



Effects of Exposure to Mainstream Media in Changing Political Behavior and Party Affiliation a Case Study of University of Gujrat, Pakistan

Zahid Muhammad Bilal¹, Sarah² and Hassan Syed Ali¹

¹Centre for Media and Communication Studies, University of Gujrat, Post code 50700 Gujrat, Punjab, PAKISTAN

²Leadership and Management Studies, National Defense University, Post code 4400 Islamabad, PAKISTAN

Available online at: www.isca.in, www.isca.me

Received 28th October 2013, revised 10th November 2013, accepted 1st December 2013

Abstract

This research reveals the role of mainstream media in Changing Political Behavior and Party Affiliation among University of Gujrat students. The students of University of Gujrat devour media for different purpose as well as political information. Mostly students' use television for political information most because it is attractive and famous medium nowadays. For this survey research conducted to investigate the media effects on changing behavior. Results explore that media have a power to change the voting behavior of viewers and it also persuades them towards new political parties. Media present issues to its audience with an effect that public forms opinion according to media's emphasis on issue.

Keywords: Mainstream media, political behavior, party affiliation, exposure, perception, students.

Introduction

This study emphasizes on the role of media in Political behavior change and political party affiliation among students. The mass media play an influential role in aiding collective interests in youth that further help to encourage more public and political action as compared to others¹. Many studies have shown that media play a significant role in shaping public perception on political issues as election campaign are going on in Media spaces. News media are more progressive and it gives mostly coverage to political discussions. According to some studies media are central to politics today due to immediate and instant dissemination of political issues. In general, mass media means, means of communication, newspaper, radio, film, television, and internet designed to reach the masses and tends to set standards, ideals and objectives of the masses.

Political information is one of the important elements of political participation and also essential to assess the political consciousness of citizens. In order to make an electoral and political decision people should be aware of political candidates. The purpose of this research is to widen the role of mainstream media (newspaper, radio and television) on the political issues. This research is an attempt to study and observe the role of students on political issues through the survey method. Young people today only measure which is better than previous generations of community service². Students are most important part of society who has potential for the development of country in political and socioeconomic fields. Moreover, students are considered educated individual of society. Political activity predicts that it was probably good to involve young people in the political process presenting the interesting issue through mass media³. In this study researcher will focus on the youth awareness in political issues and their interest in politics.

Political issues and usage of different media, is the debating issue now-a-days.

As political issues are constantly discussed and it seems that the media take on the field of politics. Thus, in this new context seems the media is more gradual. The mass media was seen as a key source of political knowledge^{4,5}, youth political engagement was steeper³. Research on political socialization has shown that attention to the news is related to political knowledge, attitudes and policy discussions⁶. Iyengar and Kinder⁷ believes that the priming is the ideas that help people evaluate politicians based on the subject covered by the media. The media should expose the reality of people, but without any negative impression. The mass media shape public opinion and attitudes of society. Media provides with a wealth of information and makes people think about it.

Mainstream media are the suitable choice for conducting this research because they are considered reliable and people depend on them for information and politics is an important pillar of a country. Media and politics both have a complex relationship and what impact these two elements create on nation building and on country progress in under consideration. This research is an attempt to study the role of different media outlets on behavior change and political party affiliation among University of Gujrat's students. Media outlets transmit information to the public by different publications and broadcast and telecast channels. Different media outlets that will be focused under this study will be newspaper, radio and television. Under this study it will be noticed and observed how they present political news and discussion and what the medium has influence on the audience. How that medium holds the attention of its audience and how they influence audience on political issues and what effects does these media outlets create in the minds of its

audience and which medium is mostly considered reliable among students and how they consume political news. McComb and Shaw⁸ describe agenda setting functions in their book *The emergence of American political issues*, both are of the opinion that both publisher and broadcaster play an important role in the decision and publishing daily news. This research will answer these questions in-depth. It will bring out the reality how adolescents look into political issues and what they think of them.

Objectives of the Study: i. To explore exposure to mass media contributes in changing voting behavior. ii. To gauge which media outlet is more effective in changing voting behavior of University of Gujrat students. iii. To explain students affiliate themselves with any political party. iv. To determine media democratic culture among university of Gujrat's students

Research Hypothesis

H1: Whether Pakistani media is changing and setting voting behavior of students/not?

