



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Modernization in Pakistani Dramas and its Influence on the Youth: A Case Study of Lahore Youth**

**<sup>1</sup> Dr. Usman Umer, <sup>2</sup> Dr. Muhammad Waqas Butt and <sup>3</sup> Nayab Sohail**

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism, Government Associate College Sharaqpur, Sheikhpura, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Assistant professor, Department of Gender Studies, University of the Punjab Lahore Pakistan
3. MPhil, Superior University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

**\*Corresponding Author:** Dr.muhammadwaqasbutt@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT**

This study explores the influence of Pakistani dramas on Lahore's youth, specifically university students, recognizing their significant role in shaping cultural perceptions and behaviors. It is essential to understand this impact to assess the broader societal implications of these dramas. Using a sample of 100 university students in Lahore selected through simple random sampling, the study collected data via questionnaire and analyzed it using SPSS. The Social Learning Theory and Cultivation of Media framework were applied to the data analysis. The findings suggest that Pakistani youths, particularly females, are highly receptive to the lifestyles and cultures depicted in modern television dramas, impacting the social and cultural landscape of society. This study underscores the significant influence of Pakistani television dramas on youth, prompting the adoption of cultural and lifestyle elements portrayed in these dramas. Future research could delve into additional dimensions of television dramas to deepen our understanding of their societal impact.

**KEYWORDS** Cultural Perceptions, Pakistani Dramas, Social Learning Theory, Societal Impact, Youth

**Introduction**

Media plays an important role in any society's success or failure. Media can help a country to achieve its goals by highlighting the problems of a country or distract people from the important issues of the society and spoil the youth by giving useless messages through their content. Television is one of the strongest and most influential mediums available to the youth of any society. The young people often idealize their favorite television shows and they want to dress and behave in the same way as their favorite stars portray themselves on television screens (Muzaffar, et. al 2019). In this study, the researcher was interested to know how Pakistani Modern Dramas were affecting the youth of Pakistan.

The role of media as one of the big influencers for youth has been widely reported and in this regard, drama is considered as an important medium of entertainment presented by Pakistani media (Muzaffar, et. al 2020; Dato, 2010) Large number of dramas are being produced and presented on diverse subjects due to the availability of a large number of channels. As per Gilani Research Foundation Pakistan's survey (2010), 87% of TV viewers watch dramas, of which 68% viewers prefer to watch Pakistani dramas. Whereas, a gender comparison showed that more females are fond of watching television dramas than the males. Initially dramas were made for the purpose of entertainment but it emerged as one of the most influential instruments to expose and inspire the attitude and emotions of people in the society (Shahbaz et al., 2015).

Moreover, people get emotionally attached to various dramas other than watching it just for enjoyment. Even in developing countries, this medium is considered important for spreading and creating awareness on various social issues (Zia, 2014).

Preferences for watching different types of dramas have also been explored by the researchers, for example, a study found that Pakistani youth prefer to watch romantic dramas (Fulkerts & Lacy 2004). Krishnan & Boopathy (2015) reported that the choices of watching TV programs in urban and rural area found to be different due to the age and sex of children. Researchers explored that female with less education and age had a tendency to watch Indian dramas more than females with higher education and age in Peshawar (Shah et al., 2016). Zia (2007) found that the majority of the females preferred to watch dramas just for entertainment and not for getting information.

Likewise, Naseer et al. (2014) stated that Pakistani youngsters and adolescents frequently watch international content shown in the dramas which influence fashion, lifestyles, language and cultures, because it shows cigarettes, alcohol and love affairs, which somehow can negatively affect the youth. In Pakistan, there are various drama channels after the growth of the media industry in the last few decades, but the dramas of HUM TV are reported best by the Asian Viewers Television Awards, 2015 and won the award of Best Urdu channel (Best Urdu Channel, 2015). This channel was launched in 2005 and got the 11th position among best 20 top highest viewed channels in 2013 (Gallup Pakistan, 2013).

Shabir et al. (2013) stated that Geo TV dramas are not depicting Pakistani culture, whereas Hum TV dramas are representing cultural and traditional norms of Pakistan. Therefore, after reviewing researches and, considering the importance of HUM TV dramas and its popularity, the researcher has selected HUM TV channel for the present study to know the perception of university students about HUM TV dramas and to examine the impact of dramas on university students of Lahore.

