

Role of Media in Transforming Political Culture: A Comparative Study of ARY and Geo News in Political Agenda Setting

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: This study analyses the two famous TV channels ARY and Geo News particularly, to investigate their political debate shows i.e. “Off the Record” & “Capital Talk”, which might be cornerstones in political agenda setting, predominant on the country's broadcasting channels. This study investigates at how media influences public opinions and encourages people to change their mindset. This study also highlights how these two talk shows can shape what people think is important and what they should be concerned about.

Methodology: This research adopts a quantitative approach to how ARY News and Geo News affect political awareness among the people of Pakistan. Talk shows like “Capital Talk by Hamid Mir” and “Off the Record by Kashif Abbasi” are focused due to their high viewership. A total of (n=50) respondents were selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Participants were chosen based on age, gender, education level, and affiliations to ensure a diverse representation. The sample included people from urban and rural areas to reflect different regions of the country.

Findings: Media significantly influences public opinion and shapes political culture in Pakistan. ARY and Geo News, as leading news channels, have played a crucial role in establishing the political agenda and framing the public discourse. Both ARY and Geo News have demonstrated a considerable influence on establishing political agendas.

Conclusion: Media access acts like a “Magical Key”. It gives people a vast amount of information and helps them stay connected. The proposed study concludes that people can find a variety of viewpoints through news channels and online platforms. They can participate in discussions and create their own opinions. However, it's crucial to critically assess the information to gain a complete understanding of the relevant issues.

Keywords: Media, TV channels, Geo News & ARY News, Political Agenda Setting, Political Culture, Talk Shows.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Electronic media has changed how we read today. It has a big impact on our reading habits. (Ahmed & Fatima, 2023). It serves as a highly impactful and powerful channel of communication (Ijaz, 2023; Safdar & Fatima, 2024). It has gained considerable authority (Ilyas & Ahmad, 2020). It currently operates as a psychological tool, capable of moulding and affecting individuals' thoughts and beliefs following the objectives of those who possess authority over this medium. Media organizations are often influenced by their stakeholders, which may encompass governmental bodies, foreign interests, or private enterprises (Riaz & Shah, 2019). Entities frequently leverage this platform to further their own goals. Electronic media, designed to enhance awareness and illuminate social issues, can present a multitude of images in just a few minutes. The degree of its psychological impact on individuals is frequently undervalued. Today, electronic media can instigate or resolve conflicts. (Awan, 2019). Over the past five decades, the impact of media has significantly expanded due to technological progress. This evolution began with the telegraph, succeeded by the radio, newspapers, magazines, and television, and now encompasses the internet (Abbas, et al., 2022). Contemporary society depends on information and communication to sustain advancement and support numerous facets of our everyday existence, including employment, leisure, healthcare, education, interpersonal relationships, and travel, along with other vital endeavours (Waqar, 2019). The majority of our decisions, beliefs, and values are influenced by tangible knowledge, underlying assumptions, and individual experiences. In our professional activities, we depend on our expertise and research to guide us in making informed choices. Conversely, in our everyday lives, we often look to the media to keep ourselves updated on current affairs and to understand the issues that demand our focus. (Tahir, et al., 2019). The media has established itself as a reliable source of news, entertainment, and educational content. Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognize the profound influence that mass media exerts on our children, teenagers, and society at large (Alam et al., 2021).

Currently, information and technology are intricately connected to the economic progress of society. The evolution of electronic media has had a significant and extensive impact on societal dynamics (Han, 2024). Opportunities for communication have dismantled obstacles between countries and encouraged the generation of new ideas by promoting cultural exchange. The proliferation of electronic information has favourably contributed to the development of various social systems. (Mohammad & Shafi, 2015). The media serves as a crucial source for delivering news to the public and plays an essential role in influencing individuals' viewpoints. Talk shows, in particular, have made substantial contributions to societal development and have altered the way people perceive various issues. Individuals are guided to engage in social and political matters. In today's technological age, people have easy access to a multitude of media platforms, allowing them to quickly acquire trustworthy information about their environment. As a result, the media can significantly sway public opinion, as it has the power to effectively mold perceptions and viewpoints. The perspective of well-informed voters demonstrates a higher level of consistency over time in comparison to those with limited awareness.

1.1 Role of Media in Transforming Political Culture via News Channels (ARY News & GEO News)

The credibility of media in Pakistan has sparked much discussion, especially with the growth of digital technology. This study will look into the issue of bias in mainstream media among young media professionals. (Anwar, 2023). Pakistani media organizations often overlook their journalistic standards. This behavior strengthens the belief among the public that journalists are not meeting their ethical duties today (Ali, Jan, & Bukhar, 2013). Pakistani media organizations are now more focused on making money rather than reporting the truth. The rush to be the first with breaking news has become more important than properly checking facts and confirming sources (Ali, 2021; Safdar et al., 2015; Safdar et al., 2018). Journalists who value honesty, fairness, and credibility are facing increasing marginalization. There is a widespread issue of corruption among journalists and photographers (Woerner, Harrington, & Orr, 2022). Some people get cash envelopes from politicians, government workers, and political groups. They use dishonest methods to twist facts for their benefit. Today, with the Internet as a fast-changing source of

information, many people are paying closer attention to the trustworthiness of the media, both from the public and critics (Maqbool, 2021). The assertion holds particular significance in light of the rapid expansion of digital media, particularly electronic news channels, in Pakistan since the beginning of the 21st century. These channels have emerged as a widely accepted source of information and stimulating discussions, earning the confidence of the populace. However, the growth of online news has also brought forth numerous challenges, particularly concerning the accessibility of reliable digital media (Qamar, Tariq, & Baloch, 2018).

1.2 Comparative Analysis of ‘Capital Talk’ and ‘Off The Record’

This study aimed to clarify how media learners view the credibility of news channels today. The results provide important insights for both academics and professionals. The research involved a targeted survey to assess how people in Pakistan perceive the credibility and objectivity of news channels. The proposed study analyzed two well-known TV channels, Geo News and ARY. It focused on their political debate shows, Off the Record and Capital Talk, which likely shaped the political conversation and had a strong presence in the country's broadcasting scene. This study analyzed how television channels effect public perception by disseminating political information.

It additionally emphasizes how these two talk shows influence public opinion and recognize the issues that people consider important and deserving of focus. An extensive evaluation of the survey findings has been performed, considering the varied academic, political, and social backgrounds of participants from different cities throughout Pakistan. The research first assessed the general responses to each inquiry and then performed distinct analyses categorized by rural or urban regions, age, education level, and occupation.

The primary objective of this multi-faceted analysis was to evaluate the extent to which both ARY and GEO news channels significantly influence their audience. They draw significant viewership and establish a forum for discussions and debates on a wide range of subjects. Such programs have the potential to mould public opinion, affect individual viewpoints, and enhance the broader societal discourse. Initially, the researcher inquired about the respondents' connections to rural and urban regions, as well as their ages, educational backgrounds, and occupations. Among the 50 respondents who indicated their affiliations, 35 were from urban areas while 15 were from rural regions. All participants hailed from various cities across Pakistan and strongly believed that, in today's uncertain times, television channels, especially talk shows like Capital Talk and Off the Record, can shape political views. These shows often choose and present information and opinions that reflect their own biases and agendas.

1.3 Research Objectives

This research aims to find out how news channels affect people's political growth. It focuses on the role of 'Electronic Media.' Geo News and ARY News are the channels being studied. This study looks at how different channels shape public opinion. It aims to understand the media's role in society. This study explores the impact of talk shows i.e. "Capital Talk" and "Off the Record" on young, educated Pakistanis. The study aimed to see how these shows impact political knowledge and increase political awareness.

1.4 Research Questions

RQ1: What does the role media play in agenda-setting?

RQ2: How do TV channels play an important role in shaping public opinion by providing political information?

