

**MEDIA PARTISANSHIP AND ITS EFFECTS ON AUDIENCE
POLARISATION: A CASE STUDY OF GEO AND ARY**



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2019-2023**

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POLARISATION: A CASE STUDY OF GEO AND ARY**



**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO
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**DISSERTATION APPROVAL
KINNAIRD COLLEGE FOR WOMEN**



Date: 12th June, 2023

I hereby recommend that the dissertation prepared under my supervision by Hiba Basit Qureshi (F19BAMS069)

Entitled

“Media Partisanship and Its Effects on Audience Polarisation” be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**B.A HONS
IN
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RESEARCH COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

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All changes suggested by examiners during defense are incorporated in this final copy
It is assured that research work is original and has not yet been published anywhere else.

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ABSTRACT

A quantitative approach was used in this study to find whether partisanship existed in Pakistani prime-time talk shows and what were its effects on audience polarisation. Prime-time talk shows from two leading Pakistani news channels, ARY News and Geo News, were selected for content analysis to check for the presence of media partisanship. The selected timeline for content analysis was April to September 2022 because of the increasing political instability in Pakistan after the success of the vote of no confidence against former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan. A total of 144 episodes from each of the programmes, Off the Record hosted by Kashif Abbasi, and Capital Talk hosted by Hamid Mir, were studied. To determine the impact of media partisanship on audience polarisation, a survey of 200 participants aged 30 and older was conducted. Based on a variety of parameters, including the representation of various political parties, the choice of the panel for the debate, and the tone and conduct of the host towards guests from different political parties, the study concluded that partisanship occurs in prime-time talk shows on Pakistani news networks. The findings of the survey indicate that media partisanship has a direct effect on audience polarisation as the audience develops their political perspectives from talk shows and has become increasingly involved in political activities in the selected time frame. In conclusion, prime-time talk shows on Pakistani news channels give a biased political analysis that propagates particular ideologies in the audience. Over time, the audience has become increasingly divided over their political opinions and has lost the patience to respect differences of opinion required for the normal functioning of a society.

Keywords: *media partisanship, audience polarisation, political talk shows, audience perception, news media influence*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Television is one of the most widely consumed mass media in the world. After it was first invented in 1927, it quickly became a popular device and spread all around the globe (Stephens, 2015). In Pakistan, television transmission commenced in 1964 (Din, 2017). The first television station was established in Lahore, the second in Dhaka, and the third in Islamabad (Naveed, 2011). For a long time, the medium was only available in monochrome but later it evolved into a colour display. Before television, the radio was the medium of choice. People were accustomed to listening to the latest happenings on the radio and did not even think about something like television. It changes people's preferences and perspectives a great deal as the audiences wanted to witness what they were being told. Television became a dominant medium as people started to be heavily influenced by the content that was shown.

As television changed the thinking patterns of the masses, news agencies and entertainment channels also aimed to improve their content to attract audiences. The industry grew as multiple new companies continued to emerge. Different companies established many news channels. Every Pakistani consumes news channels and deems them as trustworthy news sources. Journalism changed with the medium and the channels as talk shows were started as a way to analyse current affairs and hold discussions to understand the current political scenario. The first talk show was launched in 1951 by Joe Franklin, and it quickly gained views (Stephens, 2015). The talk shows are widely viewed but certain issues have led people to believe that these talk shows are now mostly interested in increasing their ratings and viewership.

Geo News and ARY News are two of the most-watched news channels and their viewers seem to hold opposing opinions from each other. Geo News was launched in 2002 while ARY News was launched two years later in 2004 (Din, 2017). Both of these channels are still very well-known nationwide. As of November 2022, both ARY News and Geo News are part of the top 5 viewed news channels in Pakistan. The average monthly ratings of different news channels show that ARY is the leading news channel with a 30.19% rating whereas Geo News stands at number 4 with an 8.79% average TRP (Daily Pakistan, 2022). This clearly shows the dominance of these two news channels in the Pakistani television industry. Even though they are widely

recognised, they have both recently come under fire for being biased. Each news channel is blamed for excessively supporting a particular political party rather than reporting neutrally. ARY News is known by the audience for supporting PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) and the viewers have called out the anchors repeatedly for not showing the complete truth. Similarly, Geo News is criticised for supporting PML(N) which is the government. Both news channels have completely opposite perspectives and have been called out for their biased display of Pakistani politics. This particularly irked the audience in the elections of 2018 when both channels showed a different number of seats being won by each political party.

This research aimed to understand how such displays of media partisanship impact audience polarisation. The Pakistani audience has become divided on the basis of political parties. People have started tilting towards holding extreme opinions rather than looking at things in a neutral manner. Hence, this study determines how the selected news channels play a role in formulating these opinions by analysing a primetime talk show from each of these news channels. The talk shows which are analysed are Capital Talk hosted by Hamid Mir (Geo News) and Off the Record hosted by Kashif Abbasi (ARY News). Both talk shows are on-aired from Monday to Thursday at 8:05 pm. They were studied from April to September 2022 as this time frame is characterised by extreme political instability and active political interest of the audience due to the success of the vote of no confidence against former Prime Minister Imran Khan. The study is quantitative in nature to evaluate the extent of media partisanship and its effects on the audience. A content analysis of the two shows was conducted along with a survey of the audiences and their opinions.

1.1 Statement of Problem

This research aimed to probe media partisanship in prime-time talk shows of ARY News and Geo News and its effects on audience polarisation.

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To examine whether partisanship exists in selected talk shows.
2. To explore the relationship between media partisanship and audience polarisation.

1.3 Research Questions

1. Is media partisanship reflected in selected talk shows?
2. Is audience polarisation a direct effect of media partisanship?

1.4 Hypotheses

H₁: Media partisanship is reflected in selected talk shows.

H₀: Media partisanship is not reflected in selected talk shows.

H₂: Audience polarisation is a direct effect of media partisanship.

H₀: Audience polarisation is not a direct effect of media partisanship.

1.5 Research Rationale

News Channels, especially political talk shows, are a major source of information for people in Pakistan. The purpose of political talk shows is to address particular conflicts and bring awareness by providing information through debate. Political talk shows have contributed to the emergence of political consciousness in Pakistani society. People are more knowledgeable and informed about the country's political environment. Talk shows are able to influence people's political opinions. A study has shown that people in Pakistan consider information from talk shows trustworthy and are likely to share it with others (Khan, 2020). Talk shows steer the audience's political sentiment in a certain direction. Pakistanis today are selective about which political party they support. For knowledge about political campaigns, media consumers prefer television discussion shows over print media. It builds their political narratives. If a talk show is biased, it would glorify a particular political figure and/or party creating their idealised image in the public eye. Similarly, it would shatter the reputation of the opposing political figure/party.

