

Impact of Socio Religious Programs on Viewers: A Case Study of Qutab Online



Rao Shahid Mahmood	Assistant Professor, Department of Media Studies, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: raoshahid@iub.edu.pk
Arsha Saleem Meer	Lecturer, Department of Mass Communication, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan/PhD Scholar, CMCS, University of Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan.
Irem Sultana	Assistant Professor, Department of Mass Communication, Government College University Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.

Abstract: *The media has a significant impact and influence on society, as well as on its thinking and behavioral elements, among other things. Around the globe, television has long served as a primary means of receiving and disseminating information. Television programs have a direct influence on our behavior, perceptions, and perspectives. Over the years in Pakistan, religious programs have grown in popularity and their impact on the people is undeniable. The purpose of the study was to analyze the impact socio religious programs on viewer. The researcher explored the impact of religious program 'Qutab online' on viewer's perceptions and attitudes towards religion. The objective of the study was to analyze the level of awareness among the viewers about the religion after watching Qutab Online. To reach the objectives, quantitative methodology was applied. 200 respondents from Lahore participated in the survey from age 15-64. the findings of the study indicated that Qutab online is influencing the mindset of the people regarding religious beliefs and also creating awareness regarding religion.*

Key Words: Mass Media, Television Channels, Religious Programs, Impact, Viewers

Introduction

Traditional functions of the media include informing, entertaining, and persuading audiences (Haque, 2012). According to Hijazi and Naqqash (1995), mass media has developed into a magnificent impact in today's society, offering information, leadership, and ideas, as well as playing a critical role in influencing and promoting public opinion. The term "mass media" encompasses a variety of formats, including newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the internet. Right and wrong are the focus of the Islamic idea of social responsibility. The media, on the other hand, encourages us to play a conflicted role by both appreciating and disapproving of wickedness. According to Sadiqui (1994) Media outlets are more interested in controversy, disagreement, disarray, and humiliation than they are in promoting harmony, stability, and consistency. Television's audio-visual characteristics, combined with its capacity to integrate numerous media formats, particularly narrative genres, has a profound effect on people (Ramlakshmi & Vani, 2019). It is predicted that television, as a

broadcasting institution, will provide new hope for positive social transformation. Many experts, particularly those who are quite optimistic about the good impact of television media, contend that media has the power to produce messages significantly more frequently (loads of times) than other institutions such as social circles, nations, or corporate organizations. A similar situation occurs when a message is delivered and quickly spread (dispersion) among thousands or millions of people who are intended to receive it (communicant). Television is now a platform that save time while transmitting a message thousands of times more effectively than any other medium on the planet (Bahri, 2019). Following up on the findings of a study conducted by Galician and Merskin (2007), it was discovered that television has the most influence over people's perceptions of other individuals and ethnicities with which they have no prior experience. The appearance and debate of religion in the media has become a standard practice, and it is becoming increasingly popular as a result. Hoover (2008) notes

out that, in recent years, there has been an increase in the demand for religion-related content in the media, which is partly attributable to a shift in public perceptions regarding the significance of faith issues among the general public. People spend 40% of their media time watching television, according to a new study (Rodney, 1996). A number of scholars believe that television has a similar effect on people's worldview as religion ([Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1980](#)).

Television and Religious Programs

Programs on television have a direct impact on our behavior, perceptions, and perspective ([Al Mamori & Rahman, 2017](#)). When it comes to finding out what they need to know, most people these days turn to various forms of media, such as television, the internet, online libraries, and electronic versions of newspapers ([Saifce, shiekh, & sultan, 2012](#)). According to research, those who watch religious television programs take them seriously. It is a degree of moral obligation that motivates individuals to watch religious programming on television: a sense that they seem to be doing it not only for oneself, as well as for everyone else, whether it is members of their own families or members of their local communities ([Biberman et al, 2006](#)).