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a mixed-method approach. It looks at how ARY News and Geo News impact political awareness in Pakistan. Popular news channels and talk shows in Pakistan have a big following. Shows like "Capital Talk by Hamid Mir" and "Off the Record by Kashif Abbassi" are focused due to their high

viewership. A total of 50 respondents were chosen. They were picked using a special method called stratified random sampling. People were picked for their age, gender, education, and the groups they belonged to. This was to make sure a wide range of views were included. The sample included people from urban and rural areas.

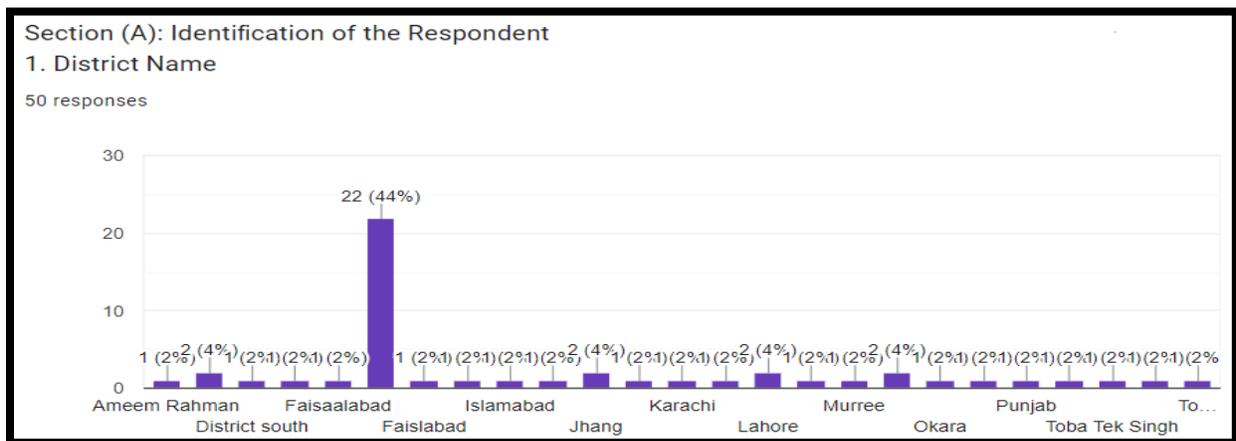
3. DATA ANALYSIS

This study gathered information from people in Pakistan through a structured survey. The aim was to find out how ARY News and Geo News have raised political awareness among the public. The survey has four sections, labelled 'A' to 'D'. Section 'A' identifies the respondents, including their district or city. Section 'B' asks about their age in full years, education level, and job. Section 'C' explores how electronic media influences Pakistan. Section 'D' assesses the trustworthiness of media, focusing on the impact of ARY and Geo news channels on public opinion. It includes a comparison of how people view information from Geo's "Capital Talk," hosted by Hamid Mir and ARY's talk show "Off the Record," hosted by Kashif Abbasi.

3.1 Section (A): Identification of the Respondents

This section provides a summary of the respondents' identification, including the names of the cities or districts in which they reside.

Figure 1: Selection of respondents (District wise)



3.2 Section (B): Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Figure 2: Respondents Age

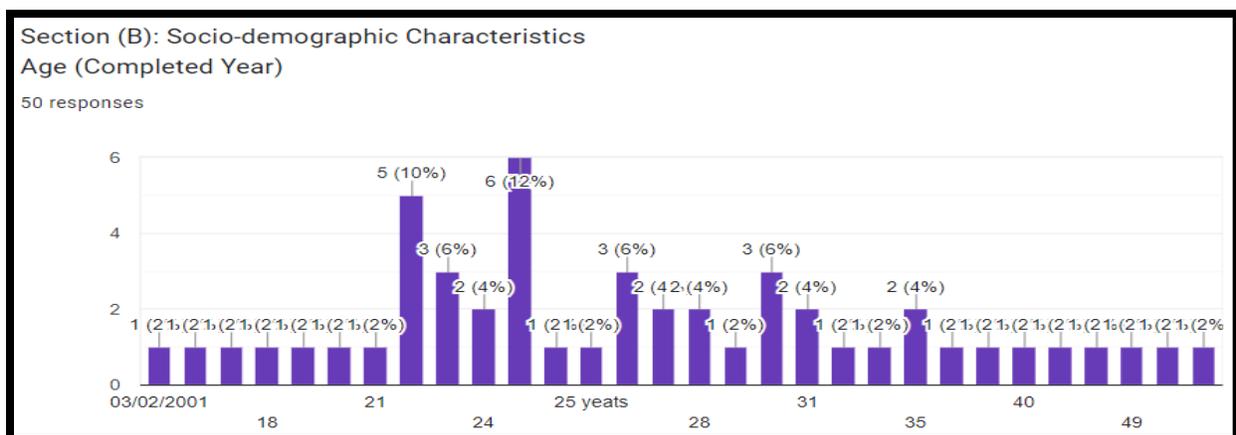
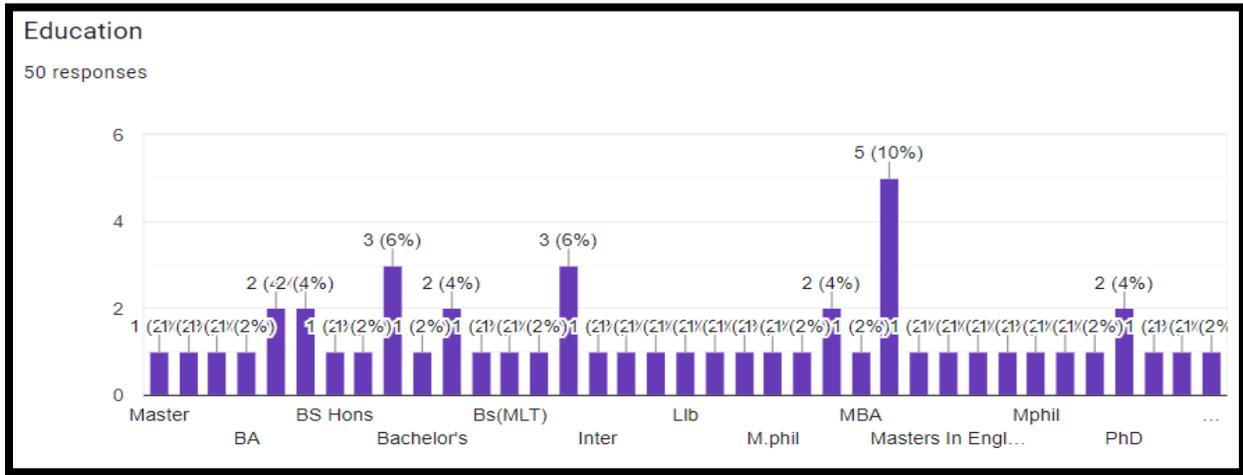
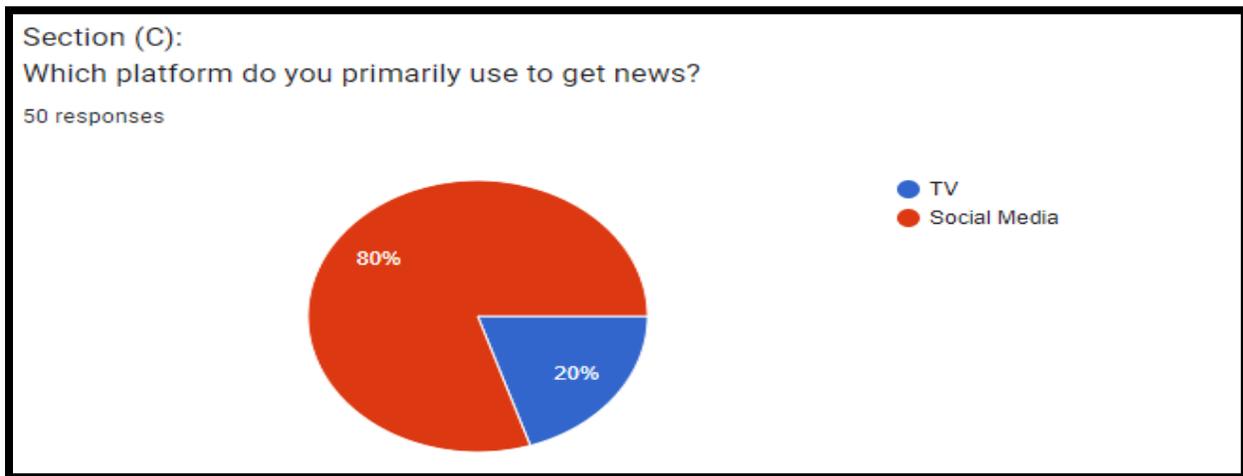


