

## The Role of Political Talk Shows in Raising Political Awareness among Youth: A Case Study of University of Karachi

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### Abstract

*This research paper examines the influence and role of the political talk shows in raising political awareness among youth. The factors included in the study were; political talk shows, educational level, political awareness, political discussion and participation, voting behavior and party mandate. The universe of the study was university of Karachi. Calculated sample of the study was 196. Respondents were taken from the faculty of Social Science & humanities and the faculty of Sciences, University of Karachi. Equally proportionate stratified sampling was used for distribution of the sample size while convenient random sampling was used to select the sampling units. Questionnaire was used as a tool of data collection. Hypotheses were tested and p-value were calculated through SPSS software. The result showed that political talk shows had significant relationship with the level of political awareness among youth. It was also observed that political talk shows were essential for the promotion of knowledge, news and updated awareness about the political issues of the country.*

**Keywords:** Youth, political talk shows, political awareness, political participation and debates, media.

### **Introduction:**

Mass media is defined as “The methods and organizations used by the specialist social groups to convey messages to large, socially mixed and widely dispersed audiences” (Haralambos & Holborn: 2000). The role of mass media is also considered vital. Television is a principle medium of mass communication, and talk shows are the most powerful tool of communication. Almost every TV and radio channel is producing talk shows and chat shows which are influencing their viewers and listeners. Nowadays, it can be seen that electronic media is playing a key role in bringing change and structuring the political institution as well as socializing the public on various political aspects (Kenski & Stroud: 2006).

Media’s powerful impact on youth can be seen in the 2008 presidential election of USA, one aspect is that the election of Barak Obama as president of the United States was a global media event; anticipated, analyzed, and celebrated around the world. In Pakistan, the management of private news channels were producing political talk shows specifically discussing United States election and their influence on Pakistan and the whole world by senior analysts of Pakistan. This was possible because of media liberalization in the world. The rapid communication among the people of different countries in the world is possible due to the global mass media. Political parties put pressure on cable operators to block channels that are spreading negative and critical reviews of parties. Through political talk shows bureaucrats and politicians and members of judiciary exchange knowledge and experience with their counterparts from the other provinces in front of political talk shows’ viewers (Nash: 2010).

Mass media and news media have influenced our decision process and have shaped our perception of the world. Mass media had always been an important means of communication where its role is gaining popularity and approval day by day. It is transforming very rapidly by adopting a global outlook and this has made people become more and more aware of other societies of the world. The global perspective have opened people’s eyes to the fact that our increasing ties with the rest of the world means that our actions have consequences which forces us and shapes us (Giddens: 2001).

Politics is a common activity of human beings; it has filled human history in various aspects. Politics has been based on different principles and has produced the most varied institutions. Political action is obviously not to be confused with the state. Political action has its historical expressions and the trend of modern civilization toward rationalization. Theoretically, every political power is a potential aspirant to prestige; because of the competition and rivalry between political units such as political talk shows, political participation, and political activities (Thakur:2006).

In the past, governments have been elected or appointed or in some cases created by the armed forces of the country as governments have the power to make, interpret and enforce the rules and decision. Now they are being elected by the people following their own choices. People have

changed their decisions of voting and electing government officials through news media. Hence, mass media is the source of influencing people to participate in politics and an ideal source of creating awareness among citizens. People have been affected by the news and especially by the news talk shows that are on air live on different news channel of Pakistan around the clock (Naz, et.al: 2014).

