

BETWEEN SILENCE AND SONG: A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF MALE EMOTIONAL REGULATION THROUGH SAD PAKISTANI MUSIC

Muhammad Husnain

BSc Scholar, Department of Psychology, Sub-Campus, Limit Group of Colleges (Affiliated with Bahauddin Zakariya University), Sahiwal, Punjab, Pakistan

Email: rjhusnainrai2001@gmail.com

Tamana Kanwal

BS Scholar, Department of English, University of Sahiwal, Sahiwal, Punjab, Pakistan

Email: tamanakanwal675@gmail.com

Nouman Qadir (Corresponding Author)

BS Scholar, Department of English, University of Sahiwal, Sahiwal, Punjab, Pakistan

Email: chnouman713@gmail.com

Iram Naseer

BS Scholar, Department of English, University of Sahiwal, Sahiwal, Punjab, Pakistan

Email: iramnaseer825@gmail.com

Abstract

This corpus-based study investigated the role of sad Pakistani music in emotional regulation among male youth following romantic heartbreak within a sociocultural context where open emotional expression seems inhibited. Situated in Pakistan's entrenched environment, this study focuses on melancholic songs and how they are psychologically safe and socially acceptable forums for processing loss, grief, heartbreak, and emotional vulnerability, emphasising the role of music in mediating emotional pain under masculine norms. Despite burgeoning research about emotional regulation through music, non-western culture retrieved limited attestation where emotional restraint is essential to masculine identity. Additionally, there is limited focus on how Urdu and Punjabi lyrical traditions assist emotional expression and reevaluation within Pakistani masculine norms. Addressing this gap, music provides an adaptive coping mechanism, while long-term emotional repression is linked with psychological distress. A qualitative interdisciplinary approach was used in this study to analyse a self-constructed corpus of fifty Pakistani sad songs (25 artists × 2 songs), released after and before 2000. The lyrics were analysed using linguistic and psychological frameworks after being transcribed into both Roman Urdu and English. Through metaphor, symbolism, and repetition, findings indicate that melancholic music serves as a successful, culturally effective method for male emotional regulation in Pakistan.

Keywords: *Emotional regulation, masculinity, sad music, lyrical analysis, cognitive reappraisal.*

Introduction

Pakistan is a culturally conservative society where masculinity receives the excessive dosing of the strictness of sociocultural norms, which value emotional containment, stoicism, and self-control (Channa & Tahir, 2022; Imtiaz & Kamal, 2023). Due to that context, any open expression of affection, sorrow, or emotional closeness typically signals vulnerability, particularly in men (Ahmmed & Khan, 2024). Leaning more towards personal vulnerability and love life, boys are socialised to associate the concept of real strength with being silent and with emotional control at the earliest age (Imtiaz & Kamal, 2023). Thus, at the moment when romantic relations are destroyed due to pressure in the family, the social limitations or the inability to find something in common with a partner, individuals are likely to absorb the

painful feelings instead of expressing them publicly (O. de Visser, Mushtaq, & Naz, 2020). Such an absence of socially approved outlets exposes young men to emotions repressed over the long term, perplexed, and unsolved grief (Zafar, Debowska, and Boduszek, 2020).

In a cultural environment like that, music can contribute to more than just entertainment. Listening to melancholy melodies in Urdu, Punjabi, or English is a socially acceptable means of experiencing emotional pain to many young Pakistani men (Faran et al., 2021). The saddening tunes and suggestive lyrics enabled listeners to project the sorrows but not disrupt the cultural norms of masculine silence (Ma'rof, Danhe, & Zaremohzzabieh, 2023). Sad music is nothing but a figurative language of mourning- a medium that can put the unspoken grief into verses and songs (Sachs, Damasio, and Habibi, 2015). The emotions that cannot be expressed openly are released through rhythm or imagery and sound and thus emotional catharsis is experienced within the socially acceptable boundaries (Van 10-tol and Edwards, 2014).

This study is based on the process model of emotion regulation proposed by Gross (1998) according to which engagement with sad music can be viewed as a form of cognitive reappraisal. Rather than directly experiencing the emotional pain, listeners redefine individual loss at the level of aesthetics and symbolism of music (Gross, 2015; Faran et al., 2021). This non-proximal emotional interaction encourages reflection, meaning-making and catharsis - particularly in contexts where the opposite of strong emotional disclosure is discouraged (Lazarus 1984; Folkowsch 2014). Melancholic music is the coping tool and a challenge to restrictive masculine norms thus to Pakistani men acculturated to hide vulnerability (Imtiaz & Kamal, 2023).

Hearing sad music, however, is not to be considered emotional ineptitude but an indicator of emotional sensitivity and control (Saarikallio & Erkkila, 2007). It is a reflexion of a constant negotiation between the cultural demands of stoicism and the need of humans to express themselves. In line with this, this paper examines melancholic music as an unofficial, still, effective emotion-regulating technique in Pakistani male youth who have experienced romantic heartbreak, which is a combination of psychological, linguistic, and cultural views.

In order to address this goal, we gathered a self-assembled corpus of fifty Pakistani sad songs (25 artists \times 2 songs each). All the lyrics were transcribed manually in Roman Urdu and translated into English so that the interpretation could be correct. The corpus is a collection of famous songs published before and after 2000, which is the primary source of data to study the mediation of suppressed emotions in the conditions of a patriarchal sociocultural environment by sound and language.

Statement of Problem

Within the sociocultural context of Pakistan, males in the younger generation continue to face strong pressure to display emotional restraint, since traditional ideas about masculinity often identify power with silence. Romantic relationships, which are usually secretive and can be ruined by social or family pressures, are likely to be broken suddenly, thus leaving young men with a dearth of culturally acceptable ways to make sense of heartbreak. Although the world musicology shows that music enables people in regulation of emotions, these results are mostly based on the Western settings which have a higher degree of expression of emotions. As a result, the gap in the knowledge about the use of melancholic music by Pakistani men in a cultural context that does not encourage open weakness exists.

This gap raises a number of questions: Does melancholic music give cathartic relief or does it enhance rumination? Do the lyrical content help listeners to reinterpret loss with the help of cognitive reappraisal or do they support emotional suppression? Additionally, in

what ways do Urdu and Punjabi lyrical cultures, which are full of symbols as rain, silence, night and separation, enable men to express grief without violating the norms of masculinity?

To answer these questions, the current research paper gathers a list of fifty well known Pakistani melancholic songs (consisting of twenty-five artists, who are represented by two songs each). The Romani Urdu lyrics with English translations represent a narrow dataset to study how emotional pain is linguistically framed and how it is psychologically regulated. As a part of the investigation, the role of male youth in coping with heartbreak is explained through this corpus and whether melancholic music represents such a kind of personal emotional release, coping mechanism, or a cultural way of re-interpreting oneself.

Finally, the issue discussed in this paper is not only a psychological but a cultural one: it questions the role of Pakistani masculinity as the factor that limits the release of emotions and the means through which music serves as a confidential yet powerful tool that helps young men to cope with loss, negotiate their identity, and turn their weakness into strength.