In reality, it is extremely difficult for us to find such type of characters portrayed in dramas. Due to societal pressure, both male and female give into the family choice and get married. What happens next, now that the girl will be looking for *Ashar* in her husband and the boy would expect her wife to be as presentable as *Khiraad* (characters from Hum TV drama *Humsafar*)? It is rooted in human nature that whenever their expectations are hurt, they would revolt and try to escape the reality. When both husband and wife find themselves to be the opposite to what has been portrayed in dramas, they find it hard to live with the reality. The differences between them continue to grow until they divorce each other. This is the state of agony that the bond, which is called the most *sacred* of all, falls prey to ludicrous portraits of our local dramas.

People who spend more time watching TV are more expected to observe the real world in a way as depicted in television, as compared to people who watch less television. Nearly four decades findings of the cultivation research on television communication systems have revealed a 'distorted' reality extravagant crime rate, gender-role stereotyping, extreme presentation of violence, and nontraditional composition of family. Television is a primary storyteller in society, TV is not only influences on individual beliefs, but also effects society as a whole as an essential manifestation of the mainstream culture. This theory said that there are two types of people first who watch less television and inspire less with the effects of TV. Second are people who watch more TV and their beliefs and point of views are alter according to media message.

This is merely a single flaw in our dramas that is adversely affecting our society. Upcoming dramas are dispersing illusions that have little or no connection with the reality. Here researcher would like to draw a link between another critical issue; the high divorce rate in Pakistan and its portrayal in dramas. The female character once again portrays an exemplary mix of both outer and inner perfection. She would be soft-spoken and kind hearted and at the same time have a fair skin color, the perfect figure, long hair and big eyes. This is the picture of the perfect wife that dramas are presenting to us. Coming towards the male character; they would be rich, tall, and handsome who finally fell in love with a middle-class girl.

## **Literature Review**

The study by Arshad, Khalid, and Hassan (2014) explores the impact of Indian dramas on language and dressing among females in the village of Sehowal, district Sialkot, Pakistan. It highlights that many individuals learn different words from Indian dramas, yet the majority dislike and avoid adopting Indian dressing styles. The study emphasizes the need to address the prevalence of Indian dressing in Pakistani society through media campaigns to preserve Pakistani cultural identity.

Saeed et al. (2010) discuss patriarchal ideologies in Pakistani cinema, citing films like "Bol," "Dukhtar," "Khuda Kay Liye," and "Bachana" where patriarchy is challenged. They highlight Humaima Malik's portrayal in "Bol" as a bold stance against discrimination and violence, contributing to feminist approaches in media.

Joshi (1985), as cited in Tamakuwala (2011), surveys women's participation in decision-making on Indian television, indicating the superficiality of women's programs. The focus of the study, however, is on the impact of Indian dramas on females regarding dressing and language.

Saleem's study (1994) on cultural imperialism examines the influence of dish antennas on Pakistani society, suggesting that they influence socio-cultural and religious beliefs. The study reveals that this projection has led some respondents to perceive Islam as a conservative religion, highlighting the impact of media on shaping perceptions.

The Cultivation Theory, developed by Gerbner, suggests that television shapes viewers' attitudes and perceptions of social reality over time. It argues that television cultivates attitudes and values already present in the culture, contributing to the maintenance and propagation of these values in society.

Several studies have shown a link between media exposure and eating disorders among women. Wertheim et al. (1997), Pratt et al. (2003), and Holstrom (2004) highlight the influence of media on women's body image and eating habits, suggesting that media plays a significant role in the prevalence of eating disorders.

## **Hypotheses**

**H1:** Exposure to modernism in Pakistani dramas has a significant impact on the cultural perceptions and behaviors of youth in Lahore.

**H2:** Exposure to modernism in Pakistani dramas has no significant impact on the cultural perceptions and behaviors of youth in Lahore.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The cultivation theory examines long-term effects of watching television on the viewers' starts of social reality. In the late 1960s George Gerbner founded cultivation analysis as part of Cultural Indicators Project. Central hypothesis of the cultivation analysis are people who spend more time watching TV are more expected to observe the real world in a way as depicted in television, as compared to people who watch less television. The results of nearly four decades of cultivation research on television communication systems have revealed a 'distorted' reality: exorbitant crime rates, gender role stereotypes, extreme presentation of violence, unconventional family structures. Television is a primary storyteller in society, influencing not only individual beliefs but also the entire society as an integral manifestation of mainstream culture. This theory said that there are two types of people first who watch less television and inspire less with the effects of TV. Second are people who watch more TV and their beliefs and point of views are alter according to media messages.

