The Influence of TV News on Youth: Trust, Perception and Mental Health Impact

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Abstract

Television is considered a powerful mass medium, which is not only meant for dissemination and analyzing the news but also the credibility and worth of news line being broadcasted. The influence of TV news channels has been massive from 21st century. The aim of this research is to take the opinion of youth to check the credibility of TV news in Pakistan as compare to the news shared on social media**. (Zuzana Rojková, 2015)** explores, television has got acceptance as compared to the other media on the issue of prime importance. Everyone wants to know about the happenings around the world and put trust in news channels and the masses without critical thinking accepts all the information. People use internet frequently but still questions the credibility as compare to the traditional media. **(Johnson, 1998)** further concluded the study that people do have credibility issues with traditional media but they are neglected because they are very less as compare to digital media. This quantitative research is based on survey methodology. By applying purposive sampling technique on 116 students selected from private universities; UMT and USKT of Sialkot Pakistan. The data was collected from media department students of private university by using 5 Likert close ended questionnaire. 46.6% of respondents agree that political parties influence TV news, and 22.4% strongly agree. 40.5% of respondents agree that they trust Pakistani news channels over international ones, while 24.1% remain neutral. This suggests a moderate level of trust. 50.9% of respondents still prefer TV news over social media, suggesting a foundation for rebuilding trust through better reporting.

Introduction

Television is a technology used to communicate with wider audience within a short time period. It provides information through channels to in various forms to shape public opinion. **(Jaime Lopez, 2023)** interprets, mass media notably influence people`s opinion illusion and reality. It works as a watchdog and secures public interest and spread awareness. Television in particular is a most influential medium of electronic media. **(Jonathan Bignell, 2022)** says, TV allows people to see videos, pictures and hear audios.it do storytelling by sharing images and messages. **(Zulfiqar, 2020)** states, violence based content and news negatively affects the viewers psychological state and change their opinion about the world. The 64% youth of Pakistan`s population are a critical demographic for changing national discourse and shaping public opinion.

Talking about traditional media, television played a vital role in delivering information to the masses. However, in the digital age the information outlook is increasingly evolving with the digital platforms particularly social media emerging as prominent sources of news and information. But the ones with traditional mindset and peer groups still. **(Norris, 2001)** explains, the trust in political institutions is nearly linked to trust in media which significantly influences public perceptions of institutional transparency and credibility. **(Sonia Livingstone, 2008)** proceeds, political talk shows are base of Pakistani television. The major share of news engagement of majority of Pakistani citizens occurs from such talk shows. The concept of news engagement is understood as much than casual news consumptions, essentially including cognitive and motivational dimensions in news consumptions**. (Zuzana Rojková, 2015)** explores, television has got acceptance as compared to the other media on the issue of prime importance. Everyone wants to know about the happenings around the world and put trust in news channels and the masses without critical thinking accepts all the information. Often the news broadcasting based on negative reports. Negative content is more attracted towards audience than positive content shown on news channels. **(Ali, Role of electronic media in changing value system in Pakistan., 2013)** says, talking about the breaking news considerations, it is known as a trend on satellite television channels. Sometimes news channels put aside core value of news in the competition and struggle of being more prevailing. Few studies show private channels are more concerned about breaking news and presents specious content for commercial benefits. **(Frye, 2005)** conducts, the current news coverage is full of sensationalism. Realities are inflated to appear seriously, thrilling and sensational. News stories are meant to gain higher ratings and more cash in a certain media. All media shares a detailed report on news to ensure they get a lot of sensational visuals. Competition between vying channels became vicious and the media changed into more obsessed with taking pills on violence and terrorism in order to get higher ratings. News channels focus more on sensationalistic news than informative one to gain more attention for the audience. Sensationalism is used for emotion arousing practice and the news are now designed in such a way to create fear or make more thrill the news shown on media**. (Madassar Hussain Shah, 2022)** explains, for breaking news each channel sensationalizes every issue and shows negative news as breaking news. This trend is effecting the perception of instability, most of TV channels lies under the category of 'news channels' where current affairs are share with general public, interestingly, 95% of audience likes to watch news channels in Pakistan.

Objectives
1. Analyze the trust in television media and its impact on public opinion in Pakistan.
2. Investigate the effects of sensationalism and biased reporting on viewer`s perceptions and societal stability.

Problem Statements:
1. Declining credibility of TV media due to sensationalism, misinformation and unethical practices.
2. Is youth shifting towards digital platforms, questioning the reliability of traditional media.

Research Questions
1. How much do youth in Pakistan trust TV news channels to provide accurate, unbiased and unethical reporting?
2. What factors influence the trust of Pakistani youth in TV news, such as perceived sensationalism, bias or relevance to daily life?

Literature Review

(Pandey, 2022) states, increasing competitions between different media organizations and channels has boosted commercialization and popularization of media content. **(Jamil, 2021)** shows, current situation of Pakistan is where the national security and personal security has been exploiting to rule again over channels and regulating the information they share. The framework of competitive authoritarianism that says there are risks for journalists and the state`s use of these methods to restrict free speech. **(Wilson, 2019)** says, freedom of expression is a base for the development of a country. It helps in getting knowledge and open gates for future adventures. It helps in finding and solving issues that hinder growth. According to **(Saeed, 2021),** media through framing and management portrays facts and news to promotes its hidden agenda. A result of group sampling of 72 media students in Lahore, the study result shows that Pakistani media is not working fairly, most of the respondents says Pakistani media is unethical and biased. **(Ahmad, 2011)** says that journalistic ethics and code of conduct has been abolished with the fact; promoting yellow and lifafa journalism. **(Quackenbush, 2013)** examines that the credibility of media is need to be researched not only in Pakistan but other countries too. The audience are not sure about the authenticity of content shown in news. According to audience the accuracy and objectivity has always been compromised on the bases of biasedness. **(Baloch, 2018)** explains, audience are more influenced towards the channels that share news about their affiliated political party. The study concludes even if the media is unbiased and share neutral content, the audience still has biased approach towards the news and information. Previous study concludes the credibility of news on internet is still a question. People use internet frequently but still questions the credibility as compare to the traditional media. **(Johnson, 1998)** further concluded the study that people do have credibility issues with traditional media but they are neglected because they are very less as compare to digital media. **(Ahmed, 2011)** explains that the talk shows are base for setting political influence in young people, people watching talk shows are more aware than those who don`t. **(Hassan, 2018)** says Pakistani media is controlled by few people who shares their ideologies in different agendas, sometimes by spreading false news. Researchers analyzed socially constructed ideology promoted in headlines of news bulletins of different Pakistani news channels. **(El Semary, 2013)** concludes, accuracy of traditional journalism stems from the experienced correspondents and editors also from the depth of news coverage from analysis and discussion. **(Gaziano, 1986)** concluded the study that credible news has two basic components, reporting and accuracy of source. Reporting was measured through journalistic expertise, honesty and caring attitude. Research work was done with a special focus on message completeness and fairness of the news story and consistency of public opinion**. (Panday, 2009)** says, traditional media that refers to the backbone of state can play a profound role in objectivity, factual information and expert opinions on the issues and events. **(Tsfati, 2012)** says, other scholars have also analyzed different studies understand the objectivity in news media such as trust and validity. **(Hackett, 1996)** also found that democratic society citizens think that only media and raise voices at national and international level and get their problems resolved**. (Keller, 2013)** says, journalist`s affiliation and associations are clearly being shown in content and analysis while writing a news story and they do not prevent from showing the unverified stories and biased interpretations.

