

The Impact of foreign content on cultural and religious values of Pakistani society: A study of Turkish dubbed dramas

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Abstract

This research is about the influence of foreign content in Pakistani society and on their cultural and religious values. The research focuses on the demand and perception of masses regarding the influence of these Dramas. The qualitative methodology has been used to gather data for this research including survey questionnaires filled by the hundred respondents, while the secondary sources are the scholarly books, official websites and previous studies made by researchers. The questions asked by the respondents are used to determine if the locals of Pakistan like the actors, producers, and writers of Pakistani drama industry, believe that these foreign dubbed and un-dubbed dramas should get banned as they are a threat to the religious and cultural values of Pakistan. The result shows that though people think these dramas do not represent an Islamic society, still they want

the foreign content to be aired on their television sets. The research is followed by conclusions on the survey and some recommendations for the study.

Key Words: Foreign Content, Turkish Dramas, Cultural and religious values.

Introduction

This research article is about the impact of foreign content on cultural and religious values of Pakistani society, and Turkish dubbed dramas will be a matter of discussion. In this research article, the background of foreign content in Pakistan will be discussed; the effects of cultural imperialism will be explained. The background of the first Turkish dubbed film and drama of Pakistan will be focused. The involvement of PEMRA on Turkish dubbed content will be highlighted. The audience of these dubbed dramas will be investigated and political and economic benefit on Pakistan by Turkish content will be highlighted.

Pakistan is the developing country with deficiency of funds and talent (McClure, 2009). After independence, the Pakistani media industry confronted with many vicissitudes (Daniel & Elisabetta, 2014). In this scenario, Pakistanis had no choice to watch the qualified content of other countries (Ali, Khalid, & Hassan, 2015). Moreover, Indian and American media has created a huge impact on people, which led them to make them habitual of foreign content (Ali, Khalid, & Hassan, 2015). However, Pakistanis were more encouraged by Indian content because of the correspondences (McClure, 2009). The culture and language was the reason people could easily relate and understand the message of Indian content. Pakistani media are telecasting foreign content for many years. However, Indian channels are the one, which established the trend to show foreign content (The newspaper staff Reporter, 2012; Khan & Arif, 2009). Moreover, Indian drama serials accelerate the foreign culture in India as well as Pakistan. The Pakistani culture was affected by the transmission of culture by Indian dramas and movies (Shah, Nazir, Bhutti, & Gillani., 2016). The cultivation of new ideas started from the beginning of 2000 when Indian channels were telecasted in Pakistan. The Indian television channels such as Starplus, Colors TV, Star one, Sony, etc. were given access to telecasting their content in Pakistan. Subsequently, society gradually became addicted to Indian culture, which was a threat to Pakistani ideology (Zia, 2014). The Hindi

language is not difficult for Pakistani people to understand, which is why people were more attracted to the Indian culture and used to absorb whatever portrayed in their programs (Ali, Khalid, & Hassan, 2015).

Turkey is the world's fastest exporter of television series after the US. Turkish shows are available usually in multiple languages (dubbed versions). The Turkish TV series have created international popularity since 2000. Moreover, series are the lengthiest, of about 120 to 150 episodes (Aslam, Ali, Ullah, Munawar, & Maria., 2015).

Subsequently, Turkish dramas have gained popularity since 2000. Many Turkish dramas have been broadcasted in Pakistan; among them, the most popular are *Ask-Memnu*, which broke rating records in Turkey. This popular drama was on aired on the Pakistani channel URDU1. "*Fatmagul*" was the second most popular Turkish drama of Pakistan, aired by the same television channel, while the third best television series is *Muhtesem Yuzyl* aired by the channel *Geo-Kahani* (Cetin, 2014). According to Pakistani media's rating network, Media Logic, more than 55 million of Pakistan's population saw *Ask-Memnu*. This TV series was a part of Pakistani media channel from 2008 to 2010. It was based on 79 episodes was replayed almost 3 times because of its high rating and public demand (Christine & Ogan, 1998).

Dubbing of films and dramas series of foreign countries are on the intensification in Pakistan until the present day. As per the PEMRA ordinance 2002, the content will be regulated as per policies. Moreover, the content will be telecasted as per the preferences of people (PEMRA., 2016). This research will help in analyzing the impact of Turkish content in Pakistan. With the help of this research, the media office will be able to take stand for the betterment of the media industry of Pakistan.

