



Effect of Multi-Channelled Cable TV and Varying Demographics on Political Enlightenment of Youth

Muhammad Khalique Kamboh *

Imran Muslim[†]

Hafiz Muhammad Muddser[‡]

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Abstract

Mass media is considered to be one of the important agents for the enlightenment of the audience towards better living. Media consumption has taken new trends due to availability of multi-channelled cable television on a large scale. It was hypothesized that the increase in media consumption might have enhanced the political maturity of viewers and make them more productive for society. For data collection through a survey questionnaire, multistage cluster sampling technique was used. Results of the study confirmed the fact that cable TV played a positive role in enhancing the political knowledge of youth. Moreover, the youth of cable TV areas was found to be more mature politically as compared to the youth of non-cable TV areas. The study concluded that if more number of options is available in terms of different forms of media or as numerous TV channels, selective exposure becomes very hard and “enhancement in knowledge” is the ultimate result of this phenomenon, hence bringing up the betterment in political maturity of the people.

Key Words: Political Maturity, Youth, Demographic Variables, Cable Television.

Introduction

Every community has some hindrances at the local level, which reduces the probability of acceptance of macro-level political culture disseminated by media, political institutions or educational organization. For example, in rural areas of Pakistan cast system is a big factor playing a decisive role in making a voting decision or in urban areas tagging the developmental work in the area to the voting decision in favor of that developmental funds holding party strongly hinders the macro-level campaign of political socialization.

In the USA, most of the work on political socialization is based on whites and middle-class communities. The diversity which is required for demographic selection seems to be inadequate. Factors like access to institutions for learning, methods adopted, and the extent to which young one's are exposed to adult's political conversation and activities, influence political socialization (Spiro, 2004).

As far as the role of youth in political socialization is concerned, it has been found in most of the studies that youth have been characterized to be politically apathetic uninterested and disengaged. Young people showed a less mature sense of civic duty, performed the responsibilities of citizenship in a lighter way as compared to older citizens (Dalton, 2008).

Analyzing on a personal level, young people are stereotyped, self-interested, greedy, spoiled and disrespectful. The most significant development that takes the attention of scholars may be the influence of technology on the political socialization process during the twenty-first century. Professor Ogburn was first to divide culture into two large categories, material culture and non-material culture. In this way, technological inventions become the primary factor in explaining the socio-cultural change. For instance, the inventions of the radio, TV, and satellite have provided political education to the viewers hence promoting the democracy and minimizing the role of dictators and kings in the world (Polat, 2013)

* Department of Geography, Government Postgraduate College Samanabad, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.

[†] Lecturer, Department of Mass Communication, Government College University Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.

[‡] Department of Mass Communication, Riphah International University, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.

If we consider socialization primarily as a communication process technology has fundamentally changed the whole process. During current days, communication takes place more through technological inputs than via face to face connect. New technologies have allowed people, especially young citizens, to form their own groups that interact digitally and offline. So the pace of communication process has been increased amazingly, but the direction of this speedy interaction in developing communities is very much questionable and needs the attention of scholars.

Electronic media took a revolutionary change during the late '80s with the emergence of 24 Hour news channels which were considered to be the leading information source. It was imagined that dissemination of news through the economical source of cable TV would add a lot in political knowledge that will help in the enhancement of political activates but surveys conducted to assess the political knowledge are suggesting a very different picture (Owen, 20015).

A survey giving a comparison of political knowledge between 1989 and 2007 showed that there is an overall declining trend in this regard. Another important fact revealed by this survey is that even after the rise in education level over the past 20 years, public knowledge has not increased accordingly. There was criticism on such surveys that they assess the political knowledge by giving the questions which need recalling ability to answer these, but this recent American survey found that multiple-choice question is a better option and proves it easier to answer, i.e. cognition is easier as compared to recalling ([Wattenberg, 2010](#))

Mass media plays its role in every aspect of life, but political communication is its special feature where media acts as an intermediately between people of a society and their political representatives, In order to understand the influence of political communication, it will be better to define its boundaries first.

Generally speaking, political communication involves the exchange of symbols and messages between political institutions, representatives and the general public. This exchange of messages may be through news media in most of the cases but also through entertainment media in some cases ([Shea and Green, 2007](#)).

News bulletin and talk shows are the most common way for political communication but programs having humor and satire also contribute to the process of political communication

Obstacles to the Smooth Flow of Political Communication

The smooth and neutral flow of political communication face some obstacle and hindrance, as suggested by [Gurevitch and blumler \(1990\)](#)

1. It is not possible every time, to provide an advocacy platform to all the concerning spokespersons. This may be due to time or policy constraints of media.
2. Point of view of elite political representatives is often different from the perspective of the common viewer, which may lead to the lack of interest of the audience in the process of political communication.
3. In democratic Societies, political participation is voluntary work, so a number of common people find it easy to be isolated from this activity
4. External pressure, especially from the political and economic environment, may create hindrance to the smooth democratic standards of political communication.

