Portrayal of Parent-Children Relationship in Television Drama Serials of Pakistan

Kiran Tahir, MPhil Scholar, Faculty of Media and Communication Studies, University of Central Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan
*Atif Ashraf, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Media and Communication, University of Central Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan
Ghulam Shabir, Professor, Faculty of Media and Communication, University of Central Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

*Corresponding author’s email: atifashraf@ucp.edu.pk

ARTICLE DETAILS

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The current research investigates the portrayal of the parent-children relationship in prime-time entertainment television dramas of Pakistan. Relationship between parenting style and socio-economic status of the parents has been analyzed.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Quantitative Content Analysis has been applied to measure the portrayal of parents in Drama serials. Top three entertainment channels ARY Digital, Hum TV and Geo TV were the targeted channels and parent-children based episodes were selected through purposive sampling. Out of 147 episodes, 308 scenes were selected. Scenes were coded on the predefined categories found in existing literature.

Findings: The results showed that there was not much significant relationship found between socio-economic status of the parents and their parenting style. However, generation raised by parents with high socio-economic status showed submissive behavior towards their parents while the children raised by parents with low socio-economic status showed disrespectful behavior to their parents.

Implications/Originality/Value: The findings suggest policy consideration to Pakistan Media Regulatory Authority regarding parents’ portrayal in drama serials. As respecting parents is our cultural value without any difference in socio economic status. But more materialistic approach is being projected in TV channels which need a second thought as the social norms.

Keywords: Parenting style, social learning, culture, socio-economic status, socio-religious norms, Pakistani society

JEL Classification: L82, A13

Introduction
Television seems indispensable part of the Pakistani society, as according to the statistics of the 2017-2018, Pakistanis watch television 2.8 hours daily on average and 55% audience watch entertainment channels (Naqvi, 2019), evidently, dramas are the major source of entertainment in Pakistan (Rehman et al., 2019), hence it is obvious that people learn family communication through television (Wilson, 2004). Pakistani society has a variant culture. According to Oxford dictionary of Islam (2021), Pakistan has approximately 97% Muslim population. Therefore, religion has a dominant influential factor in society. Pakistani society is hierarchical in its structure and collectivistic in its nature. Family system mostly contains three generations i.e. grandparents, parents, children and their spouses. This argument is endorsed from the fact that, UNESCO has divided the family set up into five major categories, in which joint and nuclear are most popular in Pakistan.

Furthermore, in typical Pakistani society parents bring up their child in social context rather than their personal choices and offspring is supposed to be obedient, submissive and adapt their parents’ ideology instead of their own choices unlike western societies where child’s autonomy is highly encouraged (Stewart et al., 2000). Again, researchers concluded in their studies that Pakistani people have poor income and inadequate education facilities along with political turmoil which indicate the low socio-economic status of its society (Khan & Zerby, 1981; Khan, 2018). Hence, the socio-cultural background combined with socio-economic status of the Pakistani society entice the researcher to unfold the representation of the parents and their children’s response according to their financial status, in entertainment television dramas of the Hum TV, Geo TV and ARY Digital.

Literature Review
A new concept of parenthood has been generated in contemporary TV shows, in which fathers are more prone to the domestic chores. As Jiang (2018) stated that authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles are common these days and exposure to the western media and culture has changed the children’s raising style all over the world and traditional parenting practices have become obsolete. Content analysis of the family dramas is the best way to analyze the portrayal of the family relations and social class over the years. Thus, SturtzSreetharan and Shibamoto-Smith (2020) analyzed the content of the Japanese dramas of 1920 and 2015, the researchers mainly investigated the socioeconomic representation of the parents over the years and revealed that fathers were solely engaged in professional life while the mothers were engaged in domestic chores. However, the media narrative of the super mom and dad emerged in 21st century (Motro & Vanneman, 2015).

Additionally, few studies have been conducted on private entertainment channels and Pakistan Television Network (PTV) in terms of socioeconomic effects, as they mainly emphasized the cultural imperialism through Pakistani dramas (Zuberi, 1993; Khan & Arif, 2009; Juni, 2014; Noreen, 2021), depiction of family status through television advertisement (Ali et al., 2012; Ullah et al., 2014; Hashmi et al., 2018) and soap operas (Shah & Khurshid, 2017) portrayal of working woman status (sharoff, 2020) economic impact of women beautification in Media (Kothari, 2006; Ali & Shahwar, 2011; Ali et al., 2014; Ashfaq & Shafiq, 2018; waheed, 2018; Arshad et al., 2021) class representation of women (Dutoya, 2018) woman economic empowerment (Malik, 2019), socioeconomic portrayal of transgender (Shahzadi & Ali, 2018; Abbas, 2019). Yet, in Pakistani TV serials children response due to parents’ socioeconomic status is clearly unaddressed, but western literature enables the researcher to analyze the phenomenon.

