

Programs for Children: Pakistani Televisions' Content in 2020

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Abstract

Television can play a significant role in nation building and children are generally viewed to be playing a vital role in building the image of a nation. Due to its significance, recent years have seen a worldwide rise in the media content that focuses children as the target audience. Several studies had investigated Pakistani televisions' content with reference to adults, women and youth audiences. Studies related to children had mostly focused on the impact of television content on children or children's attitudes towards television content. However, the impact of educating and entertaining television on Pakistani children has received limited attention. Therefore, this paper initiated to examine the role of Pakistani television channels to educate or entertain Pakistani children, during January-December 2020. The foremost objective of this paper is to examine the proportion of children's programs in the top four Pakistani entertainment television channels. For this reason, the transmissions of top five Pakistani general entertainment television channels were taken into account included; Hum TV HD, ARY Digital, Geo Entertainment, and ARY Zindagi. The study found only a few programs for children that were fulfilling the purposes of entertaining and educating. Hence, Pakistani television channels are not fulfilling their responsibility in nation-building, as being a social agent of change, the media is responsible to play a key role in building their character and improving the ethical standards of Pakistani children.

Keywords: *Children Programs, Entertainment, Nation Building, Pakistani Television, Social Responsibility.*

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Introduction

Children at an early age can be trained, shaped, and instilled with religious, cultural, and nationalistic values and this practice ultimately would enable them to become responsible citizens. Therefore, an increasing concern in children's healthy grooming can be seen across the globe. Past researchers have found that television may have a number of influences on children (Clifford, Gunter, & McAleer, 1995). A lot of body of literature that investigated television and children over 50 years concluded that children primarily learn from what they watch on the television. For instance, if children watch violent content, they are likely to show an increase in aggressive behavior (Pecora, Murray & Wartella, 2009).

Although the Internet is replacing television channels, still television has a significant place in Pakistani society. Moreover, entertainment television channels are the most viewed television channels in Pakistan (Iftikhar, Zia, & Raza, 2018). Since a large segment of the population watch these channels and doing so, they are exposed to a vast range of television content that can entertain, inform and educate them, or involve them in other ways. Television being the most powerful medium is capable to influence its audiences and leaves a strong impact on the attitudes and behaviours of viewers. It can play an important role in a child's development, as children learn in both formal and informal environments. In Pakistan, a large number of children are unable to access formal education and television programs can be the only early education resource for those Pakistani children. Pakistani families, whether they can provide their children education or not, regardless of their social status, usually invest in buying a television. In this scenario, educational and culturally rich television content can impact positively, as it is viewed daily in most homes.

Researchers have investigated the status of education in Pakistan and explored the literacy rate. According to AlifAillan's recently released report, 41% of students drop out at primary level, more than half of the girls never join schools, over 70% of 5th graders can't read English in Sindh, and in Balochistan, an average student hardly completes the first four years of schooling (Samiuddin, 2016). According to Khan and Paracha, television entertainment programs create playful humoristic pleasure and accelerates the multi-dimensional growth of kids, particularly, they boost the emotional, attitudinal, and behavioural development of young viewers. Moreover, the role of television can be enhanced if the owners of television channels are serious to use it (Khan & Paracha, 2019). Educational television programs facilitate a child to learn the behaviors and skills necessary for success on the elementary level (Barr, Lauricella, Zack & Calvert, 2010).

Theoretically, this study is associated with Social Responsibility Theory by Robert Maynard Hutchins developed in 1940. The theory emphasizes that the media should serve and work in the public interest. Moreover, the theory indicated the guidelines for the media that media should carefully observe the public interest and fulfil its responsibility of serving the public (Malik & Shehzadi, 2017). According to Moemeka, "this theory places due emphasis on the moral and social responsibilities

of persons who, and institutions which, operate the mass media” (Uzuegbunam, 2013).

In nutshell, because of the dramatic and demonstrative power of television, it has become a part of everyday life and can play an important role in educating and entertaining young viewers. Therefore, noticing the increasing need for children television content in Pakistan, this paper aims at exploring the role of four top Pakistani entertainment TV channels in educating and entertaining Pakistani children.

Objectives

This research initiated to explore the performance of Pakistani television channels to educate and entertain children, during January-December 2020. Hence, the foremost objectives of this research are:

- To investigate the proportion of children's television content on Pakistani general entertainment television channels, during January-December 2020.
- To explore the role of Pakistani general entertainment television channels to educate and entertain preschool (3-6 years old), and school-age (6-12 years old) children.