## Literature Review

Abedin & Zaman (2015) found that 63.3% males and 36% females watched political talk shows. Among these all, few students watched for entertaining and some of them watched for just passing time. Moreover, 13.3% students watched political talk shows in order to know the real situation of their country. Some of the students said that all discussion about law and constitution is valid, while others viewed that talk shows are politically biased. Many students said that talk shows are not major source of giving loyal platform between government and public. Thus, the research concluded that talk shows have little impact on public to create awareness. Ahmed (2017) explored that majority of the respondents agreed that awareness regarding political affairs has received through talk shows. Very few of the respondents told that political talk shows are crucial source for the political awareness and play a significant role for the change in the political structure. And only 15% of the respondents told that they have knowledge about political rights. None of the respondents were satisfied on the current political situation of the country. Naz, et.al (2014) found that 96.7% respondents had access to media and 58% respondents casted the vote according to their own will. Majority of the respondents watched news channel and political talk shows which were based on critical analysis. 54% youth watched shows which were presented about elections, 36% of the youth took interest in politics, and 38% respondent agreed that news channels promote political awareness among youth. Thus, the researchers concluded that media was major source of learning of politics, and news channels promote political awareness. Kuotsu, (2016) explored that male had higher level of political awareness as compared to women. The factors which created this huge gap between men and women political awareness include; variances in political characters like concentration to news or exposure to media, attention in politics, participating in political debate and socio-economic status. Bhatti, Ali, and Hassan (2016) found that majority of the respondents used electronic media for information, others used media for the purpose of education, and remaining respondents used media for entertainment. Majority of the respondents liked different news channels i.e. PTV, Geo TV, Express news, Dunya News, Samma and ARY news. About a half of the respondents were spending 3-4 hours with electronic media. A huge majority (92.5%) of the respondents reported that the electronic media presents the political awareness. 61.7% of the respondents were watching/listening political talk show and majority of them were agreed that political talk shows provide political knowledge to them. Qaiser, Amin, Rasheed & Umair (2014) found that majority of the respondents watch Geo news than express and Dunya news. The most of the respondents watch "Capital Talk Show" than other programs. A significant interest in political talk shows was observed among the respondents and they were fully satisfied with the information provided in the "capital talk show". Thus, the talk shows played a key role in the participation of the political

activities, like procession and rallies etc. According to Hayat, Juliana & Umer (2015), political talk shows in reality are producing political awareness among their viewers. The respondents who mostly watch talk shows often have more knowledge and develop a strong vision about their political rights. This helps them to take part in the ongoing political process of the country. The 2013 general election voter turnout, which was 55% over all, showed the participation of the youth in the political affairs of the country. Political talk shows fetched the people closer to the political processes by giving them knowledge and understanding. Thus, political talk shows had a huge impact on the diversion of the opinion and concentration of the public. Ali & Ali (2014) found that News media plays an influential and essential role in making political awareness among youth and students. Political debates and description to news media defines political interests. Among the social media, Facebook is the mostly used medium by the students for the entertainment and political information. The affiliation of students depends upon the political issues and leaders. The modification in voting behavior and persuasiveness towards political parties has been credited towards the social media. Facebook is the biggest platform for the students to connect themselves with political issues and debates rather than other social media sites. Anwar & Jan (2010) found that there was a slight significant variance between TV, radio and newspaper for receiving political information. Radio, TV and newspapers were the main sources of accessing political information. Private TV channels were more significant than the government channels for taking the interests in political programs. However, media plays a vital role in creating awareness regarding political issues of the country. Media largely affected the public opinion and strengthened the relationship between public and political parties. Beside all this, media also played an essential role in the transparent election process and politically socializing the people. Pasek, Kinski & Romer (2006) explored that media or mass media is highly correlated with the political awareness of the youth. Youth had used the media for accessing information regarding politics and participation of civic activities in the country. The awareness about the politics was directly related with the interests of the youth in taking part in the upcoming general election of the country. Thus, media played an influential role among American' youth. Ahmed, Hussain & Tariq (2014) found that 48% of respondents were affected by electronic media which in turn affected their political perception about county's political situation to great extent whereas 9% were of opinion that electronic media did not affect political perception. 90.0% replied that news channels were playing positive role in raising political awareness among people to a great extent, and 10% answered that news channels did not play positive role in raising political awareness. 93% respondents were of opinion that news channels were credible sources of political information to some extent, and 7% said news channels did not have credible sources of political information. They concluded that, electronic media put a great impact on people's lives throughout the world. Media technology has changed and has influenced our daily lives. Due to the revolution of electronic media; political debates, political programs, live news, and breaking news have been easily accessible. Ali, Sohail & Hassan (2013) explored that 50% students liked to discuss political issues with others. 48% students took points from newspapers for discussion. 76% students took points from TV whereas only 6% students took points from radio. It was concluded that Mass Media played a powerful and influencing role in creating political awareness among University of Gujarat students. Most students consumed media for 1-3 hours. Most preferred to watch television but some students also liked to read

newspaper's columns and editorials for political information. This study examined that students were politically aware and they relied and depended on talk shows for the political information