Pakistan has been going through political instability for years. However, after former Prime Minister Imran Khan was removed through a vote of no-confidence, a new political turmoil was triggered in the country. During this period, it was observed that Pakistani society has been extremely polarised politically. People have developed intolerance towards opposing

political perspectives leading to disputes. The affiliation with a particular political figure and/or party has divided society into segments.

This being the case, it was important to investigate whether Pakistani news media, particularly talk shows, are partisan and what is the relation between media partisanship and audience polarisation. It was important to identify whether political talk shows are a cause of increased political polarisation in Pakistani society so that measures could be taken to counter this effect.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review adds credibility to the research by establishing that the research topic has been previously studied. Current and previous researches allow researchers to know what has been already researched in the field and what remains unknown. It not only aids the researcher to develop a better understanding of the research topic but also helps readers in better comprehension.

Electronic media, whose most important tool is considered to be television, is considered a tool with significant importance in changing and building narratives. Shahzad (2021) claims that Pakistani television is dominated by news channels and this society is very dependent on news channels for news-related information. News channels are said to create political efficacy and they affect state policy, developing national interests, and structural and political systems through their talk shows. Due to being an audio-visual medium, television uses multiple effects such as monochrome, background music, catchy tickers, etcetera, to create a long-lasting impression on audiences' minds. Electronic media transforms society at various levels. At the individual level, it has the ability to change political perspectives and generate interest. At the national level, political transformation requires high-profile agendas to bring change in public mindsets. News channels politicize topics such as religion, patriotism, and security that connect every citizen for national-level transformation. The study claims that news channels groom voters that affects the voting process by bringing the voter turn-out up and down or increasing or decreasing the vote bank of a particular political party. Political movements gain momentum through electronic media, which leads to the ideological transformation of society. The study concluded by reiterating that news channels transform society at the political and public levels according to their own interests.

Alam et al. (2021) explore the role of electronic news media in shaping public policymaking in Pakistan. The researchers acknowledge that Pakistani political parties exist in polarised states. This means that they are very extreme in leaning towards one perspective to the point that they only consider that to be the right one. This in turn has polarised the Pakistani news media as it tends to heavily tilt toward a particular political party. The study identified that ARY News and Geo News groups have a wide range of audiences that depend on them as their

primary source of news and current affairs. These news channels play a fundamental role in sparking people's interest and empowering them to actively participate in the policymaking process. This is especially prominent during elections when people are encouraged to vote and contribute to the process as per each channel's wants. These factors relate to this study because of their acknowledgement of the fact that electronic news media is an essential element of policymaking. ARY News and Geo News are two of the most well-known names in this area, and a large population watches them understand Pakistan's political situation. Hence, this shows how they are both working to improve people's interest in democracy and policymaking and that the polarisation is also resulting from the way the news is being broadcasted and perceived by the audience.

Amin et al. (2020) analyse the perceptions of audiences regarding the media coverage of the Panama leaks, specifically Geo News and ARY News. The researchers conducted a quantitative analysis through a survey of 320 respondents with convenience sampling. They found that more people were inclined to watch ARY News and were satisfied with their coverage of the issue as well. It also showed that viewers would watch talk shows and programs more than news bulletins. As a result, they showed a significant tilt by agreeing with the stance of a particular political party over another. The polarised opinions became clear when they showed their support to one party while the other was completely disregarded as corrupt. These results relate to the research at hand because they show how watching only one news channel for political analysis can lead to the formation of polarised opinions. The respondents were quick to agree with one party and blame the other. Despite what is right and wrong in this specific situation, the viewers believed and formed opinions according to what they saw on television.

Ilyas and Ahmad (2020) examine the role of electronic media in developing political perceptions of the Pakistani audience through a study of ARY News and PTV News channels. A total of 120 people participated in the survey, with 30 coming from each of the four universities that were chosen for the data gathering. The study's findings show that the majority of people get their political news via electronic sources (Ilyas and Ahmad, 2020). People's perspectives are influenced, and they are becoming more politically conscious thanks to electronic media, particularly news stations. The research states that media plays a vital role in shaping perceptions, which is visible from the fact that political parties have their own newspapers and news channels that support them. It is stated that electronic media serves as the primary means of

informing the public about local, national, and foreign events and fostering consciousness among them. This has an impact on the social, cultural, and economic as well as the religious facets of society. Even though the researchers acknowledge the negative impact of news channels' content, they conclude that the positive aspects outweigh the negative ones.

Yousaf et al. (2020) explore how the increase in news media consumption has led to people forming polarised opinions. They conducted their study by using content analysis and survey methods. The researchers discovered that the polarisation of public opinion on the characteristics of health issues correlated with increased exposure to the news media. The divisiveness brought on by the news media has effects on society. Individual agendas are growing as public consensus on significant social issues and collaborative action for societal well-being is diminishing. The researchers are more focused on health issues but their study highlights how media usage is directly proportional to audience polarisation. As people watch more news about a certain issue on a certain channel, they become inclined to support the opinion presented in that news. News media shapes the perceptions and results in polarised opinions among the viewers.

Sarwar (2020) identified that politically polarised news channels lose credibility in non-partisan audiences. Biased and one-sided coverage of events decreased the content credibility significantly for news channel consumers that were unbiased. Because different political parties were covered differently by the media, consumers were inundated with prejudice, polarisation, and division, and as a result, they eventually stopped watching the news. Additionally, the legitimacy of the content increased the viewership of the news channel and their audience was more politically aware.

Media plays an important role in building the perceptions of people as it is a major source of information for a mass audience. Ali and Rehman (2019) argue that politics and media have an interdependent relationship. Along with providing information to the audience, the media builds their political agenda. Media has a significant role in shaping political opinions as people learn about politics through media. The study found that the media played a crucial role in increasing voter turnout in the 2013 general elections in Pakistan. Media is said to have the power to frame the political beliefs of people by emphasizing certain issues and neglecting others. A study found that exposure to "particular media outlets" led to a shift in voting from traditional parties to new parties. Similarly, voters' support of a political party increased at

election time when the media coverage was in support of that specific political party. Ali and Rehman (2019) concluded from the results of their study that Pakistani people's political choices, affiliations, and voting patterns are highly influenced by news media as a majority of their respondents confirmed being dependent on news media for opinion formation on political issues.

Baloch et al. (2018) contended that audience perceives the credibility of different media channels differently. They do so based on their political disposition. People with particular political beliefs consider those news channels credible that aligned with their political beliefs. In parallel to this, channels that propagate a message framed in a particular way provide affirmation to their audience regarding their political stance that strengthens their beliefs. The study found that news channels are affiliated with particular political parties as they receive benefits from that particular political party such as funding, advertisement packages etcetera. Due to these benefits, news channels become biased and inclined toward a particular political party leading to partisanship in media. The study found that ARY News and Geo News defended their favoured political party and contradicted the opposing party. Similarly, when it comes to the audience, they like to watch the news channel that favours their preferred political party and considers it credible.

