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Political shows coverage on private sector television in Pakistan; A content analysis of selected programs (January 2021 to December 2021)

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Abstract

The study analyzed the political situations of Imran Khan's government through content analysis during the time period of January 2021 to December 2021. The study examines the anchor person's behavior towards the government participants through different indicators such as i.e., question tone, time given to the participants, the interruption made by anchor person towards the participants. Through random sampling 10 political talk shows were selected from each channel GEO news and ARY News. From GEO News Capital talk show was selected. From ARY News OFF The Record show was selected. The finding of the study was in term of time given Capital talk was given more time to the government participants and anchor person of the Capital talk was more neutral and less unfavorable towards the government participants. whereas the participants of the government were more interrupted. OFF The Record was given less time to the government participants and the anchor person asked mostly neutral questions and less unfavorable towards the government participants. The anchor person of OFF The Record were less interrupted the government persons.

Keywords: Political, Talk show, Anchor person, GEO news, ARY news.

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Introduction

Since its founding in 1947, Pakistan's political history has been marked by sporadic periods of military dictatorship, democratic government, and political instability. The interaction of democratic institutions, the military's influence, regional factions, and religious dynamics has resulted in the formation of the complicated political terrain. Because of Pakistan's advantageous geopolitical location, understanding its political instability is not only important on a regional level but also on an international (Zaman, 2023).

There are several political parties which participate in elections for the seats of federal and provincial assemblies. In 2011 a sharp rise was witnessed in the popularity of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, headed by Imran Khan a former cricket legend. In 2013 elections the PTI emerged as the second largest political party in federal, Punjab and emerged as a largest party in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where it formed coalition government. The military establishment was blamed for its influential role in nurturing the PTI and for making it as a third major centrist political power. In July 25, 2018 election no political party gained the simple majority to form its government in the center. PTI became the largest party in center and formed coalition governments in federal and Punjab while being the major party in KPK, formed its own government and supported BAP in Balochistan and in Sindh the Pakistan People's Party formed its own government. It was believed by some critiques that the federal government of Imran Khan was a form of Hybrid political system where major decisions of the government were taken in consultation with the top military establishment. The election of July 2018 was rejected by main opposition parties and they blamed the establishment of the country for their support to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. The 2018 polls were of its own kind that almost every political party declared it rigged elections. The chief of Jamiat Ulema Islam of his own fraction Moulana Fazal Rahman mulled over with the leaders of other parties like Pakistan Muslim League-N, Pakistan People's Party, Awami National Party and others over resignation from the all the seats of assemblies. On the other hand, the leadership of PPP opposed the idea and was of the opinion that they should be part of system and play the role of opposition strongly with in the assemblies. Deliberating different options, the leaders of other parties were finally convinced with the idea of the PPP. The opposition groups united under the name called Pakistan Democratic Movement PDM and its main agenda of the alliance was ouster of Imran Khan from power. The PTI lead government faced a strong opposition on the other side of treasury benches, who called Imran Khan as Selected Prime Minister. Having the establishment on same page there were no apparent threats for the government. Imran Khan faced challenges from within the party on some key appointments and important of it was the appointment of Usman Buzdar as CM Punjab, the largest province of Pakistan and on the issue of letting Nawaz Shareef out of incarceration, who was convicted in gross corruption charges by the Accountability Court before 2018 general elections and was serving his imprisonment, and allowing him to go abroad for his medical treatment.

With no apparent vision of the betterment of economy and the rise in inflation the government faced several long marches of the opposition parties, blaming the government for the deteriorating economic situations, poor foreign policies, rigging in senate chairman polls and political victimization of opposition leadership by the state institutions. The decline of Imran's government started when Jahangir Tareen parted ways with Imran Khan and this departure weekend Imran's government and the government was not even in a position to pass the fiscal budget of fiscal year 2020-2021 from the national assembly and Imran sought establishment help in managing the approval of the budget from the assembly. In March 2022 the opposition moved a motion of no confidence against Prime Minister Imran Khan and succeeded to oust Imran Khan on 12th April 2022, and formed a coalition government of opposition parties led by Shabaz Sharif of PML-N.

Research Gap

The study is concentrated on particular television shows in the private sector. Comparing how various talk show formats Capital Talk from GEO News and OFF The Record from ARY News cover the political landscape from January to December 2021 over the same time span reveals a disparity. This could shed light on differences in coverage and biases.

Research question

Q1: How primetime talk shows of ARY and GEO cover Pakistani political scenario during the regime of Imran Khan?

Literature Review

TV network in Pakistan offer a wide range of entertainment 24/7, with the current affairs shows becoming increasingly popular. Typically, the host and guests of these shows talk on issues pertaining to the nation's current political climate. The host of the show and the production staff often choose the topics for the show (Meijer, 2001; Harrington, 2008).