Aims and objectives

The Aims and objective of this research article are

- To investigate the impact of foreign content on the people of Pakistan.
- To observe the response of the people as per foreign content.
- To examine alteration in culture.

Research Question

Following are the research question of this research article

- *How are the Turkish dramas threat to the Pakistani media industry including the career of actors, producers, directors, and writers?*
- *Do Turkish Dramas affect Pakistani society? Or do they have a significant role in the growth of Pakistan's economy?*
- *Do the culture and religious values of a society come under threat when foreign content is telecasted on television channels?*

Literature Review

Culture imperialism has a great influence on the masses in Pakistan. In the context of portraying content on television, the maintenance of the unequal relationship with other civilization is performed, and providing value to their own culture is promoted (Khan & Arif, 2009).

Herbert Schiller says,

“The concept of cultural imperialism describes as, the sum of the processes by which a society is brought into the modern world system. Public media are the foremost example of operating ‘Enterprises Theater’ used in the penetrative process. For penetration on a significant scale, the media themselves must be captured by the penetrating power. It transpires through the commercialization of broadcasting.”(Schiller & Herbert, 1976)

Tom McPhail defines electronic colonialism as the

“dependency-relationship is created by the importation of communication hardware, foreign-produced software, along with engineers, technicians, and related information protocols that vicariously establish a set of foreign norms, values, and expectations which, in varying degrees, may alter the domestic cultures and socialization processes.”(McPhail & Thomas, 1987)

The foreign content portrays western ideas of beauty, culture, and lifestyle, which decline of local cultures and decency of the people of Pakistan (PEMRA., 2016). However, modernization has been seen in the lifestyle of people. The modernization can be referred to as the adaptation of urbanization, literacy, mobility, and consumption of media. Here the consumption of media is the matter of discussion (Daniel & Elisabetta, 2014). Although, foreign content make cultural faith declined but also ease their life in many ways, such as the way of living, maintaining relations, etc. As compared to the Pakistani contents, the storyline mostly revolves around sensitive subjects like female humiliation, domestic abuse, suppression of women's voice, etc., which are being telecast for many years. However, Indian content is almost the same but in a more exaggerated manner (Christine & Ogan, 1998), while Turkish dramas focus on story and the main idea of the drama. The Turkish dramas show content, which is close to the reality that is way, people are more interested in watching them (Aslam, Ali, Ullah, Munawar, & Maria., 2015).

Impact of cultural and ethical imperialism on Pakistani society

Historian Joseph Ki-Zerbo once said,

“Our cultures are being reduced little by little to nothing. These technologies have no passport and no visa, but they are affecting us, and shaping us.”(Tomlinson & John, 1991)

Before centuries, countries used to exchanged goods and ideas by trade, art, and migrations. According to the Morley, “American culture media has the power to influence and control the developing countries and other nations.” He used a quote from Schiller

“Media necessary have straight forward, predictable and automatic effects on their audience.”(Tomlinson & John, 1991)

According to Galtung’s structure theory, there are five types of imperialism. Economic, political, military, communication and cultural (Ali K., 2016). As per research, the channel of influence in Pakistan is from Hollywood, Bollywood, and Turkish to Pakistan. The agenda of Pakistani drama content is to highlight the sensitive subject drama and societal darken issues such as extramarital affairs, the culture of divorce, domestic violence, etc. the purpose to telecast this issue is to eliminate them from society(Christine & Ogan, 1998). However, Indian and Turkish drama is more into telecasting romance, taboo themes, consumption of drugs/alcohol, etc. Due to the way of execution, it does not feel like they are portraying cultural imperialism (Khan & Arif, 2009). Moreover, high rated actors and celebrities influence people to adopt their way of dressing, language, fashion, lifestyle, and religion. Turkish and Indian content has similarities (Aslam, Ali, Ullah, Munawar, & Maria., 2015), with Pakistani content as per religion and culture. Therefore, English content from America has created a huge impact on a particular class of people of Pakistan who can understand English, however, as per dubbed English content

dubbing artist do changes in the language (Ali, Khalid, & Hassan, 2015).

