

Media Imperialism and Cultural Dissatisfaction: A Case Study of Undergraduate Students in Islamabad

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Abstract

The objective of the research was to dig out the effects of exposure to western television channels among the undergraduate students in Islamabad on their cultural dissatisfaction.

Key Words

Assumption, Cultural Dissatisfaction, Media Imperialism, Undergraduate Students

The extent of dissatisfaction about Pakistani culture and positive assumptions in favor of western culture was noted. A convenient sampled survey with equal representation of male and female gender was applied. It was found that exposure to western television channels makes an alien world in the minds of audience ($t=3.02$). A considerable variance in assumption inclined to foreign culture was assessed ($\beta=0.32$). Moreover, income and time spent remained the important factors to make the western alien culture a reality.

Introduction

Cultural effect is an important phenomenon in the field of media imperialism. Many researchers debated and concluded that the foreign media content manipulate the cultural perceptions of the respondents in accordance with the foreign culture and develop dissatisfaction about their own cultures among the viewers. Exposure to the foreign television contents make an alien world in the minds of audience and they consider themselves backward and try to modernize their lifestyle with the concept of exposed contents of foreign television channels.

Media Imperialism

Boyd Barrett (1977) introduced the term *media imperialism* in the aspects of media ownership, structure, distribution, or content and their effect on the peripheral countries that was further defined and generalized by focusing the precise countries (Lee, 1978; Tunstall, 1977). Media was argued to be a main tool behind the media imperialism effects that had manipulated the perceptions of the audience and developed an alien world in the minds of them with accordance to their own culture (Feies and FredMass, 1980), while focusing on the media outlets, television was found as an area to be evaluated under the phenomenon and the term cultural imperialism was found which could describe the whole phenomenon of media imperialism (Schiller, 1971). In the same way, media and cultural imperialism were found equal in status (Fuchs, 2010).

Dominick (2009) maintained that the core objective of media imperialism was to make cultural dissatisfaction among the audience. He further assessed that exposure to foreign television channels had resulted negativity among the audience about their own culture. Whereas, Barrett also updated his own definition of the term by the words that the developing countries were the target of all the media communication and contents while discussing the effects of media imperialism. Chadha and Kavoori (2011) assessed the effects of exposure to foreign media contents. He added that more exposure to the foreign media contents enhanced the effects of media imperialism and resulted in loss of the local cultures of the developing countries. John Tomlinson (2003) defined the cultural imperialism as the manipulation of the local cultures and the domination of western culture that reordered the local cultural norms and values. Colin Sparks (2012) argued that the domination of developed countries over the developing countries should be assessed by analyzing the effects of cultural imperialism. Hamelink (1983) found the cultural dependence and the modernization of media industry as the main factors to be addressed to understand the term media imperialism. Lee (1978) examined the exposure to foreign television contents and its effects on the local cultures as a key indicator in defining the term. The author added that cultural values of developing countries were massively negatively affected.

Media in Pakistan

Access to foreign media channels was found with the invention of private television channels in Pakistan as the introduction of cable network. The cheap cable network rates allowed the Pakistani to have access to more foreign television channels and the whole picture of media industry changed. Gallup Pakistan (2012) reported the investment of 22 billion rupees in advertisement to the different television channels that increased to 32 billion rupees in the same year highlighted the importance and use of the cable network massively. The huge investment in the media industry provoked us to explore the cultural effects of media imperialism in Pakistan.

Statement of Problem

Exposure to the western television channels has made it easy to effect or manipulate the local culture of Pakistan. Increasing exposure with the passage of time is becoming a continuous threat to the local cultural norms and values. The people make their minds and perceptions with respect to the contents of western television channels. An alien culture in the minds of audience may affect the satisfaction level about their own culture as they belong to the developing country. Dissatisfaction level about the local culture increases with more exposure to the western television contents.

To explore the effects of cultural dissatisfaction through the exposure to western media contents, it is necessary to dig out that in which extent they are deviating the audience from their own culture.

Rationale of Research

Television has become a tool of media industry that is consumed massively in Pakistan. Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) has asserted in its report for 2006-2009 that 77 private television channels were given permission to broadcast their transmissions at the end of 2010. Almost 8 million viewership of cable television network was found in 2009 with an average exposure of 2 hours a day with foreign television programming. It is a researchable phenomenon that whether daily exposure to foreign television channels has made dissatisfaction about their own culture and making foreign culture dominant. By taking an overview of the related research work, cultural dissatisfaction about the own cultures and then making the foreign culture acceptable is a theoretical framework of media imperialism.

