

Political talk shows & political awareness: an impact study about the universities' students of Lahore, Pakistan



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2016

Acknowledgement

I thank Almighty Allah for giving me strength and the opportunity to complete this research work. I was fortunate to have worthy Dr. Muhammad Khalid, as my supervisor. He is known the world over for his enriched knowledge of the subject that had inculcated in me a constant, forbearing and perfect guidance. Simply speaking this study has only been completed owing to his guidance based on his global exposure to the mass communication studies. I am greatly indebted to you sir for guiding me through.

I profoundly thank Dr. Ifra, Assistant Professor, LEADS University, Lahore, the light under which I dared to think of conducting the research, and struggled to complete it. Her valuable help and gracious cooperation instilled in me the spirit to fight the odds that were numerous. I humbly thank you madam.

I am also extremely grateful to Abbas Rasheed Butt, Assistant Professor, LEADS University, Lahore and Myhammad Rafique Awan librarian UMT, Lahore, who has always been a helping hand in conducting the analysis.

I acknowledge Late Abdul Basit, Assistant Professor, Cluster Head Lahore Business School, University of Lahore, for his advice, constructive comments and support. His kind involvement gave me the knowledge that would continue to benefit me all my life. I thank him for the kindness towards me.

I am also obliged and deeply indebted to Assistant Professor Shabbir Sarwar, Institute of Communication Studies, University of Punjab, Lahore, for sparing much of his valuable time for me. His bright ideas and rich experience proved an invaluable asset for shaping up my mind and completing the study. His biggest support came at the time of writing this thesis, and the hours of editing are endless. I am grateful to him for his kindness.

Those who supported me are numerous and I cannot mention them here for constraints of space. But it would be an injustice to miss my friend Ali Raza Arif, Umer Mufti, Syed Faraz Gilani and Syed Faizan Haider, Lecturer, Lahore Business School, University of Lahore which helped me to concentrate on my work and during the entries of huge data into SPSS.

Lastly, I am really thankful to my parents, my brother and my nephew Ali the love and support at home which helped me to focus on my work.

Abstract

This study investigates the impact of talk shows on political awareness and voting trend of the students of Lahore, Pakistan through survey (n=400), using questionnaire as a tool of data collection. The study recorded the students' level of viewing political talk shows, political knowledge, awareness, activities, voting trends and government assessment score. It crossed checked the above factors with the level of viewing along with demographic characteristics of the respondents. The statistical tests chi-square and Mann Whitney U test were applied for testing the hypothesis, confirming that greater the exposure to talk shows greater the political awareness, political knowledge and political activities. The study also found that there was no significant relationship between talk shows viewers and voting trend and similarly about the assessment of the government performance. The study also concluded that talk shows played significant role in rural areas where students did not cast vote merely on caste bases in general election.

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1 Introduction

“Media are the most powerful entity on the earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that is power. Because they control the minds of the masses” - Malcolm X

Authoritarian governments used mass media for their own purposes (Philip, Muzammil&Hussain, 2011) but after the vast history of military rule, Pakistan is now experiencing eighth year of democratic regime. Due to the presence of democratic civilian government and advancement in the technology Pakistani media are relishing independence to a large extent (Rabbani, 2014). The independent media are considered as a fourth pillar of a state because of the power and functions they exercise. The significant force of media can encourage democratic behaviors by promoting tolerance, defending human rights, educating voters and guaranteeing that governments are accountable, however, similarly it can also contribute in public cynicism and democratic decay (Coronel, 2002).