

Impact of Television Public Service Messages on Viewers of Lahore: A Case of COVID-19

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Abstract

The current study has investigated the impact of television public service messages (PSM) on viewers of Lahore during covid-19. The present research was focused on viewers' behavior, their comprehensive knowledge about covid-19, and how well they have adopted precautionary measures to prevent themselves from covid-19. This study was aimed to examine how TV Covid-19 PSM affected the viewers of Lahore, how well they have educated the viewers about the contagious virus covid-19 and created awareness among them to protect from covid-19. By using survey method and questionnaire as tool of data collection, the data was collected from 450 respondents from 9 towns of Lahore (50 from each town) to find out how effectively TV PSM has impacted the viewers in changing their behavior, creating awareness, educating people as well as adopting the precautionary measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19. The study concluded that TV public service messages positively contributed in raising awareness and educating people about the precautionary measure of Covid-19 in Pakistan.

Keywords: PSM, Television, Covid-19, Impact, Pakistan.

1. Introduction

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is defined as an infectious disease that cause mild to severe respiratory illness that could leads to death. Its official name is (SARS-CoV-2). The outbreak was start from Wuhan City, China. It was firstly reported December 31st (2019) to the world health organization (WHO). On January 30th (2020), the WHO declared COVID-19 outbreak as a global health emergency and after that on March 11th 2020 the WHO declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic. Coronavirus has spread rapidly and effected masses around the world as it easily transmits from one person to another. The coronavirus spreads through droplets of person's saliva and discharge from nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes in front of other. The virus wreaked havoc across the world because it has no treatment and still incurable expect the work underway on a vaccine and its trial. COVID-19 has not only cause serious issues for health but also leave huge impact on the psychological, social and economics aspect of the life. (Khan et al., 2020).

As the coronavirus spreads crosswise the world, all journalists are scrambling to keep the public informed about this outbreak and response. Many of them endangering their health to report of outbreak from the front line. With the increasing spread of COVID-19 world has observed an increase in misinformation about the virus around the globe and the Director General WHO called it as we are not only fighting with an epidemic but also with info-demic (Baba et al. 2022).

Public media are considered the most trusted source of news across the world. In this context some of the developments and new initiatives being applied by public media organizations to report the COVID-19 outbreak in best way and effectively inform the public. Public service messages are referred to an ordered set of communication activities directed at a large number of audiences to generate specific outcomes within a specified time period. The purpose of Public service messages (PSM) is to affect and change the behaviours of every individual, PSM dispersed in the form of advertisement communication and easy to persuasive to promote attitude, public behavioural changes towards any social health issue PSM can influence and increase knowledge about particular issue related to the public, because it can play an important role as a carrier or informant for the viewers to change their behaviours regarding a specific issue. PSM regarding "Coronavirus"

outbreak (covid-19) refer to preventive measures to stop the spread of virus among people, awareness and educating that how to keep safe yourself from this deadly virus. PSM has been delivering by various media sources to improve awareness about Covid-19, to change behaviours, and to educate and promote prevention management regarding existing coronavirus.

Public service messages an effective way to reduce the risks of spreading Coronavirus among people. Here is important to know that how helpful media's public service messages to aware and educate people in this crucial situation. What factors that predict the efficacy of COVID-19 related persuasive messages? Messages that is about personal risk and recklessness, emphasize narrative scenarios or protection of community have proved more effective at increasing perceived risk and motivating health behaviour e.g., mask wearing, social distancing, and vaccination (Bokemper et al., 2022; Sinclair et al., 2021; Cakanlar et al., 2022).

In Pakistan, various news channels such as Geo News, Express News, Ary News, Dunya News, etc., have devoted special prime time slots to broadcast public service messages for the people of Pakistan to provide them with details to help them in this global pandemic situation. Somehow public service messages have never been evaluated in this way because the world has never faced this pandemic situation before. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the PSM on coronavirus disease through surveying to understand some factors, (specified in objectives).

2. Literature Review

This study will find out how Pakistani television public service message regarding Covid-19 affected the viewers of Lahore. The existing knowledge about televised PSA on epilepsy is having a positive, knowledgeable, and great impact on the viewer's other than a school-based educational program on epilepsy (Martiniuk et al., 2010).

This study is based on a media campaign against the dengue virus by the Government of Punjab to know the level of knowledge about the Anti-dengue media campaign. Research conducted a questionnaire survey to know the level of awareness. In the Gujranwala distract 300 participants and find out the result that the media campaign is successful due to the usage of television as a core source of information. The finding of this study is television is an

effective source of information for a successful media campaign. This study also supports the social learning theory and emphasizes more education the people through the television media campaign (Waseem, 2017).

This study examines the dread over a conceivable repeat of Ebola remain unavoidable among college undergraduates in Nigeria. Avoidance instruction proceeds to be delivered through PSAs (public service announcement) on radio, tv, and social media. Be that as it may, small is known around college students' information, demeanours, and devotion to PSAs on Ebola infection. The reason for this consideration was to explore college students' information and state of mind almost Ebola and variables that foresee adherence to Ebola instruction data intervened through PSAs. An add up to 211 duplicates of the organized survey were managed to a multi-stage test drawn from medium-sized Nigerian universities. The larger part of the members reacted accurately to the questions that related to Ebola infection transmission. About 86% of undergraduates agreed that Ebola can be contracted through body discharges of a debilitated individual, 83% of undergraduates recognized the fundamental indications of Ebola as vomiting and weakness whereas 82% concurred that customary washing of hands and utilize of hand sanitizers can anticipate Ebola transmission. Information and demeanours developed as critical indicators of students' adherence to PSA exhortation on Ebola illness ($p < .05$). In show disdain toward their deficiencies, PSAs remain a critical vehicle for passing on Ebola anticipation instruction to educational institutes (Ajilore et al., 2017).

The aim of this study was to define public service advertisement flyer design of "wash hands with running water". It was three flyers public service announcement "wash your hands with soap and running water" campaign that designed by ministry of health Indonesia. This campaign used various media including posters, flyers, social media and animated video. The study used qualitative research to collect data from flyers. Result says the third flyer of PSA "wash hands with soap and running water" had highest scores to disseminate the PSA among people (Patria & Kristiana, 2020).

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effects of broadcasted public service advertising produced by the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on cardiovascular disease. The study was based on a quantitative survey and quota sampling was used on 1000 participants with

age 19 over 15 provinces of Korea. Public communication Companies theory of public relations theory used in his study. In the light of conducted review after watching public service message, 75% of participants were understood and 70 % had willingly to change their behaviours. Public service message having positive effects and increasing the level of understanding (Jung et al., 2016).

This study based on content analysis and examine the reports of article a substance examination of 56 English language Public Service Announcements for HIV/AIDS avoidance created by the government of U.S in 1987 for TV broadcast. These PSAs don't lead target groups of viewers through a coherent grouping from mindfulness to inspiration, skill building, and upkeep. The PSAs underutilize a methodology of “strategic ambiguity” to create person PSAs that address the requirements of an offer to numerous target gatherings of people, subsequently coordinating data not as it were to heteros, the essential target of these PSAs but to gay people and bisexuals. The PSA generally disregard issues related to infusion sedate utilize and sharing of needle. What drug related depictions there is centre on African American road addicts, which sustains racial generalizations and falls flat to address intermittent infusion sedate utilize. The PSAs misuse fears of AIDS/HIV to debilitate medicate utilize but don't offer sedate treatment or counselling data. PSA created by the Clinton organization to promote condom utilization doesn't completely address key reasons why individuals come up short to utilize condoms: concern approximately sexual joy, humiliation approximately getting condoms, and need of abilities to arrange condom utilize with sexual partners. These suggestions of conclusions for the end of the U.S. AIDS/HIV avoidance are discussed (Dejong et al., 2001).

3. Objectives

- To examine the impact of TV Public Service Messages regarding the coronavirus on the behavior of viewers.
- To examine how successful were the public service messages in creating awareness about the coronavirus outbreak.
- To measure how well people understood the public service messages regarding coronavirus preventive measures to stopping the spread of the virus.

4. Theoretical Framework

This study was based on theory of persuasion is called Elaboration Likelihood Model. Theory says that persuasion happens through one of the two routes; one is the peripheral route or central route. The central route uses logical processing that produce more persuasion, where the other peripheral route makes use of contextual signs result change in behaviour temporarily. This theory supports this research work to persuade the people or the viewers' public service message (Petty et al., 1986).

The persuasion theory demonstrates that how people change and acquire their behaviour in response to persuasive message. Persuasion can be defined as a method that used to raise awareness, influence attitudes or educate behaviours. This is how and what you think about the persuasive information. A reasoning response is a thought made in response to persuasive communication and therefore triggers an attitude change (Petty et al., 1981).

5. Research Question

RQ1: How for TV PSM on COVID-19 remain successful in changing behaviour of viewers?

RQ2: Did TV PSM on COVID-19 help in stopping the spread of virus by educating masses regarding Covid-19 outbreak?

RQ3: Are TV PSM on COVID-19 successful in creating awareness about precautionary measure against COVID-19?

6. Hypotheses

H1: More the exposure of TV PSM on COVID-19 greater the change in behaviour of the viewers.

H2: More the exposure to TV PSM on COVID-19 greater the help in stopping the spread of virus.

H3: TV PSM of COVID-19 is successful in creating awareness about precautionary measure against COVID-19.

7. Method

The present study was based on quantitative approach. Survey method was employed as method of the study and questionnaire as a tool of data collection. Respondents from nine towns of Lahore were the sample of this study. A size of 450 respondents (50 from each town) from Gulbarg, Samanabad, Iqbal Town, Nishtar, Ravi, Shalamar, Wagha, AzizBhatti, Data Gunj Buksh was taken for the study by using convenience sampling. SPSS was used to carry out the analysis of the study and correlation was used to find out the relationship between variables.

7.1 Data analysis

The data analysed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software to test hypothesis correlation used. Whereas to check the reliability of the scale colon Bach alpha was employed.

8. Findings

8.1 Demographic Information

Demographic information contains gender and educational level.

Table 8.1: Gender wise distribution of respondents (N=450)

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Male	244	54.2
	Female	205	45.6
	Total	405	100.0

As shown in table 8.1, total respondents were 450 out of two forty-four (54.2%) were male and two hundred and five (45.6%) were female.

Table 8.2: Education wise distribution (N=450)

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Under Graduate	56	12.4
	Graduate	322	71.6
	Post-Graduation	72	16.0
	Total	450	100.0

As shown in table 2, total respondents were 450 out of 322 (71.6%) were Graduate, two 72 (16.0) were Post graduate and 56 (12.4) were under Graduate.

8.2 Correlation Tables

H1: More the exposure of TV PSM on COVID-19 greater the change in behavior of the viewers

Behavior		
	Pearson Correlation	.231**
Exposure of TV PSM	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	450

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between exposure of PSM and changing in viewer's Behavior was investigated using Person product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analysis was performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There is a significant weak positive correlation between the variables, $r = .231$, $n = 450$, $p = 0.000$. Thus, the hypothesis was supported by data.

H2: More the exposure to TV PSM on COVID-19 greater the help to stopping the spread of virus.

Precautionary Measures		
	Pearson Correlation	-.081
Exposure of TV PSM	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.85
	N	450

The relationship between exposure of PSM and greater the help to stopping the spread of virus changing in viewer's attitude was investigated using Person product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analysis was performed to confirm no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There is a no significant association between variables, $r = -.081$, $n = 450$, $p = 0.085$. Thus, the hypothesis was not supported by data.

H3: TV PSM of COVID-19 is successful in creating awareness about precautionary measure against COVID-19

Awareness		
	Pearson Correlation	.197**
Exposure of TV PSM	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	450

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between exposure of PSM and successful awareness about precautionary measures against Covid-19 was investigated using Person product-moment correlation coefficient. Initial analysis was completed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, homoscedasticity and linearity. There is a significant but weak positive correlation between variable, $r = .197$, $n = 450$, $p = 0.000$. Thus, the hypothesis was supported by data.

9. Discussion

Purpose of this study was to examine or investigate the impact of Television Public Service Messages regarding Covid-19 on viewers of Lahore. 450 respondents were selected including male, female from 9 towns of Lahore via cluster/random sampling. Data analysis has done by using correlation to test hypothesis. This research initially started with the aim to find out the impact of TV Covid-19 PSM on viewers of Lahore.

H1: More the exposure of TV PSM on COVID-19 greater the change in behavior of the viewers

Perhaps the most important finding is the effectiveness of TV PSM in changing viewer's behavior towards covid-19 by perusing them. Most of the people considered PSAs as a source of information and made them change their behavior toward covid-19, not only just behaviors but also has changed their work environment, family and social gatherings. The previous studies also help to define PSM's exposure and its positive behavior changing effects on viewers. related to this goal the previous recent study that conducted by Reidenberg and Berman, study was aimed to determine PSM results regarding suicide prevention whether exposure of public awareness campaigns is effective to pursue the viewers and getting them involve in help seeking behavior. For this purpose, 1-month campaign of suicide prevention PSA was started.5000 flyers was distributed. Result of the study was proven that majority of PSAs regarding suicide prevention has effect viewers in help-seeking behavior as well as effective at getting viewers to engage in a help-seeking behavior. Another study was conducted by District Health Office of North Lombok Regency to critically examine the sanitation behavior through PSA using Sani FOAM framework. For this purpose, department has developed 3 minutes' duration PSA to endorse stunting reduction among viewers by adapting hygienic and healthy behavior. Results say that PSA looks successfully conveys the main messages and effects viewers' behavior regarding their hygienic behavior. This indicates that exposure of TV PSM directly affected viewers' behavior (See table 8.1).

H2: More the exposure to TV PSM on COVID-19 greater the help to stopping the spread of virus.

Through a careful consideration of the content of those PSAs that were judged to be effective in prevention of the spread of virus among masses, and majority was agree that PSM has help to minimize the spread of virus by getting them inform about the main symptoms of covid-19 are fever, fatigue and dry cough and the droplets of infected person can cause infection to another person. Previous literature related to this study was about Ebola virus prevention education through public service announcements (PSAs) among in Nigeria's college students on traditional and social media. Data were collected by using survey on a multi-stage sample in a private university of Nigeria.

Results of the study was in the favour of PSM's effectiveness that positively conveyed messages about Ebola virus prevention.in this context majority was agreed that they have exposed to precautionary measure's PSM and that was helpful and minimize the spread of virus but along with not much practice of adopting precautionary were seen (See table 8.2).

H3: TV PSM of COVID-19 is successful in creating awareness about precautionary measure against COVID-19

Another important finding of the study was the positive effectiveness of TV PSM in creating awareness and educating people about covid-19 majority of viewers were agree that TV PSM has made them aware about this deadly, incurable covid-19 as well as educate them that how to stay safe from getting infected from this virus. With this reference of this previous study in which media campaign against the dengue virus by the Government of Punjab has been taken to know the level of information about the Anti-dengue media campaign. Researcher Waseem in 2017 conducted a survey to know the level of awareness among people. For these 300 participants were selected form Gujranwala distract. Finding of this study was that television is an effective source of awareness and information for a successful media campaign.in this current study TV PSM has created awareness from wearing mask to sanitizing, washing hands and maintaining social distance (See table H1).

Thus, by keeping in view the above-mentioned results and findings can be concluded that TV PSM regarding Covid-19 are playing a vital role by pursuing people in positive manner. PSM has help peoples to know about this deadly unburn-able virus that can be easily transmit by one person to another's has changed viewers' attitude, behaviour their life style, working environment as well as their family and social gatherings.TV PSM has created awareness about precautionary measures to prevent the spread of virus. And also educating people how to practice preventive measures by washing hands for 20 second, using hand sanitizers, wearing masks and maintaining 6 feet distance.

10. Conclusion

After analysing the data of survey, it is concluded that TV PSM regarding Covid-19 playing effective role in changing people's behaviour, attitude. According to the respondents these TV PSM of Covid-19 are contributing positively by educating people about the virus to save their lives. These PSM are for people's health and safety and are best source of getting information about Covid-19.

PSM can peruse the people's attitude, behaviour while disseminating messages regarding Covid-19. As mainstream media is mandated to provide essential and lifesaving information during emergencies and crises. The purpose of public service messages is to affect and change the behaviours of every individual the public towards any social health issue. When PSM broadcasts necessary information or announcement, viewers perceive as PSM describes and it also affects viewers' behaviour towards that specific social health message.

Attitude and behaviour of viewers is found positively changed. The exposure to PSM and the information they have been provided leaves impact on viewers. Sensitivity of the information that shows in PSM leads audience to change their behaviour, as PSM makes them carious about their health. After it comes to creating awareness about Covid-19. PSM aware people about this virus that how fatal this virus could be, how to prevent to get infected by using washing hands for 20 seconds, sanitizing your hands, wearing mask before going outside and maintaining distance of 6 feet. This is making people more careful about their daily hygiene routine to be safe from Covid-19.

So, it was concluded that PSM are helping to understand Covid-19's symptoms including fatigue, fever, dry cough and that droplets of infected person transmit virus to healthy person also about the self-isolation.as PSM disseminated complete information about Covid-19 as well as helping in minimize the spread of the virus. Study has concluded that TV PSM of Covid-19 are playing a vital role to creating and educating people and giving them information that consist of precautionary measures, symptoms, self-isolation, all necessary things they need to know about this virus.

11. Limitations of the Study

Non-availability of the material in library related to the topic Impact of TV Public Service Messages on viewers of Lahore as first time this pandemic has occurred. That is why most of the sources of data is internet. Where there is lack of related searches and material found as there are many studies of PSM were about AIDS, breast cancer, suicide prevention and other non-communicable diseases except data on Ebola, influenza and Dengue virus. In this study non probability sampling has been used, which is not representative of whole study.

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