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Female television viewers' habit during the Covid-19 pandemic in Hyderabad, Sindh, Pakistan

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Abstract

Television morning shows are a feasible way to quickly disseminate health information during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study seeks to shed light on female viewing habits during the Covid-19 pandemic in the Sindh province of Pakistan. A survey was conducted among 200 female respondents in Hyderabad, Sindh. The results found that during Covid-19, female viewers were interested in watching morning programs to get information related to the prevention of Coronavirus-related news, health, and religious programs. Meanwhile, they have frequently watched dramas and entertainment programs to decrease the mental stress of Covid-19 disease and infotainment purposes. Moreover, morning shows have spread awareness about health care information concerning the novel Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Covid-19 Pandemic, Morning Shows, Television, Female Viewers' Habits

INTRODUCTION

The quick shift in how individuals have watched content during the Coronavirus outbreak highlights the importance of television viewership engagement. During the Covid-19 pandemic, when all activities shut down, people had to spend more time in front of a TV set, to watch multiple programs, especially, morning shows. Television morning shows have grasped the audience's attention with the multiple segments of the program. There is a need for more research into household viewership trends during the Coronavirus. The growing number of Pakistan's media outlets and the expansion of

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television channels are encouraging viewers to watch programs and spend more time in front of a screen. Pakistani television channels disseminate healthy information regarding the prevention of Coronavirus around the world.

During the spread of the Coronavirus in the world, mass media campaigns have the power to influence huge populations' health behaviors in a positive way (Wakefield et al., 2010). Daily health advice was reaffirmed in the media, and health care related information was promoted for individuals to get the health care they needed (Anwar et al., 2020). In the modern world, mass media is crucial, because it offers a platform for all public health communication, extensive health care education standards, and effective social distancing tactics, while retaining social relationships (Anwar et al., 2020). The study reveals that the majority (86.7%) turned to social media for television information, whereas 95% of respondents exhibited ethical behaviour, 89.9% had optimistic attitudes, and 67.4% had sufficient knowledge of Pakistan (Rehman et al., 2021). Another study also concluded that Pakistan's population has a positive attitude and is proactive in implementing Covid-19 with limited knowledge (Rehman et al., 2021). It is notable that healthy behavior in the utilization of public spaces is increased by media exposure, the sense of social preventative activities increases, and fear increases (Scopelliti, Pacilli & Aquino, 2021). On the other hand, the media is a crucial medium for facilitating the exchange of health information because of its significant contributions to health promotion and awareness (Mheidly & Fares, 2020).

Today, television disseminates information related to Coronavirus disease through a variety of programs, particularly television morning shows. This research aimed to determine women's viewing patterns during Covid-19 in Hyderabad (Sindh), Pakistan. The research study will be significant to demonstrate the manner in which the media has presented numerous features of society to the Pakistan Electronic Media Regular Authority (PEMRA) and Minister of Information departments.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Television has been one of the most popular mediums of entertainment, information, education, and persuasion for the general population (Damratoski, Field, Mizell & Budden, 2011). A plethora of studies were found regarding television viewers' habits.

However, women's physiological and psychological viewpoints are influenced by viewing television programming (Raza, Shahid, & Hameed, 2022). Television viewing time was used to assess the impact on physical activities and diet among adults (Williams, Raynor, Ciccolo, 2008). In Nigeria, during the first phase of the Covid-19 lockdown, the majority of respondents increased their television viewership to avoid boredom, learn about Covid-19, and find spiritual motivation (Egielewa, Ngonso, Ate, Cirella, Iyalomhe & Orobello, 2023). Kim (2023) conducted a study on viewers from France, Brazil, Italy, the United States, and Saudi Arabia, and found that screen viewers have consumed fewer horror, drama, and adventure shows. However, the genres of television shows that people watched more frequently changed during Covid-19 (Kim, 2023). Another study found that 35% of viewers of television programs have increased due to the wide variety of content on several channels (Hardy, Quelch, Spencer & Munro, 2016).

The majority of viewers watch satires to learn new things, for entertainment, or for political information (Karthika & Vijayalakshmi, 2020).

According to Jones (2009) an average American spends more than 151 hours per month watching television and another seven hours watching recorded programs (Jones, 2009). Kim, Merrill, Collins & Yang (2021) found that the interaction between television participation and enjoyment is mediated by the social presence of virtual co-viewers. In addition to this, a useful understanding of social television viewing is needed when in-person social interactions are limited (Kim, Merrill, Collins & Yang, 2021).