A number of research studies have advocated that mass media has a major role in educating the audience for civic and political grooming. [Shea and green \(2007\)](#) elaborate that there is a tendency in youth to participate in civic activities. But young people show greater enthusiasm for civic engagement than politician engagement due to many reasons.

One of the major reasons is the un-civic behavior of political leaders. Attention is paid by the political for the civic activities only in the days of elections [Kopkin \(2016\)](#) gives a different angle for political socialization discussing the case of Bulgaria, the author says that political system itself is most important in socializing the public politically. An example is given of such countries which were under totalitarianism earlier, but the youth of those countries experience freedom. In this case, culture and background for both the generation was the same, but the political system was different so as a result, the political attitude was also different

[Anduiza, Gallego and Jobra \(2009\)](#) argue that there are many researchers who hold the view that increasing media choices is one of the main reasons in widening knowledge gap. The audience who have better I.Q and

greater cognitive and processing abilities extract more and more information while the uninterested or with low intellect skip information and become more and more ignorant.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship of gender, education and socioeconomic status with political maturity, disseminated through media?
2. What will be the difference between an audience of Multi-channeled cable TV system and Non-cable TV areas, regarding their motivation for political participation?

Methodology

This survey research focused on urban respondents who have access to cable television, as well as those in peripheral areas where cable television is not available, and Pakistan Television (PTV) is the only visual source of information available to them.

When selecting the population, the researcher wanted to choose an industrialized, modern and large city, surrounded by less developed peripheries. These options include cities like Multan, Bahawalpur, Faisalabad and Rawalpindi etc. Of these options, Faisalabad is preferred for the following reasons.

- 1) Faisalabad is the third-largest industrial city in Pakistan. These consist of a diversified range of voters including rich and poor, educated and uneducated and obviously with or without access to multi-channelled cable TV.
- 2) The peripheral areas around Faisalabad, although located within a few kilometres away, are of a very contrasting nature; mostly these are agricultural areas with a traditional way of life and lack modern technological gadgets and facilities.
- 3) During elections in this city, there is always a stubborn struggle between the main political parties, so that political parties pay special attention to the influence on voters.

Sampling Technique

The system of basic democracies has given a new dimension to the urbanized areas. Faisalabad has been divided into eight equal parts, and every part is called Town. So according to this new seating district Faisalabad comprises of:

Table 1. Political Division of District Faisalabad

Urban Areas	Peripheral Areas
Lyall pur Town	Samundari Town
Jinnah Town	Tandlianwala Town
Iqbal Town	Jaranwala Town
Madina Town	Jhumra Town

These Towns are further subdivided into union councils. So regardless of the urban or rural areas, union council is the basic unit of administration. Political representatives of these union councils were elected by the people. Although this political setting is not working at the moment as long as it existed, it comprised of 13 representatives. Although all eight subdivisions of the city have nearly the same population, the profile of this population differs in character. This difference is due to the uneven distribution of resources, infrastructure, ways of earning and training, etc.

However, the researcher decided to split the same quota for each city so that he could represent each segment of the population. Then, in each city, cluster sampling technique was used in several stages. The main subdivision was the "house", which was chosen by a simple random technique.

Table 2. Sampling Grid (Selection by Simple Random Technique)

Town	Union Council	Sector/village	Houses (N)	Population	Male (M)	Female (F)
Loyal Pur Town	UC No. 169	4-JB (Ram Dewali)	825	6280	30	30
Jinnah Town	UC No. 264	Doglus Pura	378	1334	30	30
Iqbal Town	UC No. 235	Batala Colony	978	11`215	35	35
Madina Town	UC No. 142	Abdullah Pur	812	6441	30	30
Samundari Town	UC No. 118	Chak No 441 GB	840	7682	30	30
Jaranwala Town	UC No. 18	Chak No 65 RB	630	4502	30	30
Tandlianwala Town	UC No. 86	450 GB (Nadir Ki Jhok)	654	2844	30	30
Jhumra Town	UC No. 9	102 JB (Burj Mandi)	2024	10036	35	35

Total Sample Strength

Cable TV area	=	250
Non-cable TV area	=	250
Total	=	500

A survey questionnaire was developed in order to collect data from respondents. This questionnaire consisted of two parts. First part focused on media consumption habits of respondents. And the second part was developed to evaluate the political knowledge and political participation of the research subjects.

Variables for Survey

Being a survey study, there might be a number of confounding variables involved, but the researcher specifically selected those variables which were intended to be studied in the Research Hypothesis or Research Questions.

Independent Variables

Following independent variables were measured in this survey.