An increasing trend in electronic media are anchors that work for several news and current affairs network. Anchors don't uphold the fundamental ethics of justice; instead, they are prejudiced in favor of particular political parties or organizations and attempt to force their opinion on the panel and, eventually, the audience. They choose the direction in addition to providing the analysis. By distorting the truth and offering a biased analysis, they transgress professional ethics. They frequently made disparaging remarks about the panel and probed them personally to establish their guilt (Khan and Yousafzai, 2012).

However, Pakistan's political and current affairs programs continue to be well liked in spite of all the criticism and the lack of professionalism. There is no doubting that talk programs have a sizable following of people of all ages across the nation who genuinely agree with their material. Siddique and Rahman (2017) according to their research, the majority of students believe that political talk shows are politically biased and that the

information they present about the nation's laws and constitution is wildly incorrect. They contended that it could not be regarded as a reliable information source.

According to (Qaisar, Madni, Hassan & Amin, 2012), the media is doing a good job of moulding and altering public perceptions, culture and society. It also aids in understanding societal concerns by drawing attention to problems with jobs, education, law and order etc.

A research was done by (Ali, F., Rahman, B, 2018). They discuss that political shows are important to be effective space for public political discussion, honest and unbiased role of anchor person is essential. The researcher found anchor person bias in political talk shows against MQM participants before local bodies' election.

(Bilal, et al., 2018), that people only provide interest to the selective exposure which assist their preexisting attitudes, and they keep away from contradictory records. The researcher has observed the opinion of 185 students from the University of Gujrat. The discovering was that all through electoral rigging issue, selective exposure also different exposure was observed. In the course of this time periods target audience watch both channels for getting facts about electoral rigging. Heavy GEO TV watchers had been inclination towards PML-N and viewers of ARY TV have been located extra closer to PTI. For the duration of this time duration partisanship has too much grow.

Research Methodology

The researcher used content analysis as a study methodology. The method is where researcher carefully analyzed the prime time talk shows through different indicators. Such as

1. Questions tone
2. Time given to the participants
3. Interruption of the participants by anchor person

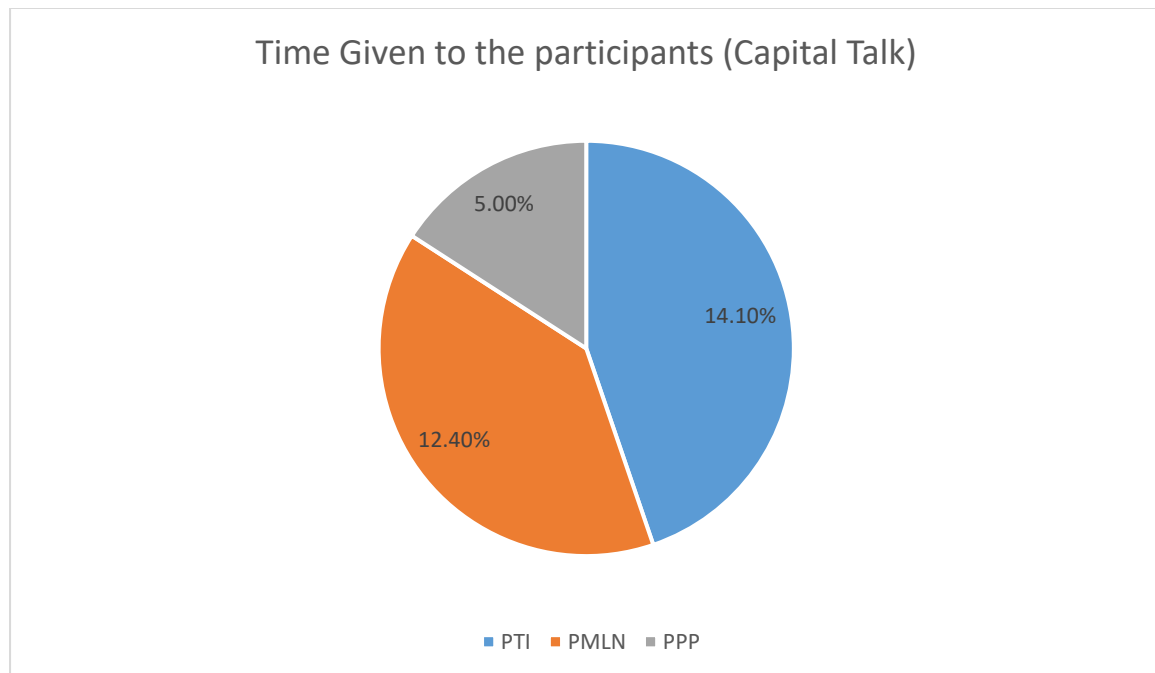
The researcher for her study select the two famous channels prime time talk shows. Such as Capital talk from the GEO News, Off the Record from ARY News channel. The researcher randomly selects the 10 shows from each channels. The researcher selects the time period from January 2021 to December 2021. It was the time period of Imran khan regime.

