A Critical Analysis of Current Affair Talk Shows on Pakistan Television News Channels: A Mirror or Bamboozle of the Society?

Nabeel Raza
M.Phil. Scholar, Institute of Communication Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.
Email: jrizz888@gmail.com
Dr. Savera Shami
Associate Professor, Institute of Communication Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.
Email: saverashami@gmail.com
Dr. Ayesha Ashfaq
Associate Professor, Institute of Communication Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.
Email: ayeshaashfaq.ics@pu.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

This study aims at analyzing the content, popularity and preferences of the issues highlighted in the current affairs talk shows on prime time in Pakistan. Therefore, the top three talk shows of prime time (8:00 pm to 9:00 pm) Capital Talk, Off the Record and On the Front from January to June 2020 were analyzed under the light of Agenda Setting theory and Rhetorical Communication theory. After analyzing the content of shows, the questionnaire was also constructed as an instrument to explore the public mindset and accumulated data. In this study results of 342 respondents are incorporated through simple random sampling. It was concluded that one of the most important but contentious product of news channels after news bulletins is talk shows in which interpersonal conflicts and confrontation among guests are mostly broadcasted but these shows are popular and a great number of public still prefer to watch regularly. It was found that majority of the respondents supported the argument that current affair talk shows are a mirror of the society despite showing their dislikeness for the way in which talk shows highlight the issues.

Key Words: **Political Talk Shows, Content, Popularity, Conflict & Mirror.**

Introduction

Mass Media conceded as a vital tool that can influence the masses. It is also acknowledged as the fourth pillar of state and has graced an influential stakeholder in society. It not only influences public mindsets but also plays important role in a state as an important entity (Qaisar, Madni, Hassan & Amin, 2014). The duty of media is to promote facts and highlight the obscure and esoteric areas and aspects of lies. Media has to disseminate alternative point of views, resolution of. dilemmas, and truthful information (Jan & Khan, 2020). Some scholars also

recognize that the backbone of any democratic system as it uncovers wrongdoings and omissions of those who are in power which not only helps democracy to groom but also keeps officeholders accountable and transparent. Some believe that it also has to highlight the issues of the average man because every man does not have access to power houses but media has. There is a thriving concern that this watchdog is not doing what it should. It is becoming a patron of the status quo, preferring entertaining rather than information, meddling in personal lives, and overlooking the real problems (Fog, 2004).

These are the issues generally debated all over the world about the role of media but how media is operating in Pakistan then the most commonly used terminology for media even after two decades of arrival of private channels is 'Immature Media' (Jamali, 2014). According to Chairman PEMRA and its official website till May 2019 the number of total channels in Pakistan was 88 and many more to come. Pakistani media and journalists are trying to find their voice but journalism in-country is deeply influenced by economic realities, nationalism, religion and tactics of government (Pintak & Nazir, 2013). Hence, there is a consensus that Pakistani media has witnessed tremendous growth in the media sphere and it can and it will strengthen democracy more and more as it has great potential to play an imperative part in the upgrading of democracy (Eijaz, Rahman, Ahmad, & Butt, 2014).

One of the most important but contentious product of news channels after the news is talk shows in which interpersonal conflicts and confrontation among guests are mostly broadcasted but still, these shows are popular and a great number of public prefer to see this (Rubin, Haridakis & Eyal, 2003). The reason behind this is that talk shows are supposed to be the advice-giver as it only comprises news in it but it also renders a chance to see the views of different parties and critics (Holderman, 2003). It has become a popular television genre and grasped an important place in television scheduling (Wahab, 2011).

This study sought to analyze the content of the top three talk shows of Prime Time (8:00 pm to 9:00 pm). According to Medialogic:

1. Capital Talk
2. Off the Record
3. On the Front

This objectives of this study are:

1. to analyze the content of talk shows of Pakistani media.
2. to study the topics which talk shows covered during on air time.
3. to investigate the essence of arguments of the participants.
4. to explore that is there any correlation between the topics being discussed in talk shows and public mindset?
5. to find out which topics or issues the public aspires to see in talk shows?

