal suffering and abuse, inspiring people to support the pet movement. This lobbying pressures politicians, legislators, and society to advocate for animal freedom. Social media and mobile tools empower activists, change public opinion, and confront speciesism (Mummery & Rodan, [2018](#)). Animal rights assert that all animals have the right to exist and that their basic needs should be prioritized, treating them as individuals with their own dreams and desires (Porcher, [2022](#)). The animal husbandry industries in Pakistan are diversified and large in scale. Animal welfare institutions at such firms have often made national headlines in Pakistan throughout the last ten years (Usman et al., [2023](#)).

In Pakistan, animal abuse is legally recognized as a form of animal cruelty and is addressed under relevant laws. Pakistan's Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1890 prohibits animal cruelty and is protected by international animal rights organizations and state authorities under the Pakistani Constitution (Perez, [1993](#)). Pakistan's constitution protects pets with fundamental rights, through the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Acts of 1960, 1971, 1979, 1997, and 2017 providing safeguards for draft animals. Physical abuse and negligence are punishable by fines and imprisonment, recognizing their value in Pakistani society. Pakistan's animal rights activists, including Animal Rescue, Pakistan Animal Rights Activists Society, and Saving Lives on Paws, are actively fighting for animal rights and conservation through various channels, especially social media (Usman et al., [2023](#)). Animal rights organizations oppose cages, while animal welfare groups advocate for larger cages. Both groups assert that humans must respect animals' rights to avoid violating their rights (Barber & Hathaway, [2022](#)).

Social media offers the opportunity for target audiences—individuals—to engage with every topic, along with knowledge of animal legal guidelines (Bir et al., [2019](#)). Animal content dominates the internet, with numerous YouTube channels and Instagram accounts featuring cute, funny profiles, videos, and photos, as well as pet rescue institutions and teaching channels (Jacobsson & Lindblom, [2013](#)). Social media is widely used by people and organizations (Rafique et al., [2022](#)), including World Animal Protection, which heavily relies on it for animal protection efforts and plays a crucial role in Pakistan's patriotic struggle (Junaidi, [2016](#)).

Significance of Study

In a country like Pakistan, where incidents of the earlier mentioned animal cruelty are common and the media is so dynamic, it's very vital to find out the media's role in the animal cruelty. This study investigates the media's role in addressing animal cruelty in Pakistan, analyzing public perceptions and attitudes towards its influence. It aims to bridge the knowledge gap between Pakistani animal lawmakers and policymakers, enhancing animal welfare and safety. The research will guide future policymakers in revising animal rights strategies and suggesting innovative ways for creating a special animal protection body, ultimately enhancing animal welfare and safety in Pakistan.

Aim of the Study

The study aimed to determine the role of media campaigns in creating awareness about animal cruelty in Pakistan. The purpose of the study is to analyze the relationship between media and Pakistani public perceptions about animal cruelty. In this study, we will also find out how the media shapes public behavior and attitudes toward animal cruelty.

The present study has been designed to obtain answers to the following research questions:

- To what extent does the media contribute to raising awareness about animal cruelty in Pakistan?
- How do pet owners in Pakistan access and utilize animal-related information provided by various media outlets?

Considering the literature, study objectives, and research questions, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

H1: The media plays a crucial role in raising public awareness about animal rights.

Literature Review

The literature review covers public perceptions of animal cruelty, animal rights activist stances, mass media advocacy, Islam and animal rights, a global perspective, animal protection laws, and societal behavior. It highlights the impact of mass media, particularly social media, on people's psychology, behavior, attitude, and perception of animal cruelty. Scholars have identified various types and causes of animal cruelty, and researchers

have suggested various solutions. Current studies on animal cruelty and Pakistani mass media also highlight such issues.

Pakistan's biodiversity is a global treasure, but its natural wealth is under threat due to forest clearing and hunting. Many valuable animal and bird populations are threatened or endangered, while its forests, deserts, and rivers are vital guardians of rare plants and animals (Adler et al., [2020](#)). Animal rights activists think using or exploiting animals is ethically wrong (Jarvie et al., [2021](#)). The mass animal rights movement in China emerged late and without significant regional support but has become a vocal tool for change. Despite state-led pushback since 2012, the movement remains thriving in the social environment, mediating humans' interactions with animals. The COVID-19 epidemic in China has provided a fresh resource for animal rights activists (Barber & Hathaway, [2022](#)). Animal rights, a social movement originating in the 18th century, necessitated a shift in societal perception of nature, to which animals were traditionally considered to belong (Rault et al., [2022](#)).