Ali and Rahman (2018) conducted a content analysis to assess how Pakistani talk shows can push their own agenda and biased opinion during their programmes. The researchers sampled 22 primetime political talk shows and analysed their representation of MQM before the 2015 elections. Six indicators—the direction of the introduction of political talk shows, the ranks of respondents, the tonality of the questionnaire, the allegations made in the questions, the amount of time allotted to participants, and the anchorperson's interruptions—were used to analyse the partisan bias of the anchorperson. The study found that anchorpersons are not impartial. This was reflected in their behaviour and treatment of the guests which come to speak at their shows. Their tone and the time they are given to speak show their lack of impartiality. This study supports that the audience's opinions are also influenced by such anchorpersons as they tend to believe what they have to say. It relates to the current research because it shows that biases in political talk shows are not a new phenomenon. It reflects how news channels can influence and support a particular political party. Therefore, this study will help to comprehend the extent of partisanship presented by news channels.

Bode et al. (2018) found that viewers have turned to openly partisan publications that support their ideas because they sense bias in mainstream media sources. The majority of studies state that people who watch these partisan political talk shows tend to only expose themselves to information that supports their party's opinions, which might worsen political polarisation. While most Americans claim they do not favour news media with a particular political bias, a 2012 Pew Research Survey showed that 60% of viewers of rightist Fox News were Republicans whereas 58% of audience of leftist MSNBC were democrats. The content of programs on these channels aligned with the political perspectives of their audiences. People frequently report the highest levels of participation when a political talk show host openly supports their political viewpoints. Contrarily, viewers report lower levels of interest when the host openly rejects their partisan affiliation. Viewers are more likely to appreciate shows with hosts that share their views, but they are less sensitive to more subtly biased content. That is, whether the guest who shares their political beliefs is given more time to make their case does not affect their levels of involvement with a political talk show. Additionally, they do not typically believe that talk shows that support their opinions lack credibility.

In light of the aforementioned literature, it can be presumed that partisanship exists in Pakistani private news channels which is reflected through the content on-aired, especially in the prime time shows and bulletins. Similarly, audience polarisation is related to media partisan. Most of the studies support the idea that the audience prefers channels whose biases align with their political stance. In a world full of biased news channels, the audience has become inclined toward the channels that provide affirmation for their beliefs. Partisan media defends their favoured political party by justifying all of their moves while criticising every move of the opposing party. This results in a politically polarised and intolerant society. The present study is different from previous studies as it explores both angles of media partisanship and audience polarisation with a mixed-method approach. It is important to determine how both of these are separate occurrences and the association between them. Another important distinction is that the present research studies a time period when Pakistan was experiencing extreme political turmoil which saw a rise in polarisation of opinions.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework consists of existing theories relevant to the concept of a research paper. These theories advocate the topic of research and increase the credibility of research work by providing support for the research topic. The theoretical framework shows comprehension of ideas and concepts pertinent to the research topic.

3.1 Agenda Setting Theory

Proposed in 1972, Agenda Setting Theory describes how the news coverage of a media outlet decides which topics would get the most public attention. The founding fathers of Agenda Setting theory, Donald Shaw and Maxwell McCombs found while surveying in North Carolina during the 1968 US Presidential election that issues considered most important by the public were issues that the media categorised as the most critical (Krank, 2019). Therefore, proponents of Agenda Setting theory believe that mass media sets agendas for what people should care about. Agenda Setting Theory has two basic propositions. First, it proposes that media outlets are subjective instead of objective. They control reality by framing a story according to their own agenda instead of simply reflecting the story as it is. They disseminate certain stories while blocking others. The second proposition is that issues that are more extensively covered by media are considered to be more important by the public. Mass Media is a major source of information for the public. When media controls the dissemination of certain stories and blocks others, it gains the power to control what the public would consider important and what is not. The issues that get more coverage by the media are considered crucial by the public instead of those that get less coverage. The media has the power to overplay and/or underplay any conflict in the eyes of the public.

Application of the theory

Political talk shows have their agendas based on which they frame their stories. This agenda is particularly evident in prime time as the channel has maximum viewership at that time and the channel owners want their agenda to be propagated at a heterogenous level. Therefore, it can be safely presumed that prime-time talk shows on news channels reflect the agenda of the

channel which constructs and/or deconstructs the image of a particular political figure, party, or ideology in viewers' eyes. Conflicts that get more attention in political talk shows would have the foremost importance in the public eye. Ideologies presented by talk show hosts through information, debates, news stories, tickers etcetera would play a crucial role in building the reality of the audience. Therefore, it can be presumed that media partisanship would increase the audience's inclination toward a particular political figure, party or ideology.

3.2 Framing Theory

The framing theory was first introduced by Erving Goffman as the framing analysis in 1974 (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2019). Systems of preconceived notions called frames are used to categorise and understand new information. Fundamentally, framing theory holds that decisions people make regarding how to absorb information are influenced by the way something is presented to an audience (referred to as "the frame"). The most frequent application of frames is in the aspect of the framing that the news or media give to the content they present. They are believed to affect how the audience interprets the news, which might be seen as a type of second-level agenda-setting since they instruct the audience on how to think about the topic as well as what to think (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2019).

Media framing primarily results from limitations on what may be conveyed due to time and budget restrictions. Journalists must make decisions about which events to report on and which to skip. They must also choose which information, principles, and viewpoints will be highlighted or mentioned. This indicates that when presenting news, journalists use their own interpretive frameworks. Social standards, pressure from interest groups, journalistic habits, and their own ideological or political orientations all have an impact on reporters. As a result, some definitions, assessments, and advice presented in news reports are given preference (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2019). Audiences are impacted since this constricts how they can perceive and comprehend events.

The theory makes four basic assumptions which are:

- It assumes that journalists choose the subjects they will cover and how they will do it. This affects the topics and manner in which audiences think about them.

- It also believes that audiences interpret information according to their own frames. The frames of audiences may conflict with or overlap those of the media.
- Every time a frame is mentioned, whether positively or negatively, it is strengthened.
- Building frames is a methodical procedure that takes place over time (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2019).

Application of the theory

The framing theory applies to the study because it discusses how the media shapes information before it is disseminated to a wide audience. Political talk shows discuss current affairs from varying angles as every analyst holds a different perspective. Each news channel frames the news story in a way that reinforces the support of a particular political party. For example, ARY News frames its news in a way that favours PTI while Geo News frames it to support PML(N). The viewers of each channel watch them so that they can perpetuate their beliefs by constantly watching a single kind of frame. Hence, this framing may lead to the audience staunchly supporting only one political party while strongly opposing the other one due to how either has been framed by the news media channels, leading to polarisation.