Literature review

This research is an endeavor to dig out what media is depicting or manifesting on-screen and what a common Pakistani thinks. Treating both sides impartially, disciples of media is a mirror and it is just a deception or false reality, literature review is also divided into two parts so that we can see both sides objectively. In the first part of the literature review, the researcher reviewed the literature particularly about just the claim that how much literature supports this narrative or opposes.

According to Qaisar, Madni, Hassan and Amin (2014, media is performing its functions effectively in formulating, shaping and reshaping public opinions, culture and society. It is also helping to understand the social issues, highlighting issues like unemployment, education, law and order situation, corruption of elites, energy and economic crisis. Similarly, Fog (2004) "Media is the backbone of democratic system" It is fulfilling its duties as a watch dog and exposing corrupts. It is identifying problems of society and also spreading political awareness. In another study Yaser, Mahsud and Chaudhry (2011) concluded that media is not only spreading awareness but it is also shaping their political perceptions and voting behaviors. Riaz (2008) further explained this in a way, that for shaping perception media do not act passively, whatever they broadcast, their choice of words, selection, rejection and repetition of stories are the tools of media outlets. But he also emphasized that this is not just their power but actually it is a responsibility and it is their duty to fulfill this carefully because if they will show irresponsibility or misuse this then it will damage interests of masses. Adding to this narrative, Jamali (2014) also added that it not only informs but also develops opinions and consensus, he hits the higher nodes by saying that "media is the face of society" and she also called it the new member of every family.

Contrary to this, Ahmad (2011) conducted in depth interviews of 40 Media practitioners from all over Pakistan named "Qalam ki Badshahi" and concluded that all is not good in Pakistani media. Everyone from top to bottom in media industry remained tied to several diverse economic, religious and political interests. Similarly Li and Chiang (2001) made conclusion that with every passing year where competition is increasing, diversity is reducing, innovative ideas from TV channels are becoming very rare so to them there is a negative relationship between competition and diversity of content. Jan and Khan (2020) added that Pakistani media works as a conflict trigger. Media is in state control, journalists are less educated, and "envelope journalism" distorts reality. Mezzera and Sial (2010) also highlighted that Pakistani media is a complicated area to discuss because there are several issues like owners either have political affiliations or they have commercial interests more than professional journalism, there are two mediums in Media as well, Urdu and English and both have different areas and angles which they cover differently. Lack of training of journalist and job security to personal security, there are bunch of issues out there. Similarly, Rasul and

Proffitt (2013) also criticized over arm twisting policies of PEMRA, they also criticizes the way government use this authority to hostile, pressurize and target media.

On the other hand, Khan and his fellows (2013) supported the narrative that people believe that there should be a regulatory body which should control media. Similarly, Eijaz et al. (2014) in their study added that in Pakistani media what we see is cut throat competition for TRP, sensationalism, yellow journalism, immature and unprofessional workers, unethical content, substandard infotainment, more statements. Hassan (2014) also argued that Pakistani media works for self-serving agendas, there are threats either from Jihadi groups or from political parties. It was also highlighted that non state actors have also a role in shaping media narrative and media itself gain advantages from situations, plays role of bargainers, either sell stories or shape or ignore contrast views.