In a report presented by Emile Rauschenberg in her work 'Mechanism is behind US Dominating of the Global cultural trade' says,

"The American movies were accounted for more than 60 percent of the box office sales in France. These figures were obtained from the ministry of culture of France in the 1990s."

Rauschenberg further says,

"This is the financial and intellectual imperialism that no longer grabs territory, but grabs consciousness, way of thinking and ways of living." (McClure, 2009)

Consequently, it was concluded that content from any country leaves an impact on any other countries (Ali, Khalid, & Hassan, 2015). On the other hand, video and audio editing can minimize the impact of the content but still, it changes lifestyle to modernization (Khan & Arif, 2009).

First Turkish dubbed film and drama in Pakistan

It involves re-recording of voices onto a soundtrack. Head of the post-production at Pinewood, Graham V. Hartstone says, "Dubbing always occurs at the tail end of the process. They'll spend as much time and money as they've got re-writing and shooting, nonetheless when it comes to dubbing they expect the mix to happen right the first time." Dubbing was first practiced in a musical when the actors did not have a satisfactory singing voice (Cetin, 2014). Now, dubbing permits the audiovisual material to be screened for the masses in countries where people do not understand the language that is delivered by performers in the original production (Ali K., 2016). Dubbing was introduced in the

1950s and after a few dubbed films, people started liking this new trend and gradually it became compulsory for the films to be dubbed (Tomlinson & John, 1991).

PEMRA on Turkish dubbed content

A recent consultation paper presented by PEMRA having the title ‘Consultation on Dubbing in Urdu or other local or regional language on landing privileges and satellite TV channels’, (PEMRA., 2016)

PEMRA also provided the benefits of dubbing for Pakistan in its consultations paper. It said that dubbing enables the viewers to comprehend a foreign language after it is translated into their national or local language (Aslam, Ali, Ullah, Munawar, & Maria., 2015). In rural areas, it would be challenging for people to understand English. Additionally, the programs of other foreign languages, like Chinese, Spanish, French, German, etc. if not dubbed in Urdu or other regional languages, it would become problematic for the majority of people to understand (PEMRA., 2016). As per the PEMRA ordinance, “being a content regularity authority in electronic media, every foreign drama must be qualified as per rules in order to telecast. Otherwise, permission will not be granted to them.”(PEMRA., 2016)

Views in favor of dubbed content:

Many broadcasters, exclusively those who are granted licensing rights, believe that if the foreign dramas, films, advertisements, and soaps were subtitled instead of being dubbed, their channels would lose viewership. In addition, various channels and companies that are dubbing foreign content in Urdu employ hundreds of people (PEMRA., 2016). Dubbed content are getting fame and appreciation in Pakistan. It is acceptable for those people who consider them as a piece of entertainment (Ali K., 2016). Furthermore, the benefits of dubbed content are, it provides a new experience for viewers, it maintains the moral of the story, it

provides ease in understanding, it educated people about new life, and it creates creativity of people (Aslam, Ali, Ullah, Munawar, & Maria., 2015).

Views against dubbed content:

Many actors, Producers, and directors protested to ban foreign content. Firdous Jamal, a Pakistani actor, said that the foreign content was a conspiracy against the local TV industry, hatched by the wealthy capitalist (2012)(Ali, Khalid, & Hassan, 2015). ‘The content which was against the local culture and values would not be tolerated and the artist community is united against the practice, said the vice- chairperson of unites Producers Association, Yasin Malik (2012) in a protest held outside the Lahore Press Club (Khan & Arif, 2009). Similarly, many people believe that they consider Pakistani content against their religious values so; it is unacceptable for them to adopt foreign dubbed content(Schiller & Herbert, 1976). Moreover, the drawback of dubbed content is, lack of professionalism in dubbing, exaggeration in way of delivering dialogues, and audio and video editing minimizes the originality in the content (Aslam, Ali, Ullah, Munawar, & Maria., 2015; Khan & Arif, 2009).