H2: Whether Pakistani media promoting democratic culture among students/not?

H3: Whether Pakistani media help to change the party affiliation of students/not?

Literature Review: Klapper⁹ in his book *The effects of mass communication* have argued that research had shown the mass media to be normally not a necessary cause of the effect public. Instead, it functions as a reinforcement of existing values and attitudes and the effects of media have been generally regarded as mediated by the interpersonal and personal experience. He also revealed that there were certain conditions under which mass communication could greatly influence society more contemporary scholars have been content to take the perspective of limited effect, perhaps in response to the most extravagant claims of a powerful and dangerous mass media made earlier. Since then there have been developments in other areas that led to a paradigm shift in communication research and renewal of the idea that the media have powerful effects¹⁰.

Newspapers have historically been a fairly reliable source of political knowledge (Chaffee and Frank, 1996)¹¹. Stromberg (1984-2004)¹² after analyzing the survey responses of American national election studies found that local newspapers are the leading provider of political information on people, because local newspapers are better informed about their representative home. Newspapers are considered an important source of political information, as writers and editors, sometimes to discuss issues including the political talk shows and other political debates are missing. It shows another aspect of a dimension that draws the reader's attention to it. These issues are discussed in detail in magazines. Reading magazines and newspapers how the voting behavior of people affected. Moreover what they look on issues after reading newspapers and magazines.

Stromberg¹² found that the radio has improved the situation of the vote in rural areas. Some of what is known and remembered in the modern campaign can be attributed to the spread of radio. Studies have shown that when there are political discussions on the radio, listeners become more active. Radio listeners are interested in political discussions, especially in rural areas. News Radio was at best a side note of numerous studies on political participation, perhaps because television has usurped the best part of the informative role of talk shows and radio news¹¹.

McCombs and Shaw¹³ believe that the media set the agenda for political discussion and political debates, talk shows and debates that influence public attitudes toward specific issues. At this stage of the media is the only source that is easily accessible from all walks of life in television, radio, newspapers and the Internet used by people for information on updates to political events every time. Media affects people's perceptions and policy discussions. Media forms of public behavior toward an issue and are essential to highlight certain attributes of the issue. The way the media provide coverage of a particular topic, the new policies that help people make decisions and perceive what is important to them. The theory of the development agenda describes a powerful influence of the media and it has the ability to tell us what the important issues are.

Baran and Davis¹⁴ explain that the theory of framing look closely at the idea of how people look forward to a question of making sense of everyday life. The basis of the theory of framing is that the media focuses attention on certain events and then places in the area of service. This field of service may have an impact on public beliefs, attitudes and behavior by connecting a particular meaning or interpretation of a question. Framing theory refers to how something is presented (in the framework) affects the choices made by gens. Cette idea is important because it is contrary to the central notion of rational choice theory.

The media drew public attention to certain issues which is the agenda setting initial thought. These themes change the attitudes and beliefs of a person and force them to think according to the agenda set by the media. A framework has a power to produce an effect on the power of collecting new audience, this kind of scheduling, not only think what to think but how to think. Kinder and Sanders¹⁵ suggests that managers use both embedded devices both in political discourse, which is equal to the concept of mass media frames and that the internal structures of the mind is equal to the individual frames.

Under the agenda setting and framing theory, people always strive to make the most rational choices possible. Thus, rational choosers should always make the same decision when given the same data. According to Fairhurst and Sarr¹⁶ framework consists of three elements: language, thought and foresight. The language helps us to retain information and actions to transform the way we perceive situations. To use the language, people

must have *thought* and reflected on their own interpretive frameworks and that other. Leaders must learn to self regulate in certain circumstances. Being able to do so had to have the *foresight* to predict the possibility of coaching. In other words, we must plan to be spontaneous¹⁷.

McComb Maxwell and Donald Shaw⁷ developed the program implementation in terms of 1968. Over 350 studies have already been discussed in the world since that time. McComb his research focuses on if the media decides what topics should be discussed as a society. Maxwell believes that the media choose our subjects. Maxwell suggests that the media control what we think that where McComb believe how we think about it. The function of setting the agenda of mass media has an impact on the mass media as it has the ability to perform cognitive change among individuals.