In addition, Wahab (2011) highlighted that talk shows try to maintain social order and exhibit only safe opinions and try to promote the ideology of elite who is ruling and it completely exclude the importance of audience. Moving ahead with who and how discussion proceeds in talk shows in an analysis of American top 10 talk shows, Holderman (2003) stated that in American shows experts got less time than others, interrupted several times, treated negatively and the experts themselves were not there with statics and figures, their opinions do not seem of an expert but of a layman. Tavener (2000) used a bit harsher vocabulary and called talk shows "nightmares" because talk shows are more into sensationalism, rating and the race of revenue than working for betterment of society. Similarly Bode et al. (2018) in their study agreed that hosts of political talk shows do not act neutrally, they either be a party or by ignoring, interrupting or giving a particular guest more time showed their alliance but they also stated that people know this biasness and even after knowing that they watch such shows if that support their ideology but for other side such shows are not considered trustworthy, unbiased or credible. On the other side, Fatima and Mumtaz (2018) in their study asked people about their perception about talk shows and public was satisfied in fact they acknowledged that talk shows are working as a bridge between public and government and they are also providing political awareness, changing thinking patterns, reforming the democratic system and even if there are negative element in talk shows that is minimal. Madni, Shehzad, and Abdullah (2011) also emphasized on the importance of talk shows as they stated that people watch current affair talk shows to stay updated about the current happenings in their country and around the world and adding to this they claimed that the more exposure of political talk shows you have, the more politically aware you will be. Mahsud, Chaudhary, Amin and Khan (2013) also argued that public is much interested to see issues of national importance in talk shows and they are satisfied with the content of talk shows. Public is not only getting information from talk shows but they think media is presenting what is important for them as well. Moreover, Ahmed (2010) highlighted that it is right that viewers of talk shows are

more politically aware but they also think talk shows spreading frustration and confusion among public.

In all the above-mentioned studies, there is a complete bewildering in terms of defining the role of talk shows. Scholars are divided into two different extremes i.e. positive and negative. It can be difficult to predict that everyone thinks this or every talk show is that much performing positive or negative so in such a situation it is an effort to treat both ends equally and dig out what was missing in previous studies.

Theoretical framework

As this study deals with two separate techniques. So keeping in mind the survey technique and the content analysis along with the main topic which is to see the content of media and mindset of the public under umbrellas of two different theories are employed. This study is conducted under the umbrella of agenda-setting theory and rhetorical communication theory and used chronological order to analyze each aspect as it befalls.

Agenda setting theory argued that media not only tell the public what to think but it also tells how to think. Agenda-setting theorists claimed and proved with empirical evidence that media influence minds. They use the way of analyzing the content of news mediums and then conducted the survey. This study is following the footsteps of these theorists and doing the same experiment of analyzing the content of media, then it analyzed the minds of the public via a survey, that what is their agenda or mindset or thinking pattern over those issues which media highlights.

This study utilized rhetorical communication theory as it suits the best when it comes to analyzing the message and the source whether that is written or spoken. Rhetorical Communication theory basically describes how rhetoric works and what it does. It suggests not only the ways of producing effective communication but also provides guidelines to analyze it.

As this research is analyzing the content of talk shows. The research is analyzing guests as well that who they are, what is their affiliation or expertise (Ethos). Then through survey public (Pathos) was questioned about the same issues. Speakers are replaced with participants of the show and instead of seeing their character, their affiliations and expertise are analyzed. It is divided it into categories. Credibility or perception in public was established with the results of the survey.

Research methodology

In this research content analysis and survey method are used as research techniques to analyze the content of media and explore the viewpoint of the public in Pakistan. Content analyses was used as a tool to analyze the content of talk

shows of Pakistani media, whereas for analyzing and exploring the mindset of the public, survey method was used as a research tool. In the first part of the study content analysis of the top three talk shows of prime time (8:00 pm to 9:00 pm), rated by Medialogic, was conducted recorded from January 2020 to June 2020. These talk shows include Capital Talk of Geo News, Off the Record of ARY News, On the Front of Dunya News. Analyses of one episode of each talk show from every week were conducted. Starting from Monday the first day of the week, episode of number one talk show was analyzed, which was Capital Talk and then day two with the ranked second that was Off the Record, and day three for the third number show that was On the Front. So the sample was based on 24 episodes of each show, recorded during the first 24 weeks of 2020. The topics of each show, allotted time to each topic, guests and their fields, nature of argument analysis are part of this study.

After analyzing the content of shows, the questionnaire was constructed as an instrument to explore the public mindset and accumulated data. In this study results of 342 respondents were incorporated through simple random sampling. Respondents belong to different fields of life and different areas of Pakistan with different age groups and education levels were included. The survey questionnaire was based on five points Likert scale. The purpose of conducting the survey was to observe the similarity or dissimilarity between the media mindset and public mindset.