Social learning theory, proposed by Albert Bandura, emphasizes the importance of observing, modelling, and imitating the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. Social learning theory considers how both environmental and cognitive factors interact to influence human learning and behavior.

### **Relevancy of theory with Research**

After reviewing the media cultivation theory it's clear that television has power to change or affect our mindset more than any other medium of communication. For example, if someone go out to watch a movie of three house, after returning house soon he start watching TV because he did not have need to leave his house or dressed up to watch television. So, the effect of watching TV will be more noticeable and pronounced than the effect of watching a movie.

### **Material and Methods**

#### **Survey Method**

This research endeavors to comprehensively assess the background and overarching impact of modernism in Pakistani dramas on youth. Employing quantitative approaches, the study utilized the survey method as its primary data collection tool. The gathered data underwent thorough processing and analysis, with comparison facilitated by the application of the Likert scale for data interpretation.

#### **Research Tool**

To effectively capture the responses of students, a meticulously crafted questionnaire comprising 19 questions was devised. This questionnaire featured a blend of 17 closed-ended and 2 open-ended questions. Developed in alignment with the research objectives, the questionnaire was meticulously structured to be informative, logical, and coherent, ensuring clarity in participant responses.

#### **Population**

Given the constraints of time and resources, the study focused its efforts on three universities in Lahore. The population under scrutiny consisted of youth aged 18 to 25 residing in Lahore, selected for their dynamic and vibrant nature. Given the impracticality of reaching the entire population, a sampling technique was employed.

#### **Sampling Technique**

In order to obtain samples for data analysis, the study opted for the simple random sampling technique, recognized for its unbiased and representative sampling approach.

#### **Sample Size**

The study's sample size comprised 100 individuals from Lahore, aged 18 to 25, encompassing both male and female youth segments.

#### **Tool of Data Collection**

For the survey, the questionnaire included four distinct sections. The first section focused on gathering basic demographic information from participants, while the second segment contained filter questions aimed at assessing their drama-watching habits. The third section utilized a five-point Likert Scale to gauge the impact of dramas on youth behavior. The final section consisted of general questions aimed at eliciting additional insights from the participants.

#### **Variables**

This research study has dependent and independent variables.

### Independent Variable

Independent variable of the study is the **Impact of modernism in Pakistani drama.**

### Dependent Variable

Dependent variable of the study is the **Youth of Lahore.**

### Results and Discussion

The study measured the impact modernism in Pakistani Dramas on youth of Lahore. This chapter is dedicated to understanding the impact of dramas on various aspects of respondents in particular. The recorded demographic characteristics of the respondents were observed through social websites. Both men and women from different age groups were given the opportunity to express their views through questionnaires. Respondents' demographic analysis consisted of gender, age, qualification & profession.

**Table 1**  
**Participant Age**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-25	100	100.0	100.0	100.0

It is clear above that people from age bracket of 18-25 are the ones who responded towards effect of modernism in Pakistani dramas.

**Table 2**  
**Participant Gender**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	67	67.0	67.0	67.0
	Female	33	33.0	33.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

By gender 67% of the respondents are male and 33% are females.

**Table 3**  
**Participant Qualification**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Intermediate	22	22.0	22.0	22.0
	Bachelors	64	64.0	64.0	86.0
	Masters	14	14.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

By qualification almost 64% of the sample has done graduation. Next is 14% being masters, 22% being intermediate.

**Table 4**  
**Participant Profession**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Student	89	89.0	89.0	89.0
	Employee	7	7.0	7.0	96.0
	House Wife	1	1.0	1.0	97.0
	Other	3	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

By profession 89% of the samples are students. 7% are employees and 1% housewife and 3% being other.

**Table 5**  
**You watch Pakistani TV Dramas**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	61	61,0	61,0	61,0
No	16	16,0	16,0	77,0
Sometimes	23	23,0	23,0	100,0
Total	100	100,0	100,0	

When asked about the watching Pakistani dramas, 61% of the people said yes whereas 16% said they do not watch drama. Rest of the 23% said they sometimes watch drama and sometimes not.

**Table 6**  
**Time you spend on watching dramas**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2-3 hours	91	91.0	91.0	91.0
4-6 hours	4	4.0	4.0	95,0
6-8 hours	3	3.0	3.0	98.0
8-10 hours	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

When asked about the time people spend daily on watching dramas, majority being represented by 91% responded that they watch for 2-3 hours whereas 4% of the people responded that they watch it for more than 4-6 hours. Rest 3% responded they watch 6-8 hours and 2% watch 8-10 hours.