Limitations

Youth`s Trust on TV News In Pakistan, this research is not done at national level but only in private universities; UMT and USKT of Sialkot Pakistan. This study aims to check the credibility of TV news according to youth.

Methodology

This quantitative research is based on survey methodology. By applying purposive sampling technique on 116 students selected from private universities; UMT and USKT of Sialkot Pakistan. The data was collected from media department students of private university by using 5 Likert close ended questionnaire. Data was analyzed by applying frequencies, percentages and cross tabulation by using SPSS.

Hypothesis:
- The youth in Pakistan have a moderate level of trust in TV news, with skepticism stemming from perceived political bias and sensationalism.
- Youth trust in TV news can be improved by focusing on impartial, fact-based reporting and addressing issues relevant to younger audience.

Variables
Independent Variable
Amount of time spent watching TV news daily.
Perceptions of TV news attributes (e.g., accuracy, bias, transparency, sensationalism)
Dependent Variables:
Level of trust in TV news (e.g., reliance for current affairs, ethical journalism practices).
Impact of TV news on youth perspectives and decisions (e.g., relevance, mental health).

Theoretical Framework
Agenda Setting Theory, developed by McCombs and Shaw (2000) and has undergone extensive examination over several decades. Initially concentrated on creating connections and drawing broader conclusions, subsequent research has delved in contingent conditions. This theory analyzes how the media shapes public opinions, emphasizing specific issues at the first level and exploring attribute salience at the second level. The substantive dimension encompasses qualities, while the affective dimensions considers emotional tones, enhancing the comprehension of media`s impact on public opinion. Agenda setting , a highly influential theory on media`s political impact (**Garbar, 2005**), not only delves into its effect on public opinion but also explores its significant role in shaping the agendas of policy makers. Scholars often uses the term 'Agenda Building' to describe the process of transferring media priorities. McCombs and Shaw, further explored that the media play a vital role in shaping the agenda for campaigns. The theory supports this research and fit to its framework.

4. Tables and Graphs:

Table 4.1 Crosstab of age of respondents

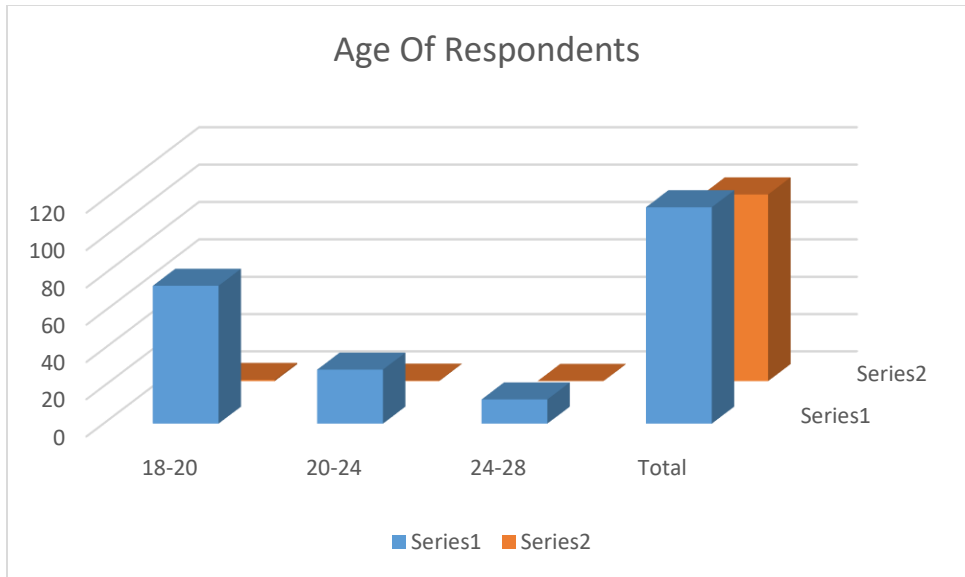|		18-20	20-24	24-28	Total
Respondents	Count	74	29	13	116
	%of total	63.8%	25.0%	11.2%	100

Age Of Respondents

Table 4.1 shows cross tab of age of respondents. The overall data shows 63.8 % respondents between 18 to 20 ages as compared to other categories 25.0 between 20-24, 11.2% respondents between 24-28 age.

Table 4.2 Crosstab of gender of respondents

		male	female	Total
Respondents	Count	33	83	116
%of total		28.6%	71.6%	100

Gender of Respondents
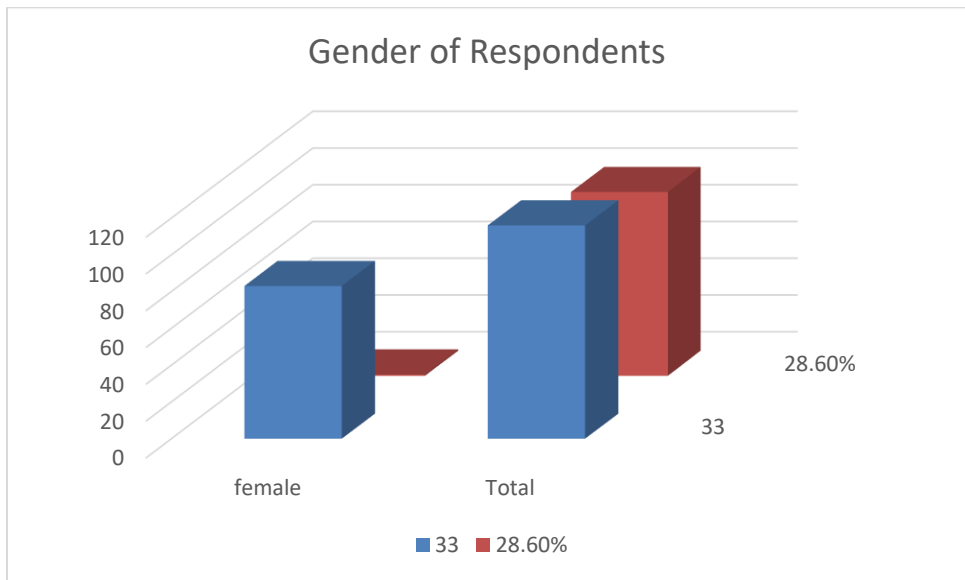
Table 4.2 shows cross tab of gender of respondents. The overall data shows 71.6% respondents are female as compared to other respondents which are 28.6% of males.

Table 4.3 Crosstab of Qualification of Respondents.

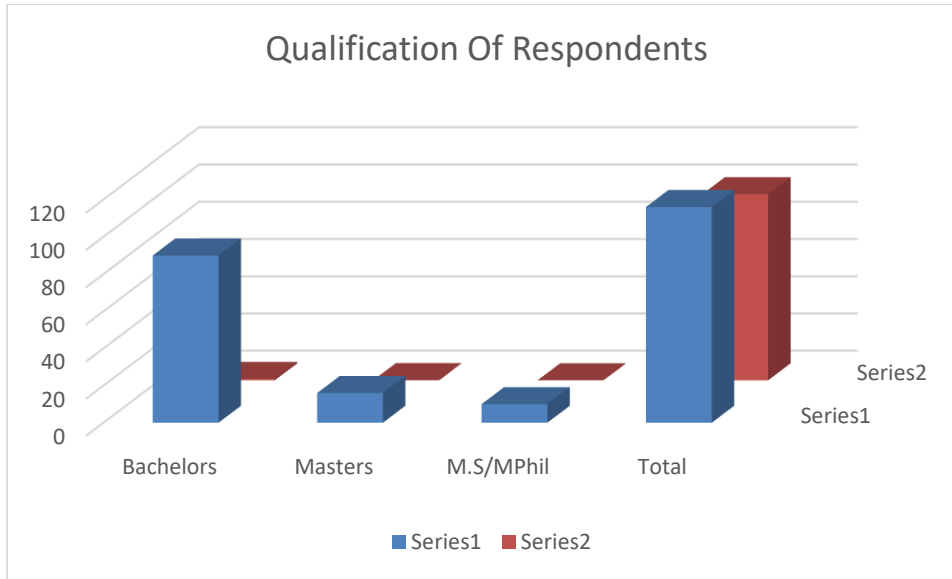|		Bachelors	Masters	M.S/MPhil	Total
Respondents	Count	90	16	10	116
%of total		77.6%	13.8%	8.6%	100

Table 4.3 shows cross tab of qualification of respondents. The overall data shows 77.6% respondents that are from bachelors as compare to other categories, 13.8% that are Masters respondents and 8.6% of M.S/MPhil respondents.