Research Questions

1. How do Pakistani male youth engage with melancholic music to regulate emotions following romantic heartbreak?
2. In what ways do the psychological themes expressed in sad Pakistani songs support emotional regulation within culturally prescribed norms of masculinity?
3. How do recurring linguistic and poetic features in Urdu and Punjabi sad song lyrics function as tools for emotional expression and meaning-making among male listeners?

Research Objectives

1. To examine how melancholic Pakistani songs function as an emotion-regulation resource for male youth following romantic breakup, using a self-compiled lyrical corpus.
2. To analyze the psychological themes embedded in sad song lyrics that reflect processes of emotional suppression, catharsis, and cognitive reappraisal within masculine cultural frameworks.
3. To identify and analyze key linguistic and poetic devices in Urdu and Punjabi sad songs that facilitate emotional expression and emotional redefinition.

Literature Review

The results of studies in the field of psychology, sociology and cultural studies are consistent when it comes to early social conditioning of emotional suppression of men. Masculine ideals of Pakistan encourage the practices of restraint, silence and emotional hardening that inhibit the expression of healthy emotion among boys and young men. Research indicates that adolescent male brains are trained not to show any form of vulnerability and regard silence as a sign of strength, thus resulting in emotional repression in the long run (Ahmmed and Khan 2024; Channa and Tahir 2020; Imtiaz and Kamal 2023). This repression is most particularly pronounced when young men are romantically bereaved.

Breakup is an emotionally disruptive process, yet the Pakistani boys are seldom free to express them, as it is dictated by the social culture. A study of Pakistani teenagers emphasizes the problem of limited expression of emotions and its possible aggravation of internal conflict, psychological stress and unresolved grief (Faiz et al 2024; Zafar et al 2020; Zafar and Tariq 2021). In this scenario, music comes out as a very important emotional release. Listening to music is very much a part of Pakistan youth culture and serves to deal with difficult emotions in a privacy manner (Rana and Ajmal 2011; Rana et al 2011).

Research indicates that people of different cultures utilize music to regulate mood, distract, reflect on themselves and release emotions (Ma'rof et al 2023; Rehman 2021; Miranda and Claes 2011). In restrictive settings among the adolescents, music gives them a safe means of expression other than verbal expression. Key models of emotion regulation serve as the basis of theoretical learning of this phenomenon. Some of the mechanisms that

Gross identified in his work are cognitive reappraisal, suppression and situation selection, which various people employ to alter emotional experiences using some internal strategies (Gross 1998). The appraisal theory proposed by Lazarus and Folkman underscores the fact that the emotional responses of people depending on the way they interpret stress with special focus given reappraisal as an important stress-evading mechanism (Lazarus and Folkman,1984).

According to Koole (2009), emotion regulation is not only psychological, but also cultural and symbolic, and multimodal coping is possible. All these theories imply that music may act as a kind of indirect regulation process in situations where there is a cultural taboo against direct communication. This is supported specifically in the works of research on music. Research indicates that melancholic music might induce multifaceted affective processes, which may include sadness and comfort, nostalgia or aesthetic satisfaction (Kawakami et al, 2013; Taruffi and Koelsch, 2014; Sachs et al, 2015). This goes against the total sum of the sad music exacerbates distress.

Rather it commonly cultivates introspection and affective clarity. Literature by Van den Tol and Edwards shows that listeners select sad songs deliberately when they are in a negative situation to attain emotional release, understanding, distraction or reappraisal (Van den Tol and Edwards,2014;2015). Certain studies do point out that there are adolescents that can intensify their depressive mood with repeated listening to melancholic music, indicating that there are individual differences in terms of who listens to the music (Ter Bogt et al,2021). But in general, the evidence favoring its therapeutic promise exists. Recent research also embraces music as a proactive emotion regulation means and not a passive one.

According to a 2024 review, in many cases, music users are strategic listeners, which means that they control stress levels by reinterpreting events and returning them to the necessary level of emotional neutrality (Chong,2024). Psychology, Today also demonstrates the ability of sad music to make one feel that their suffering is not alone but to feel less alone (Heshmat,2025). These functions are particularly important in the societies when men are pressurized to overpower their emotional needs.

Considering the case of Pakistan in particular, studies on masculinity demonstrate that males in youth do not want to be emotionally supportive because they are afraid of being judged or they think that it is a sign of weakness (O de Visser et al,2020). Therefore, headphones or playlists are some of the other forms of privacy that enable a subtle form of emotional relief. Social pressures and family structures are also revealed to result in the inability to employ cognitive regulation skills, as a result of which the adolescents are highly dependent on internal strategies due to the influence of social pressures and family structures on the emotional regulation of the Pakistani studies (Khawar et al,2023; Rauf et al 2023).

Corpus studies demonstrate that lyrics reliably reflect affective states and cognitive processes. In particular, Strapparava, Mihalcea, and Battocchi (2012) created a parallel corpus of music and lyrics annotated with emotions, illustrating that song lyrics can serve as valid and structured data for investigating symbolic emotion regulation. In the context of Pakistani sad music, corpus-based lyric analysis allows identification of culturally specific metaphors, recurring themes of loss, and linguistic strategies for regulating emotion, strengthening the analytical foundation of this study. Taken together, the literature indicates that listening to sad music following romantic loss is not merely habitual but represents a culturally sanctioned emotion regulation strategy.

Theoretical Framework

The current research is based on the interconnection of the emotion regulation theory, cognitive appraisal theories and the sociocultural masculinity norms with a particular focus

on the cultural mediation of coping with sad music among Pakistani male adolescents. The constructs of traditional Western models of emotion regulation, which are mainly the process model of emotion regulation proposed by Gross (1998, 2015) and the cognitive appraisal theory of Lazarus (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984), provides foundation concepts, but they need cultural and linguistics specifics adaptations of Pakistani society, where masculinity is strictly controlled by social norms which focus on emotional suppression and stoicism.(Channa and Tahir, 2020; Imtiaz and Kamal, 2023).

According to the model of Gross people regulate emotions by using such strategies as reappraisal of cognition, expressive suppression, and deployment of attention and enable people to regulate emotions pre-emptively or through reactivity. Lazarus points out that emotional outcomes and coping behaviors are dictated by primary appraisal (considering how a stressor is relevant to personal goals) and secondary appraisal (considering coping resources). Romantic heartbreak is a very salient stressor in the Pakistani cultural setting which has limited socially accepted coping options. This leaves sad music as an alternative reappraisal, catharsis, and affective modulation, which, as is the case in Gross and Lazarus models, but within the confines of modern culture.

The study incorporates a cultural-linguistic perspective to explain the original Pakistani sociocultural construct considering the knowledge of sociolinguistics and cultural semiotics. Their rich metaphoric material, repetition, and lyrical hybridity, Urdu and Punjabi sad songs are used as a vehicle of emotional negotiation. The metaphors of night, distance, rain, and unfulfilled love are not only poetic, but also an indicator of emotion control so that the listeners could outerize the inner conflict without desecrating the masculine principles of restraint (Faiz, Inayat, and Noreen, 2024; Rana, Ajmal, and North, 2011).

Such cultural products operationalize emotion regulation through the application of language mediated symbolic expression that provides an opportunity to catharsis and cognitive restructuring without contravening compliance with gendered norms. The model suggests sad music as a multidimensional emotional construction as a combination of three significant processes: When the song describes heartbreak, it introduces a personal loss through the lyrical means and turns it into a universal human experience (Gross, 2015; Van den Tol and Edwards, 2014).

