

Discourse of Islamic TV channels in Pakistan

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Abstract

The advancement of modern media of communication has not only changed the national boundaries of receiving the content but also internet, especially social media has broadened way of thinking of people in Pakistan. The global cultural transmission has created the trans-national media that exchange ideas of other countries and implement in their lives. Now, it will be unfair to limit or restrict the international information flow, which is a major source of cultural transmission. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan was founded based on religion. Therefore, it is the duty of every Muslim to represent Islamic culture on television media. Television channels will be the focus of discussion in this research. In this research, the impression of Islamic channels will be evaluated on the people of Pakistan. The qualitative research approach will be used to deduce the information by a semi-structured interview question with 10 respondents from Karachi, Pakistan who are the active users of Islamic channels and television.

Keywords: Islamic channels, representation of Islam on TV, Islamic education, Islamic teachings

1. Introduction

Islamic television channels are important for Muslim nations to restore the basic values

and creed in people. There are nine Islamic channels which are being telecasted in Pakistan. On the other hand, there are 112 other channels which are telecasting news and entertainment (Ahmed 2018). In order to educate and make people aware of Islamic education, PTV is the only consistent channel, which has been telecasting recitation of Quran and its translation and making people aware of their religion (www.ptv.com.pk 2017). On the other hand, other TV channels except those nine Islamic channels are working as per the global transmission pattern. The Islamic channels have a basic aim to restore heritage, the history of religion, provide solutions based on religious guidance. In addition, the impact of restoring values, religion, and culture help people to understand what things are beneficial for them and what are not.

1.1. Research background

As the world is evolving, the interference of other cultures has started to become common. The involvement of people towards non-Islamic channels has started to destroy the creed of Muslims of Pakistan. Before two decades, Islamic knowledge was presented on the television channels but later on, the impact of other television channels decreased the viewership of those Islamic news channels. The impact of Islamic channels, which were being telecasted in television at that time, is still present in the minds of the previous generation of our time. People from age 35 to 80 are more into religious knowledge as compared to the younger generation. Telecasting anything on television do leave an impact on people whether in a positive or negative way (Sarwar 2002).

1.2. Research significance

Today, Islamic education on television channels is barely seen because of disunited

ideology and different perceptions of people regarding the religious subjects (PEMRA 2009). In Pakistan, the choice to select channels is in the hand of viewers and it depends on them what they want to watch and when. This research article will help in understanding how people in Pakistan feel about Islamic channels.

Aims and objective

- To understand the interest of people, preference of people and Islamic education on television.
- To identify whether Islamic channels alters the behavior of people of Pakistan or not.
- To study the current situation in Pakistan regarding Islamic channels.

1.3. Research question

In this research article,

- What is the impact of Islamic channels on the people of Pakistan?

2. Literature Review

Islamic education is necessary for not only Muslims but to humanity at large. Many people in Pakistan are deprived of getting religious knowledge that leads them to some serious crimes. People who are unaware of Islam forget that Islam is about the fulfillment of the commandments of Allah. Consequently, at the beginning of the Pakistani television industry, Islamic teachings used to be promoted but gradually, it got faded due to other private media channels that started to put forward globalized content.

Many authors and researchers have different points of view regarding Islamic channels, such as some of them are agreed that there should be more Islamic channels so that we will be able to gain more Islamic education through digital media but some people consider them as extra programs. Television is the medium where information is

transmitted to the people in order to transfer the idea. Although, there are many Islamic channels, which are doing the efforts to make people aware, and guide them to live their lives peacefully as per the teachings of the Islam (Gardner 2008). Many campaigns are being run by western society to distort the image of Islam and Pakistan in the world. The conflicts arise from school, upbringing, and certain behavior on certain things such as liberal movement, etc. (Sarwar 2002) . The people have an aversion of these channels are the youth of Pakistan because of their schools of thought, an indulgence of worldly life and inspiration from western society. Therefore, to cultivate the idea of Islamic channels in Pakistan, the target audience must be identified first so that negative perception regarding these channels on youth would be less and misconception would be removed.