The current research has grounded cultivation theory and social learning theory. Gerbner et al. (1986) states that prime time family shows provide a learning experience to the people regarding parental duties and children’s responsibilities and people reiterate these experiences. Cultivation theory provides a family communication model (Signorielli & Morgan, 2001).
Moreover, prime-time dramas cultivate traditional ideas about children’s response to parents as mother’s professional career or authoritarian behavior is highly discouraged, whereas father’s emotional and domestic role is disliked by the children (Flores, 2017). Whereas, social learning theory states that, children learn from the observation because they do not have direct experience and television environment provides socialization to the children i.e. they identify their cartoon character first then develop prosocial behavior and finally reinforce that learning (Bandura & Hall, 2018). Social learning theory also advocates that observation of social model transforms belief system, particularly if model belongs to high rank and powerful social status (Wallack et al., 1990).

The current research uses social learning theory beside the cultivation theory as these theories seem apt to reach the final goal of the study i.e. children response to their parents according to different socioeconomic status.

After analyzing the past literature and theoretical underpinning the following hypotheses are formulated;
1. There is statistically significant association between socio-economic status of the parents and children response in entertainment television dramas.
2. The more a parent is portrayed with low socioeconomic status, the more the children will be disrespectful.
3. The more a parent is portrayed with high socioeconomic status, the more the children will be submissive.
4. There is a statistically significant association between parenting style and socio-economic status of the parents in entertainment television dramas.

Methodology
The study has used quantitative content analysis to collect data from themes, discourses, tone of communication, verbal, non-verbal communication and actions. Prime time dramas of the top three entertainment channels i.e. Geo TV, ARY Digital and Hum TV are selected for this research. The above mentioned networks are topmost trending entertainment networks of Pakistan. Geo TV, ARY Digital and HUM television network has highest rating and their programs attract more audience than any other private entertainment channels especially their family shows reflect the social issues of Pakistani society and also have strong influence over people’s mind (Mahsud et al., 2005; Nabi & Toba, 2015; Amin et al., 2018; Naqvi, 2019; Faiz et al., 2020). Researchers have selected a prime-time slot that is 7:00 pm to 11:00 pm, as it is the time when all family members sit together after daily work and experience co-viewing (Guven, 2018). All episodes of all dramas on aired between January 2020 to December 2020 are selected as the sample of the study. Researchers has taken three-episode as sample for logical assessment of the drama content (Olson & Douglas, 1997; Manganell et al. 2008). Furthermore, data is acquired through mainstream entertainment channels, online sources and DVD and study has analyzed parent-children scenes as unit of analysis.

Operationalization of Variables
Socio-Economic Status
Socio-economic status is a position of a person in a social structure, it includes prosperity, wealth, and repute (Villalba, 2014). In case of television drama, socioeconomic status is division of the social class into higher, middle or lower working class and the occupation of the head of the family (Moore, 1992)

High Socio-Economic Status
High socioeconomic status refers to person’s wealth and property however, high or low socio-economic status can be judged through education, income and occupation (Baker, 2014; Hauser & Warren, 1997).

Low Socio-Economic Status
Low socio-economic status is denoted by little income or inadequate financial resources to face the challenges of life (Leonard et al., 2016; Hauser & Warren, 1997). Socio-Economic stratification
influences the child rearing patterns (Heimer, 1997).

**Children Response**

Children’s response refers to the way in which children respond to their parents. Television children respond differently to different parenting styles (Dail & way, 1983).

**Respectful behavior**

Positive behavior towards parents and avoidance of disrespectful or destructive behavior (Yeh & Bedford 2003; Shwalb & shwalb, 2006; Schwartz, 2010; Jeremy et al., 2012). Looking after elder parents, spending time with them, participating in their social activities are marks of respect for parents (Brien, 1991).

**Disrespectful behavior**

Negative behavior i.e. destructive attitude is referred as disrespect for parents (Yeh & Bedford 2003; Jeremy et al., 2012). In parent-child relationship, disrespectful dialogues refer to such communication that does not conform to the societal norms, use of inapt and indecent language in conversation (Demars & Russell, 1996).