Table 4.4 Crosstab of Time spent of Respondents.

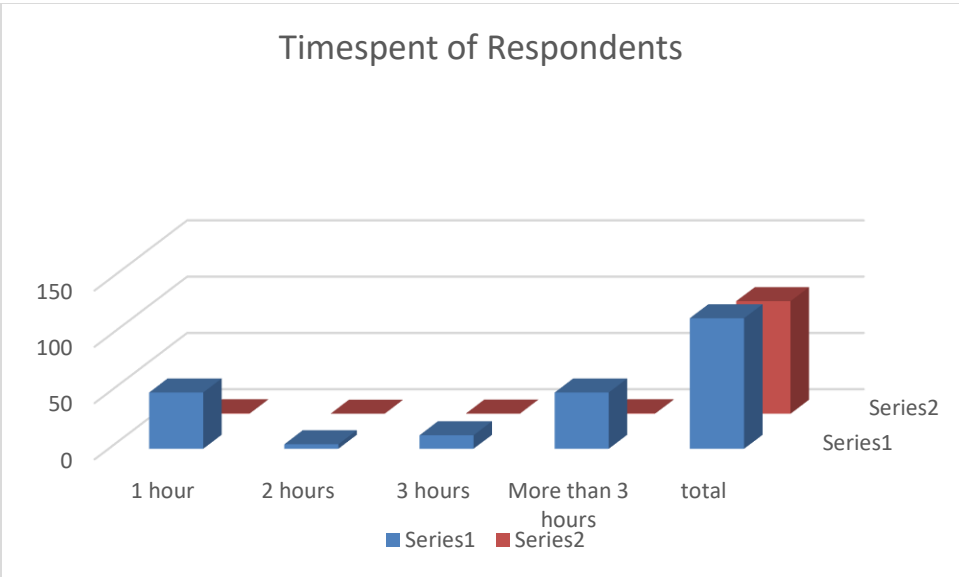|		1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	More than 3 hours	total
Respondents	Count	50	4	12	50	116
%of total		43.1%	3.4%	10.3%	43.1%	100

Timespent of Respondents

Table 4.4 shows cross tab of time spent of respondents on watching mainstream media. The overall data shows 43.1% respondents that watches news 1 hour and also 43.1% of respondents that has more than 3 hours watch time daily, as compare to other categories, 10.3% are the respondents that watches news for 3 hours and 3.4% of respondents have 2 hours of watch time.

Table 4.5 Crosstab of Accuracy and Authenticity of Mainstream Media News towards Audience.

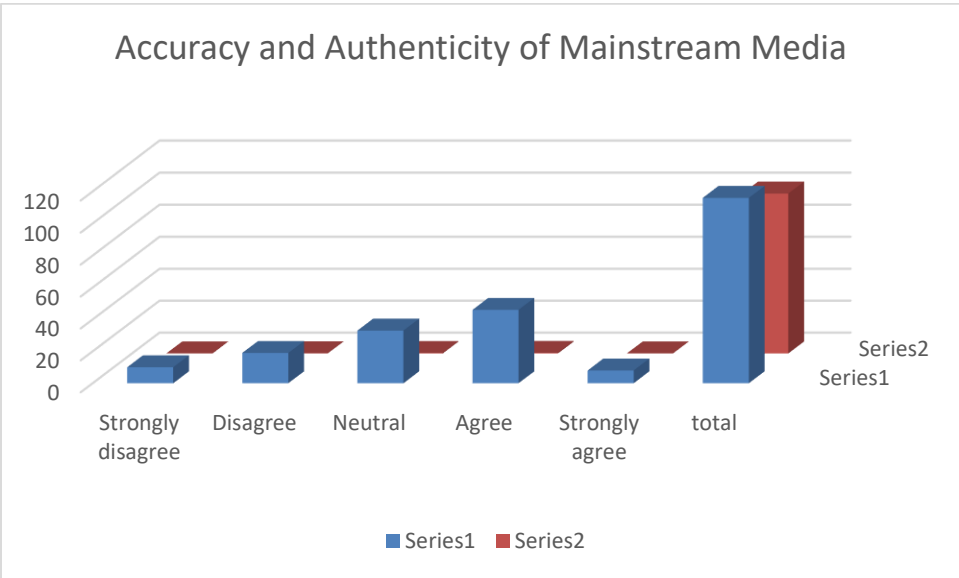|		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	total
Respondents	Count	10	19	33	46	8	116
%of total		8.6%	16.4%	28.4%	39.7%	6.9%	100

Accuracy and Authenticity of Mainstream Media

Table 4.5 shows cross tab of accuracy and authenticity of mainstream media news. The overall data shows 39.7% respondents that agree with respect to other respondents with 28.4% that shows neutral thoughts, 16.4% of respondents disagrees, 8.6% of respondents strongly disagrees and 6.9% strongly agrees with the term.

Table 4.6 Crosstab of Unbiased Coverage.

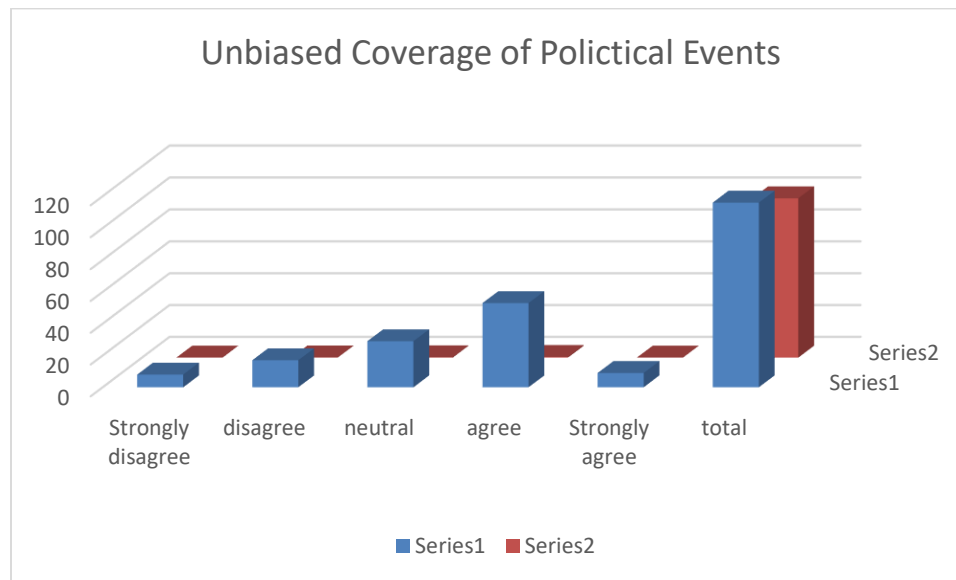|		Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	Strongly agree	total
Respondents	Count	8	17	29	53	9	116
%of total		6.9%	14.7%	25.0%	45.7%	7.8%	100

Table 4.6 show crosstab of unbiased coverage of political events by TV news channels. The overall data shows 45.7% of respondents agrees with the unbiased coverage as compare to the other categories 25.0% of respondents are neutral, 14.7% respondents disagree, 7.8% respondents show strongly agree opinion and 6.9% of respondents have strongly disagree opinion.