However, in modern times, where internationally competition prevails, all the channels are doing efforts to put forward qualified content. Moreover, these channels are beneficial for Muslims who are living in different countries where they do not get proper Islamic education and seek for the Islamic teachings in Urdu.

As it is mentioned above, there are nine Islamic channels, which are currently running in Pakistan and they are ARY Qtv, Haq TV, Hadi TV, Madani Channel, Labbaik TV, Paigham TV, Ahlebait TV, Peace TV (HD), and Takbeer TV. Among these nine channels, six belong to Pakistan, while others are telecasted from the UAE and UK. These channels are not only beneficial for the Muslims living around the world but non- Muslims as well. Among all, peace TV is the one who has created awareness not only in Muslims regarding Islam but has also converted many non-Muslims as well (Ahmed 2018).

The major objective of Islamic channels is to unite Muslims as one nation and demolish the propaganda by the western world regarding Islam and terrorism. The propaganda is not only against Islam but all the Islamic countries (like Pakistan) that have become

notorious for their lifestyle, brutal actions, and exploitation of human rights on international platforms, such as harsh punishment on trivial crime makes the image of Islam and Pakistan unscrupulous (El-Sayed 2009). People claim this type of education will lead to some serious crime for instance; India banned Hadi TV and other Pakistani Islamic channels who promotes violent behavior (according to Indian government). However, telecasting any harmful behavior must not be in the policy of any Islamic channel of Pakistan. Therefore, blaming Pakistani Islamic channels is not the solution; the matter is how the receiver decodes the education, such as, in peaceful or a violent way. The development and success of Arab satellites have minimized the propaganda and has promoted qualified teachings (Rinnawi 2013).

The people from the new generation are more into TV dramas, sports, and entertainment as compared to Islamic education. The major reason for their preferences is made up of upbringing and Islamic background of their parents. It is in the hands of parents how they shape their kids such as if they provide digital education, e-books, Islamic education or show them western/Hindi cartoon on TV. The influence of Hindi dubbed cartoons, children gradually lose interest in Islamic channels. Consequently, preferences of Pakistani younger generation comes from their previous background, and own likes and dislikes (B. Jayshree 2011).

Currently, the preference of people of Pakistan in terms of watching television channels have been changed. Now people are shifting from television to the internet. Facebook, Youtube, and other social media attract people more as compared to Islamic channels. because it saves their time. However, Islamic channels in the month of Ramadan are watched more because of the holy month (Yelena, Sahar and Feryaz. 2016).

2.1. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this research article is based on four basic theories of media that will be applied in this research to analyze the aims and objectives. It will

give the structure to conduct the analysis. Theories are:

- **Public opinion formation theory** refers to build opinion in public regarding the subject. This theory acts more strongly when media influences people by creating a positive perception and media persons change the attitude.
- **Cultivation analysis theory** refers to the long-term impact on people on television. It means media requires time to implement an idea in people.
- **Magic bullet theory/ hypodermic needle model** refers to the direct impact on people by media. This happens when the right content is telecasted on the right people at the right time (James 2015).
- **Limited effect paradigm** is the opposite of the magic bullet theory. It refers to the limitation in perceiving content whatever is telecasting on TV (Faudzi 2012).

3. Methodology

The research methodology is a significant part of this research. It will help in identifying the process of conducting the study.

3.1. Research philosophy:

In this exploration, the research philosophy will be interpretivism. This philosophy will be best for achieving the aims and objectives of this research article.

3.2. Research Approach:

The inductive reasoning approach will be most suitable for gathering information. The reason for selecting the inductive approach is the study of previous theories and articles and gathering primary evidence from the respondents.

3.3. Research method

This article will be based on qualitative research method with the linkage of the literature review which will help in validating the results. The reason to select this method is to observe how other people perceive the output of channels and how other channels (non-Islamic) create appeal to attract them.

3.4. Research choice

Mono-method will be the research choice in conducting research so; primary data will be gathered and analyzed to achieve aims and objective.

