

Political TV Talk Shows in Pakistan: Impact on the Students of Public Sector Universities (A Survey of Lahore about Azadi March by Imran Khan)

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ABSTRACT

This research was to scrutinize the impact of Political TV talk shows on the opinion of students regarding Azadi march by using the method of survey questionnaire. A sample of 120 students was selected from three public sector universities of Lahore namely Lahore College for Women University, University of the Punjab and Government College University. For the purpose of results, researchers maintained three hypotheses which were accepted through statistical test: chi square. The findings of the study has proven that Political TV talk shows have a great impact, both positive and negative, on the opinion of students regarding Azadi march.

Keywords: *Political TV talk shows, Azadi march, Impact, Opinion, Students, Public sector universities*

Introduction

Today, the electronic media, particularly TV, occupies the ample area in our lives. TV is most powerful medium of mass communication because it directly effects the youth opinion. The Pakistani electronic media zone was liberalized in 2002. With the changing trend in media, the political talk shows on TV have become an important factor that shapes youth perception. TV talk show is a program which starts with a topic and finishes with a conclusion usually drawn by an anchor. People can participate in discussion through live calls. These talk shows are broadcasting a true sense of democratic legitimacy. The Pakistani private television channels such as Geo News, ARY News, Express News, Dunya News, TV One and Channel 24 are presenting various political talk shows as Capital Talk, Off The Record, Kal Tak, Dunya Kamran Khan Kay Sath, Nadeem Malik Live, Khara Such and others. These political talk shows present the national and international political issue or event with detail, background, analysis and evaluation to give an insight to the audience. Due to popularity, the host of these talk shows have now become opinion leaders for University students. Most importantly, the political talk shows are playing a significant role in introducing change and socializing the students of Public sector Universities on various political strands. Hence, these talk shows have become an important component in the formation of student's opinion.

Indeed, a couple of prior studies provided evidence of the impact of Political TV talk shows on the opinion of youth specifically students. Due to the transformation of political situation in the country, the participation of youngsters in political processes has increased. Youngsters, today, try to develop their selves as activists. In order to obtain information regarding politics, they prefer to watch TV current affair programs. Different experts and professionals are invited in these programs

who share their experiences and opinions to masses. Particularly, these programs have the power to shape the behaviour and perception of youth regarding voting and other political activities (Malik, 2013). Today, majority of the youngsters view talk shows as an important source of political awareness but they do not take part in political affairs. Only few of youngsters participate in politics. Some youngsters have no awareness about political rights. There is low percentage of youth who are aware about their rights. Some youngsters are of the view that talk shows are only a source of distraction and frustration among people because people are losing their ability to think and analyze the issues. These talk shows have a strong influence on the perception, thinking and behaviour of people because people believe on whatever these political talk shows present and highlight (Ahmed, 2010).

News channels are an imperative source of political awareness among masses particularly youth because people has an easy access to media channels. Most of the people like to view those talk shows which are based on critical analysis. Media shows, particularly talk shows, are an important source of information among youth regarding politics. (Muhammad Ali, 2014). The viewership of news and political talk shows is high among the youngsters. Majority of the youth like to watch the talk show “Capital Talk” on GEO News Channel than other shows. The youngsters are of the view that talk shows have become an important source of awareness regarding social and political affairs having national and international importance among masses. Moreover, the Political TV talk shows influence the political opinion of people positively. Therefore, hosts of these political talk shows should follow some code of ethics (Mahnaz Sukhera, 2003-05).

Talk shows play an effective role in the formation of youth opinion. Also, these talk shows ensure the political contribution of young generation. These shows have a strong influence on the audience thinking, perception and attitude (Kwak, 2004). Presently, both male and female prefer to watch current affair shows to be aware regarding current scenario of the country. The level of political awareness depends upon the level of exposure to TV political talk shows (Madni & Abdullah, 2011-12). The Political TV talk shows are an important source of political information among youngsters. These shows are influencing the people political perception positively (Naz, Nawaz & Ali, 2014).

