

INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL SATIRICAL SHOWS ON YOUTH'S PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

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Abstract

The current research study investigated the influence of political satirical shows on the youth's participation in democratic process. The main objectives were to seek out, whether and how political comedy shows influence the individual's participation in democratic process, to find out how viewers consume political comedy shows, to find out the relationship of perception about politics with political knowledge and participation and to find out whether political involvement through comedy shows playing positive role in political socialization or not. The survey method was applied. The results of the research concluded that political satirical shows were the main source of political information ($M=2.61$, $S.D= 1.06$). It also be concluded that exposure to the political satirical shows made the respondents more political aware ($M=2.63$, $S.D= 0.95$). Political affiliation was not affected by exposure to the satirical shows that results in no voting affect of the shows. Higher rate of trust ($M=1.31$, $S.D= 0.46$) on the political comedy shows indicated the gap between the contents and the public demand.

Keywords: *Influence, Political Satirical Shows, Youth's Participation, Democratic Process*

Introduction

Changing shapes of the media with the passage of time with respect to its contents and the way of exposure to the viewers, the media has established its role in the society. Huge variety of media outlets exists in the society and they are in a competitive environment to attract the audiences and masses and to get the desired results; they create more and more programs and transmissions to have more audience. Invention of electronic media has decreased the value of print media and is affecting more the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, attitudes, behavior etc. of the audience. Many of the times, even the audience themselves do not know the effects of the media occurs through exposure on their perceptions, attitudes etc. The audience is also interested in knowing the expected effects of the media on them.

Focusing on the political issues tends to make the satirical shows “political”. The channels are including the jokes and comedy songs in their satirical shows to attract the more and more audience that reflects the decreasing demand of normal comedy contents. High ratings of the satirical shows reflect that the contents are in accordance with the audience demand. Before invention of private media channels in Pakistan there was only one state media channel. Increasing ratings of the private media channels tend to shift the audience to the private media and so enhance its importance. Comedy shows are the main source of political knowledge among the young people (Hollander, 2005). Pakistan is the country having more than 65 percent of youth in its total population and that youth is supposed to target audience of all the media outlets. Being in majority, youth is the pillar of the Pakistani society. Youth is participating more in the political activities in the recent five to ten years. Increasing rate of the voters and the voting reflect the more youth participation in the democratic process. Many researchers have indicated that audience of political satirical shows is younger than the audience of other television

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programs (Hollander, 2005; Young & Tisinger, 2006). A very important aspect of the effects of political satirical shows is the assessment the ways by which these kinds of shows affect the political behavior of the audience and how they consume these shows. Political satirical shows are affecting the perceptions and the political engagements of the viewers (Nojin Kwak , 2004). Young people among others founded more reactive to television porgrammes. (Kats, 1993).

Political satirical shows are the main source to get more and authentic political knowledge for the young viewers (Pew, 2004). Lawyer's movement for restoration of judiciary is a famous example of youth participation in the political activities and they were supposed to be vibrated by the political satirical shows. "Hum sub umeed se hen" a political satirical show of Geo News reached on top at that time and the same was followed then by other channels. Affects of the political satirical shows on general public has remained a famous topic among the researchers and they worked on it (Baum; 2003; Moy & Pfau, 2000; Prior, 2003). The audience is not consistent in viewing the political satirical shows: some of them view the shows regularly and some not. The time gap to the exposure and its affects are to be investigated time by time. The tools and methodologies of the satirical shows to attract the audience are the main aspects to be addressed.

Political Implications of Entertainment Media

Non traditional media is an important part of American Politics (Kwak & Shah, 2003). Entertainment and news are different in nature and need to be separated (Mutz, 2001). Comedy and entertainment programs play a role of "soft news" (Patterson, 2000).