UNESCO has reported the television channels with exposing more than 75% of the total foreign programming in the peripheral countries. Massive use of television channels for diffusing foreign programming has mentioned the tool as a core source in the media industry.

Research Objectives

1. To find out the relationship between exposure to western television channels and cultural dissatisfaction
2. To investigate the role of time spent with western television in imperialism effects
3. To explore the relationship between exposure to western television channels and assumption about the western culture
4. To analyze the role of gender in imperialism effects among the undergraduate students
5. To investigate role of income in media effects among the undergraduate students
6. To examine the dissatisfaction level about the local culture among the viewers of western television

Hypotheses

- H₀:** There is no relationship between exposure to western television channels and cultural dissatisfaction.
- H₁:** There is a positive relationship between exposure to western television channels and cultural dissatisfaction
- H₂:** There is a positive association between exposure to western television channels and assumption about the western culture
- H₃:** There is a positive relationship between exposure to western television channels and cultural expectations.

Review of Literature

Okafor Samuel Okechi (2017) resulted self-hatred among the viewers of foreign television contents in Africa. The author found lack of self-confidence and attitude among the viewers and found deleterious effects of exposure to the foreign television contents to the local culture. Adum, A.N., Kenechukwu, S., & Abuah, F. (2015) concluded the invention of new media technology that enabled the access to foreign television channels made the domination

of the culture of developed countries. The author chose the sample of 156 students from Madonna University, Okija.

Domirani (2014) concluded while conducted a study in Nigeria that foreign media contents had manipulated the local culture. The author highlighted the importance of selection of news by the respondents those were found more exposed to the foreign contents with cultural taboos in the local society. Sher Juni (2014) realized while considering 200 respondents and taking identity and modern orientation as the independent variables, that the respondents were found more inclined to the cultural values in favour of west. The author used both the analysis techniques i.e. qualitative and quantitative. Mitchell, Dinkha and others (2014) experienced a huge level of body dissatisfaction in result of exposure to the foreign television contents in Kuwait. The author selected 233 students from Liberal Art College and used social learning theory. It was found that foreign cultural norms and values took the place of local norms and values and massively followed by the respondents. Sezan Tanvir, Taufiq e Ahmed Shovo and Kaniz Fatima Mohsin (2014) with special reference to the interviews conducted in Bangladesh from the 111 respondents with age 16-25 by using purposive sampling resulted that the respondents were not able to differentiate in their own culture and the western.

Koblowe Obono and Oluchi Madu (2013) concluded that more than 75% programming on Nigerian television had foreign cultural values and life style and developed a sense of dissatisfaction among the viewers. The study was conducted under the phenomenon of media imperialism. Amaima Yawar and others (2013) used descriptive analysis and convenient sampling method to dig out the effects of media imperialism effects on 200 selected viewers. The authors found that beside the age limit, all the respondents were affected by the contents of foreign contents.

Waseem Khattak, Muhammad Nasir and Aftab Ahmad (2012) found less income as a key indicator behind the effects of media imperialism. In continuation, Sabir, M. (2012) resulted the harmful cultural effects of foreign media contents. The study found that local cultural norm and values were massively manipulated among the users of foreign media contents. Dal Yong Jin (2012) claimed the western media as dominated over the local culture. Ravi (2012) argued the access to foreign media contents as the key factor in the phenomenon of media imperialism that manipulated the local culture in favour of west. He argued that more resources and cheap access to the foreign media contents were the main reasons behind the manipulated cultural values among the audience in favour of the western cultural values. He found the audience with perceived culture as portrayed in the contents of foreign media.

Chanda and Kavoori (2011) highlighted the effects of media imperialism by assessing the level of national identity of the audience in Pakistan. The authors realized that overconcentration of mass media to effect the local audience could be resulted in the loss of national identity. The authors found commercialization of media and less domestic programming the main reason behind the effects of media imperialism. Khan, A.N., Khalid, S., Khan, H.I and Jabeen, M. (2011) took the sample of university students and found more dissatisfaction about their body image among the youngest respondents. Sabir, M. (2011) concluded discomfort while analysing the effects of media imperialism in Pakistan meanwhile, another study focused on nudity and sexiest contents in advertisements resulted violent and aggressive behaviour among the respondents (Akhtar, W., Abbasi, A.S., Umer, S. 2011).