**Table 7**  
**You think these dramas are based on reality**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	5	5.0	5.0	5.0
Agree	30	30.0	30,0	35,0
Neutral	47	47.0	47.0	82.0
Disagree	13	13.0	13,0	95,0
Strongly Disagree	5	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

When asked about these dramas based on reality, majority responded neutral by 47% percentage whereas 30% of the people responded that they agree. Rest 13% responded they disagree 5% strongly agree and 5% strongly disagree.

**Table 8**  
**You think the content of Pakistani Dramas is according to our cultural norms and values**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	4	4,0	4.0	4.0
Agree	24	24.0	24,0	28.0
Neutral	44	44,0	44,0	72.0
Disagree	16	16,0	16.0	88.0
Strongly Disagree	12	12,0	12.0	100,0
Total	100	100,0	100.0	

When asked about content of Pakistani dramas is according to our cultural norms and values. 44% are neutral, 24% agree, 16% disagree to the statement and 12% strongly disagree, only 4% strongly agree.

**Table 9**  
**These dramas make your wish list**

		Frequency	Percent	valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	39	39,0	39.0	39.0
	Occasionally	14	14,0	14.0	53.0
	Sometimes	39	39,0	39.0	92.0
	Often	7	7.0	7.0	99.0
	Always	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100,0	

39% of the respondents stated that the drama never make their wish list, 39% respond sometimes, 14% responded occasionally and 7% responded often, 1% responded always.

**Table 10**  
**These Pakistani Dramas changed your behaviour**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	6	6.0	6.0	6.0
	Agree	24	24,0	24.0	30,0
	Neutral	34	34.0	34.0	64.0
	Disagree	24	24,0	24.0	88.0
	Strongly Disagree	12	12,0	12.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

34% of the respondents are neutral & stated that the drama change their behavior, 24% responded agree and 24% disagree, 12% responded strongly disagree and 6% responded strongly agree.

**Table 11**  
**These dramas make you feel inferior**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	37	37,0	37.0	37.0
	Occasionally	8	8.0	8.0	45,0
	Sometimes	34	34,0	34.0	79.0
	Often	20	20,0	20.0	99.0
	Always	1	1.0	1.0	100,0
	Total	100	100,0	100.0	

Majority of 37% of the respondent responded drama never make them feel inferior, 34% responded sometimes and 20% responded often, 8% responded occasionally and 1% responded always.

**Table 12**  
**You are satisfied with family environment shown in dramas E.g., Relationships**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	7	7.0	7,0	7.0
	Agree	30	30,0	30,0	37.0
	Neutral	30	30,0	30,0	67.0
	Disagree	17	17,0	17,0	84.0

Strongly Disagree	16	16.0	16,0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

When asked about are you satisfied with family environment shown in drama, 30% are agree and 30% are being neutral, 17% are disagree, 16% strongly disagree and only 7% strongly agree with the statement.

**Table 13**  
**You are satisfied with male characterization in dramas**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	8	8.0	8.0	8.0
	Agree	36	36.0	36,0	44.0
	Neutral	30	30.0	30.0	74.0
	Disagree	18	18.0	18.0	92,0
	Strongly Disagree	8	8.0	8.0	100,0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

When asked about are you satisfied with male characterization shown in drama, 36% are agree and 30% are being neutral, 18% responded disagree, 8% strongly disagree and 8% strongly agree with the statement.

**Table 14**  
**You are satisfied with women characterization in drama**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	5	6.0	6.0	6.0
	Agree	27	27.0	27.0	33,0
	Neutral	34	34.0	34,0	67,0
	Disagree	24	24.0	24.0	91.0
	Strongly Disagree	9	9.0	9.0	100.0
	Total	100	100,0	100.0	

When asked about are you satisfied with women characterization shown in drama, 34% are being neutral, 27% agree, 24% responded disagree, 9% strongly disagree and 6% strongly agree with the statement.

**Table 15**  
**Pakistani dramas are following western culture**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	11	11.0	11.0	11.0
	Occasionally	8	8.0	8.0	19.0
	Sometimes	51	51.0	51.0	70.0
	often	19	19.0	19.0	89.0
	Always	11	11.0	11.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100,0	

When asked about western culture shown in drama, majority of 51% responded sometimes, 19% responded often, 11% always & 11% and 8% responded occasionally with the statement.