Findings and interpretation

Content analysis of talk shows

Following points were addressed during content analysis of talk shows

Topics discussed in talk shows

Corona	Sugar and Wheat Crisis	NAB vs Opposition	Character assassination of Politicians & Media
Infightings of PTI	Performance of Govt.	Illness of MNS	Act of Putting Boot on Table in A Talk Show
Economy	Inflation	COAS Extension	Importance of Books
Conspiracy related to Shehbaz Sharif & Establishment	Govt. vs Opposition	Allies of PTI Govt. and their Concerns	1971 Fall of Dhaka
Petrol Crisis	National Unity	Parliament Session	Freedom of Speech
18th Amendment	Cabinet & Unelected Members	Infightings of PMLN	World War III & Role of Pakistan
Our Policy regarding Afghanistan	Govt. and Judiciary	NFC Award	Water & Power Inquiry
Child Abuse	ECC & Asad Umar	US President in India	
NAB Ordinance & Sharia	Ishaq Daar	Our Political Structure	Appointment of Shibli Faraz
Development Funds	Missing Persons	Kashmir Issue	Panama is the result of Dawn Leaks (Sheikh Rasheed)

History of Quetta	MQM London Issues	Opposition	Aafia Siddique
Education System	Rana Sanaullah & ANF	Locust	NRO
PIA Crisis	Salaries of Parliamentarians	Flour offloading & viral video in front of Uzma Bukhari's House	Death of Naeem ul Haq
Appointment of Hafiz Sheikh	Woman Rights	Legal authority of Asset Recovery Unit	Corruption
Sithia Richi's Allegations	Unemployment	CSS & Small Provinces	IG SINDH
Maryam Nawaz on ECL	Sugar and Wheat Crisis	NAB vs Opposition	Character assassination of Politicians & Media

All the 72 episodes of three talk shows were analyzed and the above-mentioned topics were discussed and remained a point of discussion during 72 selected episodes of the sample.

Sub-Categories of Data

Category	Sub-category	Time	Category	Sub-category	Time
Political Issues	Govt. vs Opposition	5.17	Human Rights	Woman Rights	0.18
	Allies of PTI Govt. and their Concerns	3.64		Child Abuse	0.15
	Parliament Session	3.5		Kashmir Issue	1
	Infightings of PMLN	2.93		Aafia Siddique	0.06
	Infightings of PTI	2.42		Missing Persons	0.06
	MQM London Issues	0.86		Freedom of Speech	0.56
	Our Political Structure	1.1		Total Time	2.01
	Maryam Nawaz on ECL	0.18	Public Issues	Sugar and Wheat Crisis	8.93
	Opposition	0.9		Inflation	5.23
	NRO	0.03		Petrol Crisis	1.83
	Character assassination of Politicians & Media	0.7		Education System	0.3
	Panama is the result of Dawn Leaks (Sheikh Rasheed)	0.83		Unemployment	0.16
	Illness of MNS	4.06		Locust	0.27
	Total Time	26.32		Corruption	0.03
International Issues	US President in India	0.7		Corona	19.1
	World War III & Role of Pakistan	0.53		Development Funds	0.13
	Our Policy regarding Afghanistan	1.43		CSS & Small Provinces	0.2
	Total Time	2.66		National Unity	4.72
Legal/Constitutional Matters	Ishaq Daar Cases	0.06		Total Time	40.9
	Rana Sanaullah & ANF	0.3	Govt Matters	Performance of Govt.	7.01