Table 4.7 Crosstab of Reliance for Current Affairs.

		Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	Strongly agree	total
Respondents	Count	14	9	36	48	9	116
%of total		12.1%	7.8%	31.0%	41.4%	7.8%	100

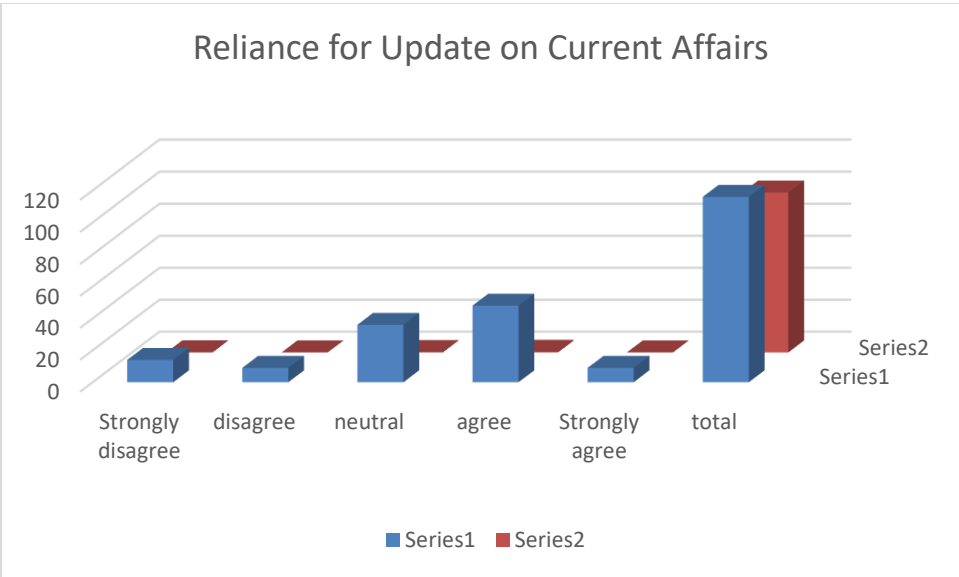Reliance for Update on Current Affairs

Table 4.7 show crosstab of reliance of audience for current affairs on TV news. The overall data shows 41.4% of respondents agree as compare to the other categories 31.5% of respondents are neutral, 12.1% respondents strongly disagree, 7.8% respondents are disagreeing and 7.8% of respondents have strongly agree opinion.

Table 4.8 Crosstab of Transparency for Information Resources.

		Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	Strongly agree	total
Respondents	Count	5	20	32	54	5	116
%of total		4.3%	17.2%	27.6%	46.6%	4.3%	100

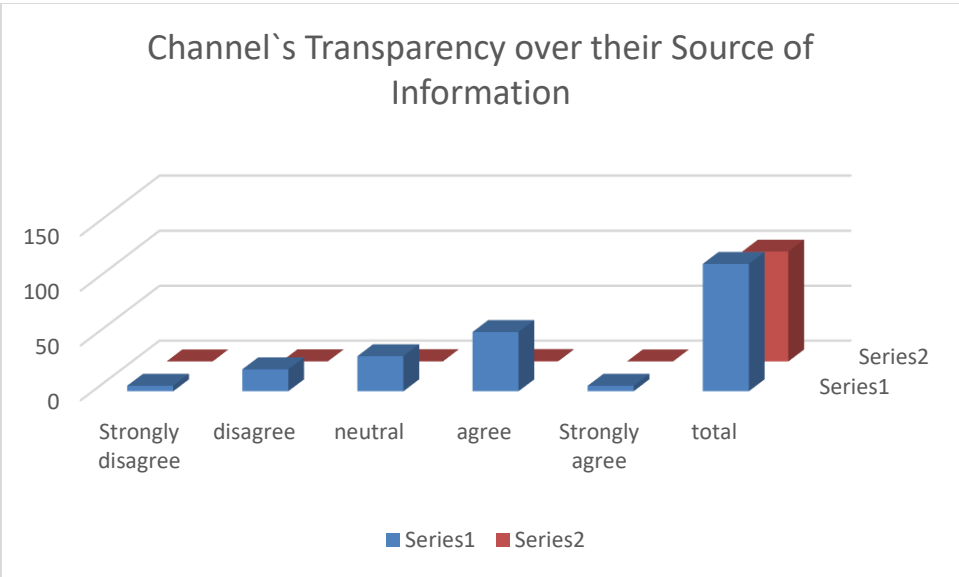Channel`s Transparency over their Source of Information

Table 4.8 show crosstab of transparency of information resources of TV news channels. The overall data shows 46.6% of respondents agree as compare to the other categories 27.6% of respondents are neutral, 17.2% respondents disagree, 4.3% respondents are strongly disagreeing and 4.3% of respondents have strongly agree opinion.

Table 4.9 Crosstab of Channel`s Political and Business interests.

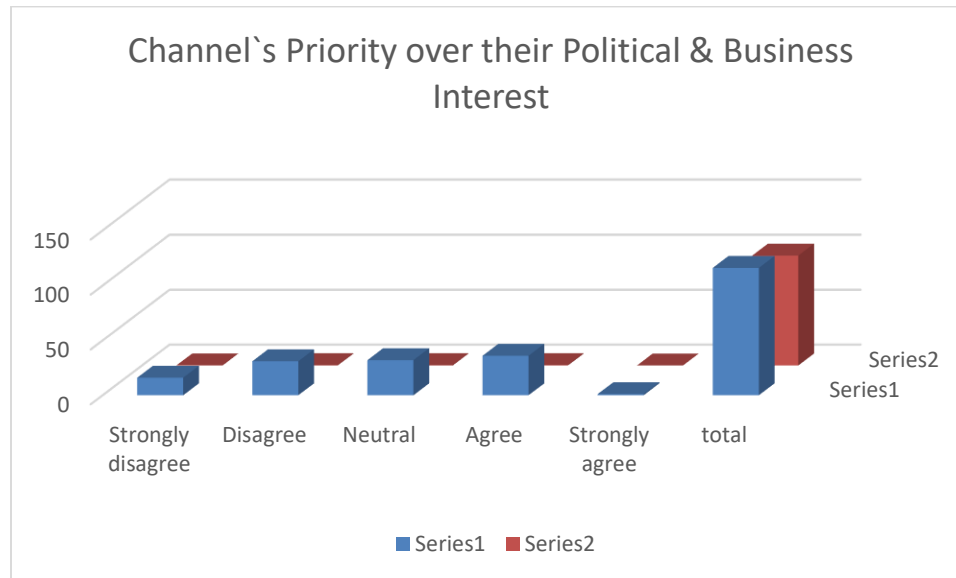|		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	total
Respondents	Count	16	31	32	36	1	116
%of total		13.8%	26.7%	27.6%	31.0%	.9%	100

Table 4.9 show crosstab of TV news channel`s priority over their political and business interests. The overall data shows 31.0% of respondents agree as compare to the other categories 27.6% of respondents are neutral, 26.7% respondents disagree, 13.8% respondents are strongly disagreeing and 0.9% of respondents have strongly agree opinion.