According to Pakistan Advertisers Society (2010) a significant trend in Pakistan's media is the popularization of religious concerns via the emergence of privately-run religious channels and programs. Following the media liberalization legislation of 2002, religious talk shows in Pakistan became a popular television genre. There have been many major debates concerning Islam and religious institution in Pakistan on these programs since they first aired ([Kazi, 2021](#)). New forms for religious programming are emerging as a result of the rise of private media. During Ramadan, Muharram, Eid al-Fitr, and other religious observances, special programs are held, while the majority of Pakistan's private channels like GEO, ARY, QTV, SAMAA, 92 carry ordinary religious programs. To show the evolving face of Islam as demonstrated by the Quran, Hadith and Sunnah, religious programs answer all questions against a modern backdrop.

Qutab Online

Qutab Online is one of the famous religious programs which is on air on Samaa news. Bilal Qutab is the host

of the show. The program emphasizes the proper transmission of Islamic teachings. Many social issues are also addressed, and their impact on human life is examined. There is also a live chat feature that allows users to ask and answer questions from the audience. The show encourages educated debates on sensitive religious matters to help dispel misconceptions that persist in the minds of many people.

Significance

One important part of Pakistan media that has contributed to this level of impact is the religious program, which has grown considerably since the early 20's. In developing countries like Pakistan, where the population is diverse in terms of ethnicity, caste, and socioeconomic status, television and other media have become ingrained habits that have a lasting impact on how people think, behave, and act. The primary goal of religious program is to raise and propagate religious consciousness among people. The study highlights the impact of largely viewed religious program on viewers perception and attitudes towards religion. It also highlights how religious programs create awareness among the viewers and promote Islamic values.

Objectives

- To analyze the impact of Qutab Online on the viewers.
- To analyze the level of awareness among the viewers about the religion after watching Qutab Online.
- To highlight that Qutab online is promoting Islamic value and principle

Literature Review

Information, education, and modification of people's knowledge, attitudes, and practices are the goals of television programming. Television accomplishes its objectives through appealing to the interests of its viewers. It has been reported that the targeted individuals have gotten "hooked" to their television programs in some instances. People's interests are targeted by television through news programs, comedy, game shows, and a range of other programming, some of which are tailored to certain audiences, such as children, women, and older citizens (Capelos, T., & Graber, D. 2009). In today's television landscape, there are a lot of religious programs being shown on a variety of channels. It is

crucial to remember that religious tv programs includes popular secular programming genres, such as chat shows, panel shows, children's shows, sitcoms, current affairs shows, entertainment programming, music/variety shows, and reality television. (Abelman, 1987 ; Zalida& Mariah. 2011). Woods and Ebersole (2005), emphasized five aspects that explicate program choice partiality, which include personal categorization with actual typescript, engagement, variations in attitude. Additionally, they discovered that personal familiarity with real writing was the most powerful motivator for reality TV viewing since it may appear to be a representation of the audiences' own psychographic and demographic identity (Dr. Ramazan 2011) did a study in which he discovered that television has a significant impact on the calming of people. A large number of people shape their spiritual sympathies through the use of surveillance television. The program that reproduces more universal human leniency is terminated, and the traditional kind of faith is replaced with more modern understandings of faith and ways of believing in the world. Zalidah and Mariah (2011) asserted that religious programs are watched by the public to satisfy their religious needs, and they also revealed that viewers agreed to watch religious programs as a substitute for not hearing sermons on a regular basis. As stated by Musa et. Al (2010) the objectives of Islamic programs should include strengthening Islamic belief, promoting Muslim thought, strengthening Islamic civilizations, developing public opinions, and functioning as a watchdog against harmful values that have an impact on society's growth Numerous studies have also discovered that television programs have an impact on the cultural standing of individuals and groups, according to the researchers. It also has an impact on people's way of living as well as their religious understanding. Many people form their religious beliefs as a result of their television viewing habits. (Ramalakshmi& Vani, 2019). Muslims should be encouraged to propagate and preach Islam through various mass media channels, including as radio, TV, periodicals, film, message and the Internet. This objective should be fulfilled by religious programs on the Islamic perspective. (Musa et al 2010). With Islam as the foundation for competition, these reality shows hope to achieve the goal of employing aspects of pop culture to address the religious challenges of Muslims in an unique and relevant way (Manaf et al, 2013). According to Fernandez (2016), individuals watch