Research Question

1. What was the proportion of children's television content on Pakistani top entertainment television channels, from January to December 2020?
2. To what extent Pakistani top entertainment television channels broadcasted preschool and school-age children content; cartoons, dramas, and films to educate and entertain Pakistani children, during January-December 2020?

Methodology

This paper has examined the content of Pakistani entertainment channels concerning children's education and entertainment. The researcher investigated the transmissions of the top four Pakistani general entertainment television channels, during the specified period: January to December 2020. Based on viewer rating, Pakistan's top-ranked four entertainment television channels were selected for the study, the selected channels include Hum TV HD, ARY Digital, Geo Entertainment, and ARY Zindagi (Top 5.pk, 2020).

To investigate the role of Pakistani entertainment channels regarding children's development in 2020, this paper accessed the transmissions of selected channels using their official YouTube channels. The researcher examined the playlists of 2020 to enlist the titles of cartoons, soap operas, dramas, and telefilms as well as the duration of each program. The total duration of television serials broadcasted by the selected channels during 2020, was estimated using the first and

last episode's time duration (Only time in minutes was quantified and seconds were ignored, in case of variation in time duration average time was estimated).

Based on program content, all enlisted programs were classified into three categories; children (preschool and school-age), teenagers, and adults. Furthermore, the number of enlisted programs and the estimated duration of all programs were quantified and comparatively analyzed.

Findings

To investigate the content of Pakistani general entertainment television channels concerning children's education and entertainment, the researcher found a total of 61 entertainment programs (dramas and telefilms) were broadcasted by selected television channels, from January to December 2020. The study found 19 programs from Hum TV HD, 30 programs from ARY Digital, 8 programs from Geo Entertainment, and 4 programs from ARY Zindagi.

Table 1: Number and time duration of entertainment programs on Hum TV HD, ARY Digital, Geo Entertainment, and ARY Zindagi during January-December 2020

Television Channels	Hum TV HD N (%)	ARY Digital N (%)	Geo Entertainment N (%)	ARY Zindagi N (%)	Total
No. of dramas, and telefilms	19 (31.14%)	30 (49.18%)	8 (13.11%)	4 (6.58%)	61
Estimated Time (in minutes)	13,551 (22.83%)	25,721 (43.35%)	8,837 (14.89%)	11,222 (18.91%)	59,331

This table shows that four entertainment television channels; Hum TV HD, ARY Digital, Geo Entertainment, and ARY Zindagi broadcasted 61 entertainment programs, from January to December 2020. Out of 61 dramas and telefilms, Hum TV HD broadcasted 19 programs (31.14%) with approximately 13,551 minutes (22.83%) duration, ARY Digital broadcasted 30 programs (49.18%) with approximately 25,721 minutes (43.35%) duration, Geo Entertainment broadcasted 8 programs (13.11%) with approximately 8,837 minutes (14.89%) duration, and ARY Zindagi broadcasted 4 programs (6.58%) with approximately 11,222 minutes (18.91%) duration.

The table reflects that ARY Digital supplied the highest number of dramas and telefilms with the highest time duration than other mentioned television channels from January to December 2020.

Table 2: *Proportion of children content on Hum TV HD, ARY Digital, Geo Entertainment, and ARY Zindagi during January-December 2020.*

Television Channels	Drams and Telefilms N	For Children (3-12) N (%)	For Teenagers (13-19) N (%)	For Adults (20 and older) N (%)
Hum TV HD	19	0	1 (5.26%)	18 (94.73%)
ARY Digital	30	0	0	30 (100%)
Geo Entertainment	8	0	0	8 (100%)
ARY Zindagi	4	0	0	4 (100%)

The above table presents the proportion of television content broadcasted by selected television channels for children, teenagers and adults. The data in the table above revealed a significant difference in transmissions for the audiences. Hum TV HD, ARY Digital, Geo Entertainment and ARY Zindagi broadcasted no program for children. Hum TV HD broadcasted only 1 program (5.26%) for teenagers, and 18 programs (94.73%) for adult viewers. Whereas, ARY Digital, Geo Entertainment and ARY Zindagi broadcasted all programs for adults.

The study demonstrates a clear picture of Pakistani television channels' entertainment content and indicates the role of Pakistani television channels in educating and entertaining children. The analysis signals that selected television channels have ignored children's content, as no program was broadcasted by these television channels to educate and entertain preschool or school-age children, during January-December 2020.