The talk shows as ‘Kal Tak’, ‘Aj Kamran Khan K Saath’ and ‘Capital Talk’ are largely watched by the students than the other programs. Furthermore, at the time of study, the particular issues such as terrorism, targeting killing and foreign policy were given more attention than corruption and economic issues. The study further evaluated that social science students were more gratified by the talk shows content than the natural science students (Mahsud, Amin & Khan, 2013). The message formation and presentational style of political talk shows are creating political biasness among youngsters. Also, the level of political biasness of youth depends upon the level of exposure to Political TV talk shows. The more a person is exposed to prime time talk shows, the more he/she becomes politically biased (Butt, 2016).

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Statement of the problem

The study explores the “The impact of Pakistani Political TV talk shows on the opinion of students of public sector universities of Lahore regarding Azadi march” in order to acquire why students watch Political TV talk shows and what is the impact of these shows on their opinion.

Rationale of the study

The research have been opted on the topic namely “Political TV talk shows in Pakistan: Impact on the students of public sector universities (A survey of Lahore about Azadi march by Imran Khan)” to explore the impact of Political TV talk shows on the opinion of students regarding Azadi march (dharna) by Imran Khan.

Due to changing trends in media and politics, the public wants to be updated and well informed about current issues and events. Multiple parties are working in Pakistan such as PTI (Pakistan Tehreeq e Insaf), PMLN (Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz), PPP (Pakistan People’s Party), MQM (Muttahida Quami Movement) and JI (Jammat-e-Islami). Among these parties, PMLN and PPP were well known national parties. However, due to the emergence of a third national political party named as PTI (Pakistan Tehreeq e Insaf) and its dharna politics, people especially youngsters get involved in politics at massive level. This has increased the interest and participation of youth in politics of Pakistan. With the same time, the boom of electronic media has added a fuel to fire in this regard. Most importantly, the Political TV talk shows has made it easier for the masses to understand the complex political issues and events. The PTTS has played a very important role in informing people about political processes such as Azadi march (freedom march). Azadi march is a term that was used for a long march of PTI (Pakistan Tehreeq e Insaf) by Imran Khan that lasted from 14 August to 17 December, 2014 to dismiss Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for manipulation of 2013 general elections. Also, the youngsters were the main followers of this march (“Azadi march”, n.d.).

Therefore, the main objective of this research is to explore the viewership pattern of Political TV talk shows among the young students (boys and girls) and their influences on the opinion of students regarding Azadi march.

Objectives

The study is intended to gain an understanding of the Political TV talk shows, whether these are able to create an impact on the political opinion of students particularly about Azadi march by Imran Khan.

In brief the concrete objectives are:

- To explore the viewership pattern of Political TV talk shows among students which includes how often and why they watch Political TV talk shows?
- To evaluate that either the impact of Political TV talk shows on students regarding Azadi march is positive or negative.

- To examine the association between exposure to Political TV talk shows and change in the thinking of students.

Hypotheses

H01: The political TV talk shows have less impact on the opinion of students of public sector universities regarding Azadi march.

H1: The political TV talk shows have a great impact on the opinion of students of public sector universities regarding Azadi march.

H2: The political TV talk shows have a positive impact on the opinion of students of public sector universities regarding Azadi march.

H3: The political TV talk shows have a negative impact on the opinion of students of public sector universities regarding Azadi march.

Methodology

Research methodology is actually the entire process of conducting research and reporting how the data is collected under what conditions and so on. There is a need of perfect research design in order to get accurate results. In this research, quantitative method has been used.

Survey method: The survey was the appropriate method for the concerned study because the major goal of this study was to assess the nature of impact of Political TV talk shows on students of public sector universities of Lahore, Pakistan. Survey method describes the process of selecting a representative sample from a target population.

It was a quantitative analysis and based on the views and opinions of those students who are the potential viewers of political TV talk shows. Survey was done with the help of a questionnaire to collect the data.

Population: The students who are presently registered in three public sector universities of Lahore which include Lahore College for Women University, University of the Punjab and Government College University, was the population of this research.