Figure 3: Respondents Education



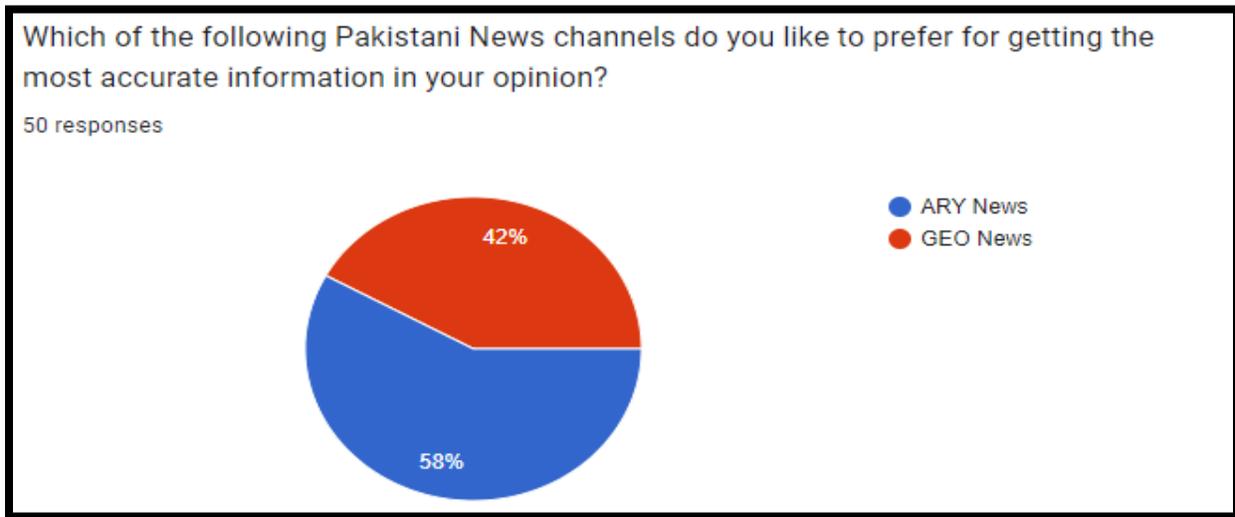
3.3 Section (C): Role of Electronic Media

Figure 3: Platform use to get news



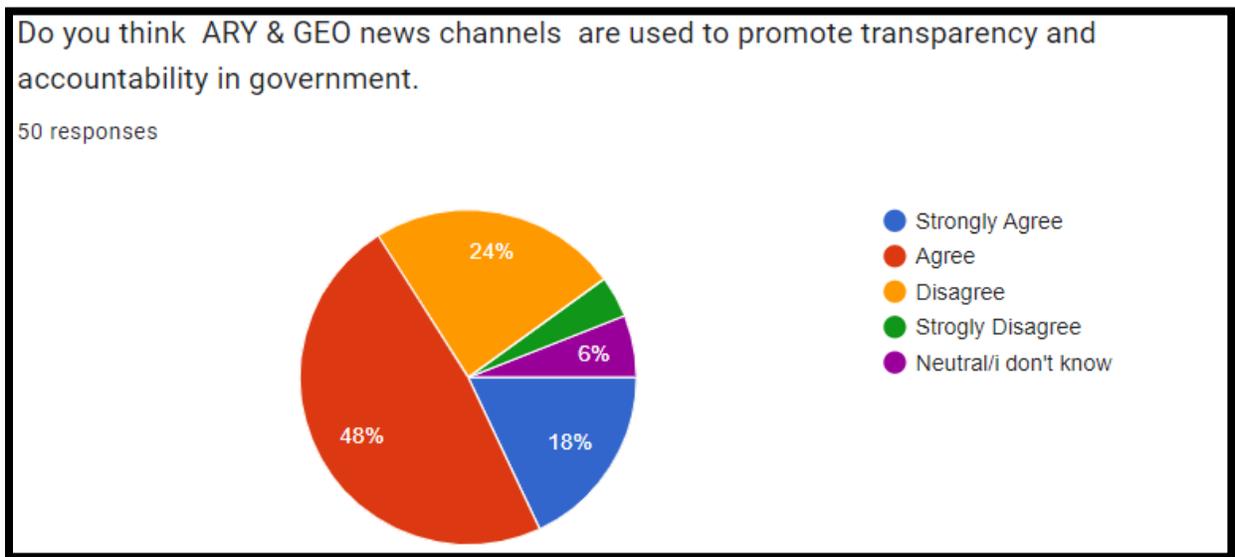
Supporters of social media indicated that it serves as a convenient means for rapid access to news; however, they emphasized the necessity of verifying the credibility of sources and recognizing potential biases. They advocate for a combination of social media and traditional news outlets to achieve a comprehensive understanding. Additionally, 20% of respondents noted that television platforms, such as ARY and Geo News, are valuable sources of information. Nonetheless, the specific sources of information utilized are less significant than the importance of critically assessing the information provided and pursuing a variety of sources for a more complete perspective. In addressing the inquiry regarding the preferred Pakistani news channels for obtaining accurate news, a survey of 50 respondents revealed that 58% favor ARY, whereas 42% opt for Geo News. Both Geo and ARY are committed to delivering precise information. Both Geo and ARY news channels possess distinct strengths and areas of specialization. Determining whether one is superior to the other is subjective; therefore, it is essential to assess the credibility and accuracy of the information provided by both channels. Furthermore, I believe it is crucial to critically analyze the content of news outlets such as Geo and ARY to identify any possible biases related to political parties. Seeking information from multiple sources is advisable to obtain a more well-rounded perspective.

Figure 4: Selection of News Channel



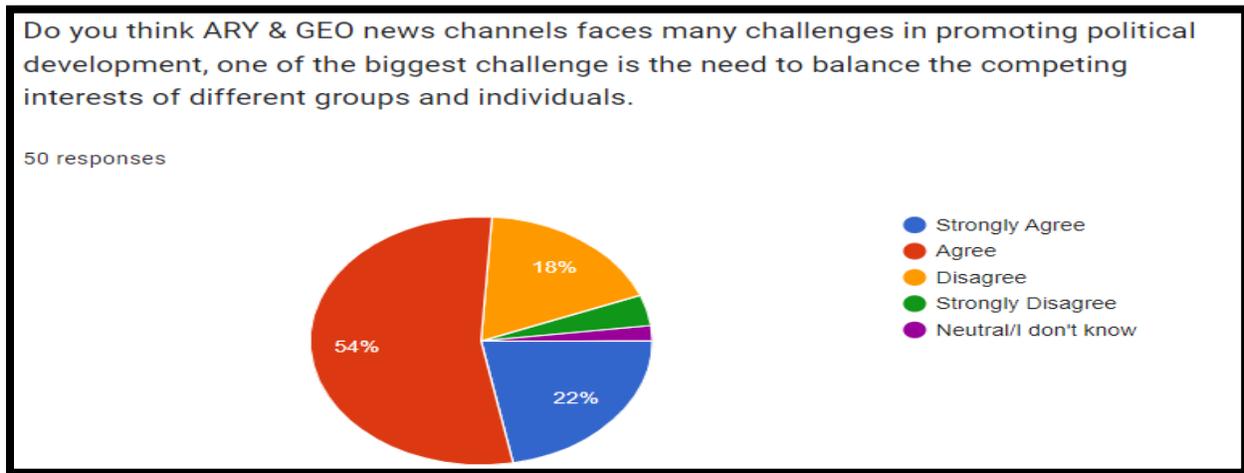
The question pertained to the role of the Geo and ARY news channels in fostering transparency and accountability within the government. Among the respondents, 18% expressed strong agreement, 48% indicated agreement, 6% remained neutral, and 24% disagreed. A significant number of individuals believe that these two news channels are vital for enhancing integrity and accountability in governmental operations. They provide a platform to reveal corruption, showcase government actions, and ensure that officials are responsible for their choices. Through thorough reporting and thoughtful analysis, news channels help create a better-informed public and support openness in government.