Table 4.10 Crosstab of Ethical Journalism Practices.

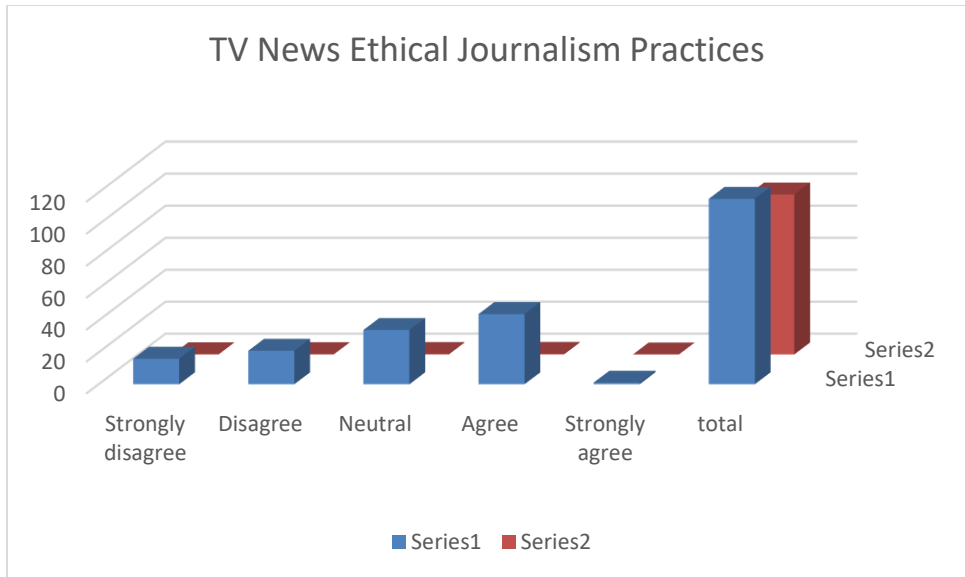|		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	total
Respondents	Count	16	21	34	44	1	116
%of total		13.8%	18.1%	29.3%	37.9%	.9%	100

TV News Ethical Journalism Practices

Table 4.10 show crosstab of ethical journalism practices in TV news channels. The overall data shows 37.9% of respondents agree as compare to the other categories 29.3% of respondents are neutral, 18.1% respondents disagree, 13.8% respondents are strongly disagreeing and 0.9% of respondents have strongly agree opinion.

Table 4.11 Crosstab of Perspectives and Concerns of Youth.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	total
Respondents	Count	7	26	34	47	2	116
%of total		6.0%	22.4%	29.3%	40.5%	1.7%	100

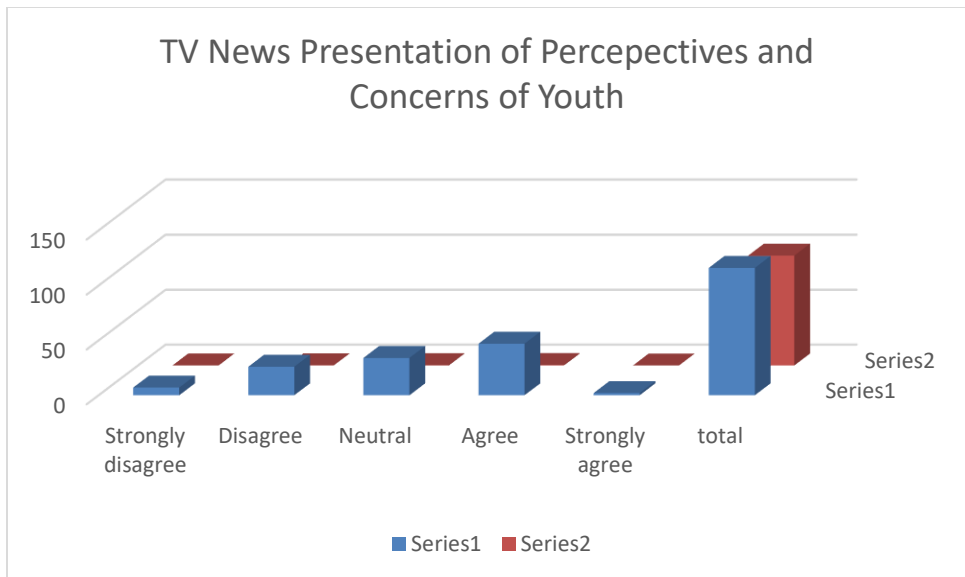TV News Presentation of Percepectives and Concerns of Youth

Table 4.11 show crosstab of representation of perspectives and concerns of youth with TV news. The overall data shows 40.5% of respondents agree as compare to the other categories 29.3% of respondents are neutral, 22.4% respondents disagree, 6.0% respondents are strongly disagreeing and 1.7% of respondents have strongly agree opinion.

Table 4.12 Crosstab of Relevance to Daily life and Future.

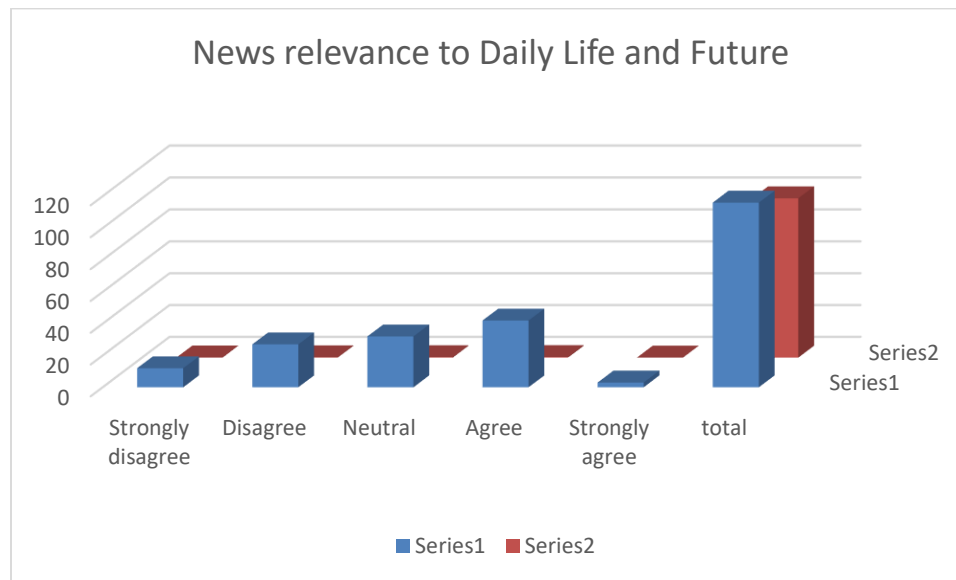|		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	total
Respondents	Count	12	27	32	42	3	116
%of total		10.3%	23.3%	27.6%	36.2%	2.6%	100

Table 4.12 show crosstab of news relevance of news to daily life and future. The overall data shows 36.2% of respondents agree as compare to the other categories 27.6% of respondents are neutral, 23.3% respondents disagree, 10.3 % respondents are strongly disagreeing and 2.6% of respondents have strongly agree opinion.