Animal activism has been organized during the last decades of the twentieth century. Animal advocacy, particularly the more extremist positions of animal and animal rights activists, arose in leftist political cultures and took on pro-government positions. It was born into progressive political milieus and first assumed anti-capitalist and defense positions (Munro, [2022](#)). Concerns about animal welfare are not given the same attention in underdeveloped nations as in higher-income ones, from policy and law to consumer knowledge and purchasing alternatives (Parlasca et al., [2023](#)). Animal rights advocates have taken note of Generation Z, which is recognized as one of the most outspoken and prominent age groups to date (Scott, [2023](#)). Researchers studied 18 family members of animal rights activists revealing their emotions and the reasons behind their activism. They used semi-structured interviews to understand the difference between law-abiding and law-breaking activists, and proposed a model to explain how these members may become infected with ideas (Ceccato et al., [2022](#)).

The Holy Qur'an and Hadith, along with Islamic culture's past, showcase compassion, kindness, and sympathy towards animals. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) warned against killing small birds or large things for nothing, indicating that Allah will inquire about such actions. Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance, valuing both humans and animals (Awan & Rahim, [2018](#)). Before Islam, animals were mistreated and used as hostages

against artillery. They were used for amusement and enjoyment, with body parts cut for eating even while alive. They traveled long distances without food or hydration, and people killed them without hesitation (Sherwen & Hemsworth, [2019](#)).

WTO law has the potential to help the progressive development of wildlife protection legislation that recognizes the moral value of animals as persons, even if indirectly and expressively rather than directly and concretely (Sykes, [2019](#)). The present modes of anthropological interaction are inadequate for dealing with the huge magnitude of animal cruelty (Kopnina, [2017](#)). A study suggested how working animals should be treated by the law. This study looks at how engaged anthropology might be used to address multiple concerns, including the use of nonhumans in medical research and the food industry, habitat destruction, and violence against nonhumans in general (Shaw, [2017](#)). The current situation of animal rights advocacy in China was examined from three interrelated perspectives: wildlife conservation, companion animal protection, and laboratory animal protection (Zhang et al., [2023](#)). Animal rights are protected in the national constitutions of Switzerland (1992, 2000) and Germany (1992, 2000). Protective constitutional inclusion is a big social movement victory, especially given the other movements vying for more political clout (Evans, [2010](#)). As part of a new set of laws, New Zealand has developed various animal welfare infraction offenses aimed at better enforcing animal care standards. Existing enforcement methods, such as welfare rules, are, however, marginalized owing to the legislation (Ferrere, [2018](#)). Since more individuals travel with their dogs these days, hospitality and tourism practitioners are beginning to recognize the potential of pet influencers. Pet influencers are social media influencers that specialize in pets. Pet influencers' successful social media posts may significantly impact pet owners' spending decisions on hotels, restaurants, and vacation places (Zhang et al., [2023](#)).

Pakistan uses animals in teaching and experiments, with a self-regulated system for institutes and research organizations. Animals are considered companions and useful in religion, with international partnerships promoting animal rights (Zaneb & Stanek, [2008](#)). Every day, animal cruelty stories make headlines throughout the world, whether it's the person who murders the neighbor's cat, the hoarder of sick and dying animals, or the family whose cold, starving dog is chained outside in the dead of winter.

Simple neglect, extreme neglect, purposeful abuse, animal hoarding, organized abuse, ritualistic abuse, or animal sexual assault are all examples of animal cruelty (Mogbo et al., [2013](#)).