Figure 5: News transparency



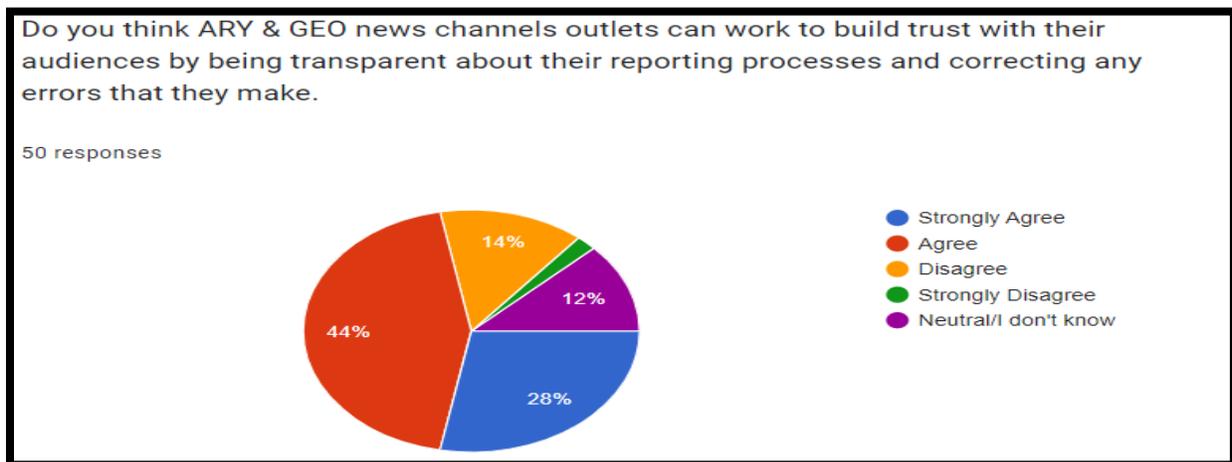
A survey of 50 people revealed that 54% agreed with a statement, with 22% strongly agreeing and 3% remaining neutral. On the other hand, 18% disagreed while 3% strongly disagreed. This indicates that news organizations face many challenges in promoting political growth. The Geo and ARY news networks struggle with balancing the various interests of different groups and individuals. It's crucial to consider all viewpoints to ensure fair representation and unbiased coverage. Achieving this balance requires careful thought but is vital for encouraging healthy discussions in a democracy.

Figure 6: *Challenges in promoting political development*



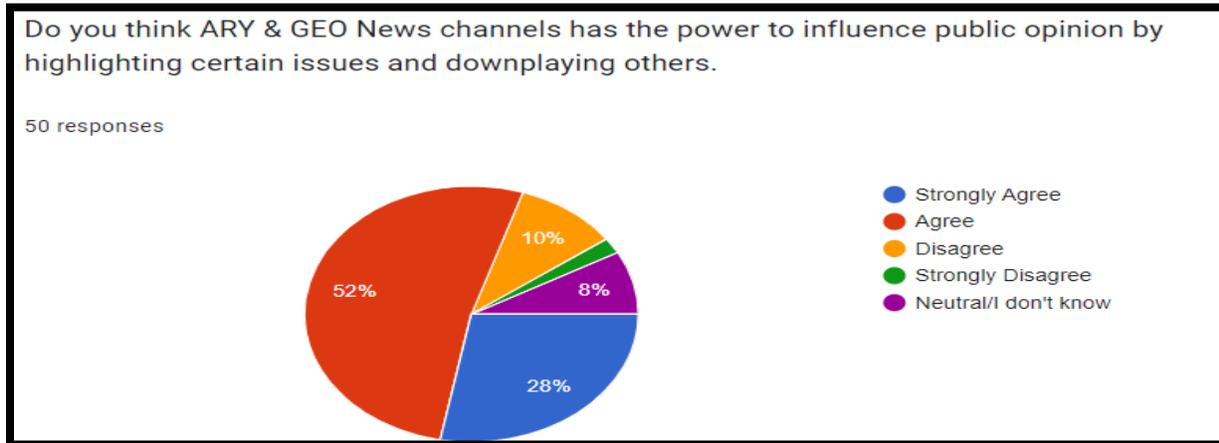
The question examined how ARY and Geo news channels earn audience trust. They achieve this by being transparent about their reporting and correcting errors. According to the survey, 32.7% of respondents strongly agreed, while 40.4% agreed with this strategy. Additionally, 15.4% felt neutral, 3.8% disagreed, and 5.8% strongly disagreed. The results highlight that news outlets can build trust by being open and taking responsibility for their mistakes. By disclosing their sources and verifying their information, they show a commitment to being accurate. Quickly addressing errors helps them keep credibility and strengthens their bond with viewers.

Figure 7: *Reporting standards and trust building among the viewers*



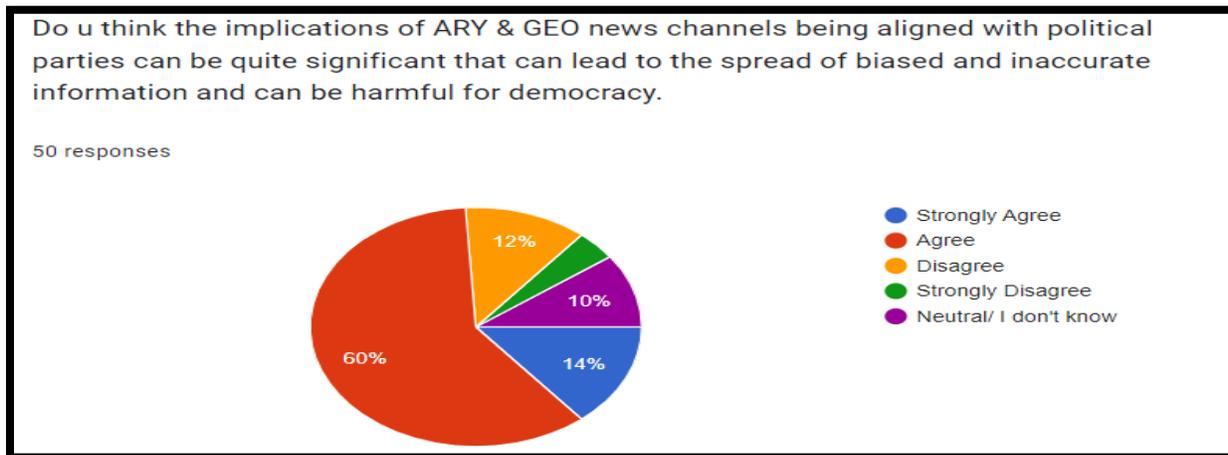
The inquiry was answered similarly. Of those surveyed, 52% agreed, 28% strongly agreed, 8% were neutral, 4% strongly disagreed, and 10% disagreed. News channels play a key role in shaping how the public views issues. They can highlight some topics while minimizing others. The selection and presentation of news articles influence how people understand and prioritize different issues. Media organizations can gain trust by being transparent in their reporting and correcting any mistakes. By explaining their journalistic standards, fact-checking methods, and sources, they show their dedication to accuracy and responsibility. Trust is built through clear communication with the audience. It is important to acknowledge concerns and include various viewpoints. Media organizations need to be open and foster strong connections with their audience. At the same time, audiences should evaluate the information they receive and seek out multiple sources for a fuller picture.