Political Comedy Shows in Pakistan

The political satirical shows has been included in the state media too but reflected the biasness towards the government. Different approach to the same issue has been examined after

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invention of private media channels in Pakistan in 2002 due to the lack of control of the government. Bundle of critics on the politics and political issues have been examined in the political satirical shows transmitted by the private media channels in form of jokes, parodies, name calling etc.

Geo TV, Dunya News and Aaj TV are telecasting most of the comedy shows and so, will be analyzed in this research.

Political Socialization

Democracy is not an anticipatory system and there should be some capabilities to be acquired. Considerable importance have been given to political socialization in mass communication literature (Barber, 1984 : Parker, 1996). And the media is an important source to get those abilities. (Kelly & Donohew, 1999).

Literature review

Most of the people discuss the political knowledge gathered through satirical shows on social media. Hoon Lee (2012) explored the effectiveness of political comedy shows equal to regular political news. Users of the social media were examined the viewers of the political satirical shows. Political satirical shows are developing the impact of TV more. Bartlett, Evan and Holtzman, Richard (2012) investigated to differ the nature of comedy shows that whether they worked as “gateway” to political knowledge among the people or had some cynical affects. The agendas of the hosts of the satirical shows are also an important aspect. Expressions and sentences of the hosts are more important instead of topic with reference to biasness. McHugh, Mary (2009) examined the effects of political satirical shows on American Presidential Election 2008. Youth among the voters has been examined keener to the satirical shows and its contents. Liberals assumed that that joke in the satirical show was on conservatives and the conservatives

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were the opinion that the joke was on liberals. The research resulted that political satirical shows had no effect on the voting behavior and the political engagement of the viewers. While it is not believed that exposure to mass media translates directly into political attitudes, it is believed that exposure does have an impact on political knowledge (Powell & Cowart, 2015). Media's impact on political socialization has not been directly correlated in research up to this point; however, Chaffee, Ward, and Tipton (1970) explored that children get political knowledge only from the media outlets and the reason behind that was the greater exposure to the television. The same pattern of heavy media usage has been examined in adults (Graber, 2002). The research in political socialization focuses on the three variables that are partisan attitude, political participation and attachment to the political system (David O. Sears). Kristen D. Landreville, R. Lance Holbert, Heather L. LaMarre (2010) tried to explore similarities between political talk and comedy shows viewing. More political discussion was founded among those who viewed more political satirical shows. Youth were more affected by these kinds of shows than elders. By continuing the democratic process, political talk is increasing in our society. Humorous way of the comedy shows have increased the viewership of them. Beside all affects, attitudinal affects of the political satirical shows were examined (Baum, 2003). He resulted that viewing political satirical shows had affected the voting behavior of the viewers. The results were verified by Cooper and Bates in 2003. Viewing political satirical shows resulted in making perception about the candidates (Pfau, Cho and Chong, 2001). Davis & Owen (1998) resulted humor as a weapon and different humorous styles worked as a weapon for some specific purposes. Major reason to discuss a candidate was founded to destroy the public image of that candidate. Contents of the program make the sense about the candidates. Pfau, Moy, Radler and Bridgeman (1998) declared that the political satirical shows were more critical to the democracy.

Statement of the Problem

Private media is increasing its jurisdiction time by time and its effects should be analyzed too. Most of the channels are including different satirical programs in their transmissions to portray the different political issues in humorous way. Most of the people take deep interest as these types of transmissions attracts the most. Obtained political knowledge develops a political sense in the viewer's minds and so the transmission has become an important part of the channels. Aim of this study is to explore the role of political comedy shows in the democratic process in respect of youth's participation.

Objectives of study

Main Objective

To investigate the role of political comedy shows in individual's participation in the democratic process.

Sub Objectives

1. To find out how viewers consume political comedy shows.
2. To find out the relationship of perception about politics with political knowledge and participation.
3. To find out whether political involvement through comedy shows playing positive role in political socialization or not.

Research Questions

1. How do viewers consume political comedy shows?
2. What is the relationship of perception about politics with political knowledge and participation?