3.3 Magic Bullet Theory

The magic bullet theory is based on the ideology that the media provides information to the audience by hitting it like a bullet. It was proposed by Harold Lasswell in 1927 (Borah, 2015). The theory assumes that the audience is passive and receives the message exactly as it has been sent. Messages are believed to be conveyed to each audience member in the same manner and to have identical intended results for everyone who receives them according to an early understanding of the media's societal impact. The foundation of the magic bullet idea is the analogical assumption that the media's message is similar to a bullet being fired from the 'media gun' into the audience member's mind (Borah, 2015). The magic bullet theory was not founded on any empirical research findings, but rather on an assumption about human nature. Due to the reason that this approach is predicated on assumption rather than on scientific proof, few media scholars have rejected it. There was an experiment in New Jersey where a radio show, 'War of the Worlds'. During a show, a bulletin was inserted that the aliens have invaded the US and 12

million heard it and 1 million believed it resulting in chaos and panic in the country (Borah, 2015).

Application of the theory

News channels constantly send information and messages to the audiences and most of the time, people believe them and start supporting their opinion. In this case, the magic bullet theory is applicable as it explains why and how people are being affected by news channels in a significant manner. The polarisation of audiences, is because news media content means that they are sending information, and the receivers, are quietly accepting it rather than questioning it. This theory also offers a reason behind why people's opinions are being influenced by news channels. As they receive the message, they agree with it and think that it is correct, which leads to them forming strong opinions which are in line with the representation of the news channel that they are watching.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research design was used in this research. A quantitative content analysis was used to identify media partisanship in the prime-time talk shows of Geo and ARY News. A survey was used to find the effects of media partisanship on audience polarisation.

4.1 Method 1: Content Analysis

Quantitative content analysis is a research method that is used to systematically categorize specific themes, ideas or words in textual, visual or aural material. It is used to analyse and assess the selected content and its features for research. Quantitative content analysis was carried out to analyse the content that is being presented by the top news channels of Pakistan, particularly through their talk shows by evaluating the categorical statements made by the anchors while they are hosting their talk shows.

4.1.1 Universe of Study

The universe of this study was mainstream news channels in Pakistan. People all over the country exclusively watch news channels on their televisions. There is a saturation in the news media industry in Pakistan with over 30 news channels. However, the universe of this study includes mainstream national news channels.

4.1.2 Population of Study

The population of this study were all primetime political talk shows aired on Pakistani news channels. Pakistani audiences often watch these talk shows to get an idea of current affairs and also understand some level of political analysis. The political talk shows help them in getting an insight into a particular situation.

4.1.3 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for this research were the political talk shows, Capital Talk (Geo News) and Off the Record (ARY News).

4.1.4 Sampling Technique

The technique that was used for this study is purposive sampling. It is a sampling technique that is mainly applied in qualitative research or analysis. This kind of sampling technique is used when a particular segment of the population of interest must provide specific and precise information for the study (Crossman, 2020). In order to provide results that are appropriate to their research, only the most relevant and pertinent data was gathered. This technique also aided in eliminating anything that is not relevant to the study.

4.1.5 Sample Size

The sample size for the content analysis was two prime-time political talk shows taken from ARY News and Geo News. The talk show from ARY News was Off the Record hosted by Kashif Abbasi and from Geo News, it was Capital Talk hosted by Hamid Mir. A total of 144 episodes were analysed from both shows from April to September 2022. This time period was chosen due to the success of the vote of no confidence against the former prime minister Imran Khan, this period was marked by a high level of political instability and active political involvement on the part of the public. Both of them have been chosen because they have high viewership and are popular for analysing political situations.

4.1.6 Tool of Data Collection

The tool for data collection was a coding sheet. The coding sheet consisted of categories that were analysed and checked to evaluate the content of the talk shows after the conceptualisation and operationalisation of variables.

4.1.7 Pretesting

Pretesting is the process of simulating the formal data-gathering procedure on a small scale in order to find issues with the tools, procedures, and methodology. The pretesting of this study was done by intercoder reliability. Intercoder reliability is a numerical measure of the agreement between different coders regarding how the same data should be coded. 25% of the total sample size was used for pretesting, which means 36 episodes. It helped in ensuring consistency and validity throughout the research process (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). Two coders based on mass communication background coded the same content to analyse and pretest the

data. The inter-coder reliability was measured by applying a percentage agreement or the Holsti method (1969). Hence, the agreement between the coders was found 83%, which is considered reliable.

$$\text{Intercoder Reliability} = \text{Total similarity} / \text{total categories} \times 100$$

$$10/12 \times 100 = 83.3\%$$

4.1.8 Categories:

The coding sheet for the content analysis of the talk shows has 6 main categories: Tone, language, body language, conduct, portrayal of political figures, and portrayal of political party's actions.

Tone: The manner in which a person speaks to someone is defined as tone. It is not concerned with the words that are being spoken but with how they are being spoken. Tone can be serious, formal, informal, respectful, rude, assertive etcetera. The coders analysed the tone of the talk show anchorperson with guests from different political backgrounds to check for media partisan.

Language: Language is defined as a structural combination of words used to communicate between humans. The coders analysed the choice of words of the anchorperson with guests from different political backgrounds to check for media partisan.

Body language: Body language refers to the conscious and unconscious gestures and body movements used to convey mood and attitude. The body language of the anchorperson was analysed with different guests to check for media partisan.

Conduct: Conduct refers to the way a person behaves or acts, especially in a controlled or professional environment. The conduct of the anchorperson with guests from different political backgrounds was analysed to check for media partisan.

Portrayal of political figures: The depiction of a person, place, thing or action by another person is referred to as portrayal. The depiction of different political figures by the anchorperson was analysed to check for media partisan.

Portrayal of political party's actions: The coders analysed the representation of different political party's actions by the anchorperson to check for media partisan.

4.1.9 Direction of Categories

A three-point scale was used in the coding sheet to analyse the categories: positive, negative and neutral.

Tone: If the anchorperson was friendly, respectful, polite or humorous towards a guest, it was considered a positive tone. If the anchorperson was harsh, loud, assertive, impolite, or satirical towards a guest, it was considered a negative tone. If the anchorperson was formal, it was considered a neutral tone.

Language: If the anchorperson used words with positive connotations, was less critical towards a guest, and had an optimistic approach, it was considered positive language. If the anchorperson used words with negative connotations and disapproved of the answers of the guest, it was considered negative language. If the anchorperson used words with neutral connotations and used similar words with all guests, it was considered neutral language.

Body Language: If the anchorperson was smiling, laughing, attentive, and maintaining good eye contact with a particular guest, it was considered as positive body language. If the anchorperson was frowning, looking away, unattentive, careless, or ignorant towards a particular guest, it was considered negative body language. If the anchorperson had the same body language with all guests, it was considered neutral.

