



Role of Crime Dramas in Making Opinions about Criminal Justice System of Pakistan

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Abstract: *The objective of this research is to study the impact of crime dramatized television programs on citizens' perceptions of the criminal justice system of Pakistan. The impact of crime-related television programs on criminal justice issues, including perceptions of police, clearance rates, crime, and fear of victimization, is focused. This study illustrated how and to what degree these crime dramas change the perception of common people of different ages, sexes, experiences and educational backgrounds. The Cultivation Theory (Gerbner, 1960) guided the study. This quantitative research is based on a cross sectional survey and data is collected employing the instrument of a valid questionnaire. The random sampling technique has been applied to reach out to the respondents to investigate about their crime programs watching habits as well as their opinions and views on different aspects of the justice system, including police effectiveness and fear of victimization. The data was collected from students of three departments of the University of the Punjab i.e. Law, Criminology, Communication Studies. The data will be analyzed with the help of SPSS.*

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Introduction

Mass media plays a crucial role in contemporary society. Now a day, every type of information is available on TV screen to shape our consciousness. According to Accurso and Gebhard (2020), the main role of media is to inform, socialize, educate, entertain and sell things to us. Furthermore, storytelling is the basic function of television. Their dramas, TV commercials, and news programs, produce coherent system of pictures and messages in every house (Gerbner, 1998).

This study focused on the previous literature

which incorporates media studies and the impact of crime-related TV programs on the perception of students. It produced a perception about the clearance of crime cases, crime rates, and the risk of personal victimization. In this study, we understand to what degree the influence of modern television crime programs on students' perceptions.

Crime shows are programs or dramas in which crime is the central topic. From many years of media studies research, the power of media to influence the perception of especially youth is examined. Previously, the researches were done in many contexts from violent and aggressive

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behavior, crime and usage of drugs. In Pakistan, different crime shows are produced with some variations like re- enactment of a crime scene. The main purpose of such shows is to explain the criminal activities of real life.

Gurmecha (2018) conducted a study to find out the perception of Addis Ababa public on the impact of Kana TV on family and their relationship. The theoretical framework of this study is guided by Cultivation Theory, Uses and Gratification theory and Technological Determinism. The analysis of the data reveals that prime time Kana TV dramas had significant viewers including women and children. Families with Lower economic status watch more TV than families with higher economic status. This study further claimed that kana TV had an adverse effect on viewers' behavior and relationships with family members and the community as a whole (Gurmecha, 2018).

Abdullah and Rehman (2017) explain that the people who watch crime shows regularly show negative behavioral outcomes. Especially the children at their developmental stage come out with negative behavioral leanings. The researcher provides detail of TV crime shows mostly seen in Pakistan and the topic concerning "media as a risk factor" in children's development is discussed, and results are produced from relevant theories. Study shows the powerful effects of media on behaviour formulation of children and the portrayal of crime shows may appear with great concerns (Abdullah & Abdul Rehman, 2017).

With the passage of time, crime dramas have become popular in Pakistani culture. Now crime shows on air on national as well as local news channels. Programs "Shabbir To Dekhe Ga," "Crime Patrol", "Wardat", "Tafteeshi", "Criminal most Wanted", 'Crime Scene', 'Thanedar' and 'CID' are very popular among Pakistanis. People do not only have a great time while watching crime shows but they also learn specific ideas and thoughts and maintain a different perception about some aspects of the criminal justice system.

The criminal justice system is defined as a set of institutions and processes established by the government for crime control. It includes police departments, prosecution, courts of all levels and prisons (Arshad, J, 2015). With the help

of crime dramas, students also make a perception about the functioning of the criminal justice system of Punjab, whether it's a reality or not but people have some perception about the working of police, investigation and court proceedings. Crime shows produce a sense of insecurity, sometimes angry behavior. People think it's a criminal society and crime is everywhere.

These crime shows can influence the behavior and perception of general members of society. It is proved by the research that media used by children indicated a number of negative behaviours (Ficher, 2012). There are many opinions about media violence and its effects. There is a claim that violent media content shown on media has many effects that importance equal to that of the issue of smoking and lung diseases (Anderson, 2003).

The same study was conducted by Khan and Shabir in 2020 in Pakistan. They studied the impacts of television crime programs on the attitude of viewers. In this study, the researcher used a quantitative approach and the survey method was used to collect the data for analysis. Researchers collected the data from university students which were below the age of 25 years. The study revealed that these crime shows have the tendency to develop criminal behavior and students fulfil their illegal needs by illegitimate means. The social construction of criminality is more prevalent than the representation of safety and security in these crime shows (Khan & Shabir, 2020).