Barry S. Sapolsky and Barbara K. Kaye (2009) viewed strong relationship between the exposure to cable television and offensive language among the viewers. Choosing method of content analysis of 14 television channels, the authors analysed 90% programs with at least one expletive incident. The authors focused on the negative contents of the cable television channels. Stanley J Baran (2009) conducted a study to explore the effects of American media contents among the audience. The authors found that the audience had perceived the portrayals of American television as models. Massive destruction of local culture was resulted. Mirza Jan (2009) concluded that cultural proximity was in favour of western culture among the viewers of cable television channels in Pakistan. The study resulted that exposure to cable television channels had developed proximities inclined to the west. Higher rate of cultural dissatisfaction was found.

Research Methodology

Keeping in view the theme of study, an adequate questionnaire was formulated to dig out the effects of media imperialism on cultural dissatisfaction among the youth in Islamabad. The variables for research work were arranged and then their indicators after that, questions were prepared for the survey. Survey technique has remained very common in the research studies conducted to explore the effects. The proceedings were as followed

Survey

A survey research make it convenient to take some specific portion from the whole population to generalize the gathered results over the whole population with the help of statistical procedures. Comparison and making

relationship to reach over some conclusion is very common and useful as well. The sample is useful to find out the answers of questions about how the respondents perceive, feel or behave (James W. Tankard, Jr., 1992).

Analysis of Survey

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the data from the questionnaire. The questions were asked with degree of acceptance or rejection in term of Likert scale to measure the responses.

Unit of Analysis

Every given option to the respondents was treated as unit of analysis as had related to some specific viewer. 5 scale Likert scale was used for the research work.

Sampling Frame

All the N units are defined as sampling frame. Every under graduate student with age 18-25 studying in International Islamic University, Islamabad were included in the sampling frame. The under graduate students were considered more provoked to adopt foreign culture and in result, dissatisfaction about the own culture. The students in Islamabad being the Capital of Pakistan with more modern way of living were more relevant to assess the results.

Sampling Design

A sampling design is referred to detailed statistical plan for the study. Convenient sampling was applied to meet the required respondents. The students in Faculty of Basic and Applied Sciences, International Islamic University, Islamabad were chosen as the target audience for the research study.

All the academic departments of faculty were given equal representation in the survey and equal representation was given to each department. 20 students with age 18-25 were chosen randomly from the each department i.e. total of 100 from male and 100 from female as there were 5 departments in female campus and 5 in male campus under the faculty. After equal representation on whole then department wise, the respondents were chosen randomly from each department with specified age limit. To make the respondents more relevant, the researchers asked a verbally question from the each respondents that whether he/she used the foreign television channels i.e. western. The questionnaire was distributed among those who were using the western television channels.

Independent Variables

Exposure to the foreign television channels was treated as the independent variable for study. The exposure was measured with the program preference and time spent with the foreign television channels.

Dependent Variables

As highlighted at above, it was hypothesized that exposure to the foreign television channels was developing dissatisfaction about the local culture of audience. They assume and perceive the foreign culture as model to be followed. The perceived culture which make a status of dissatisfaction among the audience was the dependent variable for the study.

Conceptualization of the Variables

Independent Variables

The exposure was conceptualized with the foreign program preference of the respondents by assessing their most favorite programming and the extent of them with the channels. Some demographic questions were asked to control and assess extra characteristics of the respondents.

Dependent Variables

Perception

Cultural dissatisfaction among the respondents was assessed by calculating their assumptions about the foreign culture and their cultural expectations. The assumption about the foreign culture and expectations from the local culture were correlated to reach on some conclusion for the study. The dissatisfaction level about their own culture was also included.

Theoretical Framework

Theory explains and predict any phenomenon that needs to be explored. This research work was based on Cultivation Theory that explained the power of television contents in such a way that manipulated the perceptions of the audience. The theory also insisted that the television contents had become a reality among the viewers and the contents found manipulating the perceptions of the viewers inclined to the televised contents (Gerbner, 1976).