Methodology

By keeping in view the nature of the study survey method was suitable because through this method opinion about different media outlets in Political behavior change and party affiliation among students gathered and analyzed. Survey research method used to explore the consumption patterns of different media of UOG students for information on political issues. According to Fellegi¹⁸ Collection of information through an organized and systematic manner in which all units of interest and concept of population well defined and assembles such information into a useful concise form. The survey is a study that will be helping to collect data from each sample. While, sample size took from university of Gujrat's students. The researcher took 100 students according to stratified sampling. In which researcher divided the target audience into two strata Social science and natural science. The researcher took equal respondents from both strata.

However, in this study there are two key variables that is Independent variable and Dependent variable. The independent variable is Media outlets whereas dependent variable is political behavior and Change and party affiliation motives. Mainstream Media; Television (Political news and political issues and talk shows etc. Radio; Political discussion and news. The newspaper includes Political News, Columns and Editorials. Political Behavior Change and Party Affiliation; Exposing of political information through television news, discussion programs, reading editorials and columns of national and local newspaper, listening political programs on radio and also political interest by participating in elections, attending the political processions and meetings.

Results and Discussion

Figure-1 shows that 22% of both males and females like to read the newspaper for political information. 76% males and 74% females like to watch television. While, female radio listeners are 2% more than male for political information.

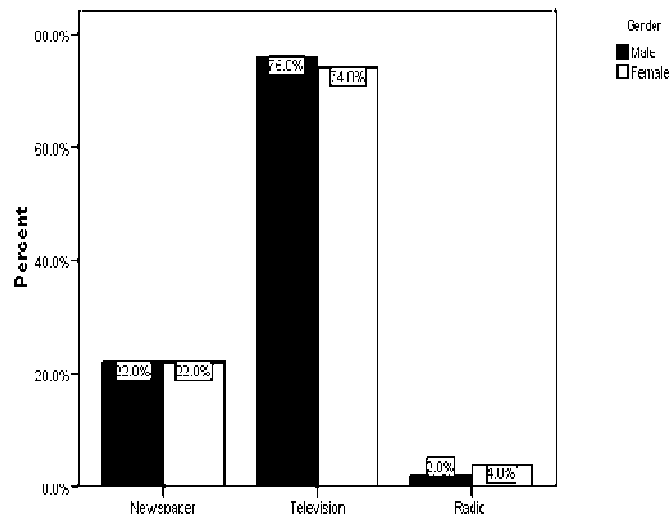


Figure-1

What is your preference for political information among the following media outlet?

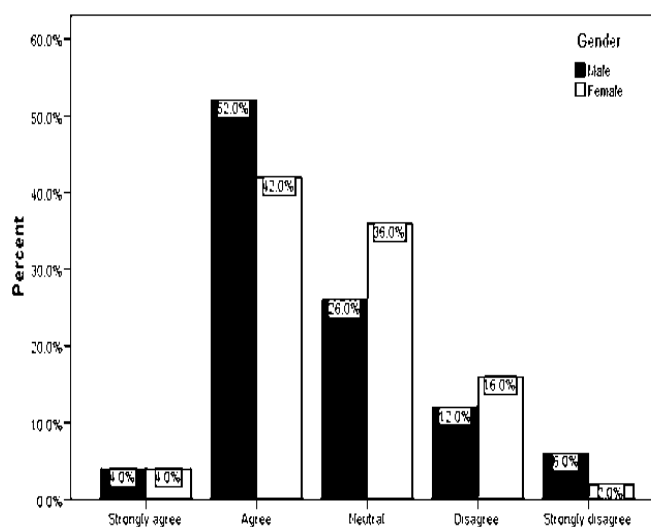


Figure-2

Do you think your medium for political information is satisfying your needs?

Figure-2 is about the satisfaction of the needs of the target population from the medium that is used for political information. 4 % both males and females are more satisfied with the medium that they are used for political information. 52 % males and 42 % females are satisfied with their medium of political information. 26 % males and 36 % females are satisfied with their medium of political information to some extent. However, 12 % males and 16 % females are not satisfied with their medium of political information. 6 % males and 2 % females are more unsatisfied with their medium of political information.