Sampling: In the proposed research, purposive sampling was applied to select those students who watch Political TV talk shows regularly, at times and irregularly because the students who watch PTTS, they can better represent the impact of PTTS on them.

The students from three public sector universities of Lahore were selected that registered in bachelor's degree program and master's degree program of Political Science and Mass Communication aged from 18 to 26.

As the age between 18 and 26 is the life period of an adult to be inspired from any type of personality, traits and other characters. BS and Master's program were taken only because the students belong to BS and Master's Program vary in age from 18 to 26. The students who study in major subjects as Political Science and Mass Communication are well aware of the current political situations of the state either by their educational content or by viewing Political TV talk shows content.

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Sample Size: For the collection of data, a sample of 120 students was taken from the public sector universities of Lahore aged from 18 to 26. The sample of 120 is divided into three universities i.e. 40 students are selected from each university. The sample was consisted of both boys and girls.

Purposive sampling was applied in the following universities.

- Lahore College for Women University= 40 Students (only females)
- University of the Punjab= 40 Students (20 males and 20 females)
- Government College University= 40 Students (20 males and 20 females)

Instrument

The questionnaire was used as an instrument to collect the data. A three pages questionnaire was designed, comprised of two sections, including 30 questions. Section I presents demographic and general information while section II includes statements regarding the effects of Political TV talk shows on students regarding Azadi march by Imran Khan. All the questions proposed in the questionnaire were close ended.

They had been designed to collect the samples of research and to test the hypothesis.

Operationalization of key words

The researchers had operationalized the keywords of research in their own perspective. It describes the keywords used in research “Political TV talk shows in Pakistan: Impact on students of public sector universities (A survey of Lahore about Azadi march by Imran Khan)”. The major terms which used in the research study are defined below:

Impact: In this study, impact is referred to the changes in the perception of students regarding Azadi march which occurred because of viewing Political TV talk shows.

Political TV talk shows: It refers to a television program in which topics related to politics are discussed and political leaders are often interviewed by an anchor person. In this research, the relationship between the exposure to Political TV talk shows and changing in student’s opinion has been analyzed.

Students: As there is no definition of student, it varies from country to country. Student life is in fact a time period between adolescence to maturity. This study targeted the students, both male and female, who are studying in public sector universities because their level of interaction is observable as compared to those staying at home. For the study, the students of age group from 18 to 26 were selected because this is the time when students interact with their friends, families and colleagues and share views.

Opinion: This research aims to explore the impact of Political TV talk shows on the opinion of students regarding Azadi march. As these talk shows strongly affect the youth and can also transform their opinion through discussion in their program. Hence, the student’s opinion has been examined.

Public sector universities: The researchers selected the students of public sector universities for the following reasons:

The main reason for choosing public sector university students is demographical diversity of students as each year various students from diverse cultural, traditional, socio-economic backgrounds, norms and values are registered in these universities. The other important reason is that youth can be easily accessible and willingly available at these university sites. Also, researcher preferred the university students because they are the real assets and future of a state. They have an effective potential to work for the development of Pakistan. Moreover, they are now participating in rallies, sit-ins and other political activities. The respondents of these known universities can better represent the view point of both male and female students. Therefore, students from the public sector universities of Lahore have been selected.

Procedure of Data Collection

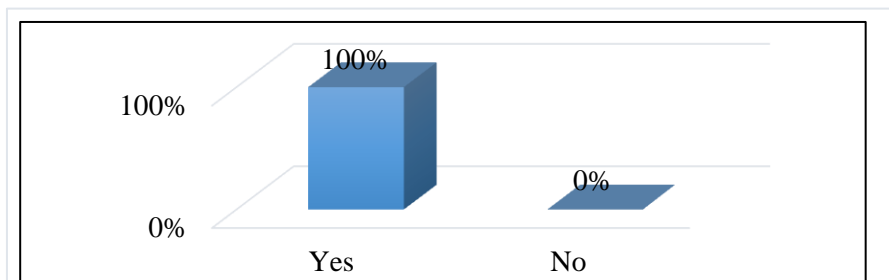
This research work was done by using the survey method. First of all, survey was done in Lahore College for Women University. At this time, questionnaire was circulated among the young girls of BS and Master's Program in Mass Communication and Political Science. After that University of Punjab was taken to complete the sample of 40 students. In this university questionnaire was given to young boys and girls of BS and Master's Program in Mass Communication and Political Science. Finally, questionnaire was distributed among the young girls and boys of BS and Master's Program in Mass Communication and Political Science at Government College University to complete the sample of 40 students. The procedure of data collection went in a good way as researcher did not face many difficulties.