3. Is the political involvement through comedy shows playing positive role in political socialization?

Hypothesis

More political involvement leads to more political socialization among the viewers.

Methodology

Data compilation was done through survey method. The questions regarding exposure to the political satirical shows and the involvement of the respondents were asked to measure the impact of political comedy shows.

Population

All the youth of Islamabad with age 20-35 was the population for the study.

Sampling Frame

Total number of actual units from which a sample is derived is called sampling frame. For this research, sampling frame consists of youth who have cable connection and view political comedy shows.

Sampling Method

Multi-stage sampling is more representative than cluster sampling in which the clusters can easily be divided into more sub clusters. This method was used to get actual research sample.

Implication of Multi Stage Sampling Method

The youth in Islamabad was the target audience for the research. For proper implementation of Multi Stage Sampling, the whole city was divided into different groups according to their characteristics. On wider scale, the city was divided in educational institutes, government offices, media offices and households. Further, educational institutes were divided

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into colleges and universities, government offices into government and semi government, media offices into print and electronic and households were divided into different sectors.

At the end, random sampling method was used to get the sample.

Sample Size

In first step, 120 respondents made the response among 300 respondents. Being very low response rate, 200 questionnaires were distributed again and 80 of them made response. Incomplete questionnaires have not been added. 200 questionnaires were finalized and analyzed for the research.

Survey procedure

Female population in Pakistan is almost 50% of the whole. To represent the female accordingly in the research, the researcher distributed the questionnaires among male and female equally i.e. 100 each. Questionnaires were distributed after confirmation from the respondents that they had a cable connection and watched political satirical shows. To make the response easy, the researcher went to the respondents and in case of difficulty in language, the researcher translated each question and some time went to the details too, and then marked according to the answers of the respondents.

Selection Criteria for the Respondents

According to survey of census department in April 2011, estimated the capital's current population at around 2 million, while the 1998 census put it at 800,000. According to the survey, almost 25 to 30 percent of the population has the age limit of 20-35 that is our target audience.

According to Population Association of Pakistan (PAP), sex ratio of male and female in Islamabad is 108.5 and 100 respectively. According to the sex ratio the researcher distributed the

questionnaires among the male and female equally to analyze the impact of television comedy shows.

Unit of Analysis

Likert scale is more affective and reliable in assessing the attitudes or behaviors of the respondents. This is more reliable way to uncover the degree of opinion of the respondents. Purpose of this research was to measure the attitude and behavior of the viewers of the political comedy shows so the researcher used Likert scale to measure the data.

Statistical Analysis

The SPSS was used to analyze and interpret data.

Variables of the Study

Exposure to all the political comedy shows of Geo TV, Aaj and Dunya TV is the independent variable for the research and their impact on “political participation in the democratic process” was treated as the main dependent variable.

Operationalization of Variables

Exposure to political comedy shows was seen in the light of political involvement, political affiliation and perception about democratic process.

1. Political Knowledge

General knowledge about politics is concerned with the variable, e.g. about the name governor of any province.

2. Political Involvement

Interest of the viewers in politics, dependence level of the viewers for political information on the comedy shows is concerned.