Conduct: If the anchorperson was acting friendly and accommodating with a guest, letting them talk freely, it was considered positive conduct. If the anchorperson was interrupting the guest continuously, was aggressive or satirical, it was considered negative language. If the anchorperson was formal and calm, it was considered neutral conduct.

Portrayal of political figure: If the anchorperson glorified a particular political figure and emphasized only their positive actions, it was considered positive. If the anchorperson mocked a political figure and criticised them continuously, it was considered negative. If the anchorperson presented all the facts, took a balanced approach and criticised everyone equally, it was considered neutral.

Portrayal of political party's actions: If the anchorperson played up a particular political party's good actions while covering their wrongdoings, it was considered a positive portrayal. If the anchorperson highlighted a party's mistakes but refrained from mentioning their good steps, it was considered a negative portrayal. If the anchorperson presented all the facts and did not withhold any information, it was considered a neutral portrayal.

4.2 Method 2: Survey

Surveys were used to collect information from people which is then gathered and evaluated to assess patterns. A survey was conducted to find the interrelation between media partisanship and audience polarisation along with the effects of media partisanship on audience polarisation. The responses of the sample collected through the survey allowed the researchers to understand the prevailing beliefs of the talk show audiences and identify whether their beliefs align with the channel's agenda.

4.2.1 Universe of Study

The universe of the study were the major cities of Pakistan (Lahore, Islamabad, Karachi) as the survey was conducted online and the researchers wanted to find the effects of media partisanship on the political polarisation of Pakistani audiences where audience polarisation is a growing phenomenon.

4.2.2 Population of Study

The population of this study were men and women of Pakistan aged 30 and above who are more likely to consume prime-time talk shows as compared to other age groups as observed by a survey by Pew Research Centre (2012).

4.2.3 Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling and snowball sampling were used to collect data. As it is a requirement of the study that respondents of the survey should be viewers of political talk shows of Geo News and ARY News, purposive sampling allowed the researchers to choose appropriate respondents for the survey. Snowball sampling allowed researchers to interact with more appropriate respondents through existing respondents.

4.2.4 Sample Size

The sample size for this study was 200 people.

4.2.5 Tool of Data Collection

The tool of data collection for this study was a questionnaire. The number of questions in the questionnaire was 24 questions. The Likert scale was used as it was easier for respondents to understand the questionnaire.

4.2.6 Pretesting

Pretesting is an integral part of research that is performed before the data is collected from the entire sample. During the process of pretesting, data is collected from 10% of the entire sample. The sample size for this study is 200 participants. Therefore, data was collected from 20 participants which are 10% of 200. After data collection, the Cronbach Alpha test is carried out to check the reliability statistic. The test is applied to check whether the questionnaire is understandable. The acceptable value of Cronbach Alpha is 0.60 to 0.95. The value of Cronbach Alpha is 0.849 for this study which is in-between the acceptable value. Therefore, the pretesting has been successful.

Reliability Statistic

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.849	19

4.2.7 Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis was done on the collected data by using a software called “Statistical Package for the Social Sciences” to find the results. Spearman Rho was applied for hypothesis testing as the variables were tested for relationship and the data type was ordinal.

4.3 Conceptualisation

Media partisanship: Media partisanship is defined as the bias of journalists and news producers in selecting which news will be reported and how will it be reported.

Reflected: Merriam-Webster dictionary defines reflected as “to make manifest or apparent”.

Talkshow: A talk show is defined as a type of show in which eminent guests are invited for panel discussions on critical ongoing happenings and issues.

Effect: Oxford dictionary defines effect as “the outcome of an action”

Audience Polarisation: Audience polarisation is defined as strong segregation among people regarding key issues and beliefs in society.

4.4 Operationalisation

Media partisanship: Media partisanship is defined as the bias of news producers and journalists towards a particular political figure, party or ideology.

Reflected: Reflected is defined as the presence of particular themes in the content that is being analysed.

Talkshow: The talk show is defined as a program format in which prominent guests are invited to discuss critical political issues in the country.

Effect: Effect is defined as the consequence of a particular action. The action in this study is media partisan.

Audience polarisation: Audience polarisation is defined as the strong division among members of society based on political ideologies and beliefs.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The study aimed to observe media partisanship and audience polarisation in Pakistan with a case study of talk shows on Geo News and ARY News. A quantitative approach was used with content analysis and survey to understand the extent of media partisanship and how it affects viewers' opinions in Pakistan. The talk shows assessed in the study are Off The Record and Capital Talk from April to September 2022. This time period was selected because the vote of no confidence against the former prime minister Imran Khan was successful and because it is characterised by a high degree of political instability and widespread public political engagement. The following results have been systematized by the researchers.

5.1 General Findings of Content Analysis

Content analysis was conducted using a coding sheet and a 3-point Likert scale was used. Following are the general findings of content analysis.

5.1.1 Tone of Hamid Mir toward PTI in Capital Talk (Geo News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
3	6	3	12

Table 5.1

Table 5.1 shows the number of times the tone of Geo News anchor Hamid Mir toward PTI in his talk show Capital Talk was seen. The total number of times where Hamid Mir's tone is seen toward PTI are 12. From these, 3 were positive, 6 were negative and 3 were in neutral tone. This indicates that the tone of the Geo News talk show Capital Talk host Hamid Mir toward PTI members was mostly negative.

5.1.2 Tone of Hamid Mir toward PML(N) in Capital Talk (Geo News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
57	2	4	63

Table 5.2

Table 5.2 displays the tone of Geo News anchor Hamid Mir toward PML(N) members in his talk show Capital Talk. The tone is positive 57 times, negative 2 times, and neutral 4 times with a total of 63 times where the tone is seen clearly. This shows that the tone of the Geo News talk show Capital Talk host Hamid Mir toward PML(N) members was mostly positive.

5.1.3 Language of Hamid Mir toward PTI in Capital Talk (Geo News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
3	9	3	14

Table 5.3

Table 5.3 shows the kind of language that the Geo News anchor Hamid Mir had with PTI members in his talk show Capital Talk. Out of 14 total occurrences, the language was positive 3 times, negative 9 times and neutral 3 times. This shows that the language of the Geo News talk show Capital Talk host Hamid Mir was mostly negative toward PTI.

5.1.4 Language of Hamid Mir toward PML(N) in Capital Talk (Geo News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
51	10	23	84

Table 5.4

Table 5.4 shows the language of Geo News anchor Hamid Mir toward PML(N) in the talk show Capital Talk. There are 84 total scenes in the selected talk show. Out of 84 total times, the language is positive 51 times, while it is negative 10 times and correspondingly it is neutral 23 times. This shows that the language of the Geo News talk show Capital Talk host Hamid Mir toward PML(N) is generally positive.