**Table 16**  
**Dramas content cause' violation and sexual exploitation in society**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	24	24,0	24.0	24,0



Occasionally	9	9.0	9.0	33.0
Sometimes	40	40.0	40.0	73.0
Often	14	14.0	14.0	87.0
Always	13	13.0	13.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Majority of 40% respondent claim that dramas content cause violation & sexual exploitation.

## Discussion

We live in a world of information and communication technologies which affects our lives at every stage. Either directly or indirectly, we are linked with these technologies. A total of 100 respondents were used to collect relevant data. Young people liked Pakistani dramas the most. Yes, it turned out that Pakistani drama is not suitable for young people because the results show that their content was somehow against our Islamic values and culture, 44% of the respondents think that Pakistani modern drama based on reality. Majority of 44% of the respondents are neutral about the content shown are according to our culture, norm and values. 39% of respondents thought that Pakistani drama make their wish list and 39% of respondents responded never. 34% of respondents are neutral with watching Pakistani drama change their behavior, 28% of respondents disagreed with the statement but also 28% of respondents are neutral with the statement that drama changes their behavior. So now prove that most of the respondents deteriorate their changed behavior by watching Pakistani dramas.

48% of respondents responded never that Pakistani dramas never make them feel inferior, 35% of the respondents responded sometimes Pakistani dramas make them feel inferior. 38% of the respondents agreed with the environment shown in Pakistani dramas and 26 percent disagreed with the statement. 32% of the respondents agreed with the statement that women in Pakistani dramas always choose successful person over a good person, 21% responded neutral. 34% responded sometimes when asked about the Pakistani is following western culture in their drama. Content of Pakistani dramas causes violation and sexual exploitation in society 40% responded sometimes. It is proved that somehow Pakistani dramas content is impactation our youth behavior.

If PEMRA refrains from taking timely action, such material will get out of control. Pakistan was an Islamic country. Our social values, principles, moral beliefs are based entirely on Islam, so these principles that are shown in modern Pakistani drama were not in the Holy Quran. It's all taken from foreign culture. The results of this study clearly show that drama seeks to shape our attitudes, behaviors, social interactions with people in our society. Basically the content of Pakistani dramas was not comfortable to watch with family so this type of drama has a bad effect on our society, if we refrain from making this type of drama then in the coming days our It will have a huge impact on society.

## Conclusion

Pakistani dramas are mainly influenced by Western culture and give birth to modernity i.e. Westernization, class segregation, liberalism, loss of religion, oppression of culture and screams of identity have become the main themes of Urdu dramas. Now Eastern and Western cultures have merged in these current dramas and this is promoting modernity and liberalism in Pakistani society and the time is not far when we will lose our dignity. The depiction of stories in Urdu dramas points to a question mark for the drama industry as to what kind of message is being given to the Muslim community through their characters and content and this research concludes that now PEMRA Is responsible for airing these dramas. Who have a real ideology of Pakistan and present moral values through representation of different characters? The main goal of the producers of the play is to get the highest ranking and commercialism by providing content that is completely against our ethical values. The

social issues that are being presented in Urdu dramas are not the same as those that are being presented in Pakistani Urdu dramas.

### **Recommendations**

There are certain ways that can be adopted to avoid modernism in dramas.

- Pakistani Dramas should be based on pure Pakistani Culture and the real ideologies of Pakistani culture.
- Pakistani Dramas should present the real code of ethics that are based on religion.
- Pakistani Drama industry should not give too much importance to western impacts culture.
- Dramas should present the importance legal marital relation rather than to promote negativity in the society.
- Pakistani dramas should focus on the content that has positive effect on all the member of the society instead to promote romantic scene sin order to get popularity among young generation.
- PEMRA should allow the promotion of only material that is closely linked to the values of our culture and religion.
- Pakistani Dramas should present a positive insight among youth in order to rectify their personalities instead of promoting extramarital affairs, westernization, distance from religion and disrespect for their elder ones.
- Pakistani Dramas should celebrate Islam as a strong foundation for future generations. Pakistani Dramas should reject western impacts on Pakistani society.
- Dramas should promote strength of women instead of highlighting their weaknesses.
- The Government should take strong measures to prevent western culture in Pakistani dramas. They should give harsh penalties to the channels who are involved in making such dramas witch are against our norms and values.

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