Objectives

The following objectives are the basis for conducting the study;

- To study the effect of crime dramatized television programs on perceptions about the criminal justice system of Punjab.
- To study the effect of crime dramas on society as well as students' views about crime and the crime control system.
- To investigate the impact of crime-related television viewing on a number of criminal justice issues, including attitudes/perceptions of police, perceptions of crime, and fear of victimization.

- To measure the difference in perception of the police system among Law and Criminology students (LCS) and media students (MS).
- To evaluate the varying level of perception about the criminal justice system of Punjab (CJSP) among students on the basis of various demographics including gender, area, socioeconomic status etc.

Research Questions

- 1: What is the effect of crime dramatized television programs on perceptions about the criminal justice system of Punjab?
- 2: What is the significant difference between respondents' perceptions who watch crime-related TV programs and those who don't about various issues related to the criminal justice system?

Literature Review

In the past 15 years, crime dramas have dominated the ratings of prime time television. The popularity of crime dramas is increasing day by day due to the thrilling nature of dramas and the interest of the general public. "At the start, the criminal justice system and the media must be studied together because in America, they are not separate" (Surette, 2007).

In the past, detective and crime related novels played a crucial role in making public opinion related to crime and justice. These novels change the paradigm of thinking about the reasons for crime. In fact, Social conditions and inequality are the basic reason for the crime. However, detective novels revealed that criminals are failed persons of society (Surette, 2007).

During the 1930s, crime-related programs were started and enhanced the interest of radio listeners. Programs like True Detective Mysteries, Homicide Squad, Calling All Cars, and Treasury Agent dramatized real-life events (Stark, 1987). The stories of these crime shows were based on real police case files which created public interest in these dramas.

The next stage after the radio crime programs was the evolution of the crime movies.

In the 1940s, the silver screen was used as a third medium to give crime based entertainment to the public of America. These crime films start with the same radio content, which fully focuses on the champion hero who solved all mysteries (Cavender and Fishman, 1998). These films were basically the documentary type which was based on real stories from newspapers related to police and the FBI.

Nowadays television is a basic tool that many Pakistani citizens use for entertainment. This dramatic and fictional nature of crime dramas produces an impact on public perceptions about the criminal justice system. Crime and police are among hot topics in the Pakistani television industry. *Andhera Ujala* was a very popular crime investigation program in Pakistan in the 1980s. Millions of Pakistanis consume TV programs related to crime, entertainment and current affairs on regular basis. "Crime as entertainment has cemented a place in popular culture" (Dowler, Fleming, & Muzzatti, 2006). This study investigates the potential impact of these crime Television programs on the general audience. A heavy dose of these crime programs may have a significant effect on an individual's perception of reality (Bilandzic, 2006; Gerbner & Gross, 1976; McQuail, 2010; Surette, 2007).

There are four main types of media content: news, entertainment, advertising, and infotainment (Surette, 2007). The focus of this research is on students' perceptions of the criminal justice system making through news stories, entertainment and infotainment programs and its agents. Infotainment is "the marketing of edited, highly formatted information about the world in disguised entertainment media vehicles" (Surette, 2007).

The criminal justice system is the set of organizations and processes established by the government to control crime and punishments. It includes police, prosecution, courts and prisons (Arshad, 2015). The police is the government department which concerned with the maintenance of law and order and possessing executive, judicial, and legislative powers (webster, 1828)

The perception of police officers as crime fighters is very important. There is a lot of differences between television dramatized police

officer and real life police officer. Television portrays police officers either a good cop or bad cop (Surette, 2007). "Good cops" have many resources, use modern technology, and arrest the culprit within days. "Bad cops" are portrayed as corrupt, oppressive, incapable, incompetent, and bound by rules and regulations (Surette, 2007).

In most of the crimes programs police officers find out the cause of death. They also arrest the suspect and reveal the actual condition for committing the crime (Nolan, 2007). In reality, police officers are not forensic scientists. The primary role of the police officer is to cordon off the crime scene and give security to a forensic specialist to collect evidence. However, when forensic specialist is not available, police officers are decision makers and ensure the strict protocol to collect evidence (Ortmeier, 2006). Moreover, they use other investigative tools such as interviews of friends and family members and neighbors of the victim and suspect and do a house search (Difonzo & Stern, 2007).