Results

To get the desired outcomes, the data was entered to SPSS 17 and a suitable numerical number against each response was assigned with keeping an eye the negativity or positivity of the given options. To measure the internal consistency between the different predictors of each variable, Cronbach’s alpha was applied. The measures were as followed:

The respondents were asked five questions to find out their assumptions about the foreign culture i.e. western entertainment, western way of life and education system ($\alpha=0.76$). Four questions were asked to dig out the cultural expectations associated with their feeling of dissatisfaction about their own culture i.e. adoption of western cultural values ($\alpha=0.7$). Some demographic questions were also included in the questionnaire. After the assessment of reliability of the data, the following procedure was followed

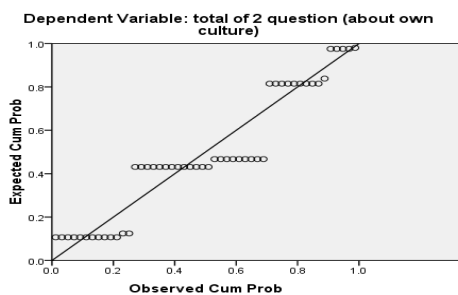
Data Formulation

The data was formulated with respect to the defined variables. The values of variables were measured with merging the responses of each respondents against the indicators. The mean value of all the indicators was taken and merged into one new variable indicating the inclination or declination of the respondents against each question and then statistically analysed.

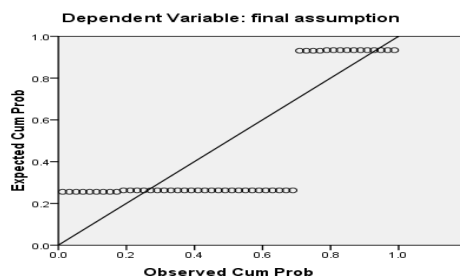
Hypotheses Testing

To find out the relationship between exposure to western television channels and cultural dissatisfaction, the Spearman Correlation and regression analysis were used to examine the strength of relationship as the data was non parametric. The correlation analysis found significant at 1% level (sig. 2-tailed 0.42) and a positive relationship was resulted between the two variables ($r = 0.46$). Regression analysis resulted the value of $\beta = 0.28$ which indicated 28% of the variation in cultural dissatisfaction about own values was explained by the exposure to the western television channels. $|t| = 2.97 \geq 2$ showed that exposure to western television channels and cultural dissatisfaction were significantly positively associated.

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

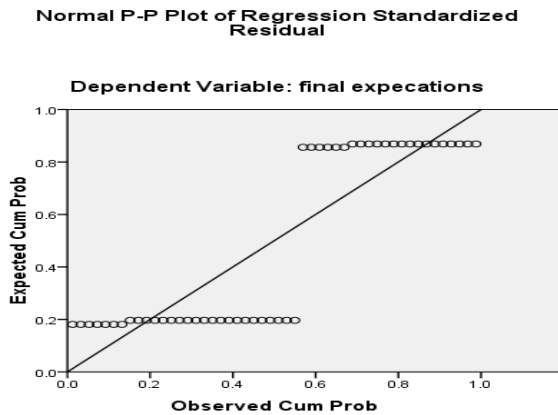


Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual



The relationship between exposure to western television channels and positive assumptions about the western cultural norms and values was assessed through Spearman Correlation as the data was non parametric. The results found that there was a positive relationship between the two variables at 1% level (sig. 2-tailed 0.52) and a positive relationship was resulted ($r = 0.32$). Regression analysis resulted the value of $\beta = 0.37$ which indicated 37% of the variation in positive assumption about the western culture was explained by the exposure to the western television channels. $|t| = 3.02 \geq 2$ showed that exposure to western television channels and positive assumption about the western culture were significantly positively related.

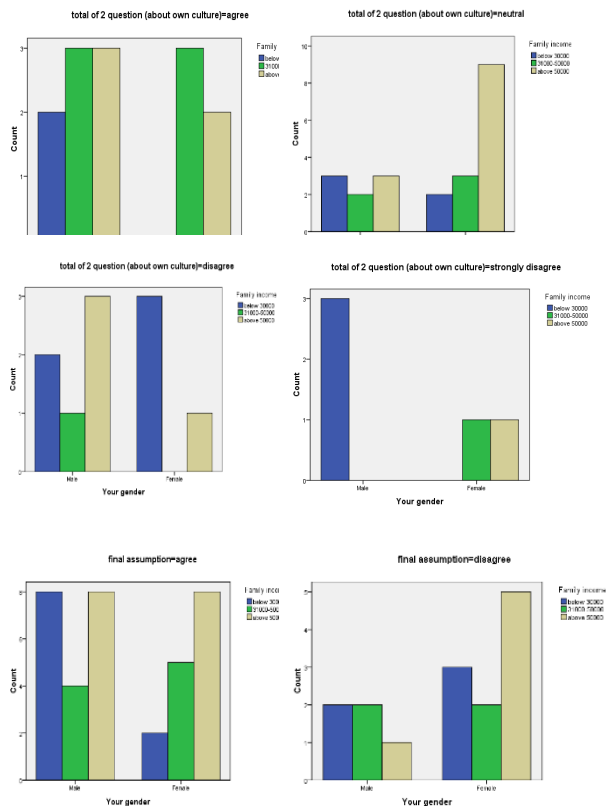
The correlation between exposure to foreign television channels and expectations of the respondents to adopt foreign cultural values was significant at 1% level (sig. 1-tailed 0.26) and a slightly positive relationship was resulted ($r = 0.026$). Regression analysis resulted the value of $\beta = 0.092$ which indicated less than one percent variation in cultural expectation was explained by the exposure.