5.1.5 Body Language of Hamid Mir toward PTI in Capital Talk (Geo News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
1	5	3	9

Table 5.5

Table 5.5 shows the frequency of the body language of Geo News anchor Hamid Mir with PTI in his talk show Capital Talk was evident. The total number of scenes where the Hamid Mir’s body language is seen with PTI in Capital Talk are 9. From these, 1 was positive, 5 were negative and 9 were neutral. This indicates that the body language of the Geo News talk show Capital Talk host Hamid Mir with PTI members was mostly negative.

5.1.6 Body Language of Hamid Mir toward PML(N) in Capital Talk (Geo News)

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
57	4	26	87

Table 5.6

Table 5.6 shows the body language of Geo News anchor Hamid Mir on the talk show Capital Talk with PML(N). There are 87 occurrences where the body language of the Geo News anchor with PML(N) was noticed. Hamid Mir’s body language was positive 57 times, negative 4 times, and neutral 26 times. This clearly shows that the body language of the Geo News talk show Capital Talk host Hamid Mir was generally positive with PML(N).

5.1.7 Conduct of Hamid Mir toward PTI in Capital Talk (Geo News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
1	2	2	5

Table 5.7

Table 5.7 displays the conduct of Hamid Mir toward PTI in his talk show Capital Talk on Geo News. There is a total of 5 occurrences in the talk show Capital Talk. According to the results, the conduct of Hamid Mir with PTI was positive once while negative twice, and neutral twice as well. This shows that the Geo News talk show Capital Talk host Hamid Mir’s conduct was generally negative with PTI.

5.1.8 Conduct of Hamid Mir toward PML(N) in Capital Talk (Geo News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
52	2	13	67

Table 5.8

Table 5.8 displays the conduct of Geo News anchor Hamid Mir with PML(N) in the talk show Capital Talk. The total number of occurrences is 67. Out of these, the conduct was negative 52 times, positive 2 times, and neutral 13 times. This indicates that the conduct of the Geo News talk show Capital Talk host Hamid Mir with PML(N) was mostly positive.

5.1.9 Portrayal of PTI Chairman Imran Khan on Capital Talk (Geo News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
5	63	11	79

Table 5.9

Table 5.9 shows the portrayal of PTI Chairman Imran Khan on Geo News Talk Show Capital Talk hosted by Hamid Mir. From a total of 79 times, Imran Khan is portrayed positively 5 times, negatively 63 times, and neutrally 11 times. This indicates that PTI Chairman Imran is mostly portrayed in a negative light on Geo News talk show Capital Talk.

5.1.10 Portrayal of PML(N) Chairman Shehbaz Sharif on Capital Talk (Geo News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
41	4	8	53

Table 5.10

Table 5.10 shows the portrayal of PML(N) Chairman Shehbaz Sharif on the Geo News Talk Show Capital Talk hosted by Hamid Mir. The total number of times that he is portrayed is 53. He is portrayed positively 41 times, negatively 4 times, and neutrally 8 times. This indicates that PML(N) Chairman Shehbaz Sharif is mostly portrayed positively on Geo News talk show Capital Talk.

5.1.11 Portrayal of PTI Actions on Capital Talk (Geo News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
6	86	15	107

Table 5.11

Table 5.11 shows how PTI actions are portrayed by Geo News on the talk show Capital Talk hosted by Hamid Mir which is analysed in this study. The total number of times that PTI actions are portrayed are 107. In a total of 107 portrayals, the portrayal of PTI actions was positive 6 times, negative 86 times, and neutral 15 times. This shows that the portrayal of PTI actions on Geo News was mostly negative.

5.1.12 Portrayal of PML(N) Actions on Capital Talk (Geo News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
67	8	21	96

Table 5.12

Table 5.12 shows the portrayal of PML(N) actions on Geo News talk show Capital Talk hosted by Hamid Mir. The total number of scenes that portray PML(N) actions on Geo News is 96. Out of 96, PML(N) actions were shown as positive 67 times, negative 8 times, and neutral 21 times. This indicates that generally, the portrayal of PML(N) actions on Geo News talk show Capital Talk was positive.

5.1.13 Tone of Kashif Abbasi toward PTI in Off The Record (ARY News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
41	5	17	63

Table 5.13

Table 5.13 shows the tone of ARY News anchor Kashif Abbasi toward PTI in his talk show Off the Record. The total number of times where the Kashif Abbasi's tone is seen toward PTI are 64. From these, 41 were positive, 5 were negative and 17 were in neutral tone. This indicates that the tone of the ARY News talk show Off The Record host Kashif Abbasi toward PTI members was mostly positive.

5.1.14 Tone of Kashif Abbasi toward PML(N) in Off The Record (ARY News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
4	19	9	32

Table 5.14

Table 5.14 shows the frequency of times the tone of ARY News anchor Kashif Abbasi toward PTI in his talk show Off The Record was seen. The total number of times where the Kashif Abbasi’s tone is seen toward PML(N) are 32. From these, 4 were positive, 19 were negative and 9 were in neutral tone. This indicates that the tone of the ARY News talk show Off The Record host Kashif Abbasi toward PML(N) members was mostly negative.

5.1.15 Language of Kashif Abbasi toward PTI in Off The Record (ARY News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
76	4	17	97

Table 5.15

Table 5.15 shows the kind of language that the ARY News anchor Kashif Abbasi toward PML(N) in the talk show Off the Record had with PTI members Out of 97 total occurrences, the language was positive 76 times, negative 4 times and neutral 17 times. This shows that the language of the ARY News talk show Off The Record host Kashif Abbasi was mostly positive toward PTI.

5.1.16 Language of Kashif Abbasi toward PML(N) in Off The Record (ARY News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
7	11	5	23

Table 5.16

Table 5.16 shows the language of ARY News anchor Kashif Abbasi toward PML(N) in the talk show Off the Record. There are 23 total occurrences in the selected talk show. Out of 23 total times, the language is positive 7 times, while it is negative 11 times and correspondingly it is neutral 5 times. This shows that the language of the ARY News talk show Off The Record host Kashif Abbasi toward PML(N) is generally negative.

5.1.17 Body Language of Kashif Abbasi toward PTI in Off The Record (ARY News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
48	3	10	61

Table 5.17

Table 5.17 shows the number of times the body language of ARY News anchor Kashif Abbasi with PTI in his talk show Off the Record was evident. The total number of scenes where the Kashif Abbasi’s body language is seen with PTI are 61. From these, 48 were positive, 3 were negative and 10 were neutral. This indicates that the body language of the ARY News talk show Off The Record host Kashif Abbasi with PTI members was mostly positive.