### **Focus of the study:**

The present study focused on the role of talk shows in raising awareness among youth of Karachi. Political talk shows are very informative regarding the political structure of the country. Indeed, the viewership of news channels is extensive in Pakistan in this contemporary time period as compared to the past. News and talk shows constantly and consistently update the viewers about the political issues going on in the country. They also critically analyze the political parties' roles and contributions for the society which is an important aspect in order to clarify the viewers' concept so that they can make an informed decision regarding who to elect as their representative.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

The objectives of the study are;

1. To evaluate the role of political talk shows in raising political awareness among youth.
2. To examine the political awareness motivating youth participation in political activities.
3. To measure the level of political awareness based on political information and political participation among youth.

### **Methods And Procedure:**

The present study was quantitative and explanatory in nature. The universe of the study was university of Karachi and target population of the study were the enrolled students of the university of Karachi. Hence, the researchers got the list of total enrolled students from the Semester cell of the University of Karachi. Multi-stage sampling was used in the study. In the first step, researchers randomly selected two faculties from the University of Karachi. Two faculties were selected; social sciences and natural sciences. Calculated sample size of 196 respondents was taken from the two selected faculties. Social Science faculty had 19 departments and Science faculty had 20 departments. Researchers used equal stratified sampling and selected five students from each department. Convenient sampling was used for the selection of research units as sampling frame of the students from all the departments was not available. Data was collected through an administered questionnaire. Chi square test was used to analyze the relationship between the variables through hypotheses of the study and p-value was calculated to determine the significance of the relationship between variables of the study.

### **Findings:**

Table No.1 indicates that majority of the respondents i.e. 54.1% of the respondents were female and 45.9% of the respondents were male who watched political talk shows. Majority of the respondents i.e. 47.4% ages were 20-22 years and 29.5% of the respondents ages were between 23-

25years old. The respondents who graduated were 47.96% and masters were 33.67%. The highest percentage of ethnic group who watched political talk shows were Urdu speaking. Majority of the respondents i.e. 52.04% watched political talk shows 1-2days at least in a week and 86.7% of the respondents told that they watched political talk shows 1-2hour on the daily basis. Majority of respondents i.e. 55.6% told that they watched political talk shows for the current affairs while remaining watched just for the information, debates and entertainment. Approximately 50% of the respondents' priority is to watch news channels whereas other 50% priorities included entertainment, religious and sports channels. The highest portion of the respondents watched debates and critical analysis on the political scenario of the country. Moreover, majority of the respondents i.e. 48.9% of the respondents had moderate level of role in political talk shows, 47.45% of the respondents had high level of role in political talk shows. 65% of the respondents paid attention towards politics news while 21% respondents viewed that political talk shows could bring change in society like end of inflation, corruption, and poverty etc.

**Table No.1**

Characteristics of the respondents: N-196

Indicators	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	90	45.9	45.9
Female	106	54.1	100.0
<b>Age</b>			
17-19	20	10.2	10.2
20-22	93	47.4	57.7
23-25	58	29.6	87.2
26-28	9	4.6	91.8
More Than 28	16	8.2	100.0
<b>Educational Level</b>			
Intermediate	28	14.3	14.3
Graduation	94	48.0	62.2
Master	66	33.7	95.9
Mphil	8	4.1	100.0
<b>Language and Ethnic</b>			
Urdu	141	71.9	71.9
Punjabi	18	9.2	81.1
Sindhi	11	5.6	86.7
Pashto	8	4.1	90.8
Balochi	4	2.0	92.9
Any Other	14	7.1	100.0
<b>Days of watching Political Talk shows</b>			
1-2days	102	52.0	52.0
3-4days	53	27.0	79.1