Figure 8: *Media influence to public opinion*



In the survey, 60% of respondents agreed with the statement. Of those, 14% strongly agreed, while 10% were neutral. Additionally, 12% strongly disagreed, and 4% disagreed. This information suggests that ties between news outlets and political groups can create major issues. Problems like biased reporting, lack of fairness, and spreading false information become clear. When news organizations seem to favor specific political parties, it can lower public trust in their reliability. A lack of trust can negatively impact how people view politics, influence debates, and affect democracy. When media outlets support certain political agendas, it harms objective reporting, which is vital for voters to make informed choices. Slanted news can shape public opinions, sway elections, and weaken democratic values. Therefore, news organizations should prioritize accuracy and fairness while promoting independence. This approach helps build trust and encourages healthy democratic discussions. Staying objective and independent is essential for quality journalism.

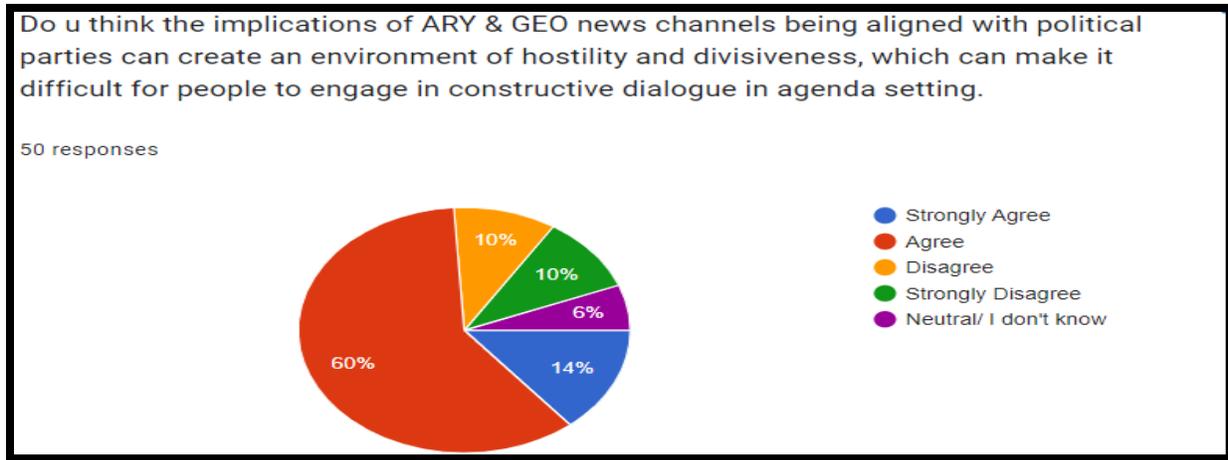
Figure 9: *News channels biasness*



The public's reaction to the links between ARY and Geo news channels with political parties shows a rise in tension. This situation makes it hard for people to have meaningful discussions about important issues. In this survey, 14% of people strongly agreed, while 60% agreed overall. Meanwhile, 6% felt neutral, and 10% disagreed, with another 10% strongly disagreeing. News outlets that create a hostile atmosphere make it challenging for people to engage in constructive talks. When reporting is exaggerated and

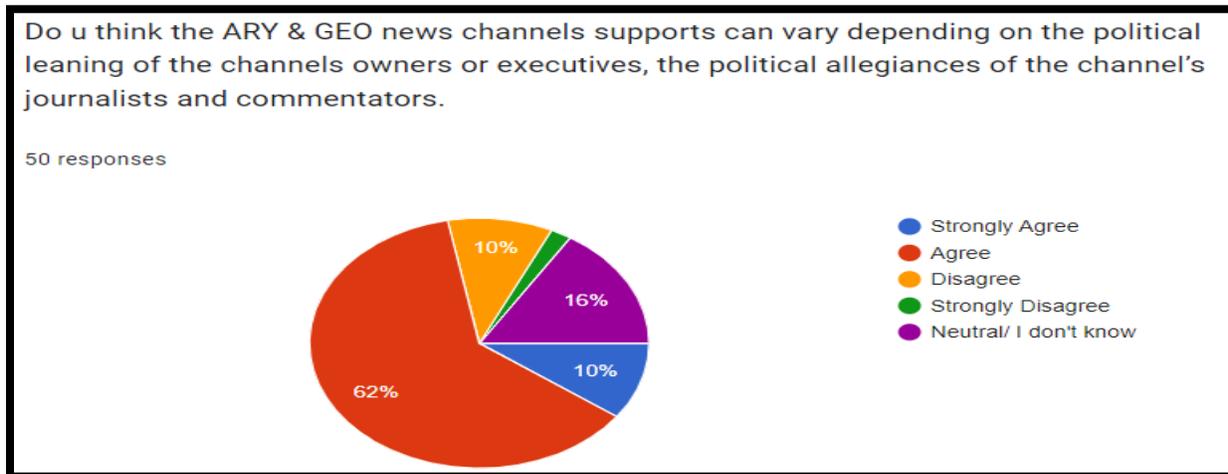
viewpoints are divisive, it can lead to further division and stop productive discussions. Media organizations need to adopt a fairer and more respectful approach. Doing so can create a better environment for meaningful conversations and agenda-setting.

Figure 10: *Media channels favoritism towards political parties*



People's views on the support for news channels can change based on the political connections of their owners or leaders. Among those surveyed, 10% strongly agreed with this idea, while 60% generally agreed. Additionally, 16% were neutral, 10% disagreed, and 4% strongly disagreed. News channels often reflect the political beliefs of their owners or executives, which can shape their content, focus, and presentation. It's important for audiences to recognize these biases. By gathering information from various sources, viewers can gain a broader understanding. It's essential to critically evaluate the news to manage the impact of these channels.

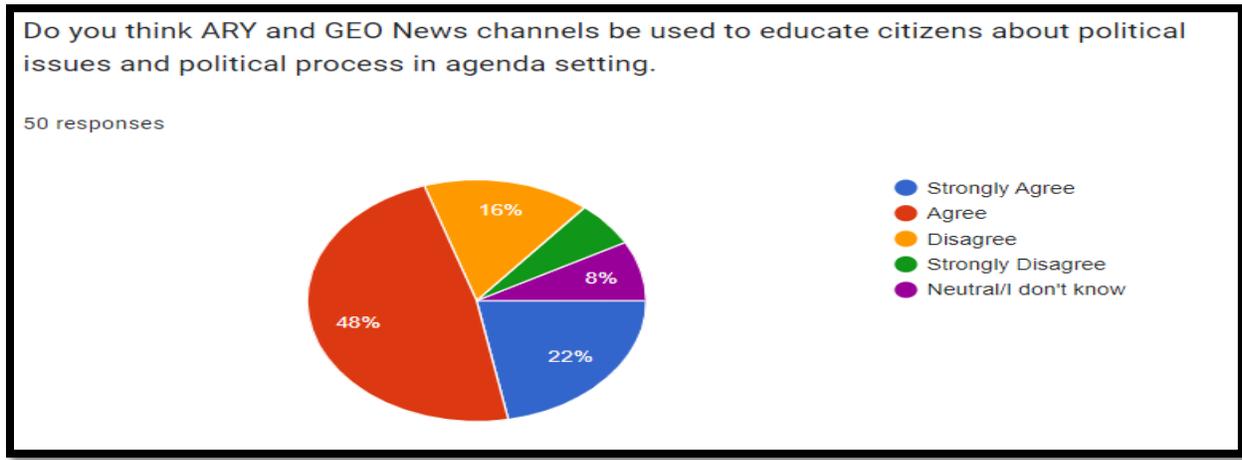
Figure 11: *News channels political affiliation*