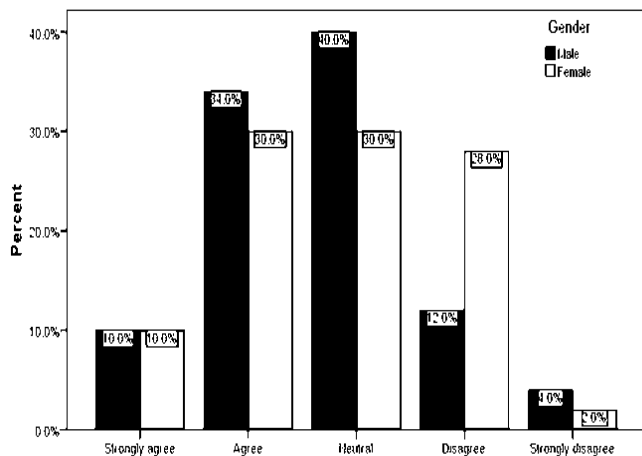


Figure-3

Do you ever think to change your affiliation with any political party when media expose it?

Figure-3 shows that whether the target population ever thinks to change their political affiliation with any political party when they expose to media. 10 % of both males and females are more agree that they think to change their affiliation with political party after exposing to the media. Whereas 34 % males and 30 % females are less agree about the thinking of changing affiliation with any other political party after exposing to the media. And 40 % males and 30 % females agree to some extent about changing of affiliation with any political party after exposing to the media. Whereas 12 % males and 28 % females do not agree about thinking of changing affiliation to any political party after exposing to the media.

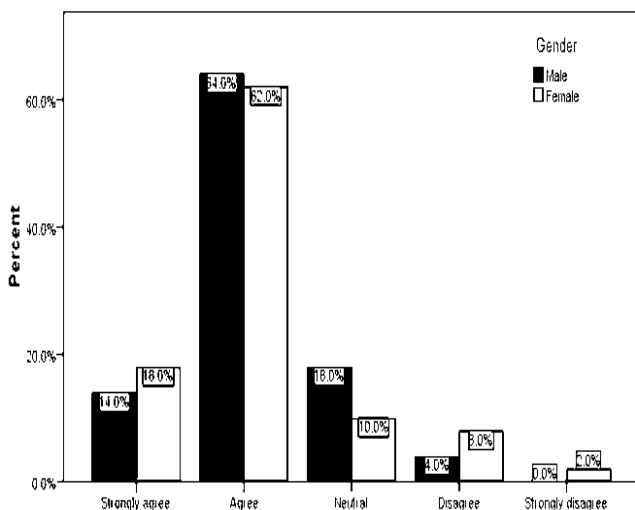


Figure-4

Do you think exposure to Mass Media contributes in changing voting behavior?

Figure-4 represents the changing of the voting behavior of the target population after exposing to the media. According to the

graph 14 % males and 18 % females are more agreeing that exposure to mass media contributes in changing voting behavior. Whereas 64 % males and 62 % females are less agree that exposure to mass media contributes in changing voting behavior. And 18 % males and 10 % females agree to some extent that exposure to mass media contributes in changing voting behavior.

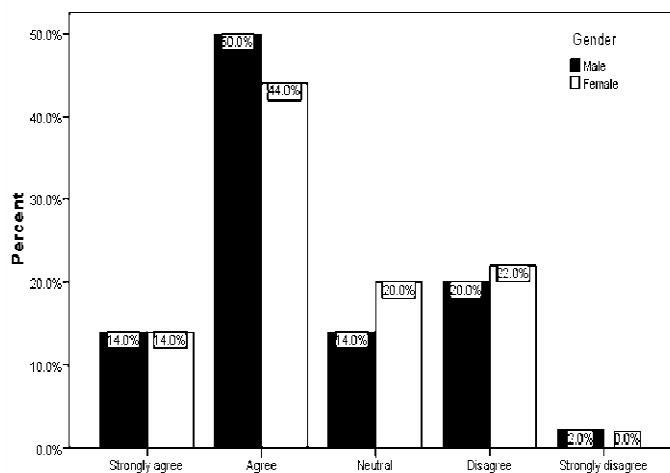


Figure-5

Do Pakistani media persuade your mind towards any new political party?