The collection of forensic evidence and results is completed within the hour, which most of the time takes many weeks or even months in reality for forensic technicians to uncover the facts (Singer, Miller, & Adya, 2007). Crime dramas show police officers have all the expertise to collect and analyze the data. In every episode, a police officer may perform trace chemistry, blood stain analysis, toxicology reports, tool mark examinations, DNA comparison and so on. In reality, it's not possible for a person to perform all of these tasks (Johnson, 2003). This unrealistic dramatization may have a direct impact on the public perceptions about the justice system's agents.

It is important to observe every time story line is repeated. Whenever a crime occurs, evidence is found on the crime scene, and the police officer and forensic technicians collect the evidence and match the evidence with a guilty person. Whether it is clean fingerprints, partial fingerprints, semen, blood, strands of hair, skin, saliva, etc., evidence that can specifically identify those who were present is usually found at the depicted crime scene. The most common types of evidence found in reality are fingerprints and tool marks, which also are the most common types of evidence tested in laboratories (Stephens, 2007).

Kappeler and Potter (2005) claim that in western society, media is among the largest myth makers. These myths include equal justice for all, a permissive criminal justice system, the role of police as a crime fighters and deterrence, juvenile super predators and many other social and moral issues. These myths influence the perception of citizens about the reality of crime, criminals, and the criminal justice system. Kappeler and Potter reveal that the depiction of criminal justice issues created by the news and infotainment strategies produces many myths. With the help of these myths public integrates an event with their belief system and worldview" (Kappeler & Potter, 2005).

It is a true that the main purpose of every privately owned broadcast company in Pakistan to make through business and advertisement. The selection of a program is based on high viewer ratings. Hence, they perform the role of storytellers rather than broadcast the facts about crime stories and police work. Selection of the content and production of crime dramas in a manner which affects the audience who watches them. A producer tries to produce story lines in a way which influence perceptions (Berger, 2007; Preiss, Gayle, Burrell, Allen, & Bryant, 2007).

The impact of crime-related TV programs on perceptions of the criminal justice system of Punjab has a number of reasons. First, television is the most common medium and almost every household has a TV set, so it's a highly visual medium and violence and crime is a hot topic and has an emotional impact than that print media (Weitzer & Kurbin, 2004). Second, the race of TRP both locally and nationally, produces content which touches the emotions of the public and making more money for the owners. Therefore, pressure for ratings and advertising influence the content and its production. So crime news and programs are more marketable and profitable (Weitzer & Kurbin).

Theoretical Framework

Cultivation theory will be used as theoretical support. Television has a regular, growing influence over time. Through a pattern of repetitive distortions of reality, people adopt certain views and attitudes towards realism. Gerbner (1998) claimed television has an impact on viewers because television is the "centralized

system of storytelling" and has become our "primary common source of socialization and everyday information" (p. 177). Therefore, the theory proposes that consistent depiction of any content on TV programs produces certain beliefs about reality in those people who watch more TV Programs.

The theory proposes the three categories of television viewers heavy, medium, and light. Generally, heavy viewers have been displayed different views and beliefs about reality which has more resemblance with the television world more precisely than the real world (Dieffenbach & West, 2001; Gerbner, 1996). Today in the modern world, many types of TV programs are broadcasted and after the initiation of the cultivation theory, different fields tested their studies on the cultivation effects of TV through this theory so this study by George Gerbner is very important in the field of research.

Media effects are the basic tools with the help of that we measure the consequences of what is the ability of mass media what he does? And what is intended or not (McQuail, 2010). However, the media has the power to impact opinions, behavior, and endorse current ideas through the production and dissemination of information.

This study is about exploring the impact produced by the re-enactment of crime dramas on the perception of the public about the criminal justice system and cultivation theory argues about the effects of Television programs on feelings and perception of people. So this theory provides the best theoretical and conceptual analysis to analyze the phenomenon under consideration.

Research Methodology

It is quantitative research. In order to assess the impact of crime related TV programs on the perception of people survey method will be used. Researchers conducted a cross sectional survey of the students of Punjab University. A valid questionnaire adopted from the doctoral dissertation of Fedorek (2013) was used to collect data. The questionnaire comprised 8 main sections which are further subdivided into many sections comprising of 71 items.