5-6days	28	14.3	93.4
Last Days	13	6.6	100.0
<b>Hours of Watching Political Talk shows in Days</b>			
1-2hour	170	86.7	86.7
3-4hour	21	10.7	97.4
5-6hour	5	2.6	100.0
<b>Reasons of Watching Political Talk Shows</b>			
Getting Information	28	14.3	14.3
About Politics	30	15.3	29.6
Current Affairs	109	55.6	85.2
Debates	26	13.3	98.5
Any Other	3	1.5	100.0
<b>1<sup>st</sup> priority of Watching programs</b>			
News / Current Affairs	99	50.5	50.5
Political Talk Shows	13	6.6	57.1
Entertainment	70	35.7	92.9
Sports Programs	12	6.1	99.0
Any Other	2	1.0	100.0
<b>Like to watch specific Talk shows</b>			
Critical Analysis	62	31.6	31.6
Conversation	31	15.8	47.4
Discussion./Arguments	64	32.7	80.1
Problem Statement	39	19.9	100.0
<b>Level of Role in Political Talk Shows</b>			
High	93	47.45	47.45
Moderate	96	48.98	96.43
Low	7	3.570	100.0
<b>Political Content</b>			
Yes	105	53.6	53.6
No	36	18.4	71.9
To Some Extent	55	28.1	100.0
<b>Source Of Political Content</b>			
Article About Politics	26	13.3	16.3
Magazine / Newspaper	50	25.5	47.5
Blogs About Politics	9	4.6	53.1
On Social Media	74	37.8	99.4
Any Other	1	.5	100.0
<b>Law Making Institutions</b>			
Federal Level	73	37.2	37.2
Provisional Level	21	10.7	48.0
Both	102	52.0	100.0

<b>Know Prime Minister</b>			
Yes	174	88.8	88.8
No	22	11.2	100.0
<b>Political Discussion</b>			
Yes	120	61.2	61.2
No	21	10.7	71.9
To Some Extent	55	28.1	100.0
<b>Discuss with whom</b>			
Family Members	85	43.4	48.6
Peer Groups	49	25.0	76.6
Social Media Users	21	10.7	88.6
Relatives	19	9.7	99.4
Any Other	1	.5	100.0
<b>Where Get Information For Discussion</b>			
News/Talk Shows	81	41.3	46.3
Social Media	77	39.3	90.3
Newspaper	16	8.2	99.4
Any Other	1	.5	100.0
<b>Government Formed Through Election</b>			
Yes	94	48.0	48.0
No	93	47.4	95.4
To Some Extent	9	4.6	100.0
<b>Government Shouldn't be Formed By Election</b>			
Not Transparency In Election Process	14	7.1	15.1
Rigging	8	4.1	23.7
Non-Serious Behavior	20	10.2	45.2
Lack of Leadership	9	4.6	54.8
All of The Above	42	21.4	100.0
<b>Pakistan's Political Situation Acceptable</b>			
Yes	12	6.1	6.1
No	168	85.7	91.8
To Some Extent	16	8.2	100.0
<b>Reason Of Worse Political Situation</b>			
Lack Of Playing Role Effectively By The Government	14	7.1	8.3
Lack Of Good Governance In Political System	18	9.2	19.0
Non-Serious Attitude Of Ruling Class	18	9.2	29.8
Corrupted Governmental Bench	37	18.9	51.8
All Of Above	81	41.3	100.0
<b>Level of Political Awareness</b>			



Low	3	1.53	1.53
Moderate	98	50.0	51.53
High	95	48.47	100.0
<b>Level of Political Participation</b>			
Low	16	8.16	8.16
Moderate	128	65.31	73.47
High	52	26.53	100.0
<b>Attached Year from Party</b>			
1-3years	18	9.2	9.2
4-6years	10	5.1	14.3
7-9years	13	6.6	20.9
Any Other	1	.5	21.4
5	154	78.6	100.0
<b>Motivated Vote For Party</b>			
Better Future	67	34.2	48.9
National Responsibility	43	21.9	80.3
Party Manifesto/Leader	22	11.2	96.4
Long Standing Affiliation	4	2.0	99.3
Any Other	1	.5	100.0
<b>Aware of Party Mandate</b>			
Yes	95	48.5	48.5
No	74	37.8	86.2
To Some Extent	27	13.8	100.0
<b>Knowing About Party Mandate</b>			
Religious Ideology	11	5.6	9.2
Liberal Democratic Structure	23	11.7	28.3
Manifesto Of Regional Issues	71	36.2	87.5
Manifesto Of National Issues	15	7.6	100.0