Table 4.13 Crosstab of Effectiveness of issues on Youth.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	total
Respondents	Count	5	19	27	57	8	116
%of total		4.3%	16.4%	23.3%	49.1%	6.9%	100

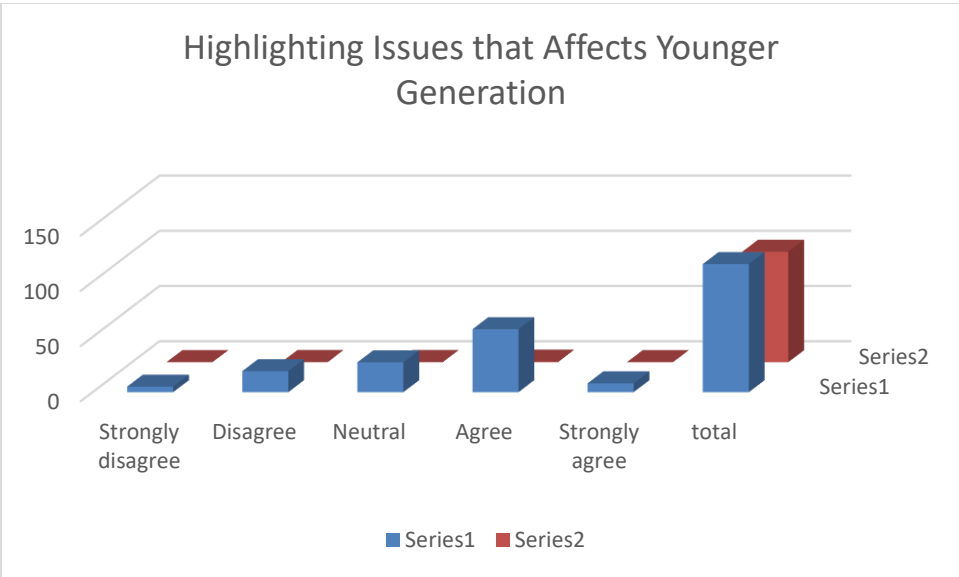Highlighting Issues that Affects Younger Generation

Table 4.13 show crosstab of issues that affects younger generation. The overall data shows 49.1% of respondents agree as compare to the other categories 23.3% of respondents are neutral, 16.4% respondents disagree, 6.9% respondents are strongly agreeing and 4.3% of respondents have strongly disagree opinion.

Table 4.14 Crosstab of Preference of TV news over Social Media.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	total
Respondents	Count	12	15	25	59	5	116
%of total		10.3%	12.9%	21.6%	50.9%	4.3%	100

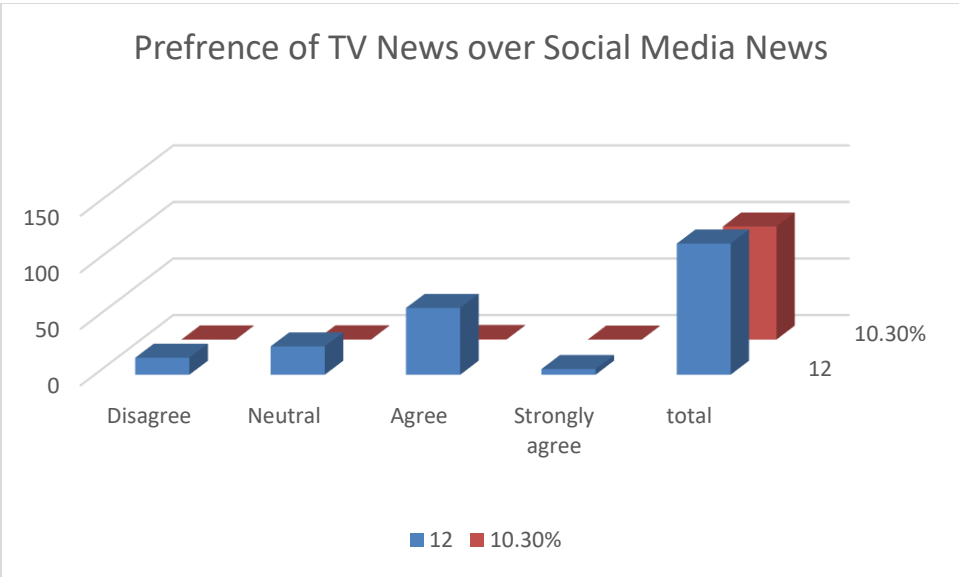Prefrence of TV News over Social Media News

Table 4.14 show crosstab of audience`s preference towards TV News as compare to social media news. The overall data shows 50.9% of respondents agree as compare to the other categories 21.6% of respondents are neutral, 12.9% respondents disagree, 10.3% respondents are strongly disagreeing and 4.3% of respondents have strongly agree opinion.

Table 4.15 Crosstab of Help in Decision making.

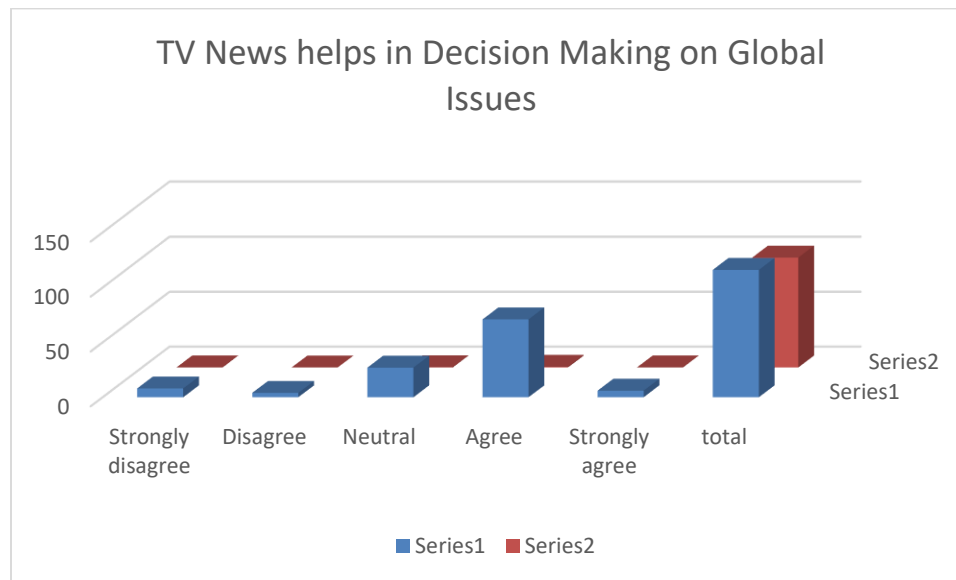|		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	total
Respondents	Count	8	4	27	71	6	116
%of total		6.9%	3.4%	23.3%	61.2%	5.2%	100

Table 4.15 show crosstab of TV News for helping audience in decision making on global issues. The overall data shows 61.2% of respondents agree as compare to the other categories 23.3% of respondents are neutral, 6.9% respondents strongly disagree, 5.2% respondents are strongly agreeing and 3.4% of respondents are disagree.