3.5. Research Design

The research design will be explanatory as per the research question, which is the impact of Islamic TV channels on the people of Pakistan.

3.6. Time horizon

The time horizon is limited to study this subject to the investigation period of secondary and primary information was six months.

3.7. Research Instrument, sample size, and target population

The research instrument will be a semi-structured interview to gather primary data for analysis (where 10 questions will be asked). For primary data collection, 10 respondents who watch Islamic channels and entertainment/news channels will be selected for interview. For secondary data collection, a literature review will be examined. The target population will be the people of Karachi, Pakistan who watch Islamic television channels as well as entertainment and news channels. While the sample size will be 10 respondents with no gender discrimination and between the age of 35 to 80.

4. Analysis of primary data collection

This area of the research will cover the collection of primary information regarding the impact of Islamic channels on the people of Pakistan. The qualitative research method is done and a semi-structured interview is conducted from the 10 respondents, who live in the different areas of Karachi. The following questions were asked

Interview questions

| Serial number | Questions |
|---------------|---|
| 1. | What do you think the purpose of television in Pakistan should be? |
| 2. | What are the things that attract you in any program (general)? |
| 3. | What are the things that attract you to watching Islamic channels? |
| 4. | For what reason you watch television? |
| 5. | Do Islamic channels help to educate people? |
| 6. | Do you think Islamic channels brainwash people and invite to terrorism according to western propaganda? |
| 7. | Why the young generation does not watch Islamic channels? |
| 8. | Do you think globalization is the reason for forgetting Islamic roots? |
| 9. | Do you think policymakers are responsible for the small percent of Islamic educational channels? |
| 10. | Do Islamic channels leaves a positive impact on people or not? |

When the first question was asked, “What do you think the purpose of television in Pakistan should be?” in the response, 10 out of 10 respondents replied “transformation of information”. All the respondents agreed that the basic purpose of television is providing information through the medium for the betterment of society. In addition, respondents said that the sole purpose of television must be to educate people regarding certain topics.

When the second question was asked, “What are the things that attract you in any program (general)?” In response, five out of 10 people said those things that attract depends on our personal perception regarding topics. Such as, relation to the program with their personal life or that subject directly/indirectly hit them. While the remaining one said, the way of presentation and qualified production, get them to watch programs.

When the third question was asked, “What are the things that attract you to watching Islamic channels?” in response, seven out of 10 responded that it provides peace to the soul. Soft background music, qualified Urdu, the way of talking, and practical implementation of Islam attracts people. While the other three said, Islamic channels help in recalling and strengthening the religion.

When the fourth question was asked, “For what reason you watch television?” in response, 10 out of 10 respondents replied ‘to watch news’. It means the first priority of people is watching the news then switching to any other channel.

When the fifth question was asked, “Do Islamic channels help to educate people?” in response, all the respondents replied ‘yes it does’. Because in modern times people do not have time to join, any Islamic institutes and most of the people do not have money. It is good for the middle class and lower-middle-class people to watch Islamic programs.

When the sixth question was asked, “Do you think Islamic channels brainwash people and invite to terrorism according to western propaganda?” all the respondents replied in

negative. They all said Islam is the religion of peace that teaches us to live a simple and peaceful life. Although some culprits are there who exploits feelings of the innocent people and brainwash them to become extremist but not on the forum of conventional media. Pakistani media is observed by PEMRA and any unlawful act will be distinguished.

When the seventh question was asked, “Why the young generation does not watch Islamic channels?” in response, all respondent replied that most of the youngsters are students and some are busy their jobs. Therefore, no one has time to switch on channels and watch the whole program. On the other hand, internet and mobile make the youngsters busy in watching their desired program.

When the eighth question was asked, “Do you think globalization is the reason for forgetting Islamic roots?” all the respondents agreed that globalization is responsible for forgetting Islamic roots and the new generation who are on different mobile applications and have different social media accounts are more affected by globalization. However, people of the previous generation are also getting aware of trending stuff but they do not get involved in anti-Islamic propaganda (because of their schools of thought).