Majority of the respondents i.e.50% had moderate level of political awareness and 48% of respondents had high level of political awareness. Respondents regarded that political awareness lead to political discussion and provides information regarding political rights. Majority of the respondents i.e. 65% had moderate level of political participation and 26.5% had high level of political participation. Majority of the respondents i.e. 67.8% casted the vote and others did not cast vote on their ethnicity because did not trust the electoral process. However, Majority of the respondents told that biometrics system can bring a change in the election process but accountability should be maintained on all level especially in security concerns. 64% respondents said yes public vote matter for bringing change in society. Majority of the respondents i.e.83.0% did not belong to any political. And Majority of the respondents i.e. 60% were having awareness about their party mandate and 37.7% did not have any awareness about their party mandate.

**Conclusion and Discussion:**

Table No.2 shows that there was relationship between role of political talk shows and political awareness among youth. As the calculated chi square 9.76 which was higher than the table value of the chi square meaning null hypothesis was rejected and alternate hypothesis was accepted. Thus, the p-value which was 0.001 shows that there was significant relationship between the role of political talk shows and political awareness among the youth. The researchers observed during the survey that youth were gaining more knowledge about politics and political issues through talk shows. The popular talk shows provoked the youth to discuss the political issues among their peers and these talk shows were also the source for the youth to upgrade their current affairs knowledge.

**Table No.2**

Political awareness	Role of political talk shows		Total
	Moderate	High	
Moderate	64 (53.07)	39 (49.92)	103
High	37 (47.92)	56 (45.07)	93
<b>Total</b>	101	95	196

**C.V: 9.76, p-value= 0.001**

Table No.3 indicates that there was no relationship between the level of education and political awareness among the youth. The calculated chi-square 3.5 was lesser than the table value of the chi-square resulting in the acceptance of null hypothesis. P-value 0.173 showed that the relationship between educational level and political awareness was not significant. Thus, the researchers observed during their study that many of the students who were in final class of their degree programs had no knowledge about the politics, current situation of the country and even about the governance of the country. Thus, it can be said that difference in levels of education had no relationship with the political awareness.

**Table No.3**

Level of Political Awareness	Education Level			Total
	Intermediate	Graduation	Master/Above	
High	11(13.57)	42(45.56)	42(35.86)	95
Moderate	17(14.42)	52(48.43)	32(38.13)	101
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>196</b>

**Chi square:3.5, p-value=0.173**

Table No.4 indicates that there was relationship between political awareness and political discussion. The calculated value of the chi-square 10.43 was higher than the table value, therefore, null hypothesis was rejected and research hypothesis was accepted. The p-value of 0.005 indicated that there was extremely significant relationship between the level of political awareness and political discussion among youth. The result of hypothesis testing proved that there was relationship found between the political awareness and political discussion. It is said that discussing politics with others is a matter of interest and awareness. That's why those who engaged in political discussion with others usually showed interest in politics and some level of knowledge too (Galstil & Dillard: 1999). The findings confirmed that political awareness leads to political discussion, where political talk shows and social media were the main sources of spreading political content for political discussion.

**Table No.4**

Political Discussion	Political Awareness		Total
	Moderate	High	
Yes	51 (61.83)	69 (58.16)	120
To some extent	35 (28.34)	20 (26.65)	55
No	15 (10.82)	6 (10.17)	21

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**Total**                      101                      95                      196

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Chi square: 10.43, P-value :0.005

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Table no.5 highlighted that there was relationship between political awareness and political participation. The calculated value of the chi square 12.19 was higher than the table value showing the relationship between the variables existed. The p-value of 0.002 indicated that there was significant relationship between the level of political awareness and the level of political participation among youth. It showed that who had awareness about politics, they would also take interest in political activities, because political awareness had been shown to play a significant role in explaining variation in political participation (Converse & Philip: 1964). Political participation in any activity shapes and affects the political sphere (SparkNotes: 2017). By the way, political knowledge motivates to individual to follow political events and acquire information, political awareness is also considered to be a consequence, as well as a cause of political activity (Verba, Nie & Kim: 1978). People cast their votes and know their rights regarding politics. In order to do that participation in election campaign, corner meetings and other involvement in political activities require some level of awareness about politics of the country.