Analysis of economic and political views on foreign content

Turkish dubbed dramas are a threat to Pakistani culture and its religious values are one thing, but it is acting as a snag in the growth of the Pakistani drama industry (Ali K., 2016). Although, there are many benefits of foreign dubbed content there are some serious drawbacks, which cannot be ignored. There are always different views and comments of people regarding the issue of cultural imperialism. (Khan & Arif, 2009). The foreign dubbed content reduces the interest in people watching their home-produced content. This affects the economy and creates threats to the entertainment industry of Pakistan. In a further elaboration, people would start perusing foreign content until their home country make content like them (which requires huge investment)

(Christine & Ogan, 1998). Consequently, Turkish dubbed dramas cannot be criticized because they are the reason behind the progress of the Pakistani media industry (people diverted from watching Indian soaps to Turkish dubbed dramas). These dramas introduced different genres for a different audience (McClure, 2009). In addition, it opened up the minds of people by discussing social sensitive issues that were similar to the issues of Pakistani society (Zia, 2014). Pakistan and Turkey have closed cultural, historical and military relations that are now expanding into 'Deeping economic relations'. In a conference, the Turkish President Erdogan termed Pakistan as "Home away from Home" (Sarwar, 2002).

Therefore, in the case of Indian content politics are involved such as focusing on Hinduism and have Hindu-Muslim discrimination. But in Turkish content, no discrimination has been seen except cultural variances (Khan & Arif, 2009; Aslam, Ali, Ullah, Munawar, & Maria., 2015).

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this research article is based on two major theories that will be used in analyzing the data collection (James, 2015). These two theories are

- Cultivation analysis theory: This theory talks about the impact of media for a long period. It means the idea is cultivated for many years to leave a long-term impact on people. The cultivating period can be five or more than five years (masscommtheory.com, 2015).
- Public opinion formation: public opinion formation talks about the formation of opinion by media. The process of opinion formation is powerful that can change the attitude and behavior of the public (Media and Communication Studies, 2014).

Research Methodology

The research methodology provides a way to perform research (Clarke, 2005). The techniques that are chosen to identify the aims and objectives of this research are given below.

The research philosophy of this research article will be positivism because the nature of this research is based on the survey; this philosophy will be suitable for performing the research. The research method of this research article will be quantitative. The reason to do quantitative research is to observe the responses from heterogeneous society. For this research article, the deductive approach will be best for data collection. The research design of this research article will be exploratory as per the question of the research, which is, “impact of foreign content on the Pakistani society. “For this research article, mono-method will be the best option to analyze the data collection such as primary and secondary. Six months will be required to do this research. In addition, due to limited time, analysis of data by the limited response from restricted respondents will be analyzed. In addition, the time horizon is cross-sectional. For this research article, a survey (online) will be conducted. Eleven questions will be prepared. The sample size will be 100 respondents, and the target audience will be people of Karachi who watch dramas. The age limit of the respondent will be between, 20 to 50 and no gender prioritization.

Findings, Analysis and Discussion

When the question was asked, "Which foreign content do you prefer the most Indian, American, Pakistani and Turkish?" In response to the question, 75% people said Turkish drama, 10% people said Indian drama, and 15% said American drama.

When the question was asked, “Which channel do you prefer to watch the foreign dubbed content?” in response, “URDU 1” and “Geo-Kahani” are providing high-quality content.

When the question was asked, “Do you feel that our society is influenced by these dramas?” In the response, 84.8% answered with a ‘yes’ and 15.2% of them said ‘No’.

When the question was asked, “Which age group is more influenced by these dramas?”, in response to the question, 52.5% of the respondents claimed people who are between the age "20 to 30" watch these dramas more often, while 24.2% of respondents believe that people of age" 10 to 20" watch them more.

When the question was asked, “Does foreign content become a threat to our family and marriage institutions?”, in the response of the question, 56.6% of the respondents replied with a ‘Yes’ and 43.4% said a ‘No’. There is just a slight difference in the percentage of both the answers, but as it seems, most of the respondents believe that these dramas are, a threat to the family and marriage institutions of Pakistan.

When the question was asked, “Do you think these dramas are influencing our culture?” people responded, 83% of the respondents answered that these dramas are influencing our culture, while 17% of the respondents think they are not influential.