When the ninth question was asked, "Do you think policymakers are responsible for the small percent of Islamic educational channels?" in response, seven respondents relied on the favorable response that there must be more Islamic channels in Pakistan" but three disagreed. Those who are disagree said that all that matters is Islamic professional on television. Uneducated anchors or teachers will lead to misrepresentation of Islam.

When the tenth question was asked, “Do Islamic channels leaves a positive impact on people or not?” all the respondents replied in affirmative. It leaves an impact on people because professionals are the ones who educate, teach and guide people regarding certain topics according to the teachings of the Quran and Hadith as compared to any other opinions.

5. Discussion, Findings, and summary of the analysis

As per the primary and secondary information, it was observed that education on television is important to telecast. It not only beneficiates the lower class who cannot afford to hire a consultant to solve disputes regarding Islamic commandments but also strengthen the Islamic values and creed in people. Same as primary information also clarifies that the purpose of TV is to provide information regarding many topics in which Islam is also included. It clearly shows that public opinion regarding Islamic channels is clear. Moreover, it was discussed that information, which is telecasted, are authentic and from the qualified scholars (which is the major reason for people's attraction).

As per the interview, it was estimated that people watch television for watching news and receiving of the information. People believe that education helps the society to progress. In addition, the other reason to watch television is personal perception regarding the topics. Those channels who have created a positive image have hit the feeling of the person. Experience and psychology are the key elements in attracting the audience. In addition, qualified content, best direction, easily decodable information also attracts the people. The reason for watching Islamic channels are to acquire religious knowledge by the qualified and well-known scholars who are not easily available for guidance. Most of the Pakistani think that Islamic channels provide peace to the soul. However, it was concluded in the interview that every Pakistani watch television for being updated by current affairs with the help of the news channels. After the interview, all the respondents agreed that Islamic channels also help in educating people who cannot afford the expensive Islamic education.

Most of the people think that Islamic education ends up in extremism. After the interview, respondents replied in negative. People of Pakistan claims that all these propagandas such as terrorism, extremism, etc. are carried out by western politics. Moreover, Islam is the religion of peace and any act, which destroys the image of Islam

and Pakistan must be banned. On the other hand, there is a huge debate regarding youngsters and their lack of interest in Islam. People believe that lack of interest make youngsters indulge themselves in some other activities such as internet and socializing. It was studied that youngsters are the ones who are easily manipulated by international propaganda over terrorism so; they end up in liberalization movements. Less interest in youth regarding Islam creates less demand for Islamic channels that is the reason why no producer wants to invest money on it. For that reason, the idea must be cultivated in people to prepare the next generation more closely to Islam. The idea must be regarding youth, the interest of people, current problems (not in a negative manner) with a solution, future problems, motivation, and long term goal. In this scenario, the upbringing of the children matters a lot. Otherwise, it is up to the youngsters where to spend their time. Most of the people in Pakistan think that globalization is the major cause that people get involved with trending contents. The major cause is globalization that focuses monoculture of the world. Internet and different international YouTube channels compel the youth of Pakistan to believe in the facts rather than religion. Consequently, this creates a limited effect paradigm regarding Islamic teachings. Moreover, people receive anti-Islamic information, and they get influenced accordingly.

The policymakers are responsible for telecasting limited Islamic channels in Pakistan. Most of the Pakistanis believe that policymaker can minimize the entertainment-based channel and maximize the Islamic channels. Although, there are minimum amounts of channels, yet create a positive impact on people regarding religion. People believe that information based on authentic references influence them.

6. Conclusion

This research was about discourse of Islamic channels in Pakistan. In this article, the interest of people, preference of people and Islamic education in the platform of television was discussed. Moreover, the impact of other news channels, international

media, and entertainment on the people of Pakistan was explained. It was concluded that Islamic TV channels do leave an impact on those who watch it. It means people between the ages of 35 to 80 are among the active users of Islamic channels and they might implement teachings in their lives. However, it was concluded that if media persons want to make more Islamic channels they must cultivate the idea, create a positive perception, or create limited effect paradigm against terror-based propagandas and entertainment industry.

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