**Table No.5**

<b>Political Participation</b>	<b>Political Awareness</b>			<b>Total</b>
	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	
<b>Moderate political participation</b>	<b>11(8.24)</b>	<b>74(65.95)</b>	<b>16(26.79)</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>High political participation</b>	<b>5(7.75)</b>	<b>54(62.04)</b>	<b>36(25.20)</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>196</b>

**Chi square: 12.19, p-value:0.002**

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Table No.6 shows that there was no relationship between the role of political talk shows and influence on voting behavior. As the calculated value of Chi-Square was 3.95 which was lower than its table value therefore null hypothesis was accepted. The result showed that there was no relationship between the role of political talk shows and its influence on voting behavior. The p-value 0.13 indicated insignificant relationship between the role of political talk shows and influence on voting behavior of youth. This finding showed that the Pakistani society is traditional society and bound with strict tradition, cultural values and norms hence these things provoke people to cast their votes based on ethnic background and sometimes their parents' choices because in Pakistani society family and parents are the most important part of an individual especially youth. Most theorists assume that children gain the majority of their political views from their parents. "Young children usually spend far more time with their families than with anyone else and thus tend to acquire the family's habits, beliefs, behavior and attitudes. For this reason, family tends to be the most important source of political socialization (Moore: 2017). That's the reason people did not take the influence of media regarding their voting behavior.

**Table No.6**

Influence on Voting Behaviour	Role of Political Talk Shows		Total
	Moderate	High	
Yes	42 (43.61)	41 (39.38)	83
To some extent	31 (25.22)	17 (22.77)	48
No	30 (34.15)	35 (30.84)	65
<b>Total</b>	103	93	196

Chi square: 3.95, P-value: 0.13

The nature of the present study was explanatory and quantitative. The main objective of the study was to analyze the role of political talk shows in raising the political awareness among youth. Thus, the finding of the study showed that the political talk shows were the principal form of accessing political knowledge. Political talk shows were also considered to be the ideal source for gaining knowledge and learning politics as indicated in the results of the study. However, news media were the ones who were widely spreading awareness among the youth of the society about the socio-political situation of the country. Technological advancement in communication has rendered easy access to political information for the youth. The electronic media, especially,

has been the most suitable source to get information and knowledge about political views and issues. Political talk shows are supposed to be very influential and source of communication between Government and public. Majority have political discussions. Political discussions are important elements to judge the citizen's political knowledge (Walsh: 2004). The findings in further suggested that talk shows in the news channels had played a powerful and influencing role in creating political awareness among university students. Hypothesis finding showed that there is relationship between the role of political talk shows and political awareness although education level had no impact on political awareness. The findings also highlighted the fact that political awareness led to more political discussion and more political participation. On the other hand, political talk shows' influence did not show on voting behavior of the university's students, who did not directly member of any political party but they knew their chosen party's mandate.

**Recommendation:**

- Freedom of expression and freedom of sharing should be given to every citizen.
- The government should end the unpleasant and fearful political environment for the students' politics within the campuses.
- Students unions should be restored so as to start constructive political activities making sure the political participation of the students before they enter the practical phase of their lives.
- Parents should discuss political matters with their children from the early age in their socialization process so that children can take interest in politics and it is also their right to have political information and knowledge.
- Parents should encourage their children towards the political participation.
- News channels should run political awareness campaigns because people watch political talk shows and gain knowledge about political issues.
- PEMRA should bound the news channels to stop the biased and prejudiced attitudes of anchors towards politicians and political parties.
- Electronic media should provide platform to youth to express their views regarding political situations.
- Mass media should promote youth towards positive political participation.

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