	NAB Ordinance & Sharia	0.13	Economy	2.22
	COAS Extension	3.89	Appointment of Shibli Faraz	0.84
	Govt. and Judiciary	0.1	Water & Power Inquiry	0.43
	18th Amendment	1.64	PIA Crisis	0.3
	NFC Award	0.8	Salaries of Parliamentarians	0.3
	NAB vs Opposition	4.7	Asset Recovery Unit	0.24
	Total Time	11.62	IG SINDH	0.23
Others	History of Quetta	0.06	Appointment of Hafiz Sheikh	0.2
	Death of Naeem ul Haq	0.03	Cabinet & Unelected Members	0.13
	1971 Fall of Dhaka	0.6	ECC & Asad Umar	0.09
	Conspiracy related to Shehbaz Sharif & Establishment	2.16	Total Time	12
	Flour offloading & viral video in front of Uzma Bukhari's House	0.26		
	Act of Putting Boot on Table in A Talk Show	0.62		
	Sithia Richi's Allegations	0.2		
	Importance of Books	0.6		
	Total Time	4.53		

After analyzing 72 episodes of the sample, it was concluded that 60 topics were discussed in the selected episodes of the talk shows. It was difficult to ask about each and every category, so the data was divided into seven different subcategories based on similarities and the categories are political, public, government, international, human rights, and others.

Sub-Categories and Allotted Time Results

Political Issues	26.32%
Human Rights	2.01%
Public Issues	40.87%
International Issues	2.66%
Legal/Constitutional Matters	11.62%
Govt. Matters	11.99%
Others	4.53%

To see the worth and importance of issues in the eyes of media, the second aspect of analyzing the talk show was the allocation of time to that particular topic or to that sub-category. So it was observed that the highest time taking and debated sub-category of issues was Public issues which got 40.87% of the on air time of top three talk shows of Pakistani media, Political issues were on the second number and secured 26.32% of the on air time, Govt. matters, were discussed 11.99%, Legal and Constitutional Matters took 11.62% attention, Human Rights obtained 2.01% of the on air time while international issues captured the 2.66% coverage, 4.53% time was furnished to the other topics.

Participants in the show

In order to examine the fields of participants and analyze who was taking over what or what was his or her expertise, this question formulated. In all the 72 episodes' guests of the shows or the participants were also analyzed that whether they are from any political party or they are expert or analyst. Out of 245 guests 179 (73%) were political figures, 55 (22%) were there as analysts while only 11(5%) experts participated in selected sample of talk shows.

Participants in the show

Talk Show	Political Figures	Analysts	Experts	Total Guest
Capital Talk	67	12	4	83
Off the Record	55	25	1	81
On the Front	57	18	6	81
Total	179	55	11	245

Nature of arguments

The purpose of this question was to see the worth of that discussion and see how much constructive that discussion was in talk shows. Sub-categories were to analyze the arguments of participants, and their arguments analyzed in light of the coding sheet. 660 arguments were made in the talk shows by the participants. Out of 660 arguments of participants, 37 arguments were based on facts and figures, 153 falls in the category of blame game while 230 times guests stayed neutral while arguing, 204 times participants defended their position, and 36 times they appeared taking responsibility.

Nature of arguments

Facts and Figures	Blame Game	Neutral	Defended their Position	Took Responsibility
37	153	230	204	36

Findings of survey

Out of 342 respondents, 258 (75.4%) were male and 81 (23.7%) were female and three (0.9%) respondents preferred not to say about their gender. Out of 342 respondents, one 116 (33.9%) respondents were 18-23 year old, 197 (57.6%) respondents were in the age of 24-30 year, 22 (6.4%) respondents were 30-40year old, the number of respondents from 41 years and above was 4 (1.2%) while three respondents (0.9%) were below 18 years. The result table shows that the age of the majority of respondents was between 18-30 years.

Public mindset and what media shows

Following questions were asked from respondents to see the difference or similarity of media mindset and what public think.

Real issues

On responding to the query that, does media depict what public want to see, out of 342 respondents, 31(9.1%) respondents strongly agreed,124 (36.3%) respondents agreed, 63 (18.4) respondents remained neutral while 86 (25.1%) respondents dsiagreed and 38 (11.1) respondents strongly agreed. Although there was not a big difference but it was still enough to say that the majority of our respondents supported argurement that current affair talk show is a mirror of the society.