Data

The researcher applied indicators to the selected shows. Through these indicators the researcher carefully analyzed these shows. In the selected talk shows this study only focus on the participants of the political parties. These participants mostly were from Pakistan Tareek-i-Insaaf, Pakistan Muslim league Nawaz, and Pakistan People's Party, in these 20 talk shows once JUIF participant were present, and in one talk show only Jangir's group participants were present.

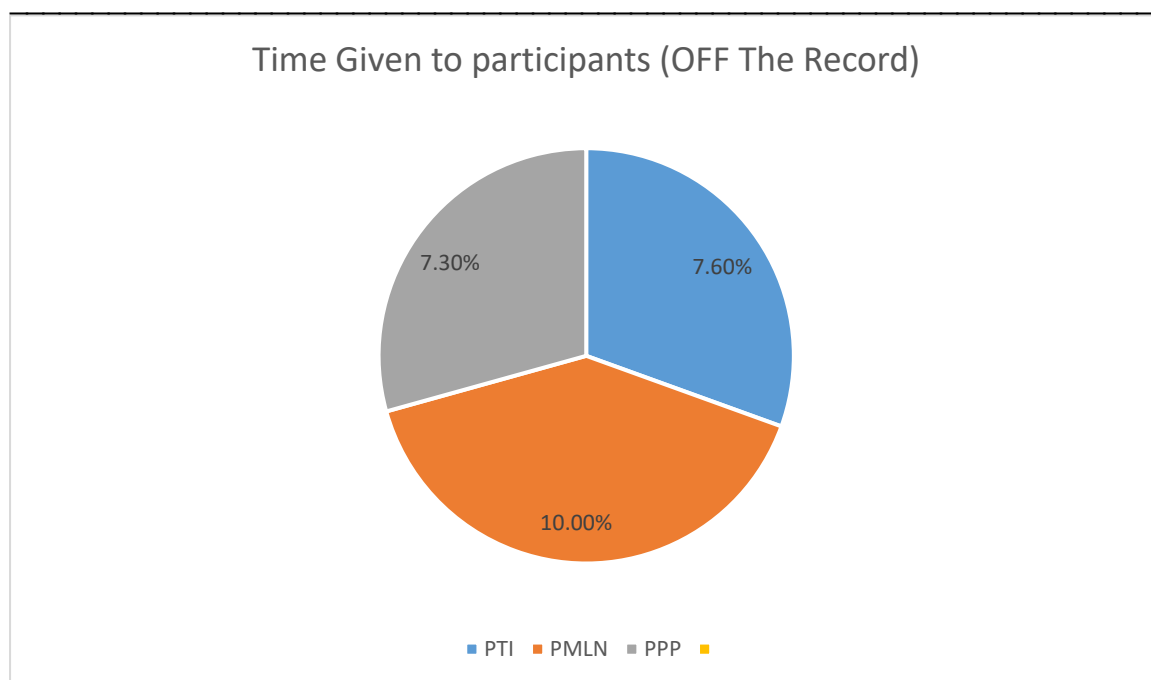
In this study the researcher analyzed the coverage of GEO News and ARY News. In these two channels famous talk shows were selected and how these shows give the coverage to the Imran' khan regime.

Q1: How the prime time News talk shows cover the Political situation of Imran Khan's regime during January 2021 to December 2021?



Pie chart (1.1) what time are given to each participants of the show

The given pie chart describes the total time which was given to the participants of the government and other political parties which were present in the talk shows. In the Capital talk the participants of the government were presented in 10 out of 10 shows. Whereas the PMLN participants were also presented in 10 out of 10 shows. PPP were just presented in the 4 out of 10 shows. And jangir groups participants were presented only in 1 show. In these selected 10 shows the participants of the government were given more time as compared to the other political parties.



pie chart (1.2) what time are given to each participants of the show

In the pie chart 1.2 describes the total time given to the government participants and other political parties in the talk show OFF The Record. In these selected 10 shows the participants of the government and PMLN were presented in 10 out of 10 shows. On the other hand, the participants of the PPP were presented in 8 out of 10 shows. And member of JUIF were just presented in 1 show. In these shows the participants of the government were given less time as compared to the participants of the political party PMLN.