1. Gender
2. Education
3. Socio economic status

Dependent Variables

Effect of independent variables was analyzed on the following variables

1. political participation
2. political knowledge

Parameters to Judge Political Maturity

Following parameters are considered to assess the process of political socialization.

- Registration as a voter.
- Voting practice
- Participation in a political campaign.
- Attending Town meetings.
- Joining a political party
- Contacting political representatives.

- Knowledge of government's and current affairs.
- Engaging in political discussion.

Results and Discussion

Data analysis means to elaborate the statistical data in words for better understanding. Multi types of tables, graphs and statistical tests carrying numbers and values, have been mentioned in this section. All the values have been developed through research by collecting responses from the population. Finally, it is in presentable form.

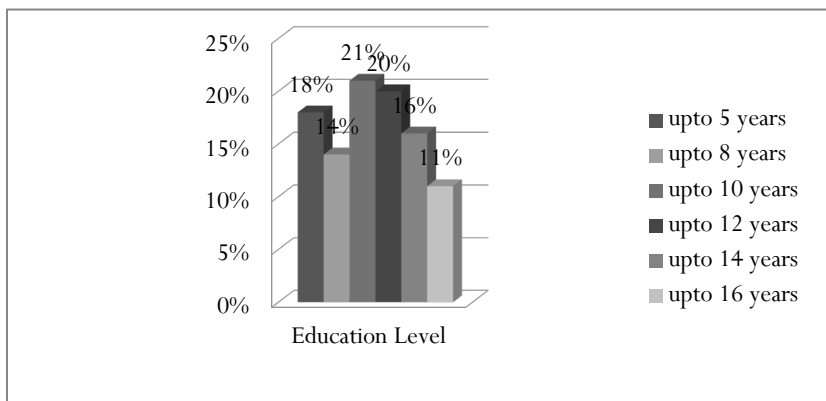


Figure 1: Distribution of Respondent Regarding their Education Level.

Figure 1 suggests that there is the almost equal distribution of the respondents regarding their years of education. Master degree holders are comparatively less in number, but it is in accordance with the overall picture of society.

Table 3. Monthly Family income of Respondents

Monthly Income	M	F	Total	%age
up to 10,000	101	93	194	39%
20,000	83	96	179	36%
30,000	34	42	76	15%
30,000++	32	19	51	10%
Total	250	250	500	100%

Table 3 describes that most of the respondents (75%) belongs to the middle class or lower-middle class. There are only 10% of respondents who enjoy a comfortable lifestyle by having their family income more than 30,000.

Table 4. Time Spent on Political Programs

Time Spent on Political Programs	Cable TV. Area				non-cable TV Area			
	M	F	T	%age	M	F	T	%age
Zero Hours/ Day	32	39	71	28%	40	48	88	35%
>1 Hour/ Day	48	57	105	42%	24	41	65	26%
<1 Hour/ Day	30	21	51	20%	32	14	46	18%
<2 Hour/ Day	15	8	23	9%	25	22	47	19%
Total	125	125	250	100%	125	125	250	100%

It is important to note that in non-cable areas, there is more variation in time spending habit for political programs. Although more number of political programs are available in cable areas, only 9% of the youth attend these fore for more than 2 hours. Whereas, in non-cable areas, 19% of the respondents give more than 2 hours to political issues

Table 5. Percentage Distribution of Respondents Regarding the Factor Appealing them in Political Discussions.

Factor Forcing to watch Political Discussions	Male	Female	Total	% Age
Cross-fire among participants	34	21	55	11%
Bold Questions of Anchor	85	76	161	32%
Logical discussion	35	16	51	10%
Motivational and patriotic discussion	42	47	89	18%
curtain-raising from corruption and bad governance	49	88	137	27%
Others	5	2	7	1%
Total	250	250	500	100%

Table No. 5 amazingly shows that a large number of youths follow the anchorperson of political programs regardless of the participants.

It is also important to note that there are only 11% who like cross-fire among participants which is a dominating part of these programs.

Table 6. Distribution of Respondents Regarding their Source of Political Knowledge

Source	Cable TV Areas				non-cable TV areas			
	Male	Female	Total	% Age	Male	Female	Total	% Age
Media	102	89	191	76%	64	76	140	56%
Family	6	18	24	10%	12	24	36	14%
Friends/Peer Groups	12	6	18	7%	34	11	45	18%
Teachers	3	4	7	3%	6	8	14	6%
Syllabus books	2	6	8	3%	4	6	10	4%
Others	0	2	2	1%	5	0	5	2%
Total	125	125	250	100%	125	125	250	100%

Table No. 6 indicate that majority of the youth choose media to gain political knowledge, but in non-cable areas, there are 38% respondents who got this knowledge through interpersonal communication, i.e. from Family, Peer Group or Teachers etc.