Media depict the real issues that are important to common men

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	31	9.1%
Agree	124	36.3%
Neutral	63	18.4%
Disagree	86	25.1%
Strongly Disagree	38	11.1%

Important issues of Pakistan

So out of 72 episodes of three talk shows this subcategory obtained 26.32% time and it was also the second highest time taking subcategory of talk shows which shows how much importance this subcategory is for the talk shows in Pakistan. On responding to the query out of 342 respondents, 46 (13.5%) respondents strongly agreed, 95 (27.8%) respondents agreed while 53 (15.5) respondents stayed neutral, 98 (28,7%) respondents disagreed and 50 (14.6) respondents strongly disagreed. Again in the response of this question, the difference is not too much but it is still indicated that the majority with very thin difference believed that these are not important issues for them.

Important issues of Pakistan are; Govt. vs opposition, infighting of political parties, cases of political leaders, and NRO

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	46	13.5%
Agree	95	27.8%
Neutral	53	15.5%
Disagree	98	28.7%
Strongly Disagree	50	14.6%

A common man care about political conspiracies and stunts

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	23	6.7%
Agree	85	24.9%
Neutral	87	25.4%
Disagree	113	33.0%
Strongly Disagree	34	9.9%

On responding to the query that, do they (general public) think a common man care about political stunts and conspiracies, 23(6.7%) respondents strongly agreed, 85 (24.9%) respondents agreed whereas 87 (25.4%) respondents remained neutral, 113 (33.0%) respondents disagreed and 34 (9.9%) respondents selected the option of strongly disagree. In the response of this question there was a huge difference of mindsets. It was observed that a great number of respondents were neutral, so results of this question were in favor of talk shows as majority of public also do not take this issue as an important one.

Non-elected persons at key posts and inquiries

The fourth and fifth question aims to cover the subcategory of Govt. Issues which got a 12% of on air time of talk shows.

Appointments of non-elected persons at key posts and case inquiries do have importance for a common man

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	42	12.3%
Agree	116	33.9%
Neutral	74	21.6%
Disagree	87	25.4%
Strongly Disagree	23	6.7%

On responding to the query that, do they (General Public) think that appointments of non-elected persons by govt. and cases and inquires have importance, 42 (12.3%) respondents strongly agreed, 116 (33.9%) respondents agreed, 74 (21.6%) respondents remained neutral while 87(25.4%) respondents disagreed and 23(6.7%) respondents strongly disagreed.

Government performance is important for common people

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	198	57.9%
Agree	106	31.0%
Neutral	10	2.9%
Disagree	17	5.0%
Strongly Disagree	11	3.2%

On responding to the query that, do they (General Public) think that performance of govt. has importance for a common man, 198 (57.9%) respondents strongly agreed whereas 106 (31.0%) respondents agreed, 10 (2.9%) respondents remained neutral, 17(5.0%) disagreed respondents and 11(3.2%) respondents strongly disagreed. It was found that this issue is important for a very big number of people.

National unity

Question number six, seven, eight and nine were about the subcategory of Public issues, the reason behind four questions for one category was that, this subcategory was the highest ranked subcategory in terms of allotted time in talk shows and it was also containing so many important issues and topics in it. On

responding to the query that, does national unity has importance for public, 170 (49.7%) respondents strongly agreed, 124 (36.3%) respondents agreed, 28(8.2%) respondents stayed neutral, 11(3.2%) respondents disagreed while 9(2.6%) respondents strongly disagreed.

National unity has importance for public in Pakistan

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	170	49.7%
Agree	124	36.3%
Neutral	28	8.2%
Disagree	11	3.2%
Strongly Disagree	9	2.6%

Inflation, corruption, education system, and unemployment are important issues

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	269	78.7%
Agree	61	17.8%
Neutral	7	2.0%
Disagree	4	1.2%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.3%

On responding to the query that Inflation, corruption, education system and unemployment are important issues, 269(78.7%) respondents strongly agreed, 61(17.8) agreed while 7(2.0%) responded as neutral,4(1.2%) disagreed and only 1 (0.3) respondents strongly disagreed.