Results

In this section, the major graphical findings of the concerned study are being represented.

Figure 1

Explains the viewing pattern of watching PTTS among respondents



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Figure 2

Evaluates the time of watching PTTS among participants

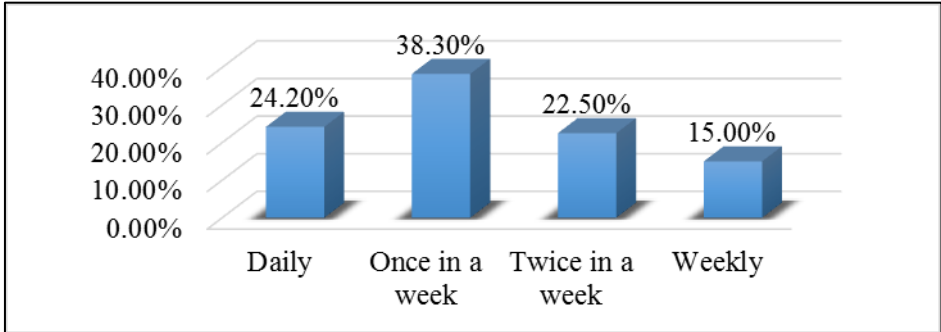


Figure 3

Indicates the reasons of watching PTTS among viewers

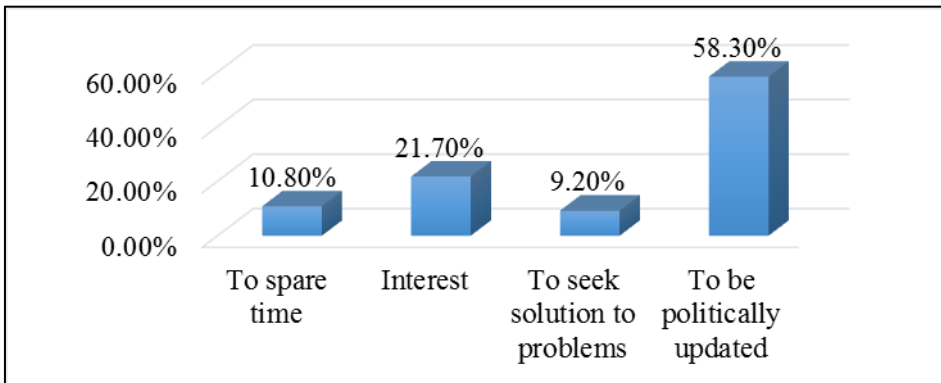


Figure 4

Clarifies that the most favorite PTTS among students is Capital Talk

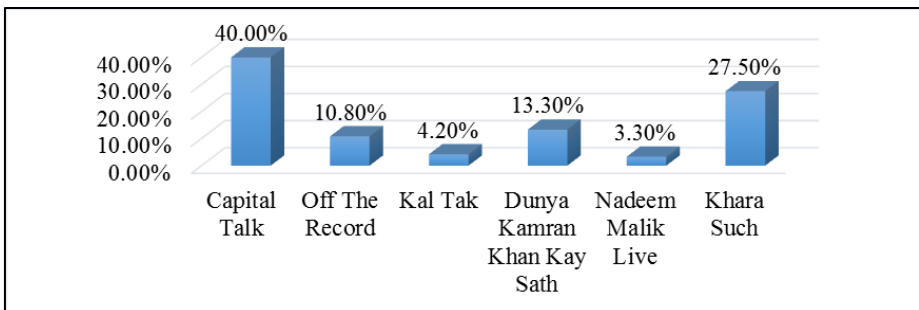


Figure 5

Illustrates that negative words were often used by PTTS about political opponents during dharna time