People's views on the support provided by news channels can change based on the political connections of their owners. In this study, participants were asked about how news channels help educate the citizens of Pakistan on political matters and how they influence agenda setting. From their responses, 22% strongly agreed, while 48% generally agreed. Additionally, 8% were neutral, 16% disagreed, and 6% strongly disagreed with the statement. Channels like ARY and Geo are important in keeping the public

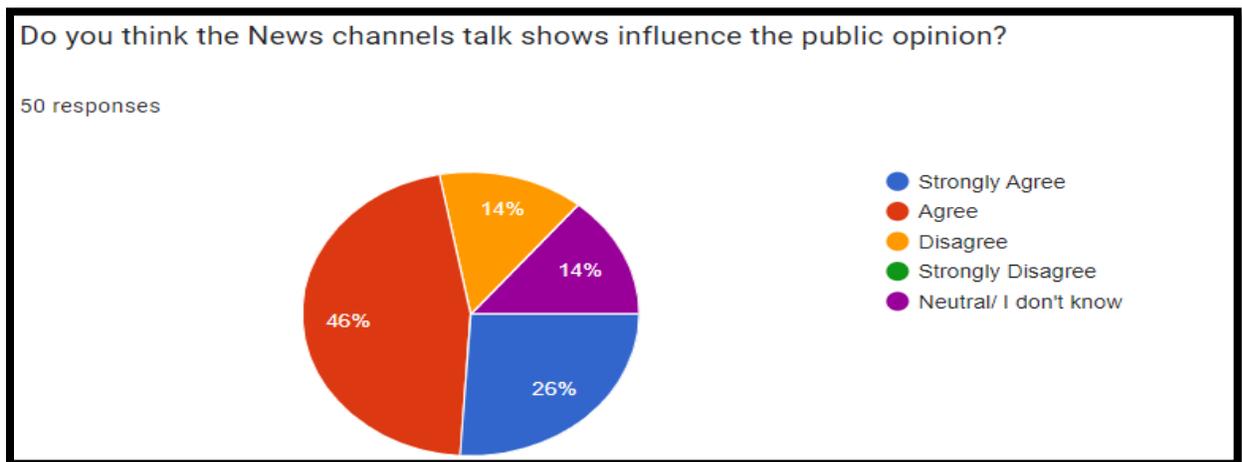
informed about political issues and elections. By delivering clear and engaging content, these networks can boost political awareness.

Figure 12: *Media role in educating citizens about political issues*



The public largely agrees that news channels and talk shows shape opinions. Around 26% of people strongly believe this, and 46% generally agree. Additionally, 14% felt neutral, another 14% disagreed, and no one strongly opposed the idea. Public opinion reflects the common beliefs and feelings within a community. It shows shared views on various topics and can affect decisions, movements, and policies. Opinions are influenced by many factors, including media, personal experiences, social interactions, and cultural values. They can change as people gain new information. Digital media serves as a key information source for many. News channels and talk shows have a strong impact on how people see issues. These programs often spotlight certain subjects, present different opinions, and generate discussions that shape viewers' thoughts. Many consider public opinion to be very important.

Figure 13: *Talk shows influence public opinion?*

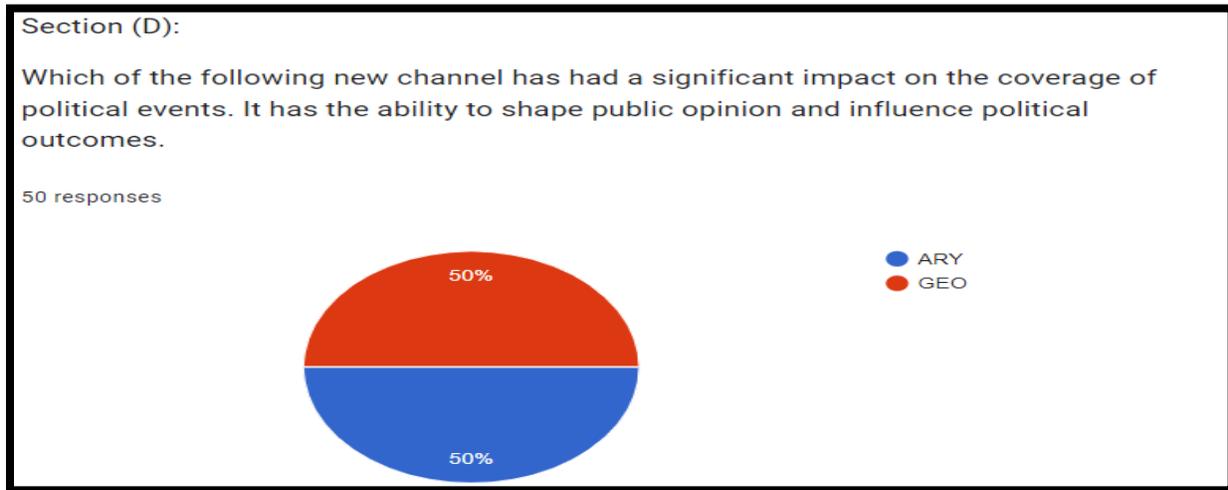


In addressing the inquiry presented in section 'D' regarding the perceptions of respondents on which news channel, ARY or Geo, has exerted a notable influence on the reporting of political events, the findings revealed a balanced outcome. Specifically, 50% of participants expressed their preference for ARY news, while the remaining 50% favoured Geo news and Geo news channels possessing the ability to mould public perception and impact political results through their coverage and examination of political occurrences. Talk shows and discussions can greatly shape how the public feels, create stories, and

influence choices. Participants noted that both channels work hard to provide fair and accurate news by following strict journalistic guidelines. They implement editorial rules and ethical standards to uphold their credibility as journalists.

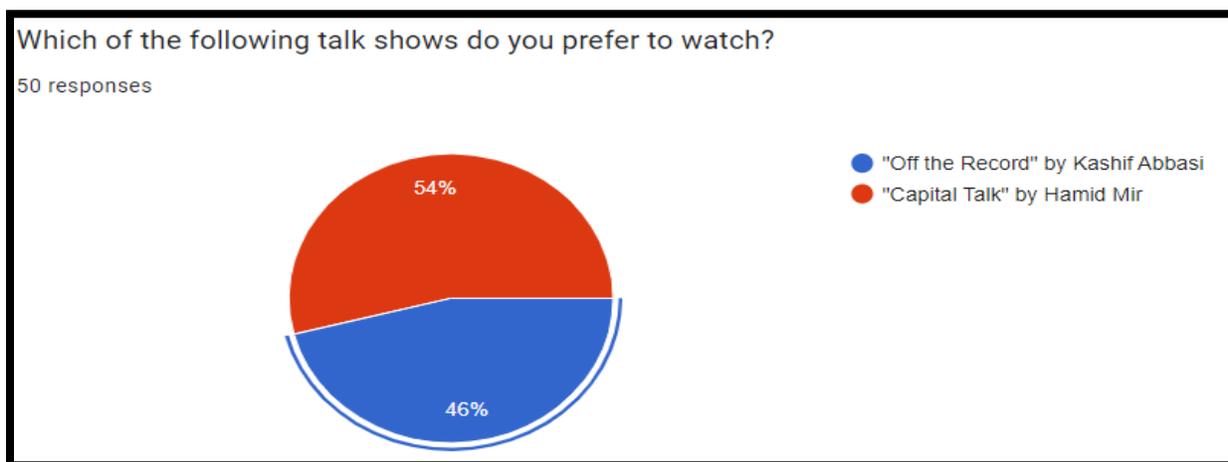
3.4 Section (D): Role of Geo and ARY News Channels in Establishing Media Credibility

Figure 14: Which channel has ability to shape public opinion?