Petrol, sugar & wheat crisis are issues of public concern and importance

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	234	68.4%
Agree	95	27.8%
Neutral	5	1.5%
Disagree	4	1.2%
Strongly Disagree	4	1.2%

On responding to the query that, petrol, sugar and wheat crisis are issues of public importance, 234(68.4%) respondents strongly agreed, 95(27.8%) respondents agreed, 5(1.5%) responded as neutral while 4 (1.2%) respondents disagreed and 4 (1.2%) respondents also strongly disagreed.

Corona and Locust attack have been the important issues in recent year

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	178	52.0%
Agree	131	38.3%
Neutral	25	7.3%
Disagree	5	1.5%
Strongly Disagree	3	0.9%

On responding to the query that Corona and Locust attack have been the important issues in this year, 178 (52.0%) respondents strongly agreed, 131(38.3%) respondents agreed, 25(7.3%) respondents remained neutral whereas 5 (1.5%) respondents disagreed and 3(0.9%) respondents strongly disagreed. These results not only show what public think about these issues but it was also the highest ratio from strongly agree to agree in answer of any question as we can see 92.2% supported this stance and it also favors the results of content analysis of talk shows as well.

Internationally important issues for Pakistan are President Trump's India visit, peace in Afghanistan and role of Pakistan in World War III

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	52	15.2%
Agree	114	33.3%
Neutral	91	26.6%
Disagree	63	18.4%
Strongly Disagree	22	6.4%

On responding to the query that, internationally important issues for Pakistan are President Trump's India visit, peace in Afghanistan and role of Pakistan in World War III, out of 342 respondents, 52(15.2%) strongly agreed, 114(33.3%) agreed, 91 (26.6%) remained neutral whereas 63(18.4%) respondents choose the option disagree and 22(6.4%) responded as strongly disagree. The results was in the favor of this topic but it was observed that the people who selected neutral option were more than the people who were is denial of the importance of this issue so it indicated that people believe these points are so important according to their mindset.

Important legal issues in Pakistan

In question number 11 and 12, it aims to cover the legal and constitutional issues which is also a separate subcategory of talk shows. On responding to the query that, important legal issues in Pakistan were cases of Rana Sanaullah, Ishaq Dar and other Opposition leader's cases, 36 (10.5%) respondents strongly agreed,

68(19.9%) respondents agreed, 90(26.3%) remained neutral, 110(32.2%) disagreed and 38 (11.1%) respondents strongly disagreed.

Important legal issues in Pakistan are cases of Rana Sanaullah, Ishaq Dar and other Opposition leader's cases

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	36	10.5%
Agree	68	19.9%
Neutral	90	26.3%
Disagree	110	32.2%
Strongly Disagree	38	11.1%

Important constitutional issues of Pakistan are; COAS extension, 18th amendment, NFC Award, and NAB Laws

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	49	14.3%
Agree	109	31.9%
Neutral	115	33.6%
Disagree	50	14.6%
Strongly Disagree	19	5.6%

On responding to the query that, do they (General Public) believe that important constitutional issues of Pakistan are; COAS extension, 18th amendment, NFC Award, and NAB Laws, 49 (14.3%) respondents strongly agreed, 109 (31.9%) respondents agreed while 115 (33.6%) respondents stayed neutral, 50 (14.6) respondents disagreed whereas 19 (5.6%) respondents strongly disagreed. Although in this case majority is taking these issues as important issues but still neutral and disagreement numbers were also above 30% but overall ignoring those numbers, it was found that majority believed these issues are important for them.

Human rights violations

Question number 13 and 14 were about Human rights as it was also a subcategory of topics which was noted during content analysis of talk shows. On responding to the query that, human rights violations like child abuse, women right menace, and limitation of freedom of speech, were important issues. 176 (51.5%) respondents strongly agreed, 130 (38.0%) respondents agreed, 26 (7.6%) respondents remained neutral while 6 (1.8%) respondents disagreed and 4(1.2%) respondents strongly disagreed.