**Submissive behavior:**

As social rank theory advocates that self-esteem is often formed by individual’s thinking about himself, developed by one’s social class, eventually this thinking takes the individual to the subordination that results in submissiveness (Gilbert, 2000; Gilbert et al., 2003). Submissive behavior is evolved in family environment or due to socioeconomic status in which an individual is raised up (Celik & Odaci, 2014). Submissive behavior often incites authoritarian behavior (Larissa & Alison, 2003).

**Parenting Style**

Parenting style means the way of childrearing. Researchers have identified the following four parenting styles i.e. authoritarian style, authoritative style, permissive style, and uninvolved parents in television shows and also explained their characteristics (Dail & way, 1983; Skill & Robinson, 1994; Kimberly, 2007; Callister et al., 2007; Clark, 2008; Abdorreza & Rozumah, 2010; Zurcher et al., 2018; Zurcher et al., 2019).

**Validity and Reliability**

To check content validity, the current study will use a formula given by Lawshe’s (1975) CVR (content validity ratio) formula. According to this formula, an item can be incorporated if maximum members of the penal consider it as essential. Afterwards, content validity index (CVI) is calculated for the whole test leading towards final coding after exclusion of unnecessary item. The CVI value is 0.96, however, as per previous researchers more than three judges with more than .78 CVI value is recommended for the good content validity (Polit et al., 2007; Shi et al. 2012). The inter-coder reliability of this study is also tested as the Cronbach’s alpha value is 0.86, that proves as satisfactory level of internal consistency. Alpha values between 0.84 to 0.90 are considered as reliable and overall 0.8 Cronbach’s alpha value shows the acceptable level of the internal consistency (Taber, 2017).

**Findings**

Table 1 indicates that, in 56.5% scenes children showed respect to their parents, of which in 50.6% scenes children are respectful to their parents who are presented in high socio-economic status and in 49.4% scenes children are respectful to their parents who belonged to the low socio-economic status. Out of 32.1% scenes, in which children showed disrespect towards their parents, of which in 45.5% scenes children are disrespectful to their parents who are presented in high socio-economic status, and in 54.5% scenes children are disrespectful to their parents who belonged to
the low socio-economic status, finally in 11.4% scenes children displayed submissive behavior towards their parents, of which in 54.3% scenes children are submissive to their parents who belonged to high socio-economic status whereas in 45.7% scenes children exhibited submissiveness to their parents shown in low socio-economic status.

Table 1 Children Response * Socioeconomic status Cross-tabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children Response</th>
<th>Socio-economic status</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High socio-economic Status</td>
<td>Low socio-economic status</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect count</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within children response</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespect count</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within children response</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submissive count</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within children response</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total count</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within children response</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X² = 1.047, df=2
The chi-square test of independence indicates that, no statistically significant association found between socio-economic status of the parents and children response in entertainment television dramas. X² = 1.047, df=2, p=0.59. The effect size value (0.004) shows that the strength of the association between these two variables is small.

H1: There is statistically significant association between socio-economic status of the parents and children response in entertainment television dramas. (not supported)
Figure 1: Children response to parents according to socio-economic status in entertainment television dramas

Above table (1) reveals that in 49.4% scenes parents are portrayed in high socio-economic status, of which in 50.6% scenes children showed respect to their parents, and in 45.5% scenes children exhibited disrespect to their parents of high socio-economic status. Further results of the study describe that in 50.6% scenes parents were portrayed in low socio-economic status, of which in 49.4% scenes children showed respect towards their parents, and in 54.5% scenes children displayed disrespect to their parents of low socio-economic status. Therefore, on the base of the results, the hypothesis is not rejected as the children are more disrespectful to the parents of low socio-economic status more than that of parents with high socio-economic status.

H2: The more a parent is portrayed with low socioeconomic status, the more the children will be disrespectful (supported)

The above table (1) describes that in 49.4% scenes parents are portrayed in high socio-economic status, of which in 54.3% scenes children exhibited submissive behavior towards their parents, whereas, out of 50.6% scenes in which parents are portrayed in low socio-economic status, in 45.7% scenes children showed submissive behavior to their parents. Hence, on the basis of the figure (1) hypothesis is not rejected as the children showed more submissive behavior to the parents portrayed in high socio-economic status.