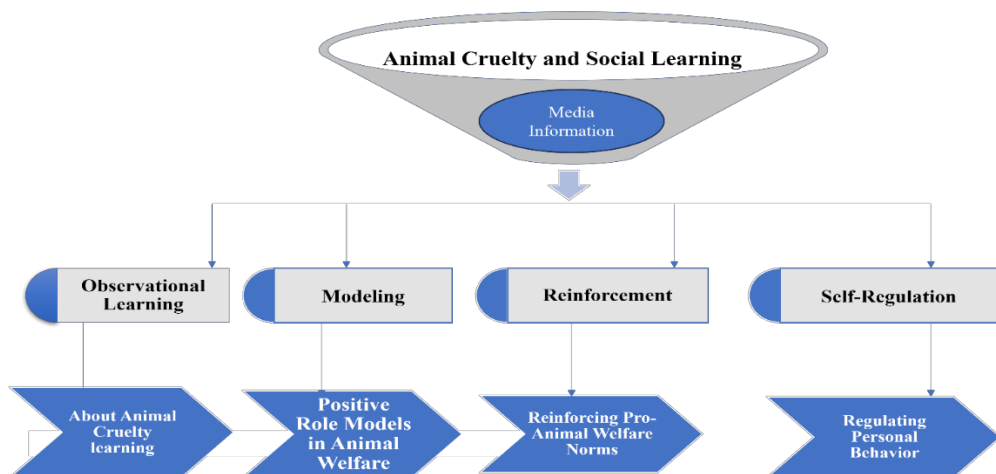
Numerous scholars have explored the issue of animal cruelty from multiple perspectives, but no study has examined pet owners' views on the role of the media in raising awareness in Pakistan. This research gap is crucial and needs to be addressed to contribute to current knowledge. The current study aims to address this gap and contribute to the current body of knowledge.

Social Learning Theory

The research uses Albert Bandura's social learning theory to analyze the impact of media coverage on public perceptions of animal abuse. The theory suggests that the media focuses on specific events and frames public perception based on their interests. This research is relevant to the topic as it demonstrates how the media draws public attention to specific topics and frames public perception based on their interests.

Figure 1

Model of Association between Media Role, Animal Cruelty, Public Perception and Behavior, and Social Learning Theory



The model in Figure 1 shows how the media's portrayal of animal cruelty influences public perception and behavior. It suggests that individuals learn from media representations, which in turn affects their

attitudes and actions towards animal welfare. The model underscores the complex relationship between media exposure, and attitudes and behaviors related to animal cruelty using social learning theory.

Methods

To determine the research's goal, a survey method was adopted. Participants were recruited using a convenient sampling technique. The study involved a sample of 500 participants from diverse regions of Pakistan, spanning various demographics such as age, gender, education level, media users, and belonging to urban or rural backgrounds. This research primarily focuses on pet owners in Pakistan, aged 15 or older, who grew up in the country. Participants must ensure they have pets and be knowledgeable about mass media, animal cruelty, and animal abuse. A 22-item closed-ended questionnaire was developed for data collection based on the objectives and hypotheses. Three forms of questionnaire distribution were used: hard copy, email, and online. The online survey took auto-notes and incidental interactions with participants. Researchers compiled facts, opinions, and attitudes using a survey questionnaire based on disagree, neutral, and agree. Data was kept confidential and collected at various periods. Responses to the questionnaires were recorded.

Ethical Consent and Approval

Ethical consent was taken from the respondents who participated in the survey, and there is no need to get any approval from any ethical committee for our questionnaire.

Operationalization of the Variables

The major terms used in the study are defined below.

Mass Media

In this study, "mass media" refers to three media platforms (electronic, print, and social media).

- **Electronic:** In this study, "electronic" refers to TV, radio, etc.
- **Print Media:** In this study, "print media" refers to newspapers and magazines.
- **Social Media:** In this study, social media refers to Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter.

Gender

It includes Pakistani males and females aged 15 and up.

Animal Cruelty

In this study, "animal cruelty" refers to depriving an animal of food, water, shelter, socialization, and veterinary treatment, along with any actions of torturing, punching, hitting, kicking, maiming, mutilating, killing, and sexually assaulting the animal.

Pet Owners

Any person who owns, harbors, or keeps a dog, cat, pigeon, rabbit, or other domestic pet, or has custody of one, is considered a pet owner.

The media's role in animal cruelty is an independent variable of the study, it refers to the time spent by the respondent viewing mass media. Whereas public reaction against animal abuse and cruelty is a dependent variable.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The researcher developed a closed-ended questionnaire as a measuring instrument to measure "animal cruelty and Pakistani mass media." The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section 01 deals with basic demographic questions, such as gender, age, time spent on media, social and economic status, and the medium of media used to learn about animal cruelty over time, which are eight in number. Section 02 has 15 questions related to public perception, behavior about animal cruelty, and the role of Pakistani mass media. For a response asking for public perception about the media's role regarding animal cruelty awareness, it was a three-point scale ranging from 1 to 3. A key was prepared, and numbers were assigned to the abbreviation used in the questionnaire scale (*disagree* (DA) = 1, *neutral* (N) = 2, and *agree* (A) = 3). Questionnaires were translated into easily comprehensible language to minimize misunderstandings during data collection. All the terms in the questions were translated into a common language so pet owners could record their responses. Following data gathering, further analysis was carried out. The collected data was then entered into SPSS, and SPSS (Version 26) was used for accuracy in the findings of the research study and balance and objectivity in the results.

Data Tabulation

The research data collected through the questionnaire was put through analyses in SPSS, and subsequently, it was arranged and presented in tables, charts, and graphs. After the SPSS analyses, the data were tabulated in tables, charts, and graphs according to the statistical methodology. Further, the tables, charts, and graphs were interpreted under the input from the questionnaire from respondents, considering the study objectives and hypothesis.

Results

This study was conducted to analyze animal cruelty and mass media in Pakistan via a cross-sectional survey. After data collection, the data was used for appropriate analysis. The data was analyzed in such a way that, first, researchers presented and interpreted the general findings and results of the study. And after that, the researcher analyzed the results of the hypotheses developed under consideration of the literature review.

Table 1

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N = 500)

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	289	57.8
	Female	211	42.2
	Total	500	100.0
Social Economic Status	Low SES	37	7.4
	Middle SES	172	34.4
	High SES	291	58.2
	Total	500	100.0
Education	Primary to Middle	80	16
	Middle to Intermediate	180	36
	Graduation or above	240	48
	Total	500	100.0
Age	15 to 20 years	35	7
	21 to 25 years	135	27
	26 to 30 years	144	28.8
	31 to 35 years	125	25
	36 to 40 years	35	7

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percent
Print Media Users	41 to 45 years	16	3.2
	46 to 50 years	10	2
	Total	500	100.0
	Magazine	286	57.2
	Newspaper	174	34.8
	Other	40	8
	Total	500	100.0
Electronic Media Users	Radio	244	48.8
	Television	98	19.6
	Others	158	31.6
	Total	500	100.0
Social Media Users	Facebook	203	40.6
	YouTube	147	29.4
	Instagram	73	14.6
	TikTok	51	10.2
	Twitter	26	5.2
	Total	500	100.0
Time Spend	1-2 hour	121	24.2
	3-4 hours	298	59.6
	5-6 hours	81	16.2
	Total	500	100.0

Table 1 shows the percentage of male and female participants in the sample. It is clearly shown that in the sample, there were higher percentages of male participants (i.e., 58%) as compared to female participants (i.e., 42%). Most of the participants in the sample (i.e., 28.8%) were young adults between the ages of 26 and 30. In regards to education, the respondents showed that the highest frequency of participants with higher education was (48%). It is shown that in the sample, most participants belong to a higher socio-economic status (i.e., 58.2%). Most participants in the sample (59.6%) spent 3 hours or more on the media. It is also shown that there were higher percentages of magazine readers (i.e., 57.2%) in the sample. It is clearly shown that there were higher percentages of radio users (i.e., 48.8%) in the sample. It is clearly shown that there were higher percentages of Facebook users (i.e., 40.6%) in the sample.

Table 2*Descriptive Statistics of Questionnaire (N = 500)*

Items of Questionnaire (Media Role)	Description		Range	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max
Due to media usage, people know a lot about animal rights.	2.25	.71	1	3
The media creates awareness among the public regarding animal rights.	2.49	.66	1	3
The media play a significant role in creating awareness about animal rights among people.	2.50	.68	1	3
The media also creates awareness among the public regarding animal abuse.	2.55	.63	1	3
Due to media coverage regarding animal rights, people have a negative reaction toward animal abuse and cruelty.	2.54	.68	1	3
Media coverage is not affecting the public's perception of animal abuse.	2.61	.62	1	3
The media play a significant role in creating public awareness about animal prevention.	2.61	.62	1	3
As a result of media exposure, I now favor slaughtering animals while treating them humanely during their lives.	2.64	.60	1	3
The media can create awareness about animal rights and prevention.	2.64	.63	1	3
Animal welfare organizations have successfully used petition sites like Change.org.	2.57	.64	1	3
The media allows animal welfare organizations to share meaningful animal stories with the public.	2.66	.59	1	3
The media has helped to bring to light cases of animal cruelty and identify the culprits.	2.65	.58	1	3
Thanks to the media, it is now easier than ever to show that you support the animal welfare cause.	2.69	.54	1	3