Table 7. Test Score for Parameters of Political Maturity

Number of Affirmative Answers	Cable TV Areas				non-cable TV areas			
	Male	Female	Total	% Age	Male	Female	Total	% Age
10	3	0	3	1	0	0	0	0
9	8	0	8	3	0	0	0	0
8	30	21	51	20	53	8	61	24
7	62	35	97	39	39	18	57	23
6	12	24	36	14	21	34	55	22
5	6	42	48	19	10	46	56	23
4	4	3	7	3	2	19	21	8
3	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	125	125	250	100	125	125	250	100

Mean of both the groups is calculated.

$$\bar{X}_1 \text{ (Mean score for cable areas)} = 6.688$$

$$\bar{X}_2 \text{ (Mean score for Non-cable areas)} = 6.324$$

A higher value of the mean of group belonging to cable areas proves that youth of this group have better consistency in their behavior towards political socialization as compared to youth of non-cable TV areas.

Moreover to calculate the coefficient of variance

$$C.V = \frac{S}{\bar{X}} \times 100$$

Where S = standard deviation of the concerning group.

By calculating we get

$$S_1 \text{ (standard deviation of cable TV areas)} = 53.93$$

$$S_2 \text{ (standard deviation of non-cable TV areas)} = 48.23$$

$$C1V1 = 807.36 \%$$

$$C2V2 = 762.65 \%$$

This shows that respondents of cable areas showed more variation regarding political socialization parameters. In other words, there are respondents who are not politically socialization at all, and they're also exist those respondents who are highly socialized but on the other hand youth of non-cable areas mostly fall in the middle range of political socialization parameters test.

Table 8. The difference in exposure to political content on TV among male and Female Respondents

Time Spent for Political Contents on TV.	Male	Female
Group 1 (0 hours)	72	87
Group 2 (> 1 hours)	72	98
Group 3 (< 1 hours)	62	35
Group 4 (< 2 hours)	44	30
Total	250	250

Applying student's t-test

By

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{S_{x_1-x_2}^2}}$$

We have $t = 2.289$

And at significance level = 0.05

Table value of $t = 1.98$

Which is less than the calculated value, so it has been proven that male and female respondents are scientifically different as per time spent for exposure to political contents on TV is concerned.

Table 9. Correlation between Socio-Economic Status and Political Maturity

Monthly Family Income	The average number of Affirmative Answers
Up to 10,000	5.9
20,000	8.2
30,000	7.4

30,000++

6.3

Apparently, it seems that the answers given in “YES’ by each group do not have any relationship with the socioeconomic status of respondents. In order to confirm this fact Pearson’s correlation coefficient was applied:

$$r = \frac{N \sum XY - \sum X \sum Y}{\sqrt{[N \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

r = 0.0493, this value of “r” suggests that there is almost no correlation between socioeconomic status and political specialization.

Table 10. Correlation between Education and Political Maturity

Years of education	The average number of affirmative answers
5	5.1
8	5.2
10	6.1
12	6.4
14	7.5
16++	8.2

Correlation between education and affirmative answers in political socialization parameters test is calculated by r = 0.964, proves that there is very high correlative between the level of education and political socialization.

Conclusions

Results of this survey study and their analysis worked as an eye-opener in many aspects. Following conclusions can be drawn from these results.

1. Most of the youth liked to use media as their opinion builder.
2. Youth analyzed the political contents very critically.
3. level of political knowledge of youth was up to the mark, but this knowledge is yet to be used for decision making gradually
4. As cable television worked in a better manner for political socialization so as soon as cable operators cover more areas, more people will get its impact.
5. The high correlation of the level of education with political socialization clearly indicates that media can play its role more efficiently if the education level is increased.
6. It has been proven that socio-economics status was not responsible for the knowledge gap. It was only the access to the technology of cable TV, which is not expansive at all.

Suggestions

1. This study should be replicated in different areas, especially that one where feudal lord manipulates the voting behavior of voters.
2. Results of this study suggest that the impact of other agents of political socialization should also be studied separately and cumulatively
3. A series of experimental studies on focus groups should be conducted in order to assess the types of contents of Television Channels and their effectiveness for political socialization
4. As a large segment of youth used TV for entertainment, so it is suggested to mix up the entertainment contents in the transmission of TV. Channel, having political contents only.
5. Entertainment channels should produce their programs purposefully so that viewer could become educated and socialized even through entertainment channels.

Limitations of the Study

1. Area for this study should be more vast so that more diverse sample could be obtained
2. Two-step flow of communication should have been studied more deeply.
3. It was very difficult to approach individual young female respondents, so female research suppliers should also have been used.
4. A content analysis of types of programs should also be conducted so that these could be correlated with the viewing habits of youth
5. In the end, it is important to mention that language becomes a barrier while dealing with the uneducated respondents.

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