H3: The more a parent is portrayed with high socioeconomic status, the more the children will be submissive (supported)

Table 2 indicates that in 49.4% scenes parents are portrayed in high socio-economic status, out of which in 22.4% scenes parents are portrayed in authoritarian parenting style, in 69.1% scenes parents are portrayed as authoritative, in 5.9% scenes parents are shown in permissive style and finally in 2.6% scenes parents are depicted as uninvolved. The study further explains that, in 50.6% scenes parents were portrayed in low socio-economic status, of which in 21.8% scenes parents are portrayed in authoritarian parenting style, in 70.5% scenes authoritative style of parenting is shown, whereas in 7.1% scenes parents exhibited permissive style and finally in 0.6% scenes parents are depicted as uninvolved parents in Pakistani entertainment television dramas.
**Table: 2 Parenting style * Socioeconomic status Cross tabulation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parenting Style</th>
<th>Socio-economic status</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Socio-economic Status</td>
<td>Low Socio-economic Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>% within parenting style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritative</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permissive</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uninvolved</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>152</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X² = 2.064679, df = 3

The chi-square test of independence reveals that, null hypothesis is not rejected because there is no statistically significant association found between parenting style and socio-economic status of the parents in entertainment television dramas. X² = 2.064679, df=3, p= 0.56. The effect size value (0.02) shows that the strength of the association between these two variables is small.

**H4: There is a statistically significant association between parenting style and socio-economic status of the parents in entertainment television dramas. (not supported)**

**Conclusion and Discussion**

The current study has bifurcated the socio-economic status into high socio-economic status and low socio-economic status. Total 308 scenes have been examined in which the frequency of
different variables of the study and their sub-categories are calculated. Results revealed that in 50.6% scenes children showed respect to their parents belonged to high socio-economic status while in 45.5% scenes children exhibited disrespect to them. Furthermore, in 49.4% scenes children showed respect towards their parents in low socio-economic status whereas in 54.5% scenes children showed disrespect to them. The association between these variables is checked through chi-square test of independence.

Some researchers believed that, in prime-time dramas, family relations are more closed, stronger and harmonies in lower socio-economic status, however, upper class life style is inversely related to the happiness, non-conflictual life and relational satisfaction (Skill & Robinson 1994; Thomas & Callahan, 1982). Whereas, Douglas and Olson (1995) stated that in television parent-children interaction, unhappiness, relational instability and disrespect are highly attached with the poor socio-economic status, hence our findings are aligned with this study as it reveals that children showed more disrespectful behavior to their poor parents. Finding also indicated that children are more submissive in high socio-economic status, because socioeconomic status is positively associated with the children's behavioral outcomes (Hui-Lan, 2004; Berger, 2014), for example Haith and Benson (2008) endorsed in their book that children reared by authoritarian parents combined with high socio-economic status, often exhibit submissive behavior, shyness, socially ineptness and show less confidence, besides all they are highly dependent on their parents. Hence, the results of this research are quite comparable with the above mentioned studies as in the Pakistani entertainment dramas, children showed submissive behavior to their rich parents.

Study also measured the relationship between parenting style and socioeconomic status of parents. Previously, the researchers have floated the idea that economic stability and financial successes are equally important in different domains of life i.e. child rearing (Fisher & Dean, 1972; callister et al., 2007; clark, 2008; Kang & Kim, 2011). Nevertheless, the findings of the present study do not resonate with the findings of the earlier studies as no noteworthy relationship found between child rearing patterns and socio-economic status of the parents in entertainment television dramas of Pakistan. However, the findings are aligned with real life, when there is no significant relationship found between parenting style and parents’ income (Anton et al., 2016), and mother’s emotional behavior and socioeconomic status (Alt afim et al., 2018). The present research explored the children response to their parents as per their socio economic status in private entertainment channels (i.e. HUM TV, ARY Digital, GEO TV) of Pakistan. Research concludes that children raised by the parents with high socio-economic status showed submissive behavior, whereas the children raised by parents with low socio-economic status exhibited more disrespectful behavior towards their parents.

References


In Rethinking New Womanhood (pp. 71-93). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.


Ullah, H. (2014). The Objectification of Women in Television Advertisements in Pakistan. FWU Journal of Social Sciences, 8(2). http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&profile=ehost&scope=site&authtype=crawler&jrn=19951272&AN=10226352&h=alRvV08YrqSgO%2BydO0dFctxpgXmqtX5YFC964p1H5sYdgQ5LeYpTcO07va%2BB9N6ap7TyTopR1iQ%2BvJBUj7w%3D%3D&crl=c