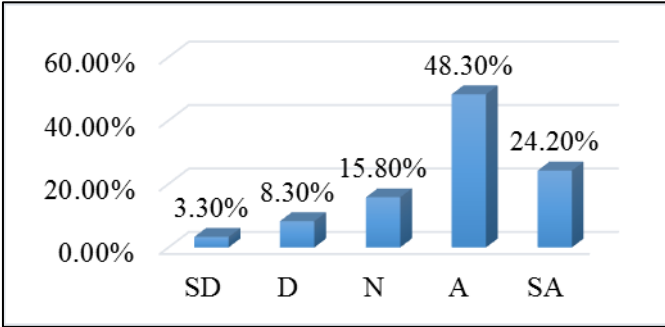


Figure 6

Exemplifies that PTTS created anarchy and dissatisfaction among people regarding Azadi march

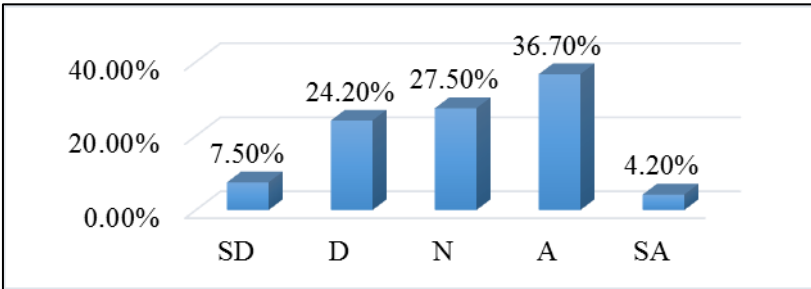
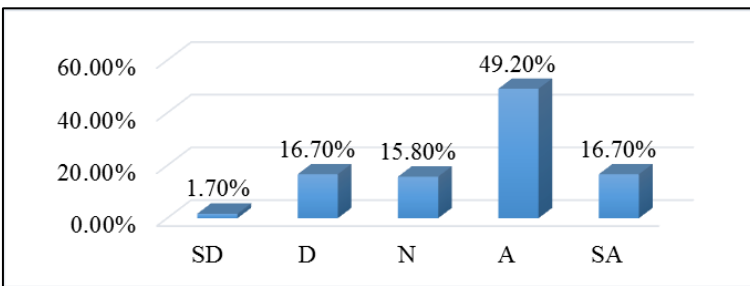


Figure 7

Demonstrate that PTTS helped students to be updated about Azadi march than any other programs on TV



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Figure 8

Shows that the thinking pattern of students has changed regarding freedom march after viewing PTTS

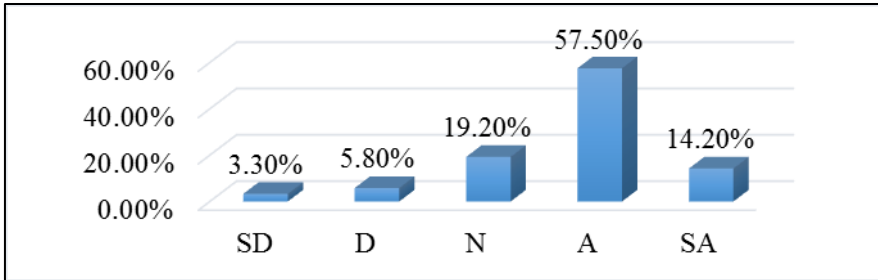


Figure 9

Clearly examines that PTTS played an imperative role in reforming the democratic structure through discussions throughout Azadi march

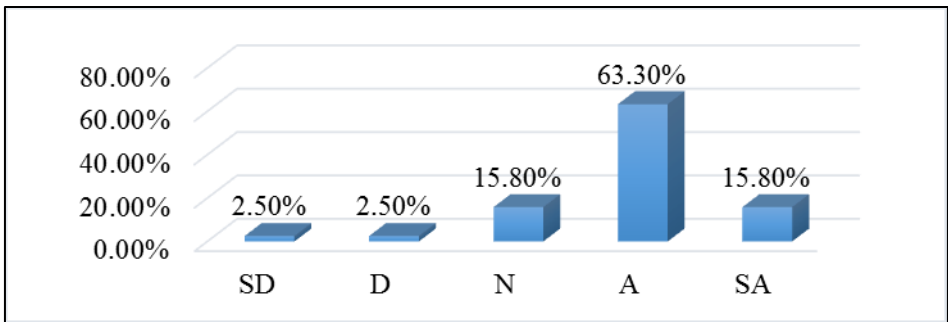
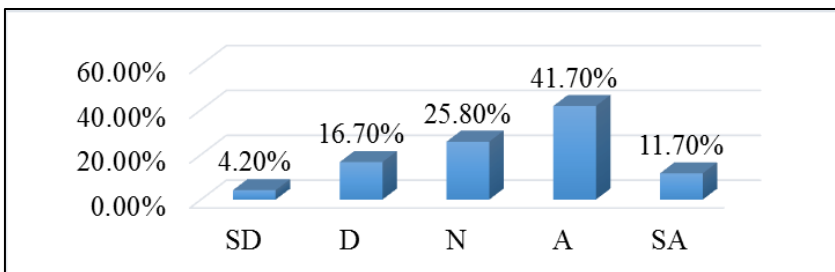


Figure 10

Confirmed that PTTS made a loyal platform between govt. and public for communication by offering discussions during dharna period



Hypotheses testing

For hypothesis testing, the researcher has used the software of tabulation SPSS and applied chi-square test to check the relationship or difference in research work. In this research work, Chi-square test is the most suitable test to check the hypothesis.

Testing of H1

Ho1: The political TV talk shows have less impact on the opinion of students of public sector universities regarding Azadi march.

H1: The political TV talk shows have a great impact on the opinion of students of public sector universities regarding Azadi march.

Chi-square table

Variables	Chi-square	P-value	Result
The Political TV talk shows helped you to be updated about Azadi march than any other program on TV.	73.583	.000	Significant
The thinking pattern of students has changed regarding Freedom march after viewing Political TV talk shows.	115.167	.000	Significant

The chi-square table clearly indicates that the P value is (.000) that is less than the value of alpha ($\alpha=0.05$) which clarifies that alternative hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis is rejected. This statistical analysis explores that the Political TV talk shows have a great impact on the opinion of students regarding Azadi march.

Testing of H2

Ho2: The political TV talk shows have no positive impact on the opinion of students of public sector universities regarding Azadi march.

H2: The political TV talk shows have a positive impact on the opinion of students of public sector universities regarding Azadi march.

Chi-square table

Variables	Chi-square	P-value	Result
Political TV talk shows played an imperative role in reforming the democratic structure through discussions throughout Azadi march.	151.500	.000	Significant
Political TV talk shows made a loyal platform between government and public for communication by offering discussions during Dharna period.	50.083	.000	Significant

The proposed table illustrates that the P value is (.000) that is less than the value of alpha ($\alpha=0.05$) which concludes that alternative hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis is rejected. This statistical analysis explores that the Political TV talk shows have a positive impact on the opinion of students regarding Azadi march.

Testing of H3

Ho3: The political TV talk shows have no negative impact on the opinion of students of public sector universities regarding Azadi march.

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H3: The political TV talk shows have a negative impact on the opinion of students of public sector universities regarding Azadi march.

Chi-square table

Variables	Chi-square	P-value	Result
Negative words were often used by Political TV talk shows about political opponents during dharna time.	75.083	.000	Significant
Political TV talk shows created anarchy and dissatisfaction among people regarding Azadi march.	45.500	.000	Significant

The above table indicates that the P value is (.000) that is less than the value of alpha ($\alpha=0.05$) which achieves that alternative hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis is rejected. This numerical enquiry discovers that the Political TV talk shows have a negative impact on the opinion of students regarding Azadi march.