Human rights violations like child abuse, women right menace, and limitation of freedom of speech, are important issues

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	176	51.5%
Agree	130	38.0%
Neutral	26	7.6%
Disagree	6	1.8%
Strongly Disagree	4	1.2%

Aafia Siddiqi, Kashmir issue, and missing persons

On responding to the query that Aafia Siddiqi, Kashmir issue, and missing persons were important human rights issues for public, 186 (54.4%) respondents strongly agreed, 118 (34.5%) respondents agreed, 28 (8.2%) respondents remained neutral while 7 (2.0%) respondents disagreed and 3 (0.9%) respondents strongly disagreed. So a topic which got 2.01% of the time of top three talk shows is actually important topic according to 89.02% of the respondents on the basis of this result, it was observed that there was a huge difference between what media is showing about this topic and what people think about this particular topic.

Aafia Siddiqi, Kashmir issue, and missing persons are important human rights issues

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	186	54.4%
Agree	118	34.5%
Neutral	28	8.2%
Disagree	7	2.0%
Strongly Disagree	3	0.9%

What News Media Should highlight the most?

	Frequency	Percentage
All	1	0.3%
All that concerned to Common people	1	0.3%
Climate	1	0.3%
Each and every issue is important for nation welfare. Media should highlight each of these issues equally.	1	0.3%
Fake news about Pakistan	1	0.3%
Govt. Matters	6	1.8%
Human Rights	103	30.1%

I think media role should be education and swat of every issue instead of dominancy	1	0.3%
International Issues	5	1.5%
Issues directly or indirectly related to majority living in country educated or uneducated is another subject	1	0.3%
Layman's issues	1	0.3%
Legal/Constitutional Matters	9	2.6%
Media should highlight how to provide security for women. In this Islamic Republic of Pakistan, a woman cannot even go to a police station because they don't feel safe over there. They should highlight about poverty, human rights and education.	1	0.3%
Political Issues	58	17.0%
Positive reporting	1	0.3%
Public Issues	149	43.6%
Public issues and human rights	1	0.3%
Truth	1	0.3%

On responding to the query that, what media should highlight the most, out of 342 respondents, 149(43.6%) respondents responded that media should highlight Public issues the most, 103(30.1%) respondents selected the option of human right issues, 58(17.0%) respondents preferred the Political issues over other issues, 9(2.6%) respondents wanted to see legal and constitutional matters, 5(1.5%) respondents choose the international issues, while the remaining respondents responded differently. Therefore, a table of comparison between content of talk shows and the findings of this last question is the following:

Comparison of Media & Public Agenda

Topics of Media	Percentage	What Public want?	Percentage
Public Issues	40.09	Public Issues	43.6%
Political Issues	26.32	Human Rights	30.1%
Govt. Issues	12%	Political Issues	17%
Legal/Constitutional Matters	11.62%	Legal/Constitutional Matters	2.6%
International Issues	2.66%	Govt. Issues	1.8%
Human Rights	2.01%	International Issues	1.5%
Others	4.53%	Others	3.4%

Conclusion

Current Affairs talk shows play a significant role in the formation of public opinion. Also, these current affair shows have a strong impact on the audience

perception, behavior and attitude towards the important issues of the country. Therefore, this paper examined the potential, popularity and content of three popular prime time talk shows in Pakistan for six months. It was concluded that one of the most important but contentious product of news channels after news bulletins is talk shows in which interpersonal conflicts and confrontation among guests are mostly depicted but these shows are popular and a great number of public still prefer to watch regularly. It was found that majority of the respondents supported the argument that current affair talk shows are a mirror of the society despite showing their dislikeness for the way in which talk shows highlight the issues. Politics is one the most discussed topic in the current affair talks shows of Pakistan where conflict is ignited by the anchors or guests to increase the TRP or as publicity stunt. Local issues and social issues are also highlighted but their depiction are far less than political hard and harsh debates.

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