Lyrics and melodic lines offer an outlet of affective expression that is socially acceptable. Through narrative and metaphoric text, listeners undergo regulated emotional expression, which is comparable to Gross the emotion facing and also with neuro-psychological findings that sad music mediates internalized affect and social demands (Hashmat, 2025; Kawakami et al., 2013). Cultural meditation is important because only in the semi-Private domain of music consumption (headphones, personal playlists), males are allowed to express their emotions in culturally appropriate ways, and emotional expression should be in line with the social expectations of collectivity (gender) (Ahmmmed and Khan, 2024; Imtiaz and Kamal, 2023).

Corpus-based analysis provides a methodological foundation for examining these dynamics. Linguistic features such as metaphor, repetition, and narrative structure encode affective meanings that reflect cognitive and emotional processes. Studies like Strapparava, Mihalcea, and Battocchi (2012) support that annotated lyric corpora can reliably capture emotional states, supporting the use of song lyrics as structured data for understanding symbolic emotion regulation. This approach help to identifies metaphors of specific culture, continual theme of loss and linguistics strategies to operationalize emotional regulation in Pakistani context. Overall, this framework positions sad music as an active regulatory mechanism that mediates the tension between individual grief and societal masculinity norms. It integrates psychological theory, linguistic analysis, and cultural

critique, providing a robust theoretical lens for interpreting lyrical content, emotional coping strategies, and the interrelationship of gender, culture, and music in adolescent psychological adjustment.

Research Methodology

The qualitative corpus-based research design is adopted in this study as the form of investigation of how Pakistani sad music constructs and expresses emotional regulation, especially among the male vocalists. Since emotional experience and language use are multi-dimensional and part of a culture, a qualitative study allows a more intimate, interpretive reading of lyrics without overlooking metaphor, narrative and emotional undertones. The corpus is used as the main data and psychological and linguistic models are used to interpret the data.

The data will include 50 Pakistani sad songs, which is 25 artists, and two songs of each artist are chosen. Sampling strategy was purposive-criterion, whereby each of the sampled songs met three set criteria: Thematically sad (lyrical content is explicitly sad, loss, heartbreak, longing, loneliness, emotional pain, or relational separation), Pakistani origin (song is performed by a Pakistani singer or band, which avoids bias due to a lack of cultural significance to the Pakistani youth), and Familiarity and reach (song is relatively well-known, widely circulated, or popular in the Mount of Pakistani music). The songs are across various timeframes, such as those published prior to and after 2000 year so that they can be diverse in terms of time and give a wider reflection of the changing musical and emotional attitudes. Genre was not limited in any way; therefore, the corpus contains pop, soft rock, indie, ghazal-influenced, R&B-coloured, and mainstream OST scores.

Each song was one after another on YouTube Music, and all the lyrics were gathered through human ears. Manual listening enabled the researcher to ensure the thematic relevance and the tone of emotion of every song, the genuine version of the song was transcribed, and genuine lines with sadness, emotional vulnerability, and interpersonal or intra-psychoic themes were accurately measured. To each song, the lyrics were put in Roman Urdu, maintaining the phonetic and stylistic integrity of the modern Pakistani musical language, often using Urdu, Punjabi, slang, and English borrowings. The translation in Roman Urdu increases the accessibility of those who do not know Urdu hand.

After the transcription, the lines were translated to English and a line-by-line bilingual set was obtained. The researcher herself translated, to provide interpretive consistency, semantic specificity and consistency in the generation of emotional depth. The English translations are not exact but strived to convey the intended meaning and tone of emotion clearly.

Every artist was given his/her own section which included the following: artist name; two sad songs chosen; Roman Urdu lyrics (line-by-line); English translation (line-by-line). This organised format enables the dataset to be both a linguistic corpus and a psychological text corpus to provide multi-layered analysis.

The corpus is analysed based on two theoretical lenses that complement each other. The psychological explanation is largely based on the theory by Gross (1998) Emotion Regulation Theory and the theory by Lazarus (1984) Cognitive Appraisal Theory. The framework developed by Gross enables the researcher to determine the role of thinking in influencing the expression of emotions by finding the evidence of reappraisal, suppression, rumination, avoidance, and acceptance in the lyrical text. These types assist in obtaining a cognitively processed and expressed sadness, longing, or grief by the singer. The model offered by Lazarus gives another dimension since it tracks the way people evaluate emotional events. Expressions of primary appraisal (perception of loss, threat or emotional harm), secondary appraisal (appraisals of coping capacity, helplessness, resignation) and

meaning-making, in which people reframe painful experiences as personally or spiritually transformative, are analysed in lyrics. With these frameworks, theme areas addressed by the psychological analysis include heartbreak, masculine silence, nostalgia, perceived abandonment, self-blame and optimistic reconfiguration of loss.

In line with this, the linguistic analysis explores the process through which meaning is created by way of language selection and stylistic devices. Special focus is made on the emotional lexicon that comprises the use of self-referent pronouns and relational words that disclose internal placement and external relations. The symbolic vehicles of coding emotional experience are looked at through patterns of metaphor, particularly repetitive imagery of night, distance, wounds, silence or emptiness. There is also the narrative structure, in the power of first-person voice and direct addressiveness, which produce immediacy and closeness, which are also considered in the analysis. Switching Roman Urdu to English and the reverse is viewed as a resource that is culturally situated in order to alert modernity or enhance emotion or at extreme intimacy levels. Repetition, parallelism, and rhythm are perceived as techniques of emotional amplification, whereas patterning of sound is sometimes used to deliver affectively. Taken together, this framework shows how sadness is discursively constructed, how vulnerability can be made vocal through the Pakistani poetic traditions and how cultural patterns of masculinity can define the boundaries of emotion expression.

Clear inclusion and exclusion criteria were used to screen the dataset to make it thematically and culturally relevant. The songs were considered including when they were performed by Pakistani artists, specifically were preoccupied with sadness, heartbreak, loss or emotional vulnerability and were clearly situated in Urdu, Roman Urdu, Punjabi, English or a mixed register as is commonly practised in the Pakistani urban music culture. Songs were also not supposed to be overtly inspirational, or celebratory, or patriotic, or romantic in an uplifting and not the depressing meaning, or they were too ambiguous in emotion to be deemed depressing in any meaningful way. The non-Pakistani musical productions were also locked out in order to preserve cultural homogeneity.

All the lyrics were obtained through free, public access sites (YouTube Music) and were used solely as an academic resource and study material, not to be reused. No copying or downloading of audio files under copyright. Translations are initial interpretations by the researcher and fall under fair use in the academic context.