religious television because they believe that it influences their value systems, supports their religion, and strengthens their holy civilizations. Family-oriented programming should be aired more frequently on television because the percentage of households who watch religious programming alone is quite low. The current affair programs have enormous belongings to transform their understanding, the respondents considerably pleased with information offered by the discussion shows as opposed to the extra program (Umair, A., Amin, S., Rasheed, A., 2014). According to Abelman (1987) there are 22 reasons why people watch religious television programs, including acquiring new information, avoiding commercial TV, feeling closer to God, supporting their ethical values, and having something to talk about with friends. There are religious programs on television that distribute their content independently from the rest of the network. Diverse artists and groups produce and distribute religious music and religious recordings, while a diverse network of religious organizations produces and distributes religious television Assman (1987). The vast majority of educators are pleased with this program. According to their estimations, these programs will be well-timed (Hameed-u-deen awan, 1986). According to Abdul Salam khursheed (1985) a mere 5 percent (or 25%) of Ulema watch religious programming on TV on a daily basis. The majority of initiatives rely heavily on the intrusion of the state. Religious services should be accessible to everybody without any religious bias or compulsion. The only scholars who need be concerned are those who already have a background in the field; otherwise, a significant shift in society could result. According to his findings, the majority of our programs are stereotyped. They fail to capture the interest of the audience. Scholars who are asked for their opinions should have a well-rounded educational experience. In order for people to be properly informed. It was found in a study done by (Peter 1984) that religious programs don't have any effect on attendance at local churches. According to him, more people watch these shows if they are available at more popular times. As a result, the show's producers made an effort to run his segment on appropriate days.

Hypothesis

H1: Qutab Online is influencing the mindset of the people regarding religious beliefs

H0: Qutab Online is not influencing the mindset of the people regarding religious beliefs

Theoretical Framework

In light of the uses and gratifications (U&G) approach (Katz, Blumber, and Gurevitch, 1973), it is presumed that viewers are engaged consumers who actively seek and attempt to meet their needs through media consumption. An investigation into the U&G of programs is conducted in order to determine what motivates them to watch the shows. In contrast to the belief that the audience is a homogenous mass that simply takes news content, it is claimed that public deliberately sought out messages to suit specific needs. This is a radical departure from the conventional wisdom (Kaye & Johnson, 2002). A focus on the psychological, social, and socio-cultural factors that impact viewers and lead to their usage of television is explored by the U&G, which is concerned with how viewers' behaviour and attitudes change in response to what is known as the gratification of viewing television (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007; Swanson, 1987). The results of empirical investigations have revealed that pleasure can come in a variety of forms, ranging from gaining information which is useful in executing one's civic responsibilities to consuming media content as part of a soothing regular ritual.

Blumler and Katz first proposed the theory in 1974. "Uses and gratification" is a significant study tradition in media studies. Uses and gratification theory explains how people use media to meet a wide range of needs and wants. People's basic needs are being met in unprecedented ways thanks to new

media. Media, which people also utilize to communicate with one another, provides them with information, interface, recreation, awareness, escape, and amusement. Research was carried out on the basis of the theory of uses and gratification to analyze how the Qutab online program affects its audience's behavior.