Discussion and Analysis

To evaluate the impact of the Political TV talk shows on the opinion of students in context of Azadi march, the discussion have been divided into two categories:

- Discussion on overall results
- Discussion on hypothesis testing

Discussion on overall results: This research included those Political Science and Mass Communication students who watch Political TV talk shows once or twice in a week, weekly and on daily basis. The selected participants were comprised of aged between 18-26 years. The sample of 120 students was selected from those three public sector universities of Lahore that are representative of all students' opinion and in which subjects of Political Science and Mass Communication are being taught.

The figure 3.1 shows that almost all the respondents watch Political TV talk shows because the research was conducted only on those students of public sector universities who watch Political TV talk shows regularly or irregularly.

The figure 3.2 explores that more than one third majority of respondents watch Political TV talk shows on daily basis while one fourth of all respondents watch Political TV talk shows once in a week. Moreover, some respondents watch Political TV talk shows twice in a week and weekly. It means that majority of respondents give more importance to Political TV talk shows while some give less importance in their lives.

Figure 3.3 evaluates that Political TV talk shows have become famous among students. More than half of students watch Political TV talk shows to be politically updated. One-fourth of respondents view Political TV talk shows due to their interest in politics. Nearly ten percent respondents watch Political TV talk shows to seek solution to problems while the same percentage of respondents view it just

to spare time. It clearly shows that respondents like to watch Political TV talk shows for obtaining information regarding politics.

Figure 3.4 point outs that more than one-third of all respondents consider Capital Talk as their most favorite Political TV talk show whereas one-fourth of entire respondents like to view Khara Such. However, lesser number of students prefer to view Off the record, Kal Tak, Dunya Kamran Khan Key Sath and Nadeem Malik Live. This illustrates that Capital Talk of Geo News Channel is likely to view by majority of respondents.

Figure 3.5 illustrates the use of negative words by Political TV talk shows about political opponents during dharna time. By the above figure, it is clear that more than half of respondents said that negative words were often used by Political TV talk shows about political opponents during dharna time. However, nearly ten percent of respondents believe that negative words were not being used by Political TV talk shows about political opponents during Azadi march. Almost fifteen percent respondents have nor positive or negative opinion regarding this phenomenon.

Now a days, it is, sometimes, said that Political TV talk shows are not able to handle the fastest flow of information during important political events which cause anarchy and dissatisfaction among its viewers. Figure 3.6 shows that when similar statement was asked as a question in context of Azadi march, more than one quarter of respondents said that Political TV talk shows created anarchy and dissatisfaction among people regarding Azadi march. Whereas little less than one quarter of respondents think that Political TV talk shows did not create anarchy and dissatisfaction among people regarding Azadi march. Nearly one-fourth of respondents have neutral views regarding this statement.

Political TV talk shows provide awareness and information to the people about political processes. Similarly, it helped people to be informed about Azadi march. Figure 3.7 evaluates that more than half of respondents believe that Political TV talk shows helped them to be updated about Azadi march than any program on TV. Although, one quarter of respondents do not agree with this statement. Only fifteen percent of respondents think as neutral.

The results in figure 3.8 expresses that more than half of respondents agreed that the thinking pattern of students has changed regarding freedom march after viewing Political TV talk shows. Very few, eight percent, respondents think that Political TV talk shows do not perform this function. Little less than one-tenth of respondents respond as neutral regarding this idea.

The findings in the figure 3.9 has shown that more than half of respondents think that Political TV talk shows played an imperative role in reforming the democratic structure through discussions throughout Azadi march. Very few, only four percent respondents, do not believe on this view. While more than one-tenth respondents think as neutral regarding this view.

The last and final figure 3.10 have analyzed that almost half of respondents believe that Political TV talk shows made a loyal platform between government and public for communication by offering discussions during dharna period. On the other end, one-fifth respondents do not agree with this idea. However, more than one-fifth respondents viewed it neutral.

Discussion on hypothesis testing

H1: The political TV talk shows have a great impact on the opinion of students of public sector universities regarding Azadi march.

Figure 3.7 and figure 3.8 has clearly proven the first hypothesis of the study that Political TV talk shows have a great impact on the opinion of students regarding Azadi march.

As figure 3.7 has shown that majority of students (65%) agreed that Political TV talk shows helped them to be updated about Azadi march than any other program on TV. However, 17% students disagreed with this view. Only 15% students gave neutral opinion regarding this statement. On the other side, figure 3.8 is showing that the thinking pattern of students has changed regarding freedom march after viewing Political TV talk shows with the percentage of 71 while 5% students think opposite.

Therefore, it is verified that majority of students think that Political TV talk shows have a great impact on the opinion of students regarding Azadi march.

H2: The political TV talk shows have a positive impact on the opinion of students of public sector universities regarding Azadi march.

Figure 3.9 and figure 3.10 has evidenced the second hypothesis of the research that Political TV talk shows have a positive impact on the opinion of students regarding Azadi march. As it is shown in figure 3.9 that 78% of respondents are of the view that Political TV talk shows played an imperative role in reforming the democratic structure through discussions throughout Azadi march. While only 4% do not believe on this view. However, figure 3.10 illustrates that more than half of respondents (52%) think that Political TV talk shows made a loyal platform between government and public for communication by offering discussions during dharna period while 20% respondents think against this statement. This has undoubtedly proven that Political TV talk shows have a positive impact on the opinion of students regarding Azadi march.

H3: The political TV talk shows have a negative impact on the opinion of students of public sector universities regarding Azadi march.

Figure 3.5 and figure 3.6 has undoubtedly proven the third research hypothesis that Political TV talk shows have a negative impact on the opinion of students regarding Azadi march. Although, figure 3.9 and figure 3.10 clearly explored that Political TV talk shows have a positive impact on the opinion of students about Azadi march but the difference lies in intensity level between both of these hypotheses. Almost 78% and 52% of respondents think that Political TV talk shows have a positive impact on the opinion of students regarding Azadi march while 72% and 40% of respondents believe that Political TV talk shows have a negative impact on the opinion of students regarding Azadi march as it is shown in figure 3.5 and figure 3.6.

Conclusion

It has been explored that students of public sector universities watch Political TV talk shows to be politically updated. Students consider Capital Talk as their most

favorite Political TV talk show among the other selected Political TV talk shows of the research as Off the Record, Kal Tak, Dunya Kamran Khan Kay Sath, Nadeem Malik Live and Khara Such. The students believe that they perceive the issues in the same way as discussed by Political TV talk shows. They think that Political TV talk shows helped them to be updated about Azadi march than any other program on TV. Likewise, they agree that their thinking pattern has changed regarding Azadi march after viewing Political TV talk shows which illustrates that Political TV talk shows have a great impact on the opinion of students regarding Azadi march by Imran Khan.

Although, Political TV talk shows have a great impact on the opinion of students regarding Azadi march but these shows have both positive and negative consequences. However, the positive effects are more than the negative effects. Findings of the study has revealed that students perceive that Political TV talk shows played an imperative role in reforming the democratic structure through discussions throughout Azadi march. Similarly, these shows acted as a bridge between government and public during Dharna period at massive level. On contrary, negative words were often used for political parties by Political TV talk shows during Dharna time. Another negative aspect of these shows is that these programs created anarchy and dissatisfaction among people regarding Azadi march on minor level. It means that these shows present both sides of an event or issue.

Recommendations

With the help of survey results, here are some significant recommendations for the producers of Political TV talk shows and students of Pakistan that must be followed;

- Political TV talk shows should work to promote such political content that build confidence and trust of public particularly educated youth about political processes.
- Students should pay less attention to politics while giving more attention to their education.
- Students should view the media content actively.
- There should be a controlled discussion. PEMRA (Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority) should keep monitoring these shows to look whether these shows are working for the public interest or for gaining profit only.
- Only Political TV talk shows are not enough to articulate the interest of people. These shows, along with the three governmental institutions should work with coordination to promote public will.

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