The accuracy, semantic fidelity, and cross-entry consistency were guaranteed by manual transcription and translation processes. Interpretive validity is strengthened with the application of well-established theoretical constructs, including the theory of emotion regulation, developed by Gross and Lazarus. The analytical reliability of the findings is enhanced through triangulation of psychological theory, linguistic features and lyrical content.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis of fifty transcribed Pakistani melancholic songs revealed that a variety of interconnected motifs represented how males control their emotions in culturally-sensitive situations. The lyrics were coded according to patterns of cognitive reframing, expressive catharsis, and loss/support appraisals by applying the analysis of the lyrics through Gross (1998) emotion-regulation framework and Lazarus (1966) appraisal theory. There were a lot of singers who expressed profound vulnerability but placed these feelings in a broader cultural narrative of destiny, pride, or unity. Among artists, four major themes were identified:

- i.* The Desire and Soldier Vulnerability
- ii.* Stoic Acceptance, Fate and Resignation

- iii. Cognitive Re-evaluation and Creative Coping
- iv. Anger, Betrayal, and Social Critique

The themes are discussed in greater detail below and interpreted through the examples of lyrics.

1. *The Desire and Soldier Venerability*

One of the most obvious ones is the demonstration of immense longing and alienation and how male subjects evaluate distances as anguishing. Solace and pain are often the dwelling place of singers. As an example, a single lyric describes the memory of the beloved as being everywhere: “*Udaas aankhon mein uska chehra hai... Dil main bhi uskiyaad baaqi hai*” (“In my melancholy eyes her face is there... I still remember, too, in my heart, her memory”). This couplet sums up this continual affective mark of the absence of a loved one, a calculated loss that suffuses everyday experience. According to the Lazarusian approach, men will evaluate the separation of a partner as a harm-loss event that causes chronic grief. This process is depicted in the song text through very graphic images of the memory: “*Yaad teri seene vich khich jehi paawe*” (The memory of you is like a stab in the chest) expressing the pain that is visceral even decades after the separation. The existence of such metaphors denotes a high sensitivity of emotional state and a clear expression through the medium of music.

Song writers are not afraid to confess to hopelessness. The narrator also sings in one chorus, lamenting that every time they are expected to meet, it is replaced by memory: “*Aaj phir tu aayi nahi, yaad teri aayi thi*” (Today you did not come again, memory of you came). Another poet also confirms the vulnerability by listing out the vulnerability as “*Meri tanhaiyaan. Meri parchayian/*” My loneliness/my shadows/are always with me. These lines indicate that male actors see their loneliness as something real. In the model of Gross, this represents the stage of identification, where the performers are not afraid to express emotions as opposed to keeping them secret, but through a medium of art. These confessions of desire defy the principles of stoicism: through speaking of crying and insomnia, the singers break the silence. However, they often frame personal anguish in culturally approved patterns of patient suffering or poetic fate. As an illustration, there is a lyric, which states, “*Be-wajah hi bewafa se bepanaah umeed jo lagayi thi*” (The limitless hope I had trusted In one who was not faithful, in vain), mixed with self-pity. In this case, the actor evaluates himself as foolishly optimistic; by putting his pain in the context of self-inflicted hope, he also participates in cognitive reappraisal, but in a way, he is sharing grief whilst avoiding taking complete responsibility.

Altogether, the theme of yearning shows that male singers estimate their emotional situation as lamentable and overwhelming. Lexicon (*sada, yaad, tanhaa, gham*) underlines profound sorrow, but the lyrical voice is also quite calm resignation men talk of weeping and insomnia, but they usually represent them as silent cries. This relationship is a cultural convention according to which men avoid direct outbursts or demonstrations of weakness in order to transfer the feeling of weakness to the world of poetry. A means of emotion regulation is thereby provided through song where the expression is covert without contravening the hegemonic masculinity rules.

2. *Stoic Acceptance, Fate and Resignation*

Another similar theme is the stoic acceptance of sadness, through which singers present emotional suffering as something that is part of life or destiny. Many of the lines are a statement of a worldview, which has misfortune caused by bad luck or an act of God but not an individual lack of competence. As an example, one of the lyricists states, “*Badd bakht bas karo, udaasi har taraf*” (Just call me unlucky; sadness is everywhere). This first quatrain is an acceptance of the general pessimism, but the singer is re-classified as one of

the unlucky and not an active casualty. The cognitive aspect of the situation is assessed as being widely tragic and impersonal: sadness is everywhere replaces attribution to a particular actor. This view reminds the idea of Lazarus about secondary appraisal, when the person admits that he or she does not have a personal control over grief. Instead of crying straight to the beloved, the singer transforms loss into fate, destiny (Badd bakht, literally, ill-fated one), and, thus, to some extent, suppresses anger and keeps emotions under control.

Similarly, acceptance in other lyrical passages is expressed by inquiry. In one of the lyrics, it is stated that: "*Raazi dil toh razamand, hum kyun nahi?*" ("If the heart agrees, why are we not in accord?"), which implies that there is a discrepancy between the fate and a personal will. Instead of complaining to the world, the composer questions himself as to why his own agreement with fate does not bring peace. This phrase reevaluates heartbreak as a cosmic incongruence, emotional dissonance (the inability to feel content) is a mystery rather than a vice. According to the terms used by Gross, this can be a sign of antecedent-oriented coping: the singer is thinking about his emotional situation (identification and reappraisal) not ranting.

The stoicism with which the verses treat pain as normal is also rather humorous. One artist comments, as an example, "*Hum they gareeb, na jaane kaati hain woh raatein kaise*" (we were poor, I do not know how we survived such nights). Hardship and poverty, therefore, act as a context to emotional sustenance. There is pride in the couplet that it is not despair but the survival: the speaker survived despite being poor. This is in line with the Pakistani cultural beliefs on patience (sabr), especially among men who were inculcated to tolerate adversity without complaining. Another such passage is the one that boasts of non-engaging in unhealthy coping (unhealthy drugs) and reinvents emotional awareness as a gift (shaor) upon which music is created: *Nahi taapi pill, gaane likhe yeh shaor, bhai*. The loving term, bhai, meaning brother, puts the feeling within the context of communal wisdom. These lines combined create an image of a resigned but dignified attitude: men meet the suffering with no complaint and turn it into art instead of self-harm.

This way, numerous songs praise personal trauma as an element of a human predicament. Lyrics like "*Insaan bhi kya cheez hai: Ek mein wafa nahi, aur doosre ko wafa ki umeed hai*" are cynical expressions of resignation of the human nature. The singer admits the contradictions of trust and betrayal to be unavoidable. This aloofness suggests a lack of emotions; the complaint is not based on the agony itself, but on a lack of concern. Lazarus would point out that the singer changes betrayal into a more universal threat that is facing everybody, not an individual offense. The result is some form of resigned equanimity: mourning continues, but is mitigated by a sense of the inevitability of fate or cosmic injustice and not only by individual culpability.

3. *Cognitive Re-evaluation and Creative Coping*

The powerful theme that comes out of the corpus, is the redefinition and surpassing pain through creative expression. Many lyrics show how men are proactively reworking grief to reclaim agency or dignity, which shows the cognitive-change strategy of Gross. Instead of giving up, they convert suffering to beauty or meaning. An example is given by a rapper, saying, "*yeh aajizi hai baaghi, isko kehte hum guroor nahi*" (this humility is rebellious, we do not call this pride). In this case the singer reinvents humility, which may be understood as a sign of weakness, as a form of resistance. He denounces social opinion (guroor, pride) and puts his humble perseverance into the form of rebellion. The example of this meta-cognitive line is reappraisal: the singer is intentionally choosing the empowering way of interpreting his emotional condition.