5.1.18 Body Language of Kashif Abbasi toward PML(N) in Off The Record (ARY News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
6	14	9	29

Table 5.18

Table 5.18 shows the body language of ARY News anchor Kashif Abbasi with PML(N) in his talk show Off the Record. There are 29 occurrences where the body language of Kashif Abbasi with PML(N) was noticed. His body language was positive 6 times, negative 14 times, and neutral 9 times. This clearly shows that the body language of the ARY News talk show Off The Record host Kashif Abbasi was generally negative with PML(N).

5.1.19 Conduct of Kashif Abbasi toward PTI in Off The Record (ARY News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
49	3	21	73

Table 5.19

Table 5.19 displays the conduct of Kashif Abbasi with PTI in his talk show Off The Record on ARY News. There is a total of 73 occurrences in the talk show Off The Record. According to the results, the conduct of the Kashif Abbasi with PTI was positive 49 times while negative 3 times, and neutral 21 times. This shows that ARY News talk show Off The Record host Kashif Abbasi’s conduct was generally positive with PTI.

5.1.20 Conduct of Kashif Abbasi toward PML(N) in Off The Record (ARY News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
4	17	10	31

Table 5.20

Table 5.20 displays the conduct of ARY News anchor Kashif Abbasi with PML(N) in the talk show Off The Record. The total number of occurrences is 31. Out of these, the conduct was positive 4 times, negative 17 times, and neutral 10 times. This indicates that the conduct of the ARY News talk show Off The Record host Kashif Abbasi with PML(N) was mostly negative.

5.1.21 Portrayal of PTI Chairman Imran Khan on Off The Record (ARY News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
36	3	33	72

Table 5.21

Table 5.21 shows the portrayal of PTI Chairman Imran Khan on Geo News Talk Show Off The Record hosted by Kashif Abbasi. From a total of 72 times, Imran Khan is portrayed positively 36 times, negatively 3 times, and neutrally 33 times. This indicates that PTI Chairman Imran is mostly portrayed in a positive light on ARY News talk show Off The Record.

5.1.22 Portrayal of PML(N) Chairman Shehbaz Sharif on Off The Record (ARY News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
7	27	13	47

Table 5.22

Table 5.22 shows the portrayal of PML(N) Chairman Shehbaz Sharif on the ARY News Talk Show Off The Record hosted by Kashif Abbasi. The total number of times that Shehbaz Sharif is portrayed is 47. He is portrayed positively 7 times, negatively 27 times, and neutrally 13 times. This indicates that PML(N) Chairman Shehbaz Sharif is mostly portrayed negatively on ARY News talk show Off The Record.

5.1.23 Portrayal of PTI Actions on Off The Record (ARY News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
38	9	24	71

Table 5.23

Table 5.23 shows how PTI actions are portrayed by ARY News on the talk show Off The Record hosted by Kashif Abbasi which is analysed in this study. The total number of times that PTI actions are portrayed are 71. In a total of 71 portrayals, the portrayal of PTI actions was positive 38 times, negative 9 times, and neutral 24 times. This shows that the portrayal of PTI actions on ARY News talk show Off The Record was mostly positive.

5.1.24 Portrayal of PML(N) Actions on Off The Record (ARY News) from April to September 2022

Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
7	74	22	103

Table 5.24

Table 5.24 shows the portrayal of PML(N) actions on ARY News in the talk show Off The Record hosted by Kashif Abbasi. The total number of scenes that portray PML(N) actions on ARY News is 103. Out of 96, PML(N) actions were shown as positive 7 times, negative 74 times, and neutral 22 times. This indicates that generally, the portrayal of PML(N) actions on ARY News talk show Off The Record was negative.

5.2 General Findings of Survey

Survey was conducted using a questionnaire. Following are the general findings of survey.

5.2.1 Age of Respondents

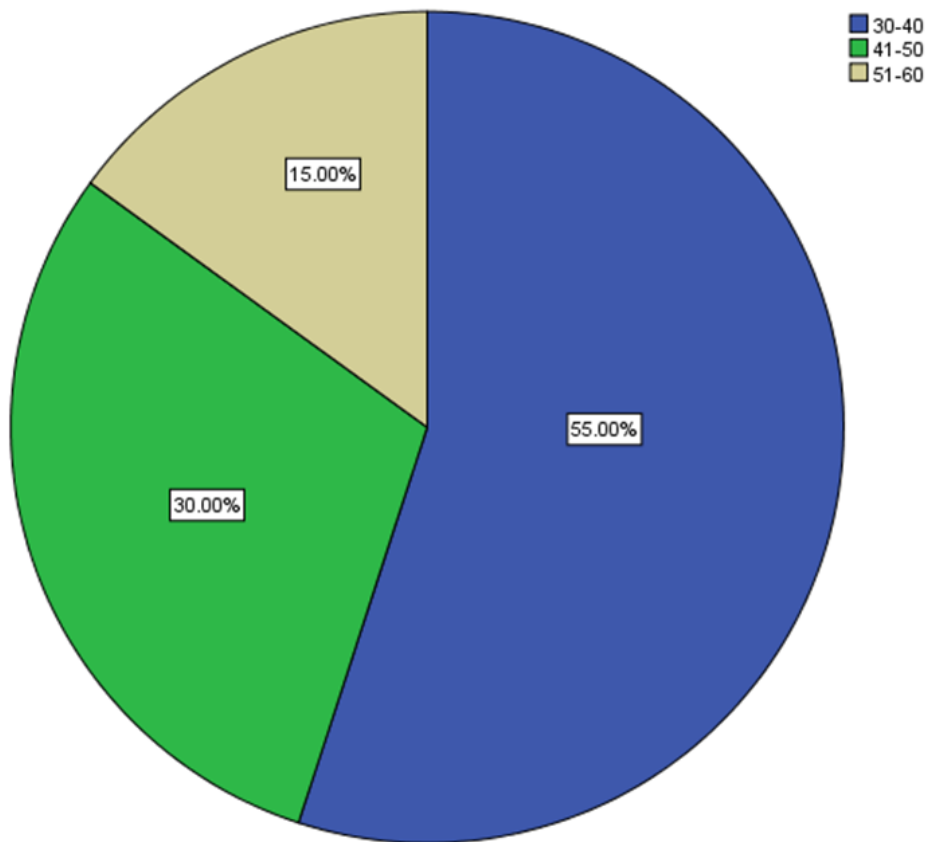


Figure 5.1

Figure 5.1 represents the age of respondents that participated in the survey. The total sample size was 200 people. The age bracket of respondents was from 30 and above. Majority of the respondents, which was 55% of the total respondents, belonged to the age group of 30-40 years. 30% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 41-50 years of age.

