



Impact of Political Satirical Shows on Political Socialization:

An Analysis

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Abstract

The first objective of this study was to analyze the impact of political satirical shows on the political socialization. The second objective was to find out the impact of the political satirical shows on the political awareness. The third objective was to find out the impact of political satirical shows on the voting behavior. The fourth objective was to study whether the viewers perceive the information provided through the political satirical shows as trust worthy or not. And the final objective was to find out that among Geo, Aaj, and Dunya television which channel political satirical shows have more impact on the viewers than any other. A survey of the randomly selected 300 youth was conducted from the capital of Pakistan, Islamabad. The results indicated that; increase in viewing the political satirical shows will increase the level of political socialization and the political awareness. The results indicated that there is no significant relation between viewing the political satirical shows and the voting behavior. There might be some other influential factors on the voting behavior that must be studied in the further research. The researcher also found that viewers of political satirical shows perceive the contents of such shows trust worthy and credible. Finally, the research revealed that the Geo television political satirical shows have more impact on the viewers' political socialization than such satirical shows of any other channel.

Key words: Political satirical shows, Political socialization, Political awareness, Trust, Voting behavior

Introduction

Political Satirical Shows

Political satirical shows received incredible response of the viewers in 2007. Youth gains maximum political knowledge of political campaigns by watching such satirical shows (Hollander, 2005). Researchers found that audience of the political satirical shows are younger than of rest of the programs of television (Hollander, 2005: Young & Tisinger, 2006). Late night political satirical shows have profound effects on the political engagements of audiences (Young, 2004). Youth is more reactive than other audience to the television programs (Kats, 1993). Survey of Pew Center says that youth takes keen interest in political satirical shows to get more and the reliable knowledge of politics (Pew, 2004).

Political Socialization

The social scientists devoted valuable importance to the political socialization particularly in mass communication the time they came to know that system of democracy is not about expected status instead it is to be a politically socialized part of society (Parker, 1996: Barber, 1984). Political socialization is "the learning about structures, environmental factors and the internalizing of customs and rules governing political life" (Graber, 2002, p. 198). The Political socialization as stated is a developmental process through which all age people and adolescents gain political awareness and also build up voting behavior (Cowart, J., & Powell,



L., 2003). Political socialization is the internalization of on hand political norms (Sigel, 1965) and afterward, few scholars agreed on the concept that individuals add more into their socialization (Chaffee & McDevit, 2002: McDevit, 2006,).

Geo Television

Mir Shakil ur Rehman laid foundation of Geo Television. Geo Television is owned by Independent Media Corporation. The initial test transmission launched on August 14, 2002 and further the regular transmission started on 01 October 2002. “Hum Sub Umeed Se Hen” is the popular political satirical show among the viewers. Khabar Nak and BNN News are also broadcasted by this channel.

Aaj Television

This channel is owned by Business Recorder Group. First transmission was on 23rd March, 2005. This is the singular television channel of Pakistan having an earth station. “4 Man Show” is most watched by youth political satirical show; “Live with Khalid Butt” is the program of this channel too.

Dunya Television

The regular transmission of this channel started on 1st December, 2008. The owner of this media group is Mian Amir Mahmood. Dunya TV launched various famous political satirical shows. “Hasb e Hal” is most watched political show among these. “Syasi Records” belongs to it as well.

Literature Review

Edwards, P., Dannagal, and Brewer, P. R. (2012) investigated the effects of political satires, and parodies on the perceptions of candidates' electability. Experimental method was taken to study this problem. Exposure of such satirical shows resulted favorable among the viewers for the candidate. It neglects the people's common approach that satirical shows are giving new dimensions to public opinions and the voting behavior. Bartlett, Evan, Holtzman, and Richard (2012) studied whether satirical shows increased cynicism or these were “gateway” to great political knowledge the people gain. Results revealed that majority of people had taken satirical shows as the information source but with almost no cynical affects observed. McHugh and Mary (2009) explored effects of political satirical shows on 2008 Presidential Election in America. Study revealed that the young viewers made sketches of the political candidates as these were shown in satirical shows. The satirical contents helped the viewers for being consistent with the political beliefs they already held (Kimberlianne, & Podlas, 2010). The research showed that each viewer took these humors as guide to their political engagement (La Marre, Landreville, K. D., Holbert R. L. and, H. L. (2010) explained relationship between viewing the political satirical shows and political talks. Results indicated that the more time spent with satirical shows the more discussion about politics among people. Sarah, E. (2007) investigated the political socialization effects of comedy shows. The study confirmed that the political socialization can be a process internalizing the current system of politics. There is found no relation between cynicism and viewing the political programs. Majority of people perceive about media that they can alter or manipulate engagement and opinion of the public. Mackey, J. E. (2008) revealed that people those who carry less knowledge of politics were also least cynical or otherwise. Kwak, N., and Lee, H. (2004) studied relationship of the satirical shows and the political commitment amongst the viewers. Viewers took such satirical shows to acquire political information