In response to the inquiry regarding the preferences of the respondents, which talk show do you favour watching: "Off the Record" hosted by Kashif Abbasi or "Capital Talk" hosted by Hamid Mir? A total of 46% of respondents expressed support for the ARY talk show "Off the Record," while Fifty-four percent of viewers preferred the Geo News talk show "Capital Talk." This shows that both "Off the Record" with Kashif Abbasi and "Capital Talk" with Hamid Mir focus on meaningful content. They provide detailed discussions on current events and political matters. Both talk shows possess distinct styles and viewpoints, rendering them engaging to view. Therefore, it is essential to recognize the variety of perspectives offered in these programs and to thoughtfully assess the information conveyed.

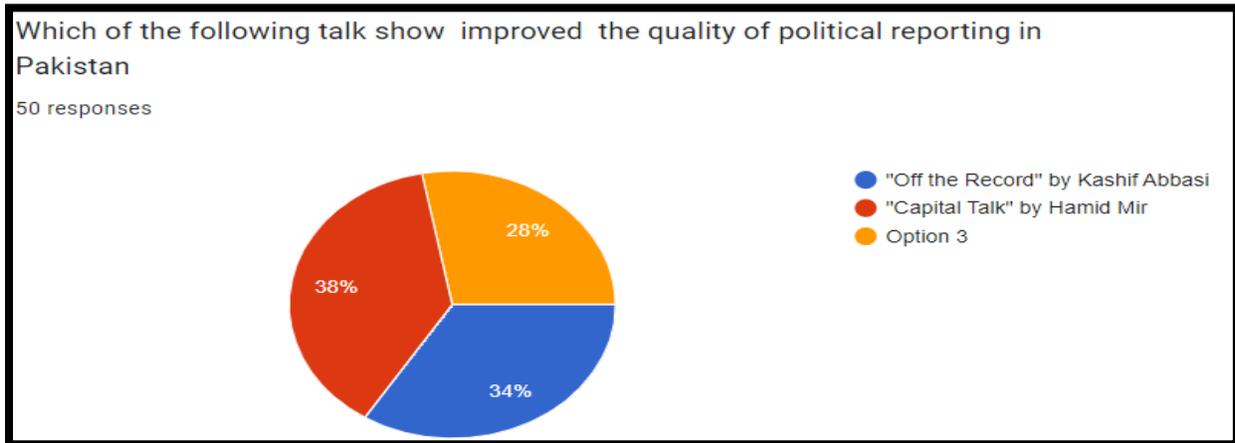
Figure 15: Talk show preference to watch



The survey asked people to choose which talk show better improved political reporting in Pakistan: "Off the Record" by Kashif Abbasi or "Capital Talk" by Hamid Mir. Results revealed that 34% favoured "Off the Record," while 38% preferred "Capital Talk." Another 28% chose different shows. These results

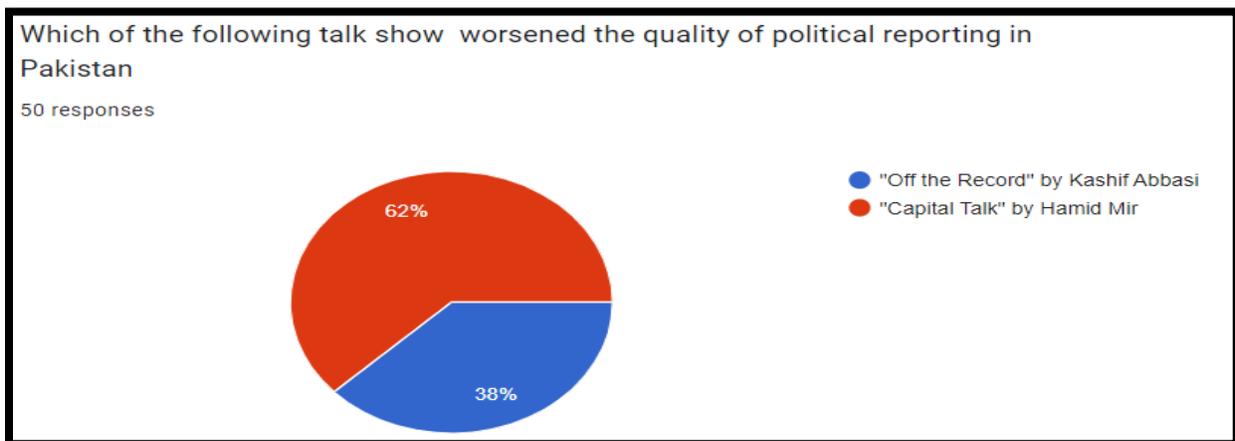
indicate that "Capital Talk" has made a notable impact on the quality of political reporting in the country. This talk show has become a space for deep discussions and debates on various political issues. By showcasing different opinions and keeping politicians in check, it promotes transparency and informs the public. However, it's important to understand that quality political reporting relies on teamwork among various news outlets and journalists throughout Pakistan.

Figure 16: Which talk show improved quality of political reporting?



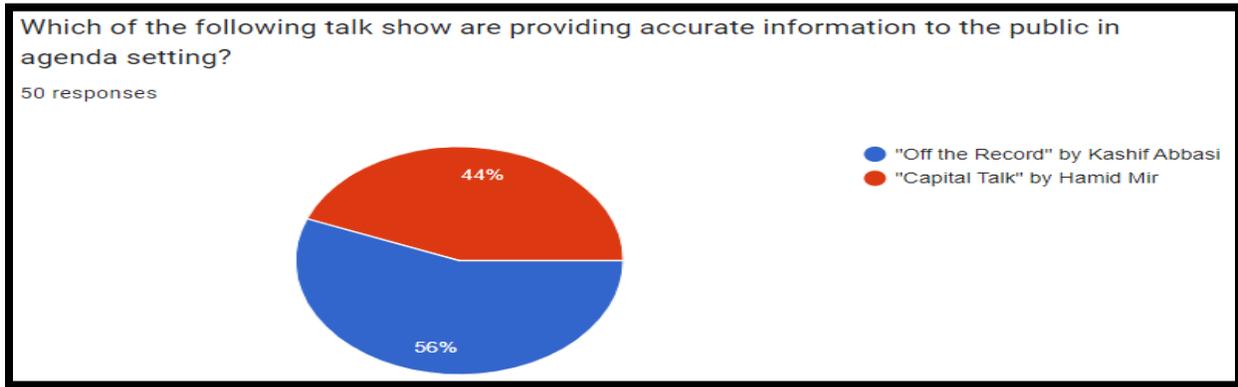
The question asked respondents which talk show harmed political reporting in Pakistan more: "Off the Record" with Kashif Abbasi or "Capital Talk" with Hamid Mir. Results showed that 38% believed "Off the Record" on ARY was responsible for the decline, while 62% blamed "Capital Talk" on Geo News.. Survey participants felt that while talk shows have helped improve political reporting in Pakistan, they have also worsened it in some ways. Additionally, the influence of these shows on political coverage seems to differ among people, indicating that views on this issue may vary based on personal opinions.