Conclusion

Children's exposure to television during their childhood can have long-term effects on their personality development. Quality television content can give children the knowledge, skills, creativity and provide a bridge between home and society. Therefore, the current study initiated to investigate the performance of Pakistani entertainment television channels and explore the proportion of children's television programs.

The researcher examined the entertainment content of Pakistan's four television channels; Hum TV HD, ARY Digital, Geo Entertainment ARY Zindagi, and accessed the data using their official YouTube channels. The study found a glaring lack of children's programs on Pakistani general entertainment television channels. The findings revealed that selected four entertainment television channels broadcasted not a single program for children from January to December 2020. The results of this study lead to the conclusion that Pakistani entertainment channels are not contributing to educate and entertain Pakistani children. However, the

prevailing entertainment content may disturb and prematurely expose young viewers to an adult world.

The study recommends that Pakistani entertainment program producers and broadcasters should pay special attention to children's television content and should develop and broadcast kids' content that can help educate and entertain them.

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Appendix**Titles of Programs, No. of Episodes and estimated Time Duration**

Hum TV HD			
Program Title	No. of Episodes	1st & Last Episode Time Duration	Total Estimated Time
Tera Yahan Koi Nahin	37	37	1369
Mushk	20	37	740
Dil Ruba	24	36	864
Jadugaryan	11	17	187
Soya MeraNaseeb	38	17	646
Mohabbat Tujhe Alvida	29	37	1073
Malaal e Yar	13	35-39 (37)	481
Raqs-e-Bismil	1	35	35
Qurbatain	40	37	1480
Ehd e Wafa	9	37+ 1:22	415
Behadd (telefilm)		1:21	81
Chamak Damak	55	19	1045
Dil TanhaTanha	14	37	518
Ishq Zahe Naseeb	2	36-37 (36) + 1:10	142
Zebaish	28	37	1036
Durr e Shewar	15	36-37 (36)	540

Chalawa	8	36-37(36)	288
Tera Ghumaur Hum	40	37-38 (37)	1480
Sabaat	29	37-41 (39)	1131
			13551

ARY Digital

Program Title	No. of Episodes	1st & last episode time duration	Total Estimated Time
Aulaad	2	41-38 (39)	78
Prem Gali	20	40- 38 (39)	780
Dunk	2	41- 37 (39)	78
Ghisi Piti Mohabbat	22	39-40 (39)	858
Ishqiya	28	42	1176
Nand	88	42-40 (41)	3608
Shadi Ka Rona (telefilm)		1:23	83
Bharaas	48	38- 39 (38)	1824
Jhooti	26	41-42 (41)	1066
Doli Saja K Rakhna		1:20	80
Kasak	24	39-40 (39)	936
Meray Paas Tum Ho	3	39- 32 (35)	105
Bhabhi Nazar Laga Dengi (telefilm)		1:22	82

Faryaad	12	37-39 (38)	456
Bulbulay	51	20-19 (19)	969
Jalan	45	38	1710
Bikhray Moti	25	37-39 (38)	950
Ghar Jamai	43	20-21 (20)	860
Mera Dil Mera Dushman	64	39	2496
Ghalati	23	38-55 (46)	1058
Bewafa	9	43	387
Dushman-E-Jaan	28	36-42 (39)	1092
Damsa	13	39	507
Jalebi	40	19-23 (21)	840
Mera Qasoor	30	19-20 (19)	570
Ruswai	15	40-47 (43)	645
Mann-E-Iltija	32	22-20 (21)	672
Thora Sa Haq	22	37	814
Log Kya Kahenge	21	42-41 (41)	861
Jahez Mubarak (telefilm)		1:20	80
			25721

Geo Entertainment

	No. of	1st & last episode	Total Estimated
Program Title	Episodes	time duration	Time

Munafiq	60	37-46 (41)	2460
Shahrukh Ki Saaliyan	2	35	70
Deewangi	39	35-39 (37)	1443
Ramz-E-Ishaq	6	38	228
Darrkhuda Say	12	37-39 (38)	456
Meherposh	39	39- 37 (38)	1482
Tu Mera Junoon	32	38-39 (38)	1216
Main Agar Chuphoon	39	38	1482
			8837

ARY Zindagi

Program Title	No. of Episodes	1st & last episode time duration	Total Estimated Time
Dugdugi	28	38- 37 (37)	1036
Dehleez	105	34-19(26)	2730
Sach Much	15	28-44 (36)	540
Behnain Aisi Bhi Hoti Hain	364	19-20 (19)	6916
			11222