Items of Questionnaire (Media Role)	Description		Range	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max
Due to the media, it is very easy to find homes for homeless animals.	2.75	.50	1	3
Due to the media, animals are more secure than in the past.	2.77	.48	1	3
Total Score	38.97	4.78	1	3

Table 2 displays descriptive statistics for all questionnaire items. The table shows the mean, standard deviation, and maximum and minimum ranges of participants for each item. Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of a questionnaire related to the role of media in promoting animal rights awareness. The questionnaire was administered to a sample of 500 individual participants. Table 2 also provides insights into how respondents perceive the impact of media on animal rights awareness. The mean scores give an idea of the average level of agreement with each statement, and the standard deviation gives a sense of the variability in responses. The "minimum" and "maximum" scores show the range of opinions among participants.

Table 3

Frequency of Responses in All Items of Questionnaire (N = 500)

Items of Questionnaire (Media Role)	Frequency of Response			Total
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	
Due to media usage, people know a lot about animal rights.	79 15.8%	213 42.6%	208 41.6%	500 100%
The media creates awareness among the public regarding animal rights	47 9.4%	159 31.8%	294 58.8%	500 100%
The media play a significant role in creating awareness about animal rights among people.	53 10.6%	138 27.6%	309 61.8%	500 100%
The media also creates awareness among the public regarding animal abuse.	40 8%	141 28.2%	319 63.8%	500 100%
Due to media coverage regarding animal rights, people have a negative reaction toward animal abuse and cruelty.	54 10.8%	122 24.4%	324 64.8%	500 100%
Media coverage is not affecting the public's perception of animal abuse.	39 7.8%	117 23.4%	344 68.8%	500 100%

Items of Questionnaire (Media Role)	Frequency of Response			Total
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	
The media play a significant role in creating public awareness about animal prevention.	38 7.6%	118 23.6%	344 68.8%	500 100%
As a result of media exposure, I now favor slaughtering animals while treating them humanely during their lives.	34 6.8%	112 22.4%	354 70.8%	500 100%
The media can create awareness about animal rights and prevention.	43 8.6%	94 18.8%	363 72.6%	500 100%
Animal welfare organizations have successfully used petition sites like Change.org.	42 8.4%	129 25.8%	329 65.8%	500 100%
The media allows animal welfare organizations to share meaningful animal stories with the public.	33 6.6%	102 20.4%	365 73%	500 100%
The media has helped to bring to light cases of animal cruelty and identify the culprits.	30 6%	111 22.2%	359 71.8%	500 100%
Thanks to the media, it is now easier than ever to show that you support the animal welfare cause.	22 4.4%	110 22%	368 73.6%	500 100%
Due to the media, it is very easy to find homes for homeless animals.	18 3.6%	89 17.8%	393 78.6%	500 100%
Due to the media, animals are more secure than in the past.	14 2.8%	85 17%	401 80.2%	500 100%

Table 3 shows the frequency of responses to all items of the questionnaire. The above table represents and demonstrates the results of the respondents' opinions that the media is a good source of animal-related information. The results showed that almost 60% of the public agreed, less than 10% of pet owners disagreed, and almost 20% remained natural with this point of view. Results show that most participants agree on the role of new media in promoting animals' rights.

Table 4

One-Way ANOVA to Investigate the Role of Print Media in Promoting Animal Rights

	Magazine		Newspaper		Other		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Print Media Usage in Promoting Animal Rights	39.62	4.91	39.68	4.28	37.65	5.25	10.56	.00

The table shows the relationship between print media usage and promoting awareness about animal cruelty and rights. The results showed that the mean scores for magazine content ($M = 39.62$, $SD = 4.91$), newspaper content ($M = 39.68$, $SD = 4.28$), and other responses ($M = 37.65$, $SD = 5.25$) changed. The study variables showed significant mean differences: $F(2, 497) = 10.56$, $p < .05$.