Figure 17: Worse quality of political reporting among selected programs



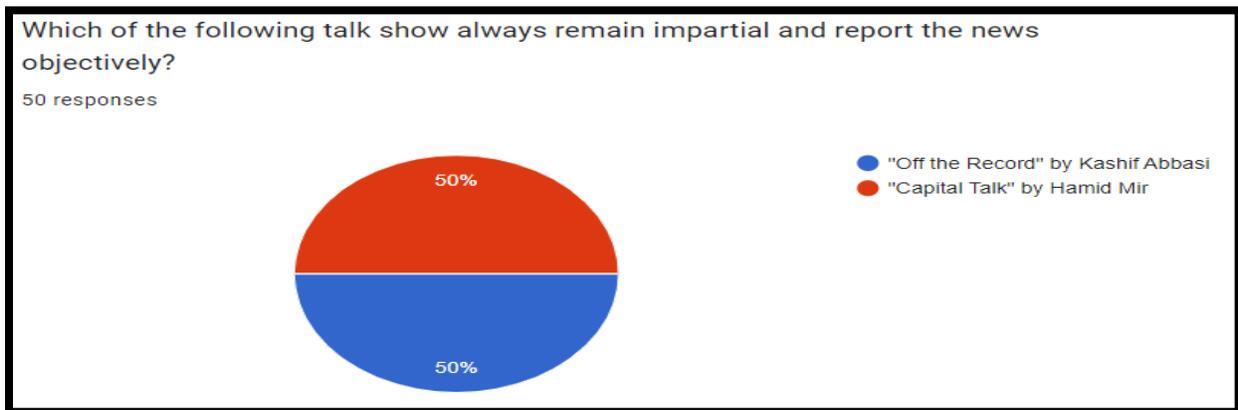
A survey asked which talk shows people trust for accurate information. "Capital Talk with Hamid Mir" was chosen by 44% of participants, while 55% preferred "Off the Record with Kashif Abbasi." This shows that being open and correcting mistakes is vital for building trust. It is important for all talk shows to play a key role in sharing information with the public and shaping public opinion.

Figure 18: *Accurate information given by the selected programs*



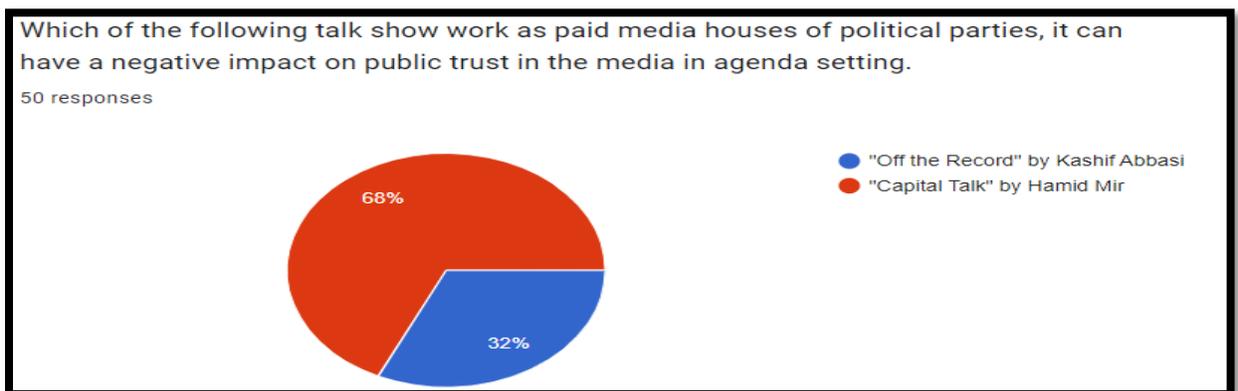
When respondents were questioned about which talk show consistently maintained impartiality and reported the news objectively, the options presented were “Off the Record with Kashif Abbasi” and “Capital Talk with Hamid Mir.” The results were evenly split, with 50% of respondents choosing “Off the Record with Kashif Abbasi” and the remaining 50% opting for “Capital Talk with Hamid Mir.”

Figure 19: *Impartial among selected programs*



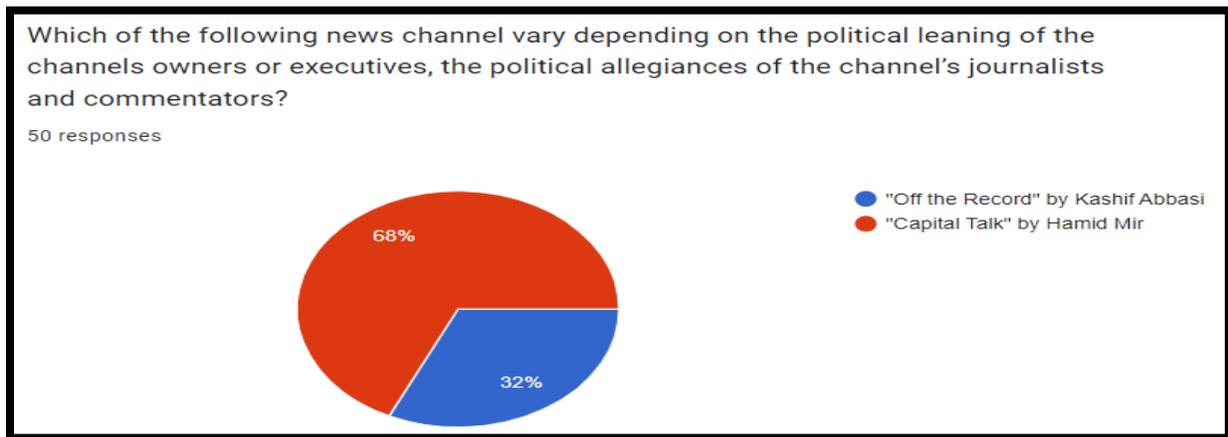
The question asked participants which talk shows served as paid media for political parties, which may harm public trust in the media's influence on agendas. Of those surveyed, 32% selected "Off the Record with Kashif Abbasi," while 68% chose "Capital Talk by Hamid Mir."

Figure 20: *Paid programs*



Viewers' choices for talk shows can differ based on the political beliefs of the channel's leaders. Specifically, there is a clear preference when comparing "Off the Record with Kashif Abbasi" and "Capital Talk with Hamid Mir." Approximately 32% of respondents' favor "Off the Record," while 68% lean towards "Capital Talk".

Figure 21: *More Political learning among selected programs*



Here are the responses to the question about preferred news channels and why? Some people prefer GEO News because it's very informative and provides unbiased coverage. One respondent noted that GEO News is better than ARY News, which they believe is biased towards PTI and creates a divisive atmosphere. Others appreciate GEO News for its authentic and timely news reporting. On the other hand, many respondents prefer ARY News, citing reasons such as unbiased news reporting, authentic information, and correct coverage compared to GEO News. Some appreciate ARY News for reporting the truth and providing a balanced perspective. However, not everyone is satisfied with the major news channels. One respondent stated that none of the major channels are trustworthy because they're all biased.

4. CONCLUSION

Media access acts like a "Magical Key". It gives people a vast amount of information and helps them stay connected. Media significantly influences public opinion and shapes political culture in Pakistan. ARY and Geo News, as leading news channels, have played a crucial role in establishing the political agenda and framing the public discourse. Both News channels have demonstrated a considerable influence on establishing political agendas. It also played a vital role in shaping government decisions and promoting the goals and plans of political parties to the public. Political parties effectively reach people through talk shows and advertisements (Majid ul Ghafar, 2023). They convey their objectives, vision, and future initiatives to the public. Additionally, some of the recipients were recognized as individuals with significant knowledge and insight into corruption committed by authorities, coupled with a strong motivation to act. This also highlights the infringement of laws and the disturbance of order, along with the manipulation of political party operations. The citizens of Pakistan shape their viewpoints and cultivate their understandings concerning the participation of various political leaders and parties in the exercise of power, authority, and the execution of their respective duties. People in Pakistan see the media as an essential part of democracy. It plays a key role in supporting and upholding democratic values. The growth of electronic media has changed how information spreads. This new source of news has greatly shaped public opinion and has helped organize political movements on a wide scale. The rise of the Internet and media has changed how we communicate. This shift has significantly affected many areas of life, including how we behave socially, relate to one another, and manage our habits and needs.

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Conflict of Interest

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