Figure-5 is about the Pakistani media as if it persuades the minds of the target population towards any new political party. According to the graph 14 % of both males and females are more agree that Pakistani media persuade minds towards any new political party. Whereas 50 % males and 44 % females are less agree that Pakistani media persuade their minds towards any new political party. And 14 % males and 20 % females agree to some extent that Pakistani media persuade their minds towards any new political party. Whereas 20 % males and 22 % females do not agree that Pakistani media persuades minds towards any new political party.

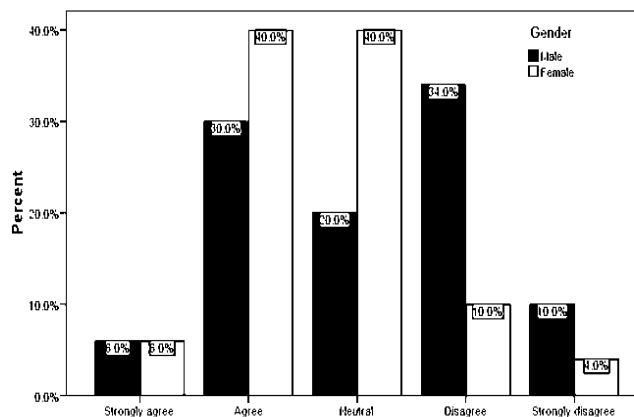


Figure-6

Is Pakistani media promoting democratic culture?

Figure-6 demonstrates whether Pakistani media is promoting democratic culture or not. 6 % of both males and females strongly agree that Pakistani media is promoting democratic culture. Whereas 30 % males and 40 % females are less agree that Pakistani media is promoting democratic culture. Whereas 20 % of males and 40 % of females agree to some extent that Pakistani media is promoting democratic culture. On the other hand 34 % males and 10 % females do not agree that Pakistani media is promoting democratic culture. And 10 % males and 4 % females more disagree that Pakistani media is promoting democratic culture.

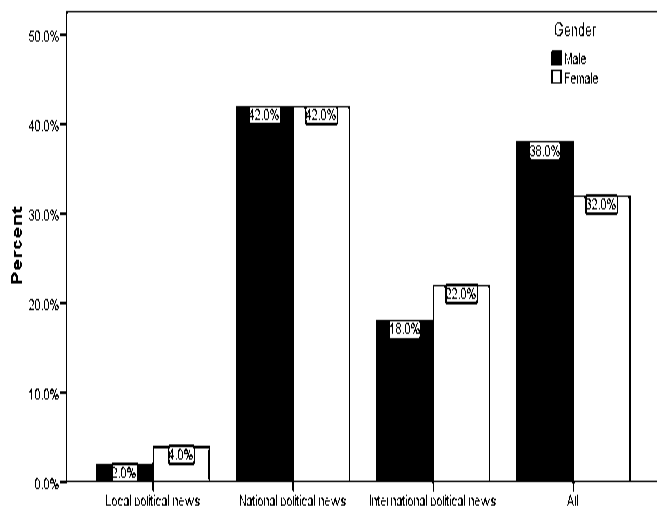


Figure-7

Which kind of political news do you prefer to consume on media?

Figure-7 is about the different kinds of political news that target population like to consume on media. According to the graph 2 % males and 4 % females like to consume local news on media. While 42 % both males and females of the target population like to consume national news on media. 18 % males and 22 % females prefer to consume international news on media whereas, 38 % males and 32 % females prefer to consume all kinds of news.

Discussion: This study represents that students of University of Gujrat like to devour different media outlets for political information as well as political parties but the television is most common, popular and interesting medium for this purpose. Television consumer's rate is higher because of the media's higher consumption rate. And mostly University of Gujrat students likes to consume television for political information. Media has created a frame and within that frame whatever information media are conveying people are consuming and rely. Entman (1993)¹⁹ suggested that frames in the news can be identified by the presence or absence of key words, phrases, images, sources of information and sentences that provide facts.