Table 4.16 Crosstab of Trust on Pakistani news channels over International News outlets.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	total
Respondents	Count	18	19	28	47	4	116
%of total		15.5%	16.4%	24.1%	40.5%	3.4%	100

Pakistani News Channels Reports more Accurately Than International News Outlets
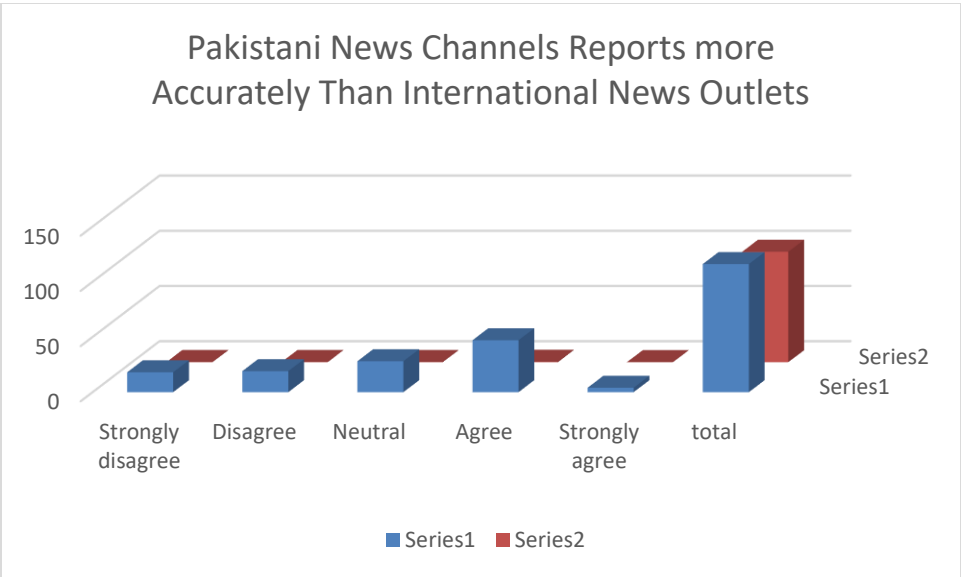
Table 4.16 show crosstab of audience`s trust on Pakistani news channels accurate reporting than international news outlets. The overall data shows 40.5% of respondents agree as compare to the other categories 24.1% of respondents are neutral, 16.4% respondents disagree, 15.5% respondents are strongly disagreeing and 3.4% of respondents have strongly agree opinion.

Table 4.17 Crosstab of Influence of Political Parties on News channels.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	total
Respondents	Count	3	6	27	54	26	116
%of total		2.6%	5.2%	23.3%	46.6%	22.4%	100

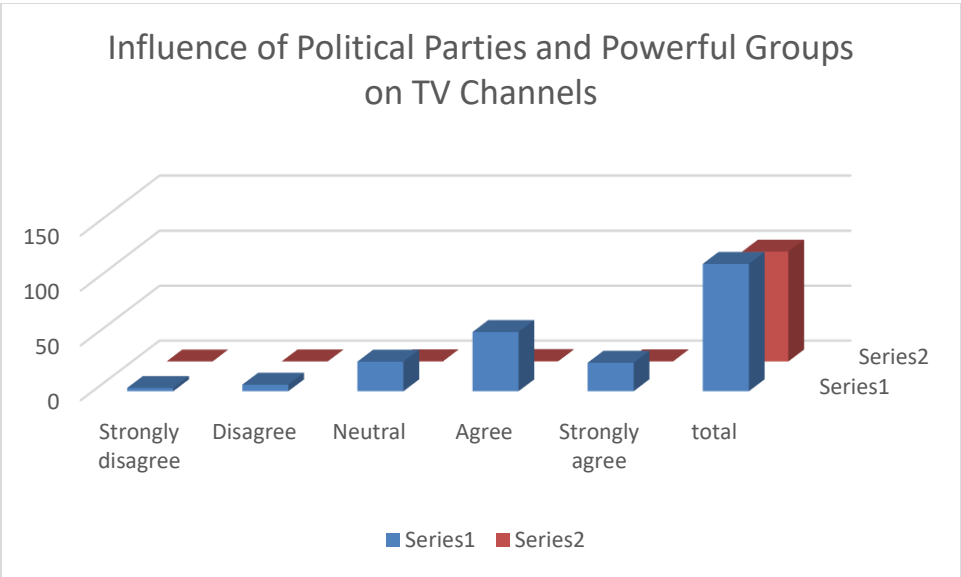Influence of Political Parties and Powerful Groups on TV Channels

Table 4.17 show crosstab of influence of political parties and powerful groups on TV news channels. The overall data shows 46.6% of respondents agree as compare to the other categories 23.3% of respondents are neutral, 22.4% respondents strongly agree, 5.2% respondents are disagreeing and 2.6% of respondents have strongly disagree opinion.

Table 4.18 Crosstab of Sensationalism over delivering Important News.

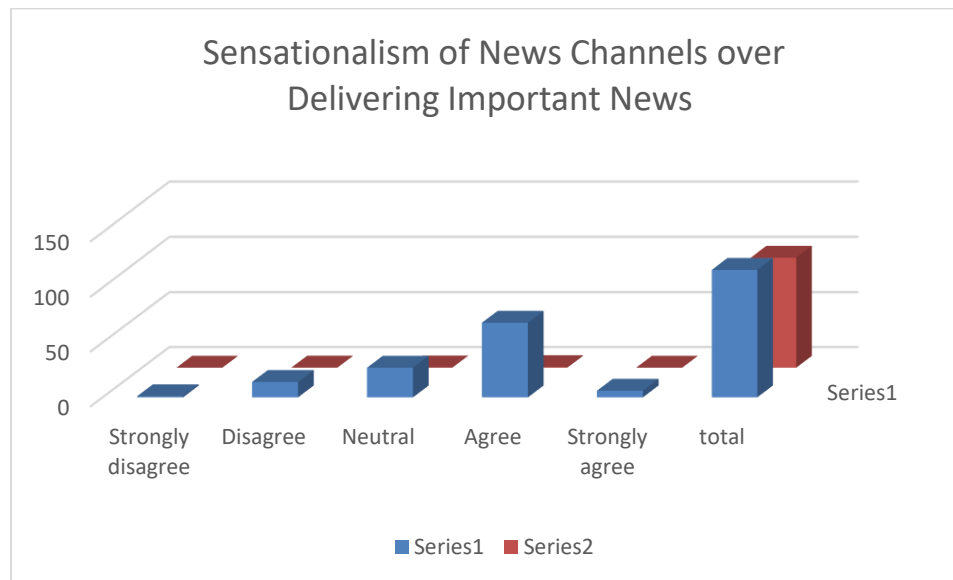|		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	total
Respondents	Count	1	14	27	68	6	116
%of total		.9%	12.1%	23.3%	58.6%	5.2%	100

Table 4.18 show crosstab of sensationalism of news channels in delivering important news. The overall data shows 58.6% of respondents agree as compare to the other categories 23.3% of respondents are neutral, 12.1% respondents disagree, 5.2% respondents are strongly agreeing and 0.9% of respondents have strongly disagree opinion.

Table 4.19 Crosstab of Effect on Mental Health.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	total
Respondents	Count	1	9	27	56	23	116
%of total		.9%	7.8%	23.3%	48.3%	19.8%	100

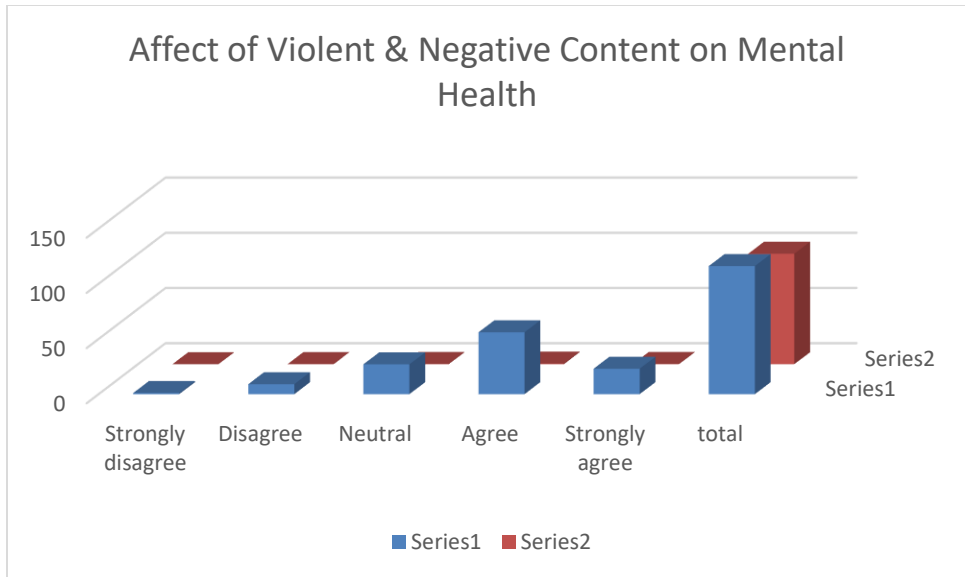Affect of Violent & Negative Content on Mental Health