Methodology

Modern-day television serves a critical role in disseminating religious knowledge. Several television networks have devoted much of their programming time to religious fare. Qualitative methodology was applied to gather results and data. The study is divided into two stages. In first stage, a survey was conducted to identify which religious program audience prefer to watch mostly. On the behalf of the survey results, the researcher choose Qutab Online as a case study. In second step, another study was conducted to analyze the impact of Qutab online on viewers. Data was used to collect through survey from 200 respondents. Target audience was selected as adults (also known as working-age) between the age of 15-64 respondents (Ritchie & Roser, 2019). As television is the most widely used media tool in Pakistan, with almost three-quarters of adults watching it on a weekly basis (BBG Gallup, 2014). Search was limited to Lahore because it is the largest city in the province of Punjab and the traditional cultural center of the region.

Result and Data Analysis

H1: Qutab Online is influencing the mindset of the people regarding religious beliefs

Table 1.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	208.149	23	9.050	4.993	.000
Within Groups	766.710	423	1.813		
Total	974.859	446			

Interpretation

The significance level of 0.05, indicating that the H1 alternative hypothesis is accepted. Qutab online is influencing the mindset of the people regarding religious beliefs. Ultimately Ho hypothesis is rejected.

Analysis & Discussion

A survey was conducted to identify which religious

programs do people watch the most. According to results, 86.5% respondents watch Qutab Online. Based on these results, further study was conducted keeping Qutab online as a case study. The key aim of the study focuses on discovering the influence of Effects of socio-religious program "Qutab online" on viewer. Quantitative research was conducted to acquire data and draw accurate conclusions based on

numbers and facts through survey. Female as well as male participants the respondents of the survey.

According to results Qutab Online is playing role in creating socio religious awareness among viewers. Majority of the population (47%) said that Qutab Online is creating awareness. 23.5 percent like the Wazif format of Qutab Online. The result show that majority people like Wazifa format of the show. Also, 44 percent of the complete Population believe that Syed Bilal Qutab as a key factor for running the show well with its intellectuals and Sufi scholar's knowledge. The survey was also helpful in getting feedback from the audience about the show. It highlighted majority of the Population consider the show as powerful medium in highlighting the importance of socio religious matters. According to 40% respondents Qutab Online is a socio religious show which motivate them for being a Good Person and Changing Perception related to Life. 35.5% respondents agree with the importance of Program to be suggested in social circle for viewing it. Majority of the respondents (41.5%) considered that Qutab Online influence their mindset regarding religious beliefs.

Conclusion

Religious programs on television has taken the place of more conventional means of learning about religion, such as attending religious services and hearing sermons on the radio or in person. In Pakistan, there are numerous private channels who broadcast religious programs which attracts a large audience. The study is design to analyze the impact of Qutab online on viewers and investigate if Qutab Online raise religious consciousness among viewers. The study proposed 2 Hypothesis. Uses and gratification theory was applied to the study which explain the impact of Qutab online on viewers. The researcher followed the proper methodology in order to accomplish the study's objectives and address all research questions. The H1 hypothesis was accepted. The study found that Qutab Online has an immense effect on viewers and show is changing the religious perception of viewers regarding religious beliefs. Additionally, the results demonstrated that Qutab Online raises awareness about religion and provides accurate information about religion. The results also revealed that Qutab online is the best source to get information about religion. Issues discuss in Qutab online also influence viewers.