which affected their efficacy level of politics, vote likelihood and trust (Xenos, Moy, Patricia & Becker, 2009). Wolf Blitzer (anchor at CNN) offers, “There’s no doubt that all this comedy has an impact. Elections are won and lost on public perceptions...” (Sella, 2000: p. 72). Baum (2003) argued that most satirical shows impact attitudinal and may affect the voting behavior. Positive relationship resulted between satirical shows and the perception about particular political candidate (Cho, Chong, & Pfau, 2001). Davis and Owen (1998) explored that humor often used as weapon to accomplish some particular purpose. Majority of contents of such satirical shows bulldoze image of the political candidate. Schutz (1977) stated that political satirical shows focused the weaknesses of the politician. Mandy Grunwald who remain media advisor for Clinton during 1992, stated that when satirical shows satire of you this means you got a serious type of political problem (Young, D. G. 2004). Pfau, and Eveland (1996) found that such entertainment shows carry significant influence at perception and the competency of a candidates. Niven, et. al. (2003) found that comedy shows are not issue oriented. Less than 10 % of the jokes are about public policy and remaining about candidate’s weaknesses. The researcher found that 13,301 jokes presented in various satirical shows from the year 1996 to 2000 of whom the presidency remained the main ta. Dye, Lichter and Zeigler (1992) supported these results as well. Most people took the political party selection decisions on basis of the contents of these satirical shows and the most amazing was that all such people had very low knowledge about politics and the most of these answered of being their incapable too (Popkin, 1991).

Problem Statement

With the development in the field of electronic media it has been found that private media has paced in as the stake holder of society. Every channel is now diffusing the political information in the satirical form. The political satirical shows are now become an inevitable part of the daily transmissions used to gain attention of people. The researchers aimed at exploring the impact of political satirical shows on the political socialization besides comparing the impact of the political satirical shows of leading television channels on the political socialization. The trust of viewers at the contents of these political satire shows was also of interest for the researchers.

Significance of study

Present study will mark a policy line that will be of great concern for media owners. The public demand for contents of the political satirical show will be monitored. This research will guide the producers of such satirical programs to think according to need of the viewers. This study will further be helpful in forecasting the voting behavior of the people in relation to the viewing the political satirical shows.

Objectives

To find out the impact of political satirical shows on political socialization

Other objectives

1. To find out impact of political satirical shows on political awareness among the viewers
2. To find out the impact of political satirical shows on voting behavior of the viewers
3. To find out whether viewers perceive the information provided through the political satirical shows as trust worthy or not
4. Which channel among Dunya TV, Aaj TV and Geo TV political satirical shows have greater political impact on viewers



Hypotheses

H1: Exposure to political satirical shows is in positive association with political socialization.

H2: Geo TV political satirical shows have greater impact on political socialization among viewers than political satirical shows of (a) Aaj TV and (b) Dunya TV

Research Questions

1. Do the viewers perceive the information gained from the political satirical shows as trust worthy or not?
2. What is the impact of political satirical shows in political awareness among the viewers?
3. What is the impact of political comedy shows in voting behavior of the viewers?

Methodology

All those youth of Islamabad having age 20-35 and watch political satirical shows regularly were considered as the population for the study. In the first step, the whole population was divided into different groups according to their characteristics such as, educational institutes, government offices, media offices and households. In the second stage, these groups were divided further into the groups i.e. educational institutes were divided into colleges and universities, government offices were divided into government and semi government, media offices were divided into print and electronic and households were divided into different sectors. After implementation of multistage sampling method, respondents were chosen randomly from the different groups by utilizing the simple random sampling. Questionnaires were distributed to those who replied “yes” against a verbally asked question “do you watch political satirical shows?” Researcher went himself to distribute and collect the questionnaires. Firstly, 300 questionnaires were distributed among the respondents. Only 120 questionnaires were returned that was very low response rate. In the second attempt 200 questionnaires were distributed and only 80 respondents filled the surveys completely. Incomplete questionnaires were not included for the better results. At the end sample consisting of 200 individuals was analyzed.

Operationalization of Variables

The following variables were operationalized for the smooth flow of the research.