When the question was asked, "Do these Turkish dramas represent an Islamic society?", in response, 59.2% of the people believe that the Turkish dramas do not represent an Islamic society, while 32.7% think that they do represent it a bit. In addition, 8.2% of people believe that Turkish dramas represent an Islamic society.

When the question was asked, “Should all the Foreign Content be banned, and only Pakistani dramas get on-aired so that we protect our culture?”, in response, 32.3% of the respondents disagreed while 31.3% were neutral to this opinion. 11.1% of the people agreed to ban foreign content.

When the question was asked, “Are the developed nations creating culture influence on other nations?” in response, 60.6% people

replied with a 'Yes', 31.3 1% said 'maybe' while 8.1% said, "this is not true".

When the question was asked, "Do you think our Pakistani dramas are decreasing the sanctity of family relations?", in response, 48.5% agreed to the question, 34.3% of the people were neutral towards the thought and 17.2% believed that the Pakistani dramas are not decreasing the sanctity of the family relations.

When the question was asked, "Do Turkish dramas have motives to influence economic and political factors rather than providing entertainment?" in response, 36.4% of the people gave a neutral response, 21.2% disagreed, 19.2% agreed, and 15.2% strongly agreed to the question.

The survey shows that people want to see Turkish dramas but also they want to protect their culture and religious values. Pakistan and its people have always been in a confused state, both politically and ideologically. PEMRA should either air those dramas that represent the Islamic society completely or it should ban the once that is of any threat to the culture or religious ethnicity of Pakistan.

People are attracted towards foreign content which is why they watch these dubbed dramas, but they also want to protect their lifestyle. Pakistanis believe Pakistani dramas are, more or less decreasing the sanctity of family relations. It might be the reason behind turning towards foreign dubbed or un-dubbed dramas rather than watching the local dramas. Respondents of this survey also believe that the reason behind these dubbed dramas have political and economic motives. People have a very neutral perspective regarding this question.

In foreign dubbed content, Turkish dramas are highly in demanded that is why most of the respondents answered "Turkish" when asked what content they watch the most. However, Indian dramas are not dubbed, and they are easy to understand by the locals of Pakistan. Consequently, Indian dramas and American Drama have

gained the public's interest. People have different choices to fulfill their requirements, such as; many channels are working to provide them the high-quality video, so professional voiceover on the characters of those foreign dramas needs to be dubbed. As per the survey, it was concluded that people like to see high quality dubbed dramas from well-reputed channels. Since there is easy access to watch these dramas, people of all ages and groups get the advantages of watching them whenever they want. It means, it can leave a harmful impact on children by watching love story and suicide-based dramas (80% Turkish Drama ends up in murder and suicide). Moreover, it was found in research, that when we start watching dramas/ reality shows of other countries, we start adopting their culture and traditions without realizing it, and because of that, western culture is bringing the concept of extra-marital affairs, illegitimate activities, and divorces. In addition, it was concluded that people of Pakistan believe that these foreign dubbed dramas are not just a threat to our family and marriage institutions of Pakistan but also they are influencing Pakistani culture.

People think that Turkish Dramas are harmful to our Islamic society because people in Turkish drama drink alcohol, wear a short dress, have illegal activities and concept of female suppression. However, knowing the facts, people still want to watch more Turkish Dramas. It is amazingly shocking to see that most of the people are against a ban on Turkish Dramas. With the help of this research, it was concluded that it creates a positive impact on the economy.

Moreover, Dubbed content are getting fame and appreciation in Pakistan has raised questions on it spreading cultural imperialism and being a threat to the media industry of Pakistan where many actors, Producers, and directors protested to ban foreign content.

Conclusion

Therefore, with the implication of primary and secondary researches, it is concluded that the foreign dramas, as per public demand, should not be banned. Nevertheless, the rules and regulations mentioned in the consultation paper presented by PEMRA are to be followed by the people of the dubbing industry as well as the local drama industry of Pakistan. As the media industries are a significant source generating economy for Pakistan, both the industries are allowed to air their programs. Conversely, in the prime time, only local dramas of Pakistan must be on-aired. On the other hand, if the number of dramas and films are imported from foreign countries, it must be checked before they start being dubbed. Consequently, people in both industries will be employed. As per the likes and dislikes are considered, it is up to the people whether they adopt other culture or not by watching or avoiding them.

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