However, students agree that Pakistani media are creating democratic culture. Students also affiliate themselves on the basis of political issues and leaders. Most students think of changing their affiliation with the party after being exposed to the news media. Whereas, students agreed that media play a key role in changing voting behavior. Students of University of Gujrat also think that media persuade people towards a new political party. At the same time when respondents were asked about national news and they always prefer to news bulletin for it. While, target population prefers to use the internet for political discussion at the international level. Other than talk shows some also like to read editorials and columns related to political issues and some like to read those columns and editorial in which they affiliate.

Conclusion

In current scenario media probationers such as producers, anchors, analysts and researchers editors and news reporters all play a central role in the development of media program that becomes public agenda after a while. In Pakistan, the media have a great responsibility to bring change in attitude and behavior of consumers. Media contributes significantly to the development in general public of political knowledge and to shape their opinion regarding a particular issue and interests also political parties. The end result reveals that Mass Media has a powerful and influencing role in changing political behavior and party affiliation among University of Gujrat students. The evidence holds that media outlets exposure affects the political behavior and practice of University of Gujrat students.

Reference

1. Pasek J., Kate K., Daniel R. and Kathleen H. J., America's Youth and Community Engagement: How Use of Mass Media Is Related to Civic Activity and Political Awareness in 14- to 22-Year-Olds, *Communication Research.*, **33**, 115, DOI: 10.1177/0093650206287073 (2006)
2. Galston W. A., Civic education and political participation. College Park, MD: *American Political Science Association*, (2004)
3. Delli Carpini M.X., Gen.Com: Youth, civic engagement, and the new information environment, *Political Communication*, **17**, 341-349 (2000)
4. Delli Carpini M. X. and Keeter S. What Americans know about politics and why it matters, *New Haven, CT: Yale University Press*, (1996)
5. McLeod J.M., Rush R.R. and Friederich K.H., The mass media and political information in Quito, *Ecuador. Public Opinion Quarterly*, **32**(4), 575-587 (1968)
6. Chaffee S.H., Jackson-Beeck M., Durall J. and Wilson D., Mass Communication in Political Socialization, In S. A Renshon (Ed.), *New York: Free Press*, Handbook of Political socialization 223-258 (1977)

7. Iyengar S. and Kinder D.R., News that matters: Agenda setting and priming in a television age, *Chicago: University of Chicago Press*, (1987)
8. McCombs M.E, and Donald L.S., The Emergence of American Political Issues, *New York. West Publishing Co*, (1977)
9. Klapper J.T., The effects of mass communications, *Glencoe: III: Free Press*, (1960)
10. Roberts D.F. and Maccoby N., Effects of mass communication. In Lindzey, G. and Aronson, E. (Eds.), *Handbook of social psychology*, *New York: Random House*, 539- 598 (1985)
11. Chaffee S. and Frank S., How Americans get political information: Print versus broadcast news, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, **546**, 48-58 (1996)
12. Strömberg D., Radio's Impact on Public Spending, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, **119(1)**, 189-221 (2004)
13. McCombs M.E. and Shaw D.L., The agenda setting function of mass media, *Public Opinion Quarterly/T*, **36**, 176-85 (1972)
14. Baran S.J. and Davis D.K., Mass communication theory: foundations, ferment, and future (5th edition), Boston, M.A.: *Wadsworth Cengage learning* (2009)
15. Kinder D.R. and Sanders L.M., Mimicking political debate with survey questions: The case of white opinion on affirmative action for blacks, *Social Cognition*, **8**, 73-103, (1990)
16. Fairhurst G. and Star R., *The art of Framing*, *San Francisco: Jossey-Bass*, (1996)
17. Deetz S. A., Tracy S.J. and Simpson J.L., Leading organizations, Through Transition, *London, Thousand Oaks: Sage*, (2000)
18. Fellegi I.P., Survey Methods and Practices, *Occasional, Ottawa Canada*, Catalogue no. 12-587-X, ISBN 978-1-100-16410-6, (2003)
19. Entman R.M., Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm, *Journal of Communication*, **43(4)**, 51-58 (1993)