In the same manner, the artistic process of songwriting is described as being therapeutic. In the song, the narrator contrasts a self-destructive desire (taking pills) with

creating music: *“Nahi taapi pill...gaane likhe yeh shaoor, bhai”*. The lyric proposes the healthy expression of the creativity as a result of consciousness by positioning the concept of awareness as the composer of songs. The creative ability of inner wisdom personified as the *“yeh shaoor”* justifies creation of art as a method of coping. This will be in line with Lazarus stressing on the coping resources: music is an active resource redefining the personal attitude to stress.

Metaphorical imagery also brings out reappraisal. One balladeer curses distance, but re-invents it in a poetic form: *“Baadal sirhaana kyunki door, tune toh aana nahi”* (I make the clouds my bed because you are far, because you are not coming). The songwriter does not accuse the absent lover and silently accepts her non-return and draws a picture of sleeping on clouds. The sadness is clear, but the very fact of making beauty out of loss proves acceptance as well as the creation of art. This is a creative coping process that is consistent with both Gross and Lazarus models, the singer focuses emotional energy into an imaginative sphere (response modulation) and evaluates his reality poetically.

The artists specifically comment on the singing as catharsis even in the titles of the songs like *“Khudkush zamana, yeh ek gaana, koi fasaana nahi”* (self-destructive era; this song, not a tale). The lyric emphasizes that the composition is a healing or confronting of the suicidal world (which is presumably the world of severe pain) by saying *“yeh ek gaana, koi fasaana nahi”*. The act of writing songs is converted into a rebellious act. Altogether, the theme of reappraisal shows how men transform hopelessness into resistance and creation. The creativity and reinterpretation are always depicted as emotional strategies in lyrics, be it through high humbleness, philosophising of memory, or by mere creating new verses. By these lines, men make Gross (1987) practical in the application of the cognitive reappraisal: they do not reject feeling but change the meaning to manage constructively.

4. *Anger, Betrayal, and Social Critique*

In line with resignation, there is a rich body of songs that expresses implicit anger and provides commentaries on betrayers and the society at large. This theme is expressed in lyrical excerpts that judge the causes of the sorrow as being unfair and question hypocrisy. An example is an outcry of protest: What does it mean to take away comfort by means of pain?... *“Muh pe tasalliyan, toh duniya mein tamashe kaise?”* What can consolations do my countenance? In what way does the world feast on spectacle?). Here, the singer, in the presence of a wrongdoer, presumably a love interest, even addresses the wrongdoer with disbelief, since a hurter is unlikely to be a comforter. This rhetorical statement prefigures a great deal of betrayal. Based on the cognitive appraisal theory, the abandonment of the lover is the primary stressor, whereas the rhetorical question of the vocalist represents the anger displayed in the form of a question. The linguistic use of words such as gham, dilaase are clear signs of anguish and false promise. In this way, the singer creates an identity, which is not that of a persecuted victim but of an agent who requires moral adherence.

Social injustice is widened in other lines to include the critique. *“Insaan bhi kya cheez hai, Ek mein wafa nahi, aur doosre ko wafa ki umeed hai”* (What a strange thing a human is: one has no loyalty, and another one is hoping to get it) creates a scathing judgment about the nature of humans. It suggests that betrayal is structural: there are those who do not show loyalty, and those who are naive and do not give up. The exasperation can be achieved with the repetitive exhortation *“Insaan bhi kya cheez hai”*. Equally, *“Jhoot ki saza nahi, toh tuhmatain lagane pe yahan dheel hai”*, (there is no crime in lies, but in bearing false accusation no mind is made) condemns the social system, in which falsehood is condoned, and false imputation is disregarded. These lines show that the experience of heartbreak is viewed in a more global context of injustice in the society. Under the Lazarus scheme, they

would fall under the category of the secondary appraisal that is, the singer examines the injustice of the situation at the scene thus provoking anger and cynicism.

It is only important to note that in many cases, anger is often woven into the music of lamentation instead of becoming an open rebellion. The mood is poetic but the lyrics are biting. As an illustration, “*Logon se pooch, yeh qalam likhta jhoot nahi*” (Ask people, this pen does not write lies) confirms the honesty of the vocalist as opposed to the dishonesty of other people. This is a defense mechanism- justification of integrity and the blame on other people is attributed implicitly. The unspoken rage is directed against hypocrisy in society, and the lyrical approach will be used to direct the affective aggression in a formatted and socially acceptable agitation discourse.

Taken together, these lyrics indicate that males performers permit themselves to utilize anger, but do not express them directly, but in a metaphorical, interrogative and communal way. This trend can be explained as the display of cultural standards that stigmatize overt aggression in males. Rather, the artistic medium is used to control emotion within the body: the singer admits anger (according to Gross model of emotional reactions) and then puts it into creative criticism. The frequent address use of plural (Hum which translates to we, our) also points to solidarity with the betrayed making anger collectivized and not individualized. Overall, the anger-and-betrayal theme represents the way in which male characters are able to think, interpret their emotional sufferings as unfair, which subsequently allows them to discharge anger in a socially acceptable, poetic, and somewhat disguised manner.

Linguistic Analysis

Throughout these themes, the lyrics contain rich linguistic devices that contribute to the processes of emotional regulation. The use of metaphor, imagery is rich: the emotions are projected outward in graphic language. The comparison of memories with physical stabbing is made (as an example, “*seene vich khich jehi paawe*” - a stab in the chest), the soulmates to heavenly bodies “*Tu hi rehmat, tu hi dhoop, tu khud Kohinoor*”, you are heavenly mercy...you are the sunshine, you are the Kohinoor), the aggravation to war (Gham - e - dahar ka jhagda). The singers can achieve this with such extended metaphors, which give a tangible shape to an abstract pain, which is a traditional re-evaluation strategy: they can make art out of it when they define emotion as a visual image.

The narrative voice is mostly a first person despite the situations where the singer is speaking to a second person or even the society in general using a you. The fact that phrases like ‘(why are we not?) and constant use of main (I) or ham (we) bring the male narrator to the foreground of the story. This is what demonstrates the self-reflective quality of the songs: the male self is the center of emotion. The emotion is personalised by occasional direct address to a lover (*bewafa se, to my unfaithful one*), or friend (*bhai*), brother. As an illustration, there is the use of the word *bhai* in the phrase “*Nahi taapi pill bhai*”, which appeals to the brotherhood. The switch to a more personal relationship expression is more or less an invitation to the man, in order to permit him to open up and tell a male friend about his burden.

Many songs are interspersed with code-switching between English and Punjabi phrases. English phrases like *jam, girl, brother*, or lines that are already in English (e.g., “I’m just a text away”) bring real-life touches of the colloquial and may make the work more interesting to the audience. This transition tends to underline a point: in one stanza, the fusion of Urdu and English, the sentence about stuck *jam* on the one-way *jam*, dramatises the sense of being stuck. Likewise, Punjabi verses like the one that goes, “*Kal sang na honge, par yaad to hogi*” (We will not be there tomorrow, but the memories will not fade) will provide some local colour and poignancy. These variations are indicative of tonal change or emphasis on certain words (including *stuck, jam, brother, yaad*), which contribute

to the representation of specific emotional conditions as part of the repertoire of the bilingual speakers.