Table 1: Question Tone (Capital Talk)

No	Questions Tone	PTI	PMLN	PPP	Jangir's Gp
1.	Neutral questions	22	19	9	4
2.	Unfavorable questions	9	10	2	no
3.	Favorable questions	no	no	no	no

In the selected 10 shows the participants of the government were mostly asked neutral questions from the anchor person and less unfavorable questions were asked by the anchor person. Whereas, the participants of the PMLN were asked more unfavorable questions as compared to the participants of the government. And were asked less neutral questions as compared to the government. As participants of the PPP were just presented in 4 out of 10 shows the asked questions from the anchor person were less neutral and less unfavorable. Jangir's group were just presented in one show where all questions asked by anchor person were neutral. Not a single favorable question was asked from the government nor from the other political parties.

Table 2: Question Tone (OFF The Record)

No	Question Tone	PTI	PMLN	PPP	JUIF
1.	Neutral questions	25	20	19	1
2.	Unfavorable questions	2	7	4	
3.	Favorable questions	no	no	no	

In the selected 10 shows the questions asked by the anchor person towards the government participants were mostly neutral and less unfavorable questions were asked. And as compared to the PTI, PMLN were asked less neutral questions and more unfavorable questions were asked by the anchor person Kashif Abbasi. As PPP were just presented in 8 out of 10 shows the anchor person were asked most neutral questions and less unfavorable questions were asked. JUIF were just presented in 1 show where the anchor asked neutral question

Table 3: Interruption made by anchor person (Capital talk)

No	Interruption	PTI	PMLN	PPP	Jangir's gp
1.	More interruption	68 times			3 times
2.	Less interruption		48 times	15 times	
3.	Equal Interruption				

In the table 3 describes how much the participants of the government and other political parties were interrupted by the anchor person. In the selected 10 shows where government participants were presented in all shows. The participants of the government were interrupted more by the anchor person. PMLN were interrupted less as compared to the government participants. As PPP were just presented in 4 out of 10 shows the interruption made towards the PPP were less.

Table 4: Interruption made by anchor person (OFF The Record)

No	Interruption	PTI	PMLN	PPP	JUIF
1.	More interruption		115 times		
2.	Less interruption	90 times		72 times	3 times
3.	Equal interruption				

In the table 4 describes the interruptions made by the anchor person towards the government participants and other political participants. In the table shows the government participants were less interrupted in the show. Whereas the participants of the PMLN were interrupted more than government participants. As PPP were just presented in 8 shows so the participants were less interrupted. And member of JUIF were presented in 1 show and interruption was made less towards the participant of JUIF.

Conclusion

The current study was the content analysis of two famous news talk shows capital talk from GEO News which is hosted by Hamid Mir. OFF The Record from ARY News which is hosted by Kashif Abbasi. The time period was selected from 2018 to 2022. It was Imran's Khan regime. From each political talk shows 10 shows were selected. The study analyzed the coverage of media during the Imran's regime. These selected shows

were analyzed through indicators, through these indicators the study analyzed the coverage of these talk shows.

In Capital talk during these selected political talk shows government participants were presented in every show, PMLN and PPP were also part of these selected talk shows. The study only analyzed the anchor person behavior towards the government participants and other political parties. The data of the study was that government participants were given more time to complete their answers and their point of views. Whereas, PMLN participants were given less time as compared to the government participants. As PPP were less presented in the talk shows so their time was less than PMLN. In contrast to talk show OFF The Record the participants of government were given less time. Though the PMLN were given more time as compared to the government participants. As presentation of PPP participants were less so their time was less than PTI and PMLN.

As compared to the question tone in Off The Record show more questions was asked by anchor person was neutral questions. Less unfavorable question was asked to the government participants. The opposition party PMLN was asked less neutral questions and more unfavorable questions as compared to the government participants. Whereas, in capital talk show the more questions asked by anchor person was of neutral nature and unfavorable question was asked more in number as compared to Off the Record. In capital talk show the participants of PMLN were asked less neutral question and more unfavorable questions as compared to the government participants.

The interruption in capital talk was made more to the participants of the government as compared to the participants of oppositions. Whereas, in OFF The Record the interruption was made more to the PMLN participants. Where the participants of the governments were less interrupted.

Suggestions

This study only includes the two famous news talk shows of two famous channels. The further researcher should have analyzed at least 2 or 3 news talk shows of the selected channels. As this study only analyzed the anchor person's behavior towards the participants of the government and other political parties. Future researcher should conduct survey method through people who watched news talk shows to analyze people perceptions regarding anchor person's behavior towards the government participants and oppositions. As news talk shows are watched by people to educate and inform them regarding ongoing situations in the country and they make their opinion according to their analysis. Anchor persons should be objective and neutral towards all the political parties.

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