Table 5

Multiple Comparisons (Tukey HSD) in All Categories of Print Media

Type of Print Media (I)	Public Choice (J)	MD (I-J)	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI	
					LL	UL
Magazine	Newspaper	-.06	.79	.99	-1.92	1.79
	Other	1.96*	.82	.04	.03	3.90
Newspaper	Magazine	.06	.75	.99	-1.79	1.92
	Other	2.03*	.45	.00	.97	3.09
Other	Magazine	-1.96*	.82	.04	-3.90	-.03
	Newspaper	-2.03*	.45	.00	-3.09	-.97

Table 5 presents a one-way group analysis of print media to examine the impact of information sources on respondents' knowledge and views of animal cruelty. Participants were divided into three groups: magazines, newspapers, and others. A statistically significant difference was found in awareness due to the intake of different animal rights and cruelty information sources: $F(2, 497) = 10.56$, $p < .05$. Those who read magazines for information about animal cruelty had a higher MD score than those who read newspapers or other sources. Results showed that participants who studied magazines were more likely to promote animal rights than those who studied newspapers or other materials.

Table 6

One-Way ANOVA to Investigate the Role of Electronic Media in Promoting Animal Rights

	Television		Radio		Other		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Electronic Media in Promoting Animal Rights	38.79	6.11	39.72	4.19	37.95	4.52	6.84	.00

A one-way ANOVA is shown in Table 6 to evaluate the influence of electronic media in supporting animal rights. The mean scores for television content ($M = 38.79$, $SD = 6.11$), radio broadcasting content ($M = 39.72$, $SD = 4.19$), and other replies ($M = 37.95$, $SD = 4.52$) all changed. All research variables had statistically significant mean differences and relationships: $F(2, 497) = 6.84$, $p < .05$.

Table 7

Multiple Comparisons (Tukey HSD) in All Categories of Electronic Media

(I) Type of Electronic Media	(J) Type of Electronic Media	MD (I-J)	SE	<i>p</i>	95% CI	
					LL	UL
Television	Radio	-.93	.56	.22	-2.27	.39
	Others	.83	.60	.35	-.59	2.27
Radio	Television	.93	.56	.22	-.39	2.27
	Others	1.77*	.48	.00	.63	2.90
Others	Television	-.83	.60	.35	-2.27	.59
	Radio	-1.77*	.48	.00	-2.90	-.63

Table 7 shows multiple comparisons (Tukey HSD) in all categories of electronic media. According to the Tukey HSD test, those who listen to the radio for information about animal cruelty have a higher MD score than those who watch television or other channel sources. Results revealed that participants who studied magazines were more likely to promote animal rights than those who studied newspapers or other materials. According to the findings, participants who listen to the radio are more likely to promote animal rights than those who watch television or read other materials.

Table 8
One-Way ANOVA to Investigate the Role of social media in Promoting Animal Rights

	Facebook		YouTube		Instagram		TikTok		Twitter		F	P
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Social Media Role	39.25	5.01	39.21	4.39	37.97	5.27	39.17	3.75	37.88	5.23	1.43	.22

Table 8 shows non-significant mean differences in all study variables: $F(2, 497) = 1.43, p > .05$. The table indicates no significant differences in respondents' perceptions of Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter's roles in promoting animal rights awareness.

Discussion

The study explores the media's role in combating animal cruelty in Pakistan, revealing the dynamic relationship between media coverage and public perceptions. Data was collected from 500 participants who regularly used the media, with a response rate of 85%. The study used descriptive and parametric statistics to analyze demographic characteristics and media types used in promoting animal rights. The research aligns with social learning theory, which emphasizes cognitive processes, observational learning, and modeling in shaping behaviors and attitudes. The findings offer valuable insights for policymakers and advocates addressing animal cruelty. The study (Table 2) reveals a significant reliance on media for information on animal welfare, with print media, particularly magazines (Table 3 shown), being the most significant in promoting awareness of animal cruelty and rights. Electronic media, particularly radio, has the potential to increase support for animal rights. The hypothesis is that media creates awareness among the public regarding animal rights, aligning with observational learning. Media exposure significantly raises awareness about animal cruelty in Pakistan, with television and social media being the most influential platforms. Media fosters empathy towards animals, with 68% of participants reporting increased empathy after exposure to animal cruelty stories. However, only 40% of respondents took advocacy action due to media exposure, with 60% citing barriers such as a lack of trust in existing organizations and the perceived futility of individual efforts.