An additional device that reflects regulation strategies as well as strengthens them is repetition. Several choruses are repeated: the words “*Insaan bhi kya cheez hai*” are used twice, within the short time span, which helps to make the feeling that human nature is confounding. This refracting implies rumination - an attribute of repression or unrecovered feeling, only paired with music becoming a group lament. Equally, stanzas can be duplicated using individual words (e.g. “*Tumm pass ho, tum pass ho*” - You are close, you are close in one song), and the repetitive nature of the obsessive attention to the presence or lack of it. The repetition, in this case, serves as a prayer or mantra: the singer repeats a phrase, maybe to calm him down or to establish the fact of emotion in his mind.

Lastly, the emotive vocabulary is many-sided and culturally diverse. Urdu words are also used significantly: gham (sorrow), tanhai (loneliness), bewafa (unfaithful), udaasi (sadness), guroor (pride), aajizi (humility), and so on. The words used tend to have connotations of honour and shame. To give an example, it is more deferential to consider oneself aajiz (humble) instead of simply being proud; it is more dignified to consider oneself udaasi (saddened). The compounding of “*sar jhuka ke zehar pi liya*” (bowed head drinking poison) and muskuraahatein teri (your smiles) demonstrates the association of pride with pain by language. To summarize, the linguistic analysis shows that male singers resort to the metaphor, tone variation, and vocabulary choice to deal with vulnerability - make sad things taste good. These tendencies support the psychological results: emotion is enabled to live, though the expression of the same is artistically adjusted to conform to masculine and cultural expectations.

All these analytical themes paint a convoluted as well as a complex picture of the emotional regulation of the male in the Pakistani music. Men are full of painful and yearning, but seldom fall under it; they tell it in poetic language, re-tell it imaginatively, and even criticize the origins of it. The evidence provided in the lyrics reveals that singers swing between a state of personal vulnerability and social stoicism, between self-blame and vindication. The deliberate application of metaphor, code -switching and repetition is indicative of an effortful manipulation of emotion. Overall, the discussion reveals the way in which masculine cultural norms (such as endurance, honour, and artistry) shape the coping mechanisms of male singers. These observations will be now generalised in Findings section, linking the lyrical themes to general assumptions on Pakistani expression of masculinity through emotions.

Artist and Song	Selected Line	Psychological Reflection	Linguistic Reflection
1. <i>Na Kaho</i> by Aaroh	“ <i>Khamoshi guftugu hone lagi hai</i> ”	Reflects intimacy where silence communicates more than speech — emotional connection beyond words.	Personification of silence + metaphor (silence = speech) shows indirect expression of intimacy; poetic inversion elevates mood.
2. <i>Aag ki Tarah</i> by Aaroh	“ <i>Jalta hai mera dil, bus aag ki tarah</i> ”	Expresses emotional suffering, longing, helpless pain.	Simile “ <i>aag ki tarah</i> ” frames pain as burning; intensifies feeling

				through vivid imagery and sensory metaphor.
3.	<i>Dastaan</i> by Abdullah Qureshi	“ <i>Tumm pass ho</i> ” repeated	Psychological reassurance/stability — the voice clings to presence to avoid loneliness.	Repetition creates rhythmic emphasis, reinforcing emotional dependency and cyclical internal longing.
4.	<i>Intezaar</i> by Abdullah Qureshi	“ <i>Zaiqa to chakh liya zakhm bhi si liya</i> ”	Shows acceptance of pain, emotional resignation, maturity in suffering.	Metaphor of tasting wounds → experiential conceptualization of pain; idiomatic structure intensifies depth.
5.	<i>Yaar Ko Humne Ja baja Dekha</i> by Abida Parveen	“ <i>Yaar ko humne ja-ba-ja dekha</i> ”	Mystical union — Divine presence everywhere.	Repetition acts like zikr; spatial deixis (“everywhere”) universalizes meaning.
6.	<i>Humko Yaa Dar Dar Phiraya Yaar Ne</i> by Abida Parveen	“ <i>Ham ko aaina banaya yaar ne</i> ”	Self as reflection of the Beloved — existential surrender.	Metaphor of mirror, transformation imagery; passive construction emphasizes destiny.
7.	<i>Pardesi</i> by Abbrar ul Haq	“ <i>Pardesi hoyon wey</i> ”	Loss, abandonment, migration pain.	Address marker “wey” + refrain show folk lament; vocative intensifies appeal.
8.	<i>Sukh Diyan Neendran</i> by Abbrar ul Haq	“ <i>Kiddi aukhi langdi wachhoreyan di raat ve</i> ”	Emotional suffering during separation; endurance theme.	Punjabi idiom + imagery of night as burden; cultural metaphor marking local identity.
9.	<i>Ye Jism Azmat</i> by Ali	“ <i>Ye jism hai toh kya, ye rooh ka libaas hai</i> ”	Existential duality — body vs soul transcendence.	Metaphor “garment of the soul” creates philosophical abstraction.
10.	<i>Maula Azmat</i> by Ali	“ <i>Tu saans mein hai</i> ”	Internalization of the Divine / beloved — dependency and surrender.	Short nominal structure emphasizes immediacy; metaphor of breath as omnipresence.
11.	<i>Ranjish hi Sahi</i> by Ali Sethi	“ <i>Aa phir se mujhe chor ke jaane ke liye aa</i> ”	Attachment trauma — craving presence even if it brings hurt; cyclical dependency.	Imperative + paradox (come so you can leave) creates emotional irony;

				repetition emphasizes resignation.
12.	<i>Chan Kithan</i> by Ali Sethi	<i>“Kalliyaan raataan jaag ke asaan, giniyaan teriyaan dooriyaan ve”</i>	Perseverance in longing; time feels heavy in separation.	Punjabi temporal imagery; counting metaphor symbolizes psychological distance; folk oral rhythm.
13.	<i>Chal Dil Merey</i> by Ali Zafar	<i>“Ye duniya jhooti, log lootere”</i>	Disillusionment and social distrust — existential rejection.	Parallelism + rhyme; negative vocatives; aphoristic phrasing mirrors folk wisdom style.
14.	<i>Mushk</i> by Ali Zafar	<i>“Ishq goonga reha, hanju bolda reha”</i>	Suppressed emotions — feelings expressed only through tears.	Personification (love mute, tears speak); metaphoric inversion conveys unspoken suffering.
15.	<i>Jo Tu Na Mila</i> by Asim Azhar	<i>“Jo tu na mila mujhe, dil ko kya bataunga?”</i>	Unresolved grief and identity disturbance after loss.	Repetition as lament; rhetorical question increases emotional vulnerability.
16.	<i>Dard</i> by Asim Azhar	<i>“Dard mera tu hai, dil tujhe chahta kyun hai?”</i>	Cognitive dissonance — loving the source of pain.	Paradoxical construction; interrogative sentence deepens existential confusion.
17.	<i>Aadat</i> by Atif Aslam	<i>“Ab toh aadat si hai mujhko aise jeene mein”</i>	Adaptation to suffering; normalization of emotional pain.	Chorus repetition becomes thematic anchor; idiomatic phrasing expresses habitual state.
18.	<i>Meri Kahani</i> by Atif Aslam	<i>“Ye meri kahani”</i>	Self-narration and reclaiming identity; nostalgia shaping memory.	Narrative self-reference; refrain acts as story frame; poetic autobiography.
19.	<i>Maand</i> by Bayaan	<i>“Jo tune nahi to aisa main chehra, ke jiski khoobsurti maand padi ho”</i>	Self-image deterioration due to emotional loss.	Extended metaphor (faded beauty) + conditional phrase for identity collapse.
20.	<i>Nahi Milta</i> by Bayaan	<i>“Sab ko sab nahi milta”</i>	Acceptance of existential injustice; philosophical resignation.	Proverbial tone; repetition reinforces universal truth effect.
21.	<i>Kaash</i> by Bilal Saeed	<i>“Je dil nu launda naa”</i>	Regret and self-blame.	Conditional “Je” marks hypothetical grief.
22.	<i>Adhi Adhi Raat</i> by Bilal Saeed	<i>“Dil meri mannda hi na”</i>	Inner emotional conflict.	Repetition emphasizes refusal.