Findings and Discussion

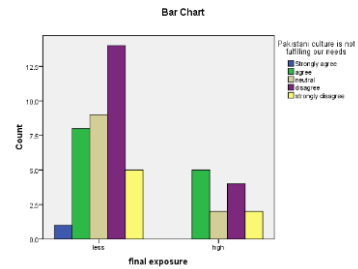
Demographic analysis found that 10% of the male respondents with low family income disagreed that their culture had not fulfilled their needs meanwhile, 4% of the male respondents with low income agreed. No female in that category responded that they were not satisfied with their culture. 6% each of the female respondents with family income middle and high agreed that there culture had not fulfilled their cultural needs. 10% of the male respondents with their family income average or high responded that there culture had not fulfilled their cultural needs. It was concluded that the students with more resources had more negative perception about their own culture. The phenomenon of dissatisfaction about the local culture might be increased with the passage of time as the people becoming more modern and equipped with more resources.

28% of the male respondents with low income assumed the western culture more relevant to their lives and should be adopted. Only 4 % replied against the positive assumption about the west. 28% of the male respondents with their family income average or high assumed the western cultural values a better concept of life. Only 4% of the female respondents with their low family income assumed the western culture a better one. 36% of the female respondents with their family income average or high assumed the western culture a better concept of life. Majority from the remaining remained neutral. Income status has played a vital role in

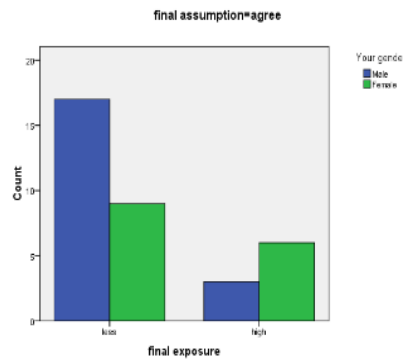
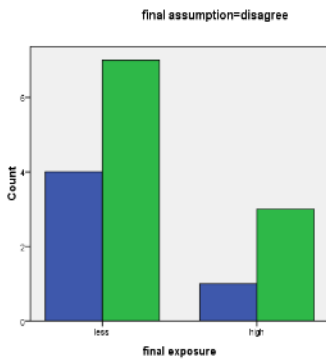


making difference in perceptions. It was resulted that the people with more resources and income will ready to adopt western culture in their lives.

38% of the male respondents with 8-10 hours average exposure to western television channels were in favour that there culture had not fulfilled their needs while, 42% of the female respondents in the same category replied same. 44% of the male respondents assumed the western culture a better one, 32% of the female respondents replied the same. Below 8% of the both gender went against to declare the western culture a good choice. The results argue that exposure to western television channels is increasing the positive perception about the western culture and dissatisfaction about their own culture. The results indicated that the students with more time spent with western television had inclined to adopt the western culture and of course, assumed an alien world in their minds that reflected in their responses as well.



It was found that 34% of the male and 18% of the female respondents was with the view that western culture was better than their own culture who viewed western television channels for less hours i.e. 5 hours or less in a week. 6% of the male and 12% of the female respondents with high exposure with the western television channels were inclined to the western culture. 8% of the male with less exposure and 2% of them with high exposure did not took the western culture a better one. 14% of the female with less exposure and 6% of them with high exposure were with the same point of view.



Conclusion

The results indicated that exposure to western television channels has resulted in making an alien cultural world in the minds of the audience as no respondent of this study had visited any western country. Massive level of manipulation of perception in favour of the western culture and against to local culture was assessed. The respondents with their family income more than low i.e. average or high were found more dissatisfied about their own culture and were more inclined to in favour of western culture. Negative assumption about the local culture and more perceived inclination to western culture had resulted the dissatisfaction among the viewers of western television channels. Attitudinal and behavioural effects in results of the perceived alien world will be a great contribution in the field.

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