Political Satirical Shows

All those satirical shows which provide entertainment from politics

Political Socialization

The political socialization is a developmental process by which people of all ages acquire political awareness and develop voting behaviors

Trust

Trust of the viewers in the information of the political satirical shows as being credible and accurate

Results

Table.1

D/ID	Mean	Standard Deviation	B	T	R
Political Socialization					
Exposure	1.48	0.501	-0.16	-3.02	-0.210



The researcher conducted the correlation and regression statistical tests. The data was non parametric so the researcher used Spearman Correlation to examine the strength of relationship between the two variables. Correlation was significant at 1% level (Sig. 2-tailed 0.003). The value of coefficient was -0.210. Regression results showed the value of β (-0.16) which indicated that 16% of the variation in political socialization is explained by exposure to the political shows. Regression results $|t| = 3.02 > 2$ showed that H1 is accepted. $F(1,198) = 9.13, p < 0.001$

Table.2

	Which channel do you prefer most for political satirical shows?	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Socialization	GEO TV	146	91.12	13303.00
	DUNYA TV	35	90.51	3168.00
	Total	181		

Table.3

	Which channel do you prefer most for political satirical shows?	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Socialization	DUNYA TV	35	27.63	967.00
	AAJ TV	19	27.26	518.00
	Total	54		

Table. 4

	Which channel do you prefer most for political satirical shows?	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Socialization	GEO TV	146	83.19	12146.00
	AAJ TV	19	81.53	1549.00
	Total	165		

The data was non parametric, so the researcher conducted Mann Whitney U test for the required analysis. First, Geo TV was compared with Dunya TV. The results showed higher mean rank (91.12) of Geo TV than Dunya TV. Second, Dunya TV was compared with Aaj TV. The results showed the higher mean rank (27.63) of Dunya TV than Aaj TV. Third, Geo TV was compared with Aaj TV, higher mean rank of Geo TV (83.19).

Table.5

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	High	138	69.0	69.0
	Low	62	31.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	

This table showed the high trust rate as the cumulative percentage is 69%.



Table.6

	I trust in the information of political satirical shows	political information of satirical shows is credible	Political satirical shows give accurate information regarding political issues
Mean	2.70	2.76	2.48

The mean values for Q7, Q8 and Q9 resulted 2.70, 2.76 and 2.48 respectively that resulted the same.

Research question 2 asked what the awareness role of the comedy shows was. Frequency results showed the mean value for Q16 (2.38, S.D. 0.89), mean value for Q17 (2.50, S.D. 0.88) and mean value for Q18 (2.72, S.D. 1.007).

Table.7

D/ID	R	Sig. 2-tailed
Voting Behavior		
Exposure	-0.098	0.167

Correlation test was conducted. The result showed the coefficient of correlation $r = -0.098$ and sig. 2-tailed 0.167.

Discussions

This study determined whether political satirical shows like as “Khabarnak,” “Hum Sab Umeed Se Hen,” “Hasb e Hal” etc had the impact on political socialization among the viewers.

It was found in the analysis of the data that with the increase exposure of political satirical shows, political socialization among the viewers will also increase. Table.1 shows the relationship between the exposure to the political satirical shows (exposure) and the political socialization. The results predicted that exposure was in positive association with political socialization. Political involvement is a big predictor of political efficacy (Evan Sarah, 2007). Regression results showed that political socialization and exposure were significantly positively related. On the basis of this H1 is accepted. Table.1

The study results predicted that Geo TV political satirical shows having greater impact on political socialization than such shows of Dunya TV and Aaj TV. The researcher first compared the Geo TV political satirical shows with those of Dunya TV. The comparison between Dunya TV and Aaj TV and between Geo TV and Aaj TV predicted that out of these three channels Geo TV has more impact on political socialization than any else. It was found that with the increase in viewership the impact on political socialization also increased. Table.2, 3, & 4

In the answer to the research question.1 the researcher found the high trust rate on the contents of the comedy shows. It was found that the viewers had the positive sense about the informative role of the comedy shows. The strong positive perception rate was concluded among the viewers about the political satirical shows. It was found that the viewers found the contents of the political satirical shows as trust worthy, credible and accurate. Table.5&6

On the basis of findings, researcher concluded that the satirical shows were positively increasing awareness among the viewers that showed the high level of trust on the contents of the comedy shows too. Table. 6



The findings of analysis to the research question 3, the insignificant relationship between the political satirical shows and the voting behavior was found. This means that increase in watching the political satirical shows does not guarantee an increase in the voting behavior. Table. 7

Conclusion

According to the statistical findings of the present study the researchers concluded that increase in the viewing the political satirical shows increases the level of political socialization. The Geo TV political satirical shows are most watched than any other channel political satirical shows and with the increase in the viewership of such programs the impact of these programs increases too. The contents of political satirical shows are perceived trust worthy, credible and accurate in information by the viewers. The awareness was found on the increase with increase in the viewership and perceiving the contents trust worthy. However the voting behavior of the viewers was not changed besides watching such political satirical shows that indicate the influence of more factors which must be addressed in the future studies.

Limitations

This research was confined on studying the impact which political satirical shows may have in Islamabad. Due to lack of resources and time, no more than three television channels were chosen and the population of the study was limited to Islamabad city, the capital of Pakistan.

Areas for Future Research

A longitudinal study on the same idea would most likely generate more interesting findings.

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