3. Political Affiliation

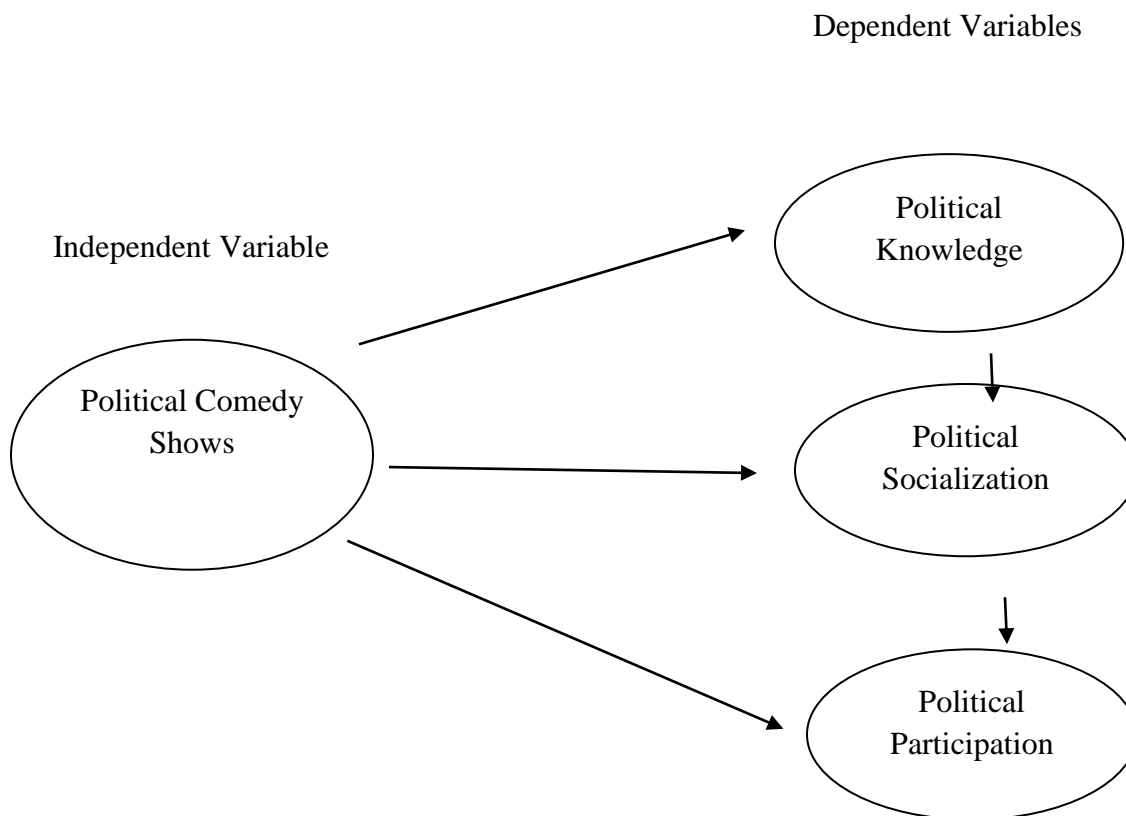
Inspection about the voting party and the behavior is concerned.

4. Political Participation in the Democratic Process

The participation of the viewers of the political comedy shows in the voting during elections and developing opinion of favor for those political candidates who are beneficial for the development of society.

5. Political Socialization

Political socialization is a process in which viewer take, learn and act as showed in the televised contents.



Results

Assessment of the individual's participation in the democratic process was the main purpose of the research. The research was conducted just before the general election 2013 and data was gathered twenty days before the election. The data was organized in SPSS 16 according to the desired variables. The respondents were asked 37 questions measuring their political attitudes, affiliation and perception to the political satirical shows. A Likert scale of five responses was prepared. For measurement of internal consistency of the items and the variables, Cronbach's alpha was gathered. The alpha value .7 and more shows a higher internal consistency for the social sciences studies. The measures were as Satisfaction with political system was the most important factor to participate in the democratic process that motivated more to learn more about the politics ($\alpha=.73$). Exposure to the political satirical shows was based upon the trust of the audience that how much they thought the contents were accurate and credible ($\alpha=.76$). Involvement in the political activities and perceived thoughts about the political role of the satirical shows was the factors behind the individual's involvement in the politics ($\alpha=.06$). Perceptions about the democratic process, the politics and the abilities of the politicians of solving the problems were the main concern of the research ($\alpha=.60$). The influence of the satirical shows on the political thoughts of the viewers was assessed thoroughly ($\alpha=.64$). Political knowledge of the respondents was calculated and the reliability was confirmed by computation of Chronbach's alpha.