The media plays a crucial role in raising public awareness of animal rights, as most participants agree, and previous studies support these

findings (Rice et al., [2020](#)). The Internet is widely regarded as the most effective medium for mass communication, particularly in the context of animal rights, as society emphasizes the rapid and inclusive transmission of information (Wheeldon, 2010). Social media is a crucial source of information on animal welfare law enforcement, with its impact on public perception being significant (Morton et al., [2022](#)). However, animal-related posts on social media can be inappropriate in terms of portrayal or treatment, potentially affecting viewers, wild animal populations, and society's ties with animals. This can have negative consequences for individual animals and the wider community (Harrington et al., [2023](#)). Social media usage has surged since the COVID-19 pandemic, with over 500 million individuals joining in the last year and 4.6 billion globally using it in 2022 (Statista, [2022](#)). It enables targeted engagement and fosters knowledge of animal legal guidelines (Javed et al., [2020](#)).

Media coverage can significantly influence individuals' perceptions and behaviors, highlighting both the positive and negative consequences of animal abuse and cruelty. By portraying reactions, individuals learn that such behaviors are unacceptable and can lead to negative outcomes. Increased media attention has made animal cruelty and abuse more well-known issues, leading people to take advantage of environmental conditions like their interests. In some cultures, caring for animals is considered part of humanity (Daston & Mitman, [2005](#)).

Activist investigations into animal cruelty often expose public suffering through the media, causing ethical dilemmas and emotional reactions. However, no significant behavioral change was observed, indicating the need for further investigation (Tiplady et al., [2013](#)). The findings indicate that individuals who read magazines (print media) were more engaged in advocating for animal rights than those who studied newspapers or other materials. Print media, such as magazines, can provide emotional stories and imagery while conveying messages about animals' issues and solutions. Print advertising reaches a large audience and provides a physical copy.

Print and electronic media can elicit public support through various stimuli, such as images, labels, and slogans (Acquia, [2013](#)). Radio, for instance, is more likely to promote animal rights than television or other media. Radio offers emotional and personal communication, allowing individuals to thank others for their contributions and encouraging them to continue working better (Animal People, [2012](#)). It is also more accessible

for older generations and allows for direct contact. Television and video broadcasting can blend pictures, literature, speech, and music to generate powerful messages about animal rights and protection. Organizations can use short pieces with emotional stimuli and stories to sustain public support (Shorter, [2012](#)). Pakistan faces animal cruelty, but progress is hindered by cultural norms, enforcement, and public awareness, despite legislative measures and advocacy campaigns. Media coverage can influence policy changes and safeguard animals.

Conclusion

Media significantly contributes to combating animal cruelty in Pakistan by raising awareness and fostering empathy. This research aims to inform interventions, policies, and awareness campaigns for a more compassionate society. Print media, particularly magazines, raises awareness about animals' rights, while electronic media, particularly radio, promotes animal rights and prevention of cruelty.

However, it suggests a gap between awareness and advocacy actions. Strategies should include building trust in animal welfare organizations, providing resources, and promoting collective action. Culturally sensitive campaigns are also crucial. The government should use social media to improve animal rights, and traditional communication techniques like propagating Islamic teachings can be effective. Building a better communication network, particularly in rural areas, is also recommended. Stricter welfare legislation and harsher penalties can help reduce cruelty. Consistent enforcement of existing animal protection laws is also crucial, requiring collaboration between government agencies and NGOs to monitor and address instances of cruelty.

Limitations

The study on pet owners' perceptions of animal cruelty has flaws, including potential selection bias, media exposure, and social desirability bias. The cross-sectional nature of the survey limits causal relationships, and longitudinal studies would provide a more comprehensive understanding of media's enduring impact on attitudes towards animal cruelty.

Author Contributions

Muhammad Naeem Javed: conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, writing – original draft, writing – review & editing. **Anam Nazeer:** investigation, resources, writing – review & editing.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

Data supporting the findings of this study will be made available by the corresponding author upon request.

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