On the other side, most females were influenced by entertainment media content to adopt current fashion trends, glamorous attire, cosmetics styles, and dance culture in their daily lives (Riaz, 2020). However, all morning shows on Pakistani television have been dominated by foreign culture, stifling the social and cultural norms of the country (Ahmad & Rehman, 2020). The majority of women are adopting the foreign culture by watching morning shows on screen (Ahmad & Rehman, 2020). The study by Hameed (2018) revealed that 54.5% of women like to watch television morning shows for entertainment purposes, and they like Sanam Jang as the host of the morning show. The study conducted in Bahawalpur, Pakistan, reveals that morning shows have an impact

on domestic women's lives and mental health (Raza, Shahid & Hameed, 2022). Another study found the main motivations for watching television were to pass the time and find entertainment among women viewers (Adnan, Hussain & Shaikh, 2018).

One of the main findings is that households have increased their weekly television viewing by eight hours, from 57 to 66 hours in early March 2020 (Schmidt, 2020). Television rediscovers the younger women's target demographic that it appeared to have lost to digital media during the quarantine of the Coronavirus (Montaña, Ollé & Lavilla, 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic outbreak has dramatically increased media consumption (Jones, 2020). In the United States (2009–2021), the average daily time spent on viewership of television was a little higher among women 2.56% in 2009 and 2.69% in 2021, as compared to 3.1% in 2009 and 3.04% male in 2021. Indian television has played a vital role in combating novel Coronavirus and spreading health care motivational programs throughout the nation (Ayedee, & Manocha 2020). The viewership time of television is around 4:00 a.m., which increases until morning news time (Ayedee, & Manocha 2020). Webster (2021) argues that the overall audience has become much larger, especially during the daytime during quarantine. During Covid-19, viewers watched television more often between the hours of 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., a 77 % increase (Webster, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

The data was collected from Hyderabad, the second-largest city in the Sindh province of Pakistan. A semi-structured questionnaire was designed to conduct a face-to-face survey among 200 women.

Purposive sampling was chosen in a survey. The survey form was divided into two sections. The first section was a demographic profile, and the second section measured constructs including time, information, and reasons for watching television programs. The five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) was used to measure the items of the constructs. The data was collected in one month, from January 1st January 2021 to 30 January 2021, when the condition of the spreading of Covid-19

was slightly controlled. To gather information about female participants' viewing habits during the Covid-19 outbreak in Pakistan, paper and-pencil questionnaires were distributed among them to fill out survey forms. There were no incomplete questionnaires; hence, none were taken out of the analyses. Frequency distribution techniques were executed to analyze the television viewers' habits.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1

Demographic information

Constructs	Items	(n) %
Respondents	Women Viewers	200(100%)
Age	< 20 years	63 (31.5%)
	21 to 30 years	76 (38%)
	31 to 40 years and above	61 (30.5%)
Education	Primary to higher secondary level	13 (6.5%)
	Matric	67 (33.5%)
	Intermediate	57 (28.5%)
	Graduated and above	63 (31.5%)
Marital Status	Single	119 (59.5%)
	Married	78 (39%)
	Divorced & separated	3 (1.5%)
Television Facility	Local Antenna TV	6 (3%)
	Dish Antenna	31 (15.5%)
	Cable TV	159 (79.5%)
	PTV	4 (2%)
Employment Status	Employed	84 (42%)
	Unemployed	116 (63%)

A total of 200 female respondents completed the questionnaire. Approximately 76 (38%) of the respondents were between the ages of 21 and 30. In terms of education, the majority of women have matriculated at 67 (33.5%), followed by graduates at 63 (31.5%), and intermediates at 57 (28.5%). However, most of the women are single, with 119 (59.5%), and 159 (79.5%) having cable TV facilities. It is very surprising that an

average of 84 (42%) women are employed. (See Table 1). It has been found that educated and single women are interested in knowing the current situation of the world and particularly of their country.

Table 2

Duration of watching television

Items	<i>n</i>	%
< 2 Hours	48	24
3 to 6 Hours	124	62
More than 7 hours	28	14
Total	200	100

Most of the respondents, 124 (62%) have spent three to six hours in front of the television during the Coronavirus. However, women have given at least 48 (24%) less than 2 hours to watch television, and very few women have spent more than seven hours in front of a small screen during Covid-19 for watching favorite programs on TV (See Table No. 2). It has been depicted that women in Hyderabad are heavy viewers.