23.	<i>Jaane Is Dil Ka Haal</i> by □ Hadiqa Kiani	<i>“Is tarah woh mujhse juda hota gaya”</i>	Gradual emotional distancing.	“Hota gaya” shows progression.
24.	<i>Kithe Nain</i> by □ Hadiqa Kiani	<i>“Din langhde ne mere, teri yaad de sahare”</i>	Dependence on memory.	“Sahare” frames memory as support.
25.	<i>Wishes</i> by □ Hasan Raheem	<i>“Judai ney teri qadar karayi”</i>	Value realized through loss.	Personification of “judai.”
26.	<i>Obvious</i> by □ Hasan Raheem	<i>“Soona soona lagey ye zamana”</i>	Emotional emptiness.	Reduplication intensifies mood.
27.	<i>Kahani Suno</i> by □ Kaifi Khalil	<i>“Teri khamoshiyaan, meri aankhein nam”</i>	Silence causing pain.	Sensory contrast.
28.	<i>Kahani Meri</i> by □ Kaifi Khalil	<i>“Rakhi chhupakar nishani teri”</i>	Holding on to memory.	“Nishani” as attachment metaphor.
29.	<i>Main Hosh Mein Tha</i> by □ Mehdi Hassan	<i>“Yeh zeher mere lahoo mein utar gaya kaise”</i>	Love as emotional poison.	Strong metaphor.
30.	<i>Mujhe Tum Nazar Se Gira</i> by □ Mehdi Hassan	<i>“Meri yaad hogi jidhar jaaoge tum”</i>	Memory as haunting presence.	Future tense signals inevitability.
31.	<i>Tera Who Pyar</i> by □ Momina Mustehsan	<i>“Tera woh pyaar, yaad aayega”</i>	Enduring attachment.	Predictive future = permanence.
32.	<i>Yaariyan</i> by □ Momina Mustehsan	<i>“Ruswa hui hai meri mohabbat”</i>	Shame + betrayal.	Passive highlights victimization.
33.	<i>Jo Na Mil Sake</i> by □ Noor Jehan	<i>“Jo chala gaya, wohi aaj tak saath hai”</i>	Persistent attachment.	Paradox conveys tension.
34.	<i>Mujh Se Pehli Si Muhabbat</i> by □ Noor Jehan	<i>“Aur bhi dukh hain zamaane mein”</i>	Universalizing sorrow.	Generalization strategy.
35.	<i>Injj Vichre</i> by □ Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan	<i>“Gham sajna de maar mukaaya”</i>	Emotional exhaustion.	Hyperbole for intensity.
36.	<i>Kise Da Yaar Na Vichre</i> by □ Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan	<i>“Roag hijar da”</i>	Separation as emotional illness.	Disease metaphor.
37.	<i>Faasle</i> by □ Quratulain Balouch	<i>“Yaad hai mujhe teri har ada”</i>	Persistent recall.	“Har” signals totality.
38.	<i>Saaiyaan</i> by □ Quratulain Balouch	<i>“Ve ghut ghut royian”</i>	Uncontrolled breakdown.	Reduplication for intensity.
39.	<i>Zaroori Tha</i> by □ Quratulain Balouch	<i>“Mohabbat bhi</i>	Acceptance of	Parallel structure.

	by Rahat Fateh Ali Khan	<i>zaroori thi...</i>	painful necessity.
40.	<i>Mere Pass Tum Ho</i> by Rahat Fateh Ali Khan	<i>“Jeena hai tere bina”</i>	Forced acceptance. Declarative brevity.
41.	<i>Ye Mumkin Tu Nahi</i> by Sahir Ali Bagga	<i>“Jo dil ne chaha tha wo mil jaye”</i>	Expresses crushed expectations and emotional disappointment. Simple SVO structure; modal desire “chaha tha” intensifies longing.
42.	<i>Kahin Deep Jalay</i> by Sahir Ali Bagga	<i>“Wahi chhor dete hain”</i>	Sense of betrayal by trusted people; emotional abandonment. Passive-like phrasing increases the feeling of helplessness.
43.	<i>Ravi</i> by Sajjad Ali	<i>“Je sang beliya koi nai”</i>	Reveals loneliness and dependence on companionship. Punjabi negative construction “koi nai” adds blunt emotional weight.
44.	<i>Lagaya Dil</i> by Sajjad Ali	<i>“Magar haan zindagi mein phir hansa nai”</i>	Shows long-term emotional damage after separation. Contrast marker “magar” highlights irreversible emotional shift.
45.	<i>Departure Lane</i> by Talha Anjum	<i>“Tu woh jo mujhe haasil hi nahi”</i>	Deals with unattainability, emotional distance, and longing. “Haasil nahi” as a fixed Urdu phrase signals impossibility.
46.	<i>Downers at Dusk</i> by Talha Anjum	<i>“Ham zindagi dhoondte dhoondte maut ke muu mein he jaate rahe”</i>	Reflects existential exhaustion and hopeless pursuit. Metaphor of “maut ke muu mein” intensifies dramatic imagery.
47.	<i>Sajna</i> by Yashal Shahid	<i>“Teri yaadan sahare mai jee te lawan gi”</i>	Shows coping through memory and emotional dependence. “Yaadan sahare” uses personification of memories as support.
48.	<i>Tere Bin</i> by Yashal Shahid	<i>“Dil dubeya ve”</i>	Captures emotional drowning in sorrow and separation. Reduplicated verb “dubeya” reinforces sinking imagery.
49.	<i>Afsanay</i> by Young Stunners	<i>“Basar karte hain tere dil mai”</i>	Shows deep emotional attachment and identity merging. “Basar karte” metaphorically frames love as residence.
50.	<i>Gumaan</i> by Young Stunners	<i>“Main woh khaali haveli jiski tu akeli waaris”</i>	Sense of emotional emptiness and longing for someone to fill it. Extended metaphor compares self to an abandoned haveli, powerful imagery.