Research question 1 asked how viewers do consumed political satirical shows. The viewers consumed the shows to enhance their level of political socialization that was proved from the findings. It predicted that exposure was positively associated with political socialization. To get the desired result, the researcher conducted the correlation and regression

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statistical tests. Spearman Correlation was applied as the data was non parametric. Correlation was significant at 1% level (Sig. 2-tailed 0.003). Regression results $|t| = 3.02 \geq 2$. $F(1,198) = 9.13$, $p \leq 0.001$ showed that political socialization and exposure were significantly positively related.

Table 1

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

Research question 2 asked the relationship of perception about politics with political knowledge and participation. The researcher conducted the correlation and found knowledge and participation insignificant concluded that weak or no relationship existed between the perception and the knowledge and participation.

D/ID	Mean	Standard Deviation	β	r
Pol. Knowledge	1.25	0.497	0.167	-0.098
Participation	1.60	0.558	0.141	-0.091

Research question 3 asked the role of political involvement through political comedy shows in political socialization. The researcher conducted correlation test that was found significant at 0.01 level and a moderate relationship was examined between political interest and socialization ($r=0.305$).

H1 predicted that individual's involvement in politics and in the comedy shows is positively associated with political socialization. According to Spearman's Correlation the two

variables were significant at the 1% level, hence H1 was accepted. The coefficient value was 0.305 concluded that moderate relationship existed between the involvement and political socialization. Regression results for the hypothesis concluded value of β (0.305) which indicated that 30% of variation in political socialization is explained by the involvement. $|t| = 4.50 \geq 2$ showed that regression results were significant, hence H1 proved. $F(1,198) = 20.25$, $p \leq 0.001$ showed that political socialization and involvement were significantly positively related.

Table 2: Hypothesis Testing

D/ID	Mean	Standard Deviation	β	T	r
Political Socialization					
Involvement	1.32	0.468	0.305	4.50	0.305

Discussions

The purpose of the study was to seek out the impact of political satirical shows such as “Khabarnak,” “Hum Sab Umeed Se Hen,” “Hasb e Hal” etc had the impact on youth’s participation in democratic process. Furthermore, the research calculated the trust on the contents of the satirical shows and perception role in political socialization. The study calculated that dissatisfaction level about the political environment was very high ($M = 1.89$, $S.D = 0.314$). Might be, it was because of the previous government of PPPs that was very unpopular at the time of general election 2013. The results concluded that 50% of the respondents watched the satirical shows for entertainment ($M = 1.08$, $S.D = 0.264$). Correlation was insignificant (sig. 2-tailed = 0.792) between the variables indicated that weak or no relationship was existed between the viewer’s usage trend and the political socialization. The results declared that the exposure to the political satirical shows had no affect on the voting behavior of the respondents. The voting

behavior was assessed two times in the questionnaire by asking the voting in previous i.e. 2008 general elections and in 2013 general elections and calculated that almost no change in voting behavior was observed through exposure to the political satirical shows. The higher dissatisfaction level about the political environment might be because of bad governance of PPPs regime and many national and international surveys were in favor of the statement too.

The respondents with less income and education were founded dissatisfied with political situation. 13% of the male respondents were founded low educated people among them 9% had less income. These respondents showed more trust on the contents of political comedy shows. Beside all, they were replied in favor of the continuation of democratic process. Low educated respondents with low and high incomes had more political knowledge than had average income. Less educated respondents among female with average income founded positivity about the current political environment.

Conclusion

Political information was founded a main element of the political satirical shows. Respondents used the shows to get aware about the political information ($M=2.61$, $S.D= 1.06$). Respondents who had more exposure to the political satirical shows were founded well aware about the politics than others ($M=2.63$, $S.D= 0.95$). The research resulted no effect on political affiliation of the respondents. The respondents viewed what had been telecasted that increased the gap between the contents of political satirical shows and public demand ($M=1.31$, $S.D= 0.46$).

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