Table 4.19 show crosstab of effect of violent & negative content on audience mental health. The overall data shows 48.3% of respondents agree as compare to the other categories 23.3% of respondents are neutral, 19.8% respondents strongly agree, 7.8% respondents are disagreeing and 0.9% of respondents have strongly disagree opinion.

Table 4.20 Crosstab of Improvement in Trust and Fact-based Reporting.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	total
Respondents	Count	3	2	37	55	19	116
%of total		2.6%	1.7%	31.9%	47.4%	16.4%	100

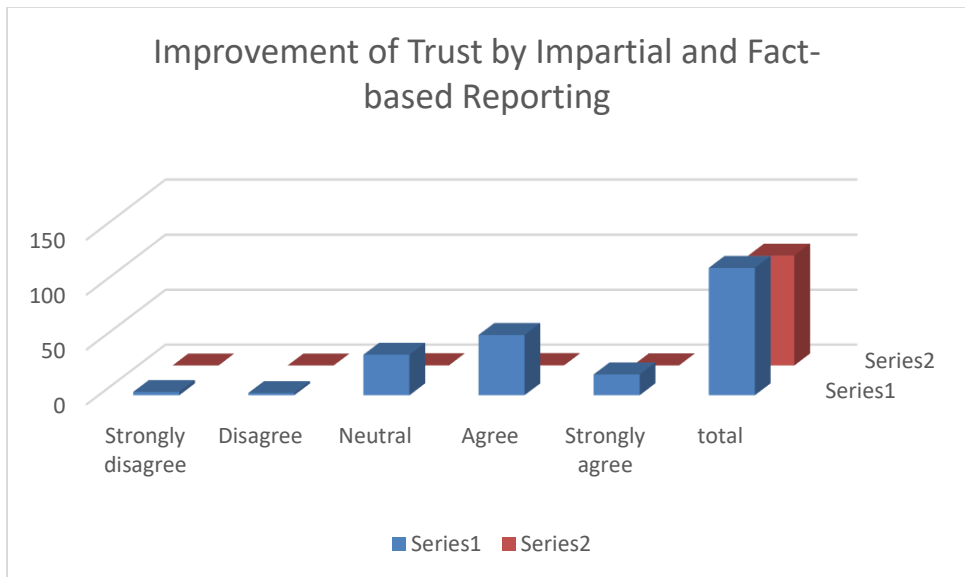Improvement of Trust by Impartial and Fact-based Reporting

Table 4.20 show crosstab of improvement in trust building and fact-based reporting. The overall data shows 47.4% of respondents agree as compare to the other categories 31.9% of respondents are neutral, 16.4% respondents are strongly agreed, 2.6% respondents are strongly disagreeing and 1.7% of respondents have disagree opinion.

Results

Hypothesis:	
The youth in Pakistan have a moderate level of trust in TV news, with skepticism stemming from perceived political bias and sensationalism.	Accepted
Youth trust in TV news can be improved by focusing on impartial, fact-based reporting and addressing issues relevant to a younger audience.	Accepted

Hypothesis 1: The youth in Pakistan have a moderate level of trust in TV news, with skepticism stemming from perceived political bias and sensationalism.

- **Trust in TV News:** Table 4.16 shows that 40.5% of respondents agree that they trust Pakistani news channels over international ones, while 24.1% remain neutral. This suggests a moderate level of trust.

- **Political Bias & Sensationalism:** Table 4.17 indicates that 46.6% of respondents agree that political parties influence TV news, and 22.4% strongly agree. Similarly, Table 4.18 shows that 58.6% of respondents agree that news channels prioritize sensationalism over important news. This confirms skepticism due to perceived bias and exaggerated reporting.

- **Impact on Mental Health:** Table 4.19 highlights that 48.3% of respondents agree that violent and negative news content affects their mental health, with 19.8% strongly agreeing. This further supports the idea that sensationalism reduces trust.

- The data supports this hypothesis 1, confirming that youth have moderate trust in TV news but are skeptical due to perceived bias and sensationalism.

Hypothesis 2: Youth trust in TV news can be improved by focusing on impartial, fact-based reporting and addressing issues relevant to a younger audience.

- **Need for Fact-Based Reporting:** Table 4.20 shows that 47.4% of respondents agree that trust in TV news can be improved through fact-based reporting, with 16.4% strongly agreeing.

- **Youth Perspectives in News:** Table 4.11 highlights that 40.5% of respondents feel their perspectives are adequately represented, but 29.3% remain neutral, showing room for improvement.

- **Preference for TV News over Social Media:** Table 4.14 indicates that 50.9% of respondents still prefer TV news over social media, suggesting a foundation for rebuilding trust through better reporting.

The data supports this hypothesis 2, indicating that improving neutrality, accuracy and relevance can help regain youth trust in TV news.

Discussion

The findings of the study offer overlook of The Influence of TV News on Youth: Trust, Perception and Mental Health Impact in Pakistan. By conducting a close ended 5 Likert questionnaire survey among universities students, it is observed that the Youth still consider TV a more credible source of information as compare to social media in modern era. The first research question examined was youth`s trust on TV news channels to provide accurate, unbiased and unethical reporting in Pakistan perspective. The analysis led to results that traditional media is more evident according to youth and audience is dependent on news channels for all the sorts of information. The credibility of TV news was measured at three levels; accuracy, unbiasedness and unethical reporting. The results show that according to youth and being a viewer, Pakistani news channels provide accurate story line regarding any news being broadcasted. The majority of respondents believed that the reporting in done unbiased in many cases. The unethical form of reporting was never seen or measured at traditional media level in the perspective of respondents. The second research question explored the factors that influence the trust of Pakistani youth in TV news, such as perceived sensationalism, bias or relevance to daily life. The results indicate that sensationalism is done at different news channels according to their agendas and the pressure they have due to different powerful groups. The bias reporting is done due to the affiliation of one news channel with a specific party of their benefit and interest. The viewership is based on the relevance of youth/audience`s relevance to daily life information about their most likely party. The overall findings indicate that the level of influence and trust news channels holds in audience`s life is unmatchable. The young generation even in this modern era still rely on TV for authentic information believing that the biased or unethical kind of reporting might be a myth. The trust level on TV news is unshakable. Future trust can be built more accurately by improving fact-based and impartial news reporting.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Pakistani news channels are trustworthy of news they broadcast. The young generation of Pakistan still consider TV news more credible than any other source of information such as social media. The level of influence of TV news is still high on the viewers. Even with the impact it causes on one's perceptions. TV news reporting includes journalistic practices and are aware of not making unethical moves that can have a negative impact on mental health of audience. The level of trust traditional media holds can be increased by doing impartial and fact-based reporting.

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