Table 1 Psychological and Linguistic Reflections of Selected Lines from Pakistani Sad Songs

Findings

The research shows that the Pakistani melancholic songs help in dealing with heartbreak in young men in a culture that discourages outright display of weakness. On a psychological level, the lyrical text can be viewed as an example of cognitive reappraisal, emotional suppression, rumination, and cathartic discharge; in this way, men will be able to make their way through troubling situations, being in a state of consonance with the mainstream masculine codes. Linguistically, the ubiquitous metaphors, images, repetition schemes and calculated code switching are used to transform the intimate affect to a format that is poetic and acceptable to the society. In turn, the information points to the fact that sad music serves as a socially approved emotional expression and, in other words, a form of unofficial coping.

Conclusion

The Sad Pakistani music provides the young men with a platform through which they can express and control feelings that otherwise would have been hidden. With the help of the application of the symbolic language and psychological reframing, the heartbreak processing can take place in a way that spares the personal dignity and provides emotional relief at the same time. The musical repertoire functions as a mediator between high cultural demands and personal susceptibility thus transforming otherwise silent mourning into a mediated artistic experience.

Recommendations

The application of qualitative research designs like interviewing listeners and quantifying the affective response can be used in future studies, where empirical evidence on music mediated emotion regulation can be enhanced. Comparative studies, using various types of music and channels of distribution, could identify other types of regulations. Mental-health workers and educators can also think of incorporating music based interventions since sad songs can be a culturally acceptable system through which young men interact and release their emotional failures.

References

- Ahmed, B., & Khan, A. (2024). Key Factors Contributing to Emotional Suppression in Male Adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent and Youth Psychological Studies (JAYPS)*, 5(5), 146-154. <https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.jayps.5.5.18>
- Channa, A. R., & Tahir, T. B. (2020). Be a Man, do not Cry like a Woman: Analyzing Gender Dynamics in Pakistan. *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal (LASSIJ)*, 4(2), 361–371. <https://doi.org/10.47264/idea.lassij/4.2.28>
- Chong, H. J. (2024). A scoping review on the use of music for emotion regulation. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, 1385.
- Faiz, A., Inayat, H., & Noreen, N. (2024). Spiritual intelligence and emotional regulation among abused adolescents of Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 12(2), 2179–2188. <https://doi.org/10.52131/pjhss.2024.v12i2.2390>
- Faiz, A., Zahra, S., & Khatoon, R. (2024). Spiritual intelligence and emotional regulation among adolescents: Gender-based analysis. *Pakistan Journal of Social Research*, 6(1), 122–134.
- Faran, M., Akram, S., Tahir, N., & Malik, F. (2021). Uses of music and flourish: mediating role of emotion regulation in university students. *J. Behav. Sci*, 31, 25. <https://url-shortener.me/9GPX>
- Gross, J. J. (1998). The emerging field of emotion regulation: An integrative review. *Review of General Psychology*, 2(3), 271–299. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.2.3.271>

- Heshmat, S. (2025). The healing power of sad music. *Psychology Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/science-of-choice/202501/the-healing-power-of-sad-music>.
- Imtiaz, S., & Kamal, A. (2023). Masculinity enactment in a Pakistani culture: Role of masculine socialization. *Pakistan Journal of Applied Psychology (PJAP)*, 3(1), 266-283. <https://doi.org/10.52461/pjap.v3i1.1627>
- KAWAKAMI, A., Furukawa, K., Katahira, K., & Okanoya, K. (2013). Sad music induces pleasant emotion. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 4. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00311>
- Khawar, R., Attia, S., Zulfqar, A., & Hussain, S. (2023). Self-regulation and cognitive emotion regulation among adolescents. *Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 11(2), 1990–1998. <https://doi.org/10.52131/pjhss.2023.1102.0500>
- Koole, S. L. (2009). The psychology of emotion regulation: An integrative review. *Cognition and Emotion*, 23(1), 4–41.
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). Stress, appraisal, and coping. *Springer Publishing Company*. https://books.google.com.pk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=i-ySQQuUpr8C&oi=fnd&pg=PR5&dq=Stress,+Appraisal,+and+Coping&ots=DhIPhoiePc&sig=ANcaE93dSSCOQvUGqrLsuAM3Iqw&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Stress%2C%20Appraisal%2C%20and%20Coping&f=false
- Ma'rof, A. A., Danhe, Z., & Zaremohzzabieh, Z. (2023). Gender differences in the function of music for emotion regulation development in everyday life: An experience sampling method study. *Malaysian Journal of Music*, 12(2), 76–94. <https://doi.org/10.37134/mjm.vol12.2.5.2023>
- Miranda, D., & Claes, M. (2011). Music listening and emotional well-being in adolescence. *Journal of Adolescence*, 34(4), 599–608.
- O. de Visser, R., Mushtaq, M., & Naz, F. (2020). Masculinity beliefs and willingness to seek help among young men in the United Kingdom and Pakistan. *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 27(5), 1052–1062. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13548506.2020.1847301>
- Rana, S. A., Ajmal, M., & North, A. C. (2011). Importance of Music for Pakistani Youth. *Pakistan Journal of Social & Clinical Psychology*, 9(1), 27-35. <https://geu.edu.pk/pages/gcupress/pjscp/volumes/pjscp2011-5.pdf>
- Rauf, U., Kazmi, S. M. A., & Rafi, A. A. (2023). Role of cognitive emotion regulation strategies and family structure as determinants of aggression in Pakistani adolescents. *Pakistan Journal of Social Research*, 5(2), 240–249.
- Rehman, N. A. (2021). Effect of music on consumer emotions – An analysis of Pakistani restaurant industry. *Journal of Independent Studies and Research (JISR) – Management, Social Sciences and Economics*, 19(1), 53–64.
- Saarikallio, S., & Erkkilä, J. (2007). The role of music in adolescents' mood regulation. *Psychology of Music*, 35(1), 88–109. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735607068889>
- Sachs, M. E., Damasio, A., & Habibi, A. (2015). The pleasures of sad music: A systematic review. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2015.00404>
- Strapparava, C., Mihalcea, R., & Battocchi, A. (2012). A parallel corpus of music and lyrics annotated with emotions. In *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation (LREC'12)*. *European Language Resources Association (ELRA)*. http://www.lrec-conf.org/proceedings/lrec2012/pdf/730_Paper.pdf
- Taruffi, L., & Koelsch, S. (2014). The paradox of music-evoked sadness: an online survey. *PLoS ONE*, 9(10), e110490. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0110490>

- Ter Bogt, T. F. M., Vieno, A., Doornwaard, S. M., Pastore, M., & van den Eijnden, R. J. J. M. (2021). Sad music depresses sad adolescents: A listener's profile. *Psychology of Music*, 49(2), 153–171. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735619868282>
- Van den Tol, A. J. M., & Edwards, J. (2014). Listening to sad music in adverse situations: How music selection strategies relate to self-regulatory goals, listening effects, and mood enhancement. *Psychology of Music*, 43(4), 473–494. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735613517410>
- Van den Tol, A. J. M., & Edwards, J. (2015). Listening to sad music in adverse situations: How music selection strategies relate to self-regulatory goals, listening effects, and mood enhancement. *Psychology of Music*, 43(3), 400–418.
- Zafar, H., Debowska, A., & Boduszek, D. (2020). Emotion regulation difficulties and psychopathology among Pakistani adolescents. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 26(1), 121–139. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359104520969765>
- Zafar, H., & Tariq, R. (2021). Emotion regulation difficulties and psychopathology among adolescents in Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 20(2), 45–60.