References

- Abdul Manaf, A. M., Wok, S., Ismail, R., & Abdul Latif, S. S. (2013). The Acceptance of TV Islamic Reality Shows by the Malay Community. *UlūmIslāmiyyah Journal*, 10, 93–116. <https://doi.org/10.12816/0002863>
- Abelman, R., (1987). Religious television uses and gratifications. *Journal of broadcasting and electronic media*, 31(3), 293-307
- Assman. (1992). *Communication strategies*, new London publishers.p.34
- Awan, H. (1986).Opinion of teacher of. PU about religious programs of TV, An Unpublished MA, thesis, Lahore.
- Bahri, A. N. (2021). The Role of Salam TV as Islamic Based Television in Promoting Interfaith Harmony in North Sumatera. *An Nadwah*, 27(1), 27. <https://doi.org/10.37064/nadwah.v27i1.9942>
- Fernandez, C. (2016). *A pilot study of impact of religious TV channels on household*. Vellore, subrub.
- Galician, M., & Merskin, D. L. (2007). *Critical thinking about sex, love, and romance in the mass media*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., & Signorielli, N. (1980). Growing up with television: The cultivation perspective. In Television Violence, Victimization and Power, *American Behavioral Scientist*. 23(5).
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Signorielli, N., Morgan, M. (1980). Aging with television: Images on television drama and conceptions of social reality. *Journal of Communication*, 30(1), 37-47.
- Gul, B. S., Ocakli, F. (2006). Channeling Islam: Religious Narratives on Pakistani Television and Their Influence on Pakistani Youth, Yelena, *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, 43, 78-97.
- Haq, F., & Hossain, M. K. (2012). *Islamophobia and its impact on conflict resolution*. Global media.
- Hoover, M. S. (2008). *Media and religion. The center for Media, Religion and Culture*: University of Colorado, USA.
- Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1973). Uses and Gratifications Research. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37(4), 509. <https://doi.org/10.1086/268109>
- Kaye, B. K., & Johnson, T. J. (2002). Online and in the Know: Uses and Gratifications of the Web for Political Information. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 46(1), 54–71. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15506878jobem4601_4
- Kazi, T. (2021). *Religious Television and Pious Authority in Pakistan*. Amsterdam University Press.
- Kerr, P. (1984). *Study Effects from TV Evangelism*.
- Khursheed, A. S. (1985). Opinion of scholars about the religious programs on TV, An unpublished MA thesis, Lahore
- Mamori, M. A., & Inam Ur Rahman, S. (2017). Role of TV Talk Shows in Creating Political Awareness among Youth. *Global Mass Communication Review*, II(1), 21–43. [https://doi.org/10.31703/gmcr.2017\(iii\).02](https://doi.org/10.31703/gmcr.2017(iii).02)
- Musa, H., Norhayati, R., Abdul, R., & Norizian, D. (2010). Expectation towards media content of Islamic program. In Mazni Buyong, Nur Kareelawati Abd Karim, Sofia Hayati Yusoff & Suria Hani A Rahman, (Eds.). *Portrayal of Islam in the Media*. Negeri Sembilan: Faculty of Leadership and Management, USIM
- Naqqash, F. M. (1995). *Mass Communication Theory and Practice*. Islamabad National Education and Training Commission. Hijazi
- P. (2010, October 11). Religious Media Content- A Cable TV Phenomenon. Pakistan Advertisers Society. <https://pas.org.pk/religious-media-content-a-cable-tv-phenomenon/>
- Ramalakshmi, V. (2019). Religious television viewing and its impact on religiosity of people. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Education and Research*, 4(5), 33–37.
- Ramazan. (2011). Significance of Television. Religion, media, and the public sphere.
- Ritchie, H. (2019, September 20). Age Structure. Our World in Data <https://ourworldindata.org/age-structure>
- Saif, S., & Sultan, A. R. Z. A. S. (2012). *The role of mass media & information technology in Islamic education*. The Role of Mass Media & Information Technology in Islamic Education, 380–390.
- Siddique, I. (1997). Muslim and media myth and realities. Chicago, cited in Mrs. Bushra Rehman, An Unpublished MA, thesis, Lahore. Stark Rodney. Religion as Context: Hellfire and Delinquency One More Time. *Sociology of Religion*. 57, 163-173.

Umair, A., Amin, S., & Rasheed, A. (2014). *Effects of private TV channels current affairs programs on student: A case study of Sargodha*

Woods, R., & Ebersole, S., Using Non-Subject-Matter-Specific Discussion Boards to Build Connectedness in Online Learning. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 17, 99-118

Zalida, A., & Mariah, M. (2011). Malay young adults' perception towards Islamic television programs. Paper presented at the International Conference on Media and Communication entitled Communication and Transformation: Progress and Paradox, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia