

**AN EVALUATION OF THE NOTION OF CHANGE IN SOCIO-CULTURAL VALUES UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF MEDIA: A CASE STUDY OF DISTRICT SWAT, KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA, PAKISTAN**

**Imran<sup>1\*</sup>**

**Amir Nawaz Khan<sup>2\*\*</sup>**

**Abstract**

*Social and cultural values are the vital ingredients in constructing cultural identity. This is not the sole choice of an individual rather a communal one. Investigating and scrutinizing the phenomenon of change in socio-cultural values of Pakhtun culture concerning the role of media (especially social media) is the main purpose of this study. For achieving this purpose, the quantitative approach has been used in the paper. The data was obtained through a questionnaire from the potential respondents (n=250) from all seven tehsils of district Swat, Pakistan. The data were analyzed through SPSS at a univariate, bivariate and multivariate level while incorporating Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test along with Gamma ( $\gamma$ ) at the bivariate level and Kendall Tau-C ( $T^c$ ) at multivariate levels respectively. The study is novel and new and of immense significance. It focuses on the altering facets of socio-cultural values in the arena of technological advancement and the dominant role of media in this regard. Based on the collected data, the study revealed at the bivariate level that there is a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) and a positive association between the role of media and changes in values. At multivariate level, a highly significant, positive and spurious relationship was detected.*

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\*Lecturer in Sociology, Department of Social and Gender Studies, University of Swat, Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Email: [sociologistimran1@gmail.com](mailto:sociologistimran1@gmail.com) / [imran\\_sociologist@uswat.edu.pk](mailto:imran_sociologist@uswat.edu.pk) (Principal and Corresponding author).

\*\* Centre for Disaster Preparedness and Management, University of Peshawar, 25130, Khyber, Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

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### **Introduction**

It is a fact that media has quite a significant socio-cultural impact on society (Florescu, 2014; Bansal, 2017). It is a universal truth that nowadays, there is no area on earth (and even space) beyond the scope of mass communication and the media, sometimes termed as the 'fourth estate,' have a profound impact on culture and the values embedded in it. Impact of media, particularly on children and young people, has long been the subject of substantial social attention and discussion, more so among teachers, families and communities. Massive social events presented on television (public or government functions, big sports events, etc.) also attract large numbers of viewers and provide social cohesion. Furthermore, it is important to mention here that as the national culture grows diverse, the reinforcement of shared values and practices is still indispensable for social rituals, customs and events (Bansal, 2017).

Values are cognitive structures that are more abstract than beliefs and principles linked to beneficial states and actions (Rokeach, 1973; Howard, 1995; Schwartz, 1992, 1994). Values and ethics are influenced by social institutional factors such as occupational positions and social status (Kohn, 1969; Kohn & Schooler, 1983) and cultural ways of thinking like personal or contingent cultural orientations in social interactions (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Carter, 1990; Ortuño, 1991). They are fundamental to the self (Gecas, 2000; Hitlin, 2006) and are powerful motivators of behaviour (Feather, 1992-1195). Structural and cultural inspirations importantly substantiate beliefs. However, it also affects human judgment and behaviour. Researchers have observed that media use is a significant predictor of value systems (Gerbner, 1982, 1984; Morgan, Shanahan, & Signorielli, 2008; Swigger, 2013). Therefore, it

undoubtedly nurtures viewpoints that are fundamental to social and civic behavioural patterns.

It has been observed that through emerging technologies, life has become more fragmented, more self-centred and also secluded. People tend to communicate with the globe via television or computer screens, many seldom vote, and hardly participate in local politics or cultural traditions (Pappano, 2001). Studies found that media usage has been related to values, which has accounted for an insignificant segment of media impacts on public participation and observation (Firat, 2014).

### **Literature Review**

It is very important to mention here that technology and media, in the epoch of international communication technologies, have provided a great social boost by integrating nation-wide differences among nation-states (Weinstein 2005; Chase-Dunn and Babones 2006). Such social transitions reveal that it is the consumption of cultural orientations spread over television programming and social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) which has the potential to drastically reconstruct the world through cultural interactions (Thompson, 1995; Sparks, 2007; Selznick, 2008). The main path of this evolution moves from the developed economies of the world to the big metropolitan centres in developing nations. It connects with their rural parts, thus disseminating media content and communications (Weinstein 2005).

According to Swigger (2013), if social media causes changes in fundamental American values and standards, it might also influence their core ideals like community and social identity. Many scholars have demonstrated unhappiness with the media. It is because they mention societies' detachment from their traditions and their preoccupation with international values. Such new morals and values are without origin or relation to the identity of the culture. Thus, through the overwhelming influence

of the foreign, media weakens the customs and ideals of local societies just for the sake of global uniformity and supremacy of a dominant culture. Resistance media prefer to use the open environment of the worldwide knowledge system to spread their own culture and philosophy (Babran, 2008).

Media has also introduced new values and ideology like a materialistic approach as human relationships are becoming impersonal and secondary: heart but no feeling, life but not emotion. However, value practices are also altered, e.g., harmony, solidarity and social welfare cooperation. People are prioritizing their families and communities far less than ever before. A sense of social responsibility, obedience towards parents, and loyalty are declining (Rao, 2019). Meyrowitz (1985) examined that the media is the "missing connection" between culture and personality, contributing to social change. Most of the past's values have diminished its former relevance. There is no effort to convince younger ones to embrace these values uncritically. There has been no new set of values established to take the position of the old ones.

Kawaljeet et al. (2018) shed light on the understanding of the concept of media (outlined by Lundmark et al., 2016; Schlagwein and Hu, 2016; Wakefield and Wakefield, 2016; Miranda et al., 2016; Spagnoletti et al., 2015; Xu and Zhang, 2013; Bharati et al., 2014; and Tang et al., 2012) and described it in their own words, i.e., social media is composed of numerous user-driven networks which facilitate user-driven communication. It is a digital environment built by people and for people. It offers an atmosphere conducive to interactions and networking at various levels (personal, corporate, technical, political, marketing, and societal).

Conventional media has a colossal impact on youth today. Television, mobile phones, online games, and all social media networks have significantly influenced all facets of a teenager's life. However, it is important to note that not all of this is

negative. Media will turn the teenager's life from good to better if used in the right way (Akram and Kumar, 2017). Most teenagers are socially anxious; social networking also offers them the chance to expand their social network and form new friendships (Shahjahan and Chisty, 2014; Akram and Kumar, 2017). Research reveals that people with high-grade scores in various tests see less TV in their infancy and early teens, whereas teenagers who view excessive television (TV) have lower grades in their tests. Other research shows that different media have different impacts on school work (William, 2012). Social media has various forms, including micro-blogs, forums, wikis, photo-sharing sites, social networking sites, video sharing sites, instant messaging, podcasts, virtual worlds, widgets, and more. Billions of people worldwide exchange knowledge and make links using social networks (Mahmoudi et al., 2008; Akram and Kumar, 2017).

Social networks and interactions establish a norm in the real-world situation that a person is expected to live up to (see, for example, Putnam 1995; Green and Gerber 2001; Fowler and Kam 2007; Sigel 2009). Kittilson and Dalton (2011) concluded that online socialization would play a similar function to social capital in the real world. The quality of online service tends to be a key factor in how online networking influences an individual's behaviour. Public debate and conversation could provide insight and promote political acceptance and understanding (Mutz, 2002; Godwin et al. 2004; Pattie and Johnston 2008; Harell 2010). On the other hand, communication networks can also become one-sided, leading towards less tolerance (Wojcieszak and Mutz, 2009). People may also have a tendency to arrange their communication networks to prevent this opposition (Kalish and Robins 2006), and the influence of social networks can be altered and reformed by individual personality variations (Hibbing et al. 2011). Likewise, studies have focused on teenage growth which has started recording value shifts and improvements in social

media use-related intellectual development (Raynes-Goldie 2010; Boyd and Marwick 2011).

Oh et al. (2015) studied Egypt's 2011 pioneering Twitter data and found that it had played a critical role in information collection and preserving situational awareness during politically unpredictable and erratic stages such as The Arab Spring. Ling et al. (2015) carried out a study based on flooding data of 2011 in Thailand which concluded that social media could offer a resourceful, psychological empowerment and structure to achieve collective participation and joint control.

### **Research Methodological Approach**

A research design was used for covering different aspects of the study, including the nature of the study, population and sampling strategy, and research instrument(s) and analyses required for conducting any research activity (Ader & Mellenbergh, 2008). A quantitative approach has been used for objective measurement through statistical analyses (Williams, 2007). All seven tehsils of district Swat, a Northern district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan, was chosen as the study locale. The sampled respondents were selected through the non-probability method from various society segments comprised of lawyers, intellectuals, literary persons, politicians, and community leaders with a sample size of n=250. Likewise, the requisite information was obtained using a questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale (i.e., strongly disagree; disagree; neutral; strongly agree, and agree). The pretesting was carried out with the intent of removing any ambiguous or irrelevant questions and adding any required research item. After collecting the required data, the analyses were made at a univariate, bivariate and multivariate level while using the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test, one of the most widely used about other non-parametric tests (Kothari, 2007) which helps us measure the association between variables of the study (Sirkin, 2006; Onchiri, 2013). However, it

is not applicable for revealing the direction of the association (Patil, 2018). To overcome this deficiency and seek the direction, Gamma ( $\gamma$ ) test statistics were incorporated at the bivariate level and Kendall Tau-C ( $T^c$ ) at the multivariate level for detecting the spuriousness or non-spuriousness of the relationship respectively.

**Data Analysis and Results**

Data of the present study was analyzed quantitatively. Furthermore, this study's quantitative method was intended to form and calculate the collected data during the survey. The bivariate and multivariate analyses and results are illustrated below.

**Table No. 1: Impact of Media and Changes in Values**

*Bivariate Analysis reflecting the Association between Impact of Media and Changes in Values n=250*

S. #	Attributes / Statement	Response	Changes in Values			Total	Test Statistic (Chi-Square & Gamma)
			Low Change	Moderate Change	High Change		
1.	Media is a vital force for bringing awareness about the modern world.	Strongly Disagree	1(11.1)	8(88.9)	0(0.0)	9(100)	$\chi^2=10.894$ P=0.052 $\gamma = 0.141$
		Neutral	0(0.0)	24(77.4)	7(22.6)	31(100)	
		Agree	9(9.1)	58(58.6)	32(32.3)	99(100)	
		Strongly Agree	4(3.6)	72(64.9)	35(31.5)	111(100)	
2.	Social media strengthen social networking in a fast manner across the globe.	Disagree	0(0.0)	2(100)	0(0.0)	2(100)	$\chi^2=15.138$ P=0.019 $\gamma = 0.169$
		Neutral	0(0.0)	23(63.9)	13(36.1)	36(100)	
		Agree	11(10.2)	75(69.4)	22(20.4)	108(100)	
		Strongly Agree	3(2.9)	62(59.6)	39(37.5)	104(100)	
3.	Media and particularly social media is a vital source of adding new traits to the indigenous culture.	Strongly Disagree	1(25)	3(75)	0(0.0)	4(100)	$\chi^2=17.348$ P=0.027 $\gamma = 0.322$
		Disagree	0(0.0)	4(100)	0(0.0)	4(100)	
		Neutral	1(2.4)	32(76.2)	9(21.4)	42(100)	
		Agree	9(8.3)	72(66.7)	27(25)	108(100)	
		Strongly Agree	3(3.3)	51(55.4)	38(41.3)	92(100)	
4.	Media makes teens get new skills.	Strongly Disagree	2(9.1)	18(81.8)	2(9.1)	22(100)	$\chi^2=45.442$ P=0.000

		Disagree	1(20)	2(40)	2(40)	5(100)	$\gamma = 0.591$
		Neutral	1(5.9)	16(74.1)	0(0.0)	17(100)	
		Agree	8(6.9)	86(74.1)	22(19)	116(100)	
		Strongly Agree	2(2.2)	40(44.4)	48(53.3)	90(100)	
5.	Due to media, understanding of other cultures becomes very easy and fast.	Strongly Disagree	2(25)	6(75)	0(0.0)	8(100)	$\chi^2=55.582$ P=0.000 $\gamma = 0.624$
		Disagree	1(100)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(100)	
		Neutral	1(7.7)	9(69.2)	3(23.1)	13(100)	
		Agree	9(7.8)	89(76.7)	18(15.5)	116(100)	
		Strongly Agree	1(0.9)	58(51.8)	53(47.3)	112(100)	

Table-1 portrays the association between the impacts of media and values changes in *Pakhtun* society in the study area. The respondents' response regarding the statement that 'media is a vital force for bringing awareness about the modern world' was observed as agree, i.e. n = 58(58.6 per cent) to moderate change and n = 32(32.3 per cent) to high change occurred in values. Similarly, those who strongly agree, among those, the response of n = 72(64.9 per cent) respondents strongly agreed toward moderate change. In contrast, n = 35(31.5 per cent) respondents opined as strongly agree toward accepting the impacts of modernization as high change. The inferential statistics indicated a significant association (P=0.052) between the variables mentioned earlier in a positive direction, as reflected by the Gamma value ( $\gamma = 0.141$ ).

The opinion of respondents toward another statement that 'social media strengthen social networking in a fast manner across the globe' was detected as agree, i.e. n = 75(69.4 per cent) to moderate change and n = 22(20.4 per cent) to high change occurred in values. Subsequently, those who strongly agree, among those n = 62(59.6 per cent) respondents responded as strongly agree toward moderate change. In comparison, n = 39(37.5 per cent) respondents opined as strongly agree toward accepting the impacts of modernization as high change. The inferential statistics unveiled a significant association (P=0.019)

between the variables described above in a positive direction, as reflected by the Gamma value ( $\gamma = 0.169$ ).

Further, responding to another statement that 'media and particularly social media is a vital source of adding new traits to the indigenous culture' was treated as agree, i.e.  $n = 72$ (66.7 per cent) to moderate change and  $n = 27$ (25 per cent) to high change occurred in values. Media added new traits to our culture as media play a vital role in bringing awareness in people and make attraction in opting for new traits. This is very much visible in different aspects of their lives like dressing, food, technological use etc. Similarly, those who strongly agree, among those, the response of  $n = 51$ (55.4 per cent) respondents strongly agreed toward moderate change. In comparison,  $n = 38$ (41.3 per cent) respondents opined as strongly agree toward accepting the impacts of modernization as high change. The inferential statistics indicated a highly significant association ( $P=0.027$ ) between the variables above in a positive direction as divulged by the Gamma value ( $\gamma = 0.322$ ).

Moreover, regarding another statement, i.e. 'media makes the teens get new skills' the response was noticed as agree, i.e.  $n = 86$ (74.1 per cent) to moderate change and  $n = 22$ (19 per cent) to high change occurred in values. Along with this, those who strongly agree, among those  $n = 40$ (44.4 per cent) respondents answered as strongly agree toward moderate change. In comparison,  $n = 48$ (53.3 per cent) respondents disclosed as strongly agree toward accepting the impacts of modernization as high change. The inferential statistics have shown a highly significant ( $p<0.05$ ) association ( $P=0.000$ ) between the variables as mentioned earlier in a positive trend, as revealed by the Gamma value ( $\gamma = 0.591$ ).

Similarly, concerning another statement, i.e. 'due to media, understanding of other cultures becomes very easy and fast' the response was detected as agree, i.e.  $n = 89$ (76.7 per cent) to moderate change and  $n = 18$ (15.5 per cent) to high change

occurred in values. Along with this, those who strongly agree, among those n = 58(51.8 per cent) respondents answered as strongly agree toward moderate change. In comparison, n = 53(47.3 per cent) respondents disclosed as strongly agree toward accepting the impacts of modernization as high change. The inferential statistics showed a highly significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) association ( $P = 0.000$ ) between the variables as mentioned earlier in a positive trend, as revealed by the Gamma value ( $\gamma = 0.624$ ).

**Table No. 2: Impact of Media and Changes in Values**

*Multivariate Analysis reflecting the Association between Impact of Media and Changes in Values while Controlling Type of Residence as Background Variable n=250*

Type of Residence	Impact of Media	Changes in values			Total	Test Statistics $\chi^2$ (P-Value), Kendall's tau-c (T <sup>c</sup> )	Level of Significance for Entire Table	
		Low Change	Moderate Change	High Change				
Rural	No Access to Media	3 (13)	20 (87)	0 (0)	23 (100)	$\chi^2 = 12.830$ $P = 0.002$ $T^c = 0.179$	$\chi^2 = 16.900$ $P = 0.000$ $T^c = 0.168$	
	Access to Media	5 (3.4)	93 (64.1)	47 (32.4)	145 (100)			
	<b>Total</b>	8 (4.8)	113 (67.3)	47 (28)	168 (100)			
Urban	No Access to Media	1 (11.1)	8 (88.9)	0 (0)	9 (100)			$\chi^2 = 4.964$ $P = 0.084$ $T^c = 0.145$
	Access to Media	5 (6.8)	41 (56.2)	27 (37)	73 (100)			
	<b>Total</b>	6 (7.3)	49 (59.8)	27 (32.9)	82 (100)			

Table-2 reveals the multivariate results that portray the association between media and changes in values while controlling the type of residence of the study respondents. The nature of change has been measured at different levels like low change in values, moderate change in values and high change in values regarding media access and no access to media. Further, it is evident from the Table-2 that out of the total n = 250(100 per cent) respondents, n = 168 were from rural areas whereas out of

168 respondents,  $n = 47$ (32.4 per cent) who had access to media resulted in a high change in values in Pakhtun society. Subsequently, the Test Statistic i.e.  $\chi^2 = 12.830$  &  $P = 0.002$  depicted a significant and positive relationship. On another hand, out of the total 250(100 per cent) respondents,  $n = 82$  were from urban areas whereas out of 82 respondents,  $n = 0$ (0.0 per cent) had no access to media portrayed a high change in values while  $n = 27$ (37 per cent) had access to media were agreed that there is a high impact of media on changes in values in Pakhtun society. Subsequently, the Test Statistics i.e.  $\chi^2 = 4.964$  &  $P = 0.084$  disclosed a significant and positive relationship. Similarly, the overall test statistics of the above table-2 specified a highly significant, positive and non-spurious relationship. It is pertinent to mention here that though the media has a positive and significant impact of media on changes in values, the background variable, i.e. type of residence has no role in describing the swiftness of change. Both are under the influence of change due to media.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the survey results ( $n=250$ ), the study's analysis revealed that the role of media is very significant concerning bringing change in the socio-cultural values of Pakhtun society in Swat. The quantitative results while incorporating Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test along with Gamma ( $\gamma$ ) at the bivariate level and Kendall Tau-C ( $T^c$ ) at multivariate levels revealed that media is a vital force for bringing awareness about the modern world. Similarly, social media's role is also worth mentioning, as it strengthens the social networking in a fast manner across the globe. Media, particularly social media, is a vital source of adding new traits to indigenous culture, which can be labelled as positive and negative regarding its suitability to the indigenous cultural traits (like new fashions etc.) and its distortion. The most affected segment of the society is teens that use media for attaining new skills and expertise. Another aspect of the media's impact is that

it provided a platform for understanding other cultures in a very easy and fast manner. Besides, the overall test statistics (see table-2) indicated a highly significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), positive and non-spurious relationship between the study variables. Besides, for further statistical inferences the research data at multivariate level, the significant results imply the impact of media on values' changes while controlling the residence as a background variable. However, the background variable (the type of residence) has no role in describing the variation of change as both are under the influence of change due to media.

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