Table 3

Television programs

Items	<i>n</i>	%
Drama	172	17.55
News	139	14.18
Religious Program	148	15.10
Music Program	31	3.16
Documentary	31	3.16
Talk Shows	77	7.86
Cooking Program	122	12.45
Morning Shows	139	14.18
Sports Program	62	6.33
Films	29	2.96
Advertisement	30	3.06
Total	980	100

Table 3 depicts that 172 (17.55%) of the women have frequently watched dramas, followed by 148 (15.10%) religious programs, 139 (14.18%) morning shows, 139 (14.18%) news programs, and 122 (12.45%) cooking programs on television. (See Table No. 3). It has been shown that women are interested in watching many television programs and give proper time to them daily.

Table 4

Reasons for watching morning show

Items	n	%
Dressing	93	21.18
Cosmetics	85	19.36
Jewelry	39	8.88
To Keep Updated on Health	139	31.66
For Entertainment	69	15.72
Any Other	14	3.19
Total	439	100

Data shown in the table 4 revealed that 139 (31.66%) most of the women prefer to keep updated in the health-related program, follows by 85 (19.36%) cosmetics, and 93 (21.18%) dressing. However, they are interested to watch Nida Yasir hosting from ARY-DIGITAL channel and Nadia Khan hosting from Morning @Home presented by Data shown in Table 4 revealed that 139 (31.66%) of the women prefer to keep updated in the health-related program, followed by 85 (19.36%) in cosmetics, and 93 (21.18%) in dressing. However, they are interested to watch Nida Yasir hosting from the ARY-DIGITAL channel and Nadia Khan hosting from Morning @Home presented by Pakistan Television (PTV) Home. (See Table No. 4). The result of Table 4 shows that women have kept themselves updated about health related to Covid-19 pandemic because standard operating procedures (SOPs) were strictly applied in the country during Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 5*Information given to audience by morning shows (Select more than one answer)*

Items	n	%
Kashees Beauty Saloon	50	20.49
Awareness about Covid-19	182	80.64
Wedding Session on Charity	7	2.87
Total	200	100

Table 5 represents approximately 182 (80.64%) women who were interested in watching the prevention of Covid-19 pandemic-related information during the lockdown. However, Good Morning Pakistan is presented by the ARY-DIGITAL television channel, and Morning at Home is presented by Pakistan Television (PTV) Home. However, 50 (20.49%) are interested in the segment of the program about the beauty salon of Kashees and Wajid Khan. Only seven (2.87%) women were interested in wedding sessions for charity (see Table 5). It has been found that women are highly conscious of their family members' hygiene. Therefore, they have wanted to know about medical precautions and home remedies for the prevention of Covid-19 pandemic.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The results of the study found a variety of viewing patterns for television programs. It has been found that Pakistani television channels (public and private) broadcast morning shows daily. However, female viewers are the main audience for morning shows. Domestic women are usually housewives who watch television in the morning while doing home chores. During Covid-19, female viewers were interested in watching morning programs to get information related to the prevention of Covid-19 pandemic, health-related programs, and news. Meanwhile, they have watched dramas and religious programs for decreasing mental stress, infotainment, and religious purposes. Television morning shows trap the audience by presenting well-known personalities, make-up artists, such as Kashee, and doctors for the prevention of quarantine during the Covid-19 pandemic. Similar results were found in the study of Karthika & Vijayalakshmi (2020) that most viewers watch television for entertainment.

The result of the study revealed that Ms. Nida Yasir, a popular host of television morning shows on-air via the ARY-DIGITAL television channel, was infected with the Corona-virus during hosting. After recovery, she shared her feelings, cautions, and prevention of Covid-19 in quarantine in front of the audience. This has also motivated the target audience to follow standard operating procedures (SOPs) as a guideline for novel corona viruses at home and outside. Television morning shows brought awareness to standard operating procedures (SOPs) and played vital roles, like health workers for community services. In this regard, Bazghina & Souci (2020) show that national coordination is required in the pandemic response's integration of mental health and psychological support services. The results of another study in Saudi Arabia suggest that Saudi health organization viewing of small-screen channels has had a favourable impact on the public's understanding of the efficacy of herbal treatments employed during the Covid-19 epidemic (Amna, 2021).

It is a notable point that females are relying on these television morning shows for all of their information without verifying its accuracy in their daily lives (Yang & Le, 2017). Besides this, the different segments of morning show also influence the culture of society by branding stylish dresses, jewelry, and makeup, which stresses females too. A similar result was observed in the study of Zia (2007) that television shows influence the audience to adopt lavish lifestyles. Raza, Shahid & Hameed (2022) reveal that these morning shows do extravagant things on sets and promote brand products, such as cosmetics, jewelry, and cooking products. Hence, this study recommends similar research on rural areas in other provinces of Pakistan.

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