Students of Punjab University will be my target population. According to the university website, there are 45000 students enrolled in Punjab University. Students from all over Punjab study at Punjab University Lahore campus. Non probability Purposive sample will be taken from the students of 3 departments of the university including Law, Criminology and Communication Studies because this sample fulfils my study need. Purposive sampling is also known as a judgmental, selective sampling is a form of nonprobability sampling in which researchers rely on their own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their study (Foley, 2018). A purposive sample of 350 participants will be collected using Solvin (Ellen, 2018) formula:

- $n = N/1+N(e)^2$
- $n = 2000/1+2000(0.05)^2$
- $n = 2000/1+2000(0.0025)$
- $n = 2000/6$
- $n = 333.3$

Results and Discussions

Due to the lockdown situation in the universities of Pakistan researcher surveyed the university student using google form as it was difficult for the researcher to contact students personally and it was costly also. The researcher collected data from 350 university students who are studying in the criminology, law, and media departments of the university. Employing a simple random sampling technique researcher collected data from 100 students from the criminology and law departments respectively while 150 students from the Media studies department. According to the data collected from these students following are the ratios of the demographics of the students.

According to the data collected researcher found that among 350 respondents, 184 (52.6%) respondents were males and 166 (47.4%) were females. However, understanding the difference of effects of crime dramatized between male and female respondents isn't part of this research.

The researcher planned before surveying to contact more students from the senior level of the university. So it's been clear from table 2 that

80.3% of students are from senior university level while only 19.7% are from junior level. The reason for contacting the senior level is that senior-level students used to have more exposure and border in knowledge and understanding discourses.

the Criminal Justice System of Punjab? As the researcher needs to check the effect of crime-related dramas on the perception of people about the criminal justice system of Punjab, that is why the researcher applied the Chi-square test to both variables. The results of the Chi-square test are as follows:

Q1: What is the Effect of Crime Dramatized Television Programs on Perceptions about

Table 1. On Average, How many Hours do you Watch Crime Related Television in a Week? * Perception of People about the Criminal Justice System of Punjab

		Perception of People about the Criminal Justice System of Punjab					Total
		13.00	26.00	39.00	52.00	65.00	
On Average, How many hours do you watch crime related television in a week?	2-4	22	12	0	6	24	64
	4-8	60	38	26	44	0	168
	8-10	32	20	16	18	0	86
	10-12	0	16	16	0	0	32
Total		114	86	58	68	24	350

Table 2. Chi-Square Test

	Value	df	Sig (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	174.560 ^a	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	166.955	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.128	1	.024
N of Valid Cases	350		

a. 2 cells (10.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.19.

As shown in the above table (37) it has been clear with the results of the Chi-Square test applied on the “On Average, How many hours do you watch crime-related television in a week?” Vs “perception of people about the criminal justice system of Punjab” that there is a significant effect on the perceptions of people about the criminal justice system of Punjab a who used to watch crime dramatized dramas more often and their perceptions about criminal justice system of

Punjab are not so good due to which they showed less confidence.

Q2: What is the Significant Difference between Respondents' Perceptions who Watch Crime-related TV Programs and Those who don't about Various Issues Related to the Criminal Justice System?

Table 3. Are you Watching Crime Dramas/programs? * Perception of People about the Criminal Justice System of Punjab.

		Perception of People about the Criminal Justice System of Punjab					Total
		13.00	26.00	39.00	52.00	65.00	
Are you watching crime dramas/programs?	yes	109	86	58	68	19	340
	No	5	0	0	0	5	10
Total		114	86	58	68	24	350

Table 4. Chi-Square Test

	Value	df	Sig (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	35.138 ^a	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	25.210	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.936	1	.164
N of Valid Cases	350		

As shown in the table above, there are 0.164 significant differences among respondents perceptions who watch crime-related TV programs and those who don't about various issues related to the criminal justice system which means respondents who watch crime-related dramas have negative perceptions about the perception of people about the criminal justice system of Punjab as compared to the respondents who do not watch crime-related TV dramas.

Conclusion

Hence it has been found that there is a difference between the respondent's perceptions about police officers' duties and responsibilities based on the amount of time spent viewing crime-related television programs in Punjab, There is a

difference between respondents' perceptions about fear of criminal victimization based on the amount of time spent viewing crime-related television programs and There isn't the significant difference of perceptions about police among LCS and media student based on the mediating role of viewership of TV crime dramatized programs.

Limitations

The study is important in the sense it investigates the difference in perception among LCS and other faculty students about the criminal justice system but it has some limitations. Only educated, same age and selected departments students of only one Public Sector University will be taken for study.

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