5.2.2 Regular Viewers of Primetime Talk Shows

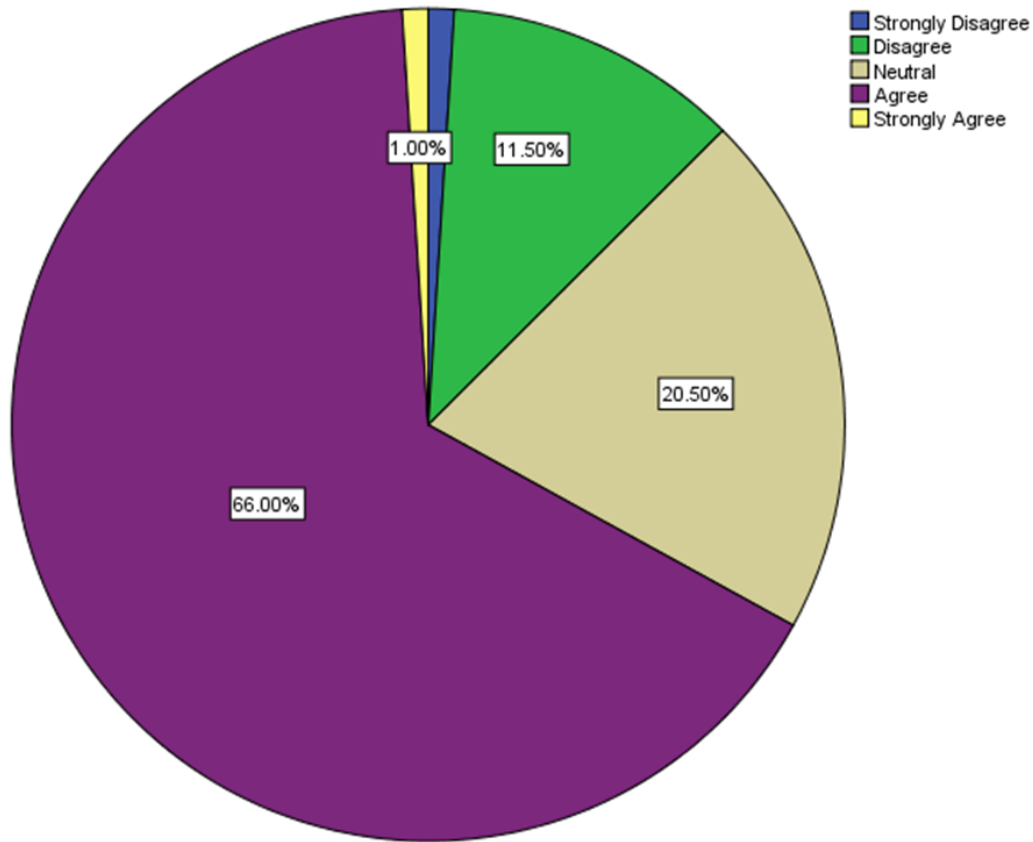


Figure 5.2

Figure 5.2 represents the percentage of respondents that regularly view political talk shows on news channels. The total sample size was 200 people. 1% of participants strongly agreed that they regularly watch primetime talk shows on news channels. 66% of participants agreed that they regularly watch primetime talk shows on news channels. 20.50% of participants were neutral. 11.50% of participants disagreed that they watch primetime talk shows on news channels regularly whereas 1% of participants strongly disagreed that they regularly watch primetime talk shows on news channels. Hence, the figure shows that the majority of the participants watch primetime talk shows on news channels.

5.2.3 Respondents who mostly watch talk shows on ARY News

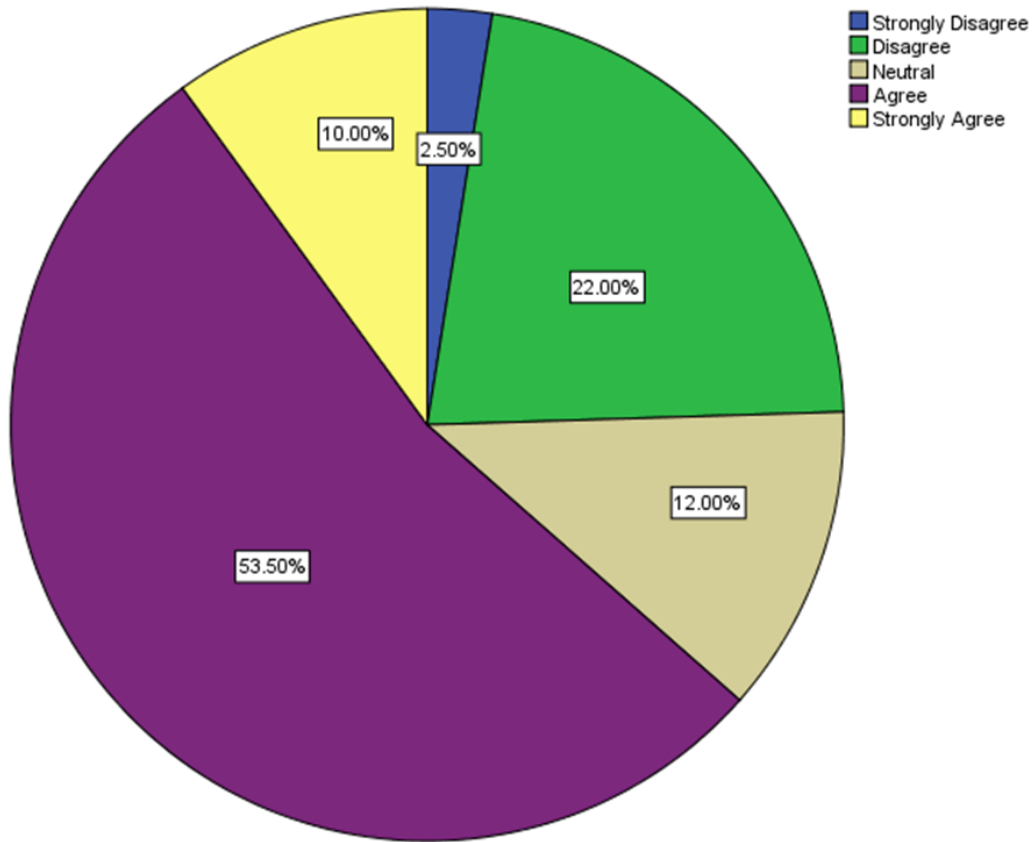


Figure 5.3

Figure 5.3 shows the percentage of people that watch talk shows on ARY News. The total sample size was 200 participants. 10% of participants strongly agreed that they watch talk shows on ARY News. 53.50% of participants agreed that they watch talk shows on ARY News. 12% of participants were neutral. 22% of participants disagreed that they watch talk shows on ARY News whereas 2.50% of participants strongly disagreed that they watch talk shows on ARY News. Hence, the figure shows that majority of the participants watch talk shows on ARY News.

5.2.4 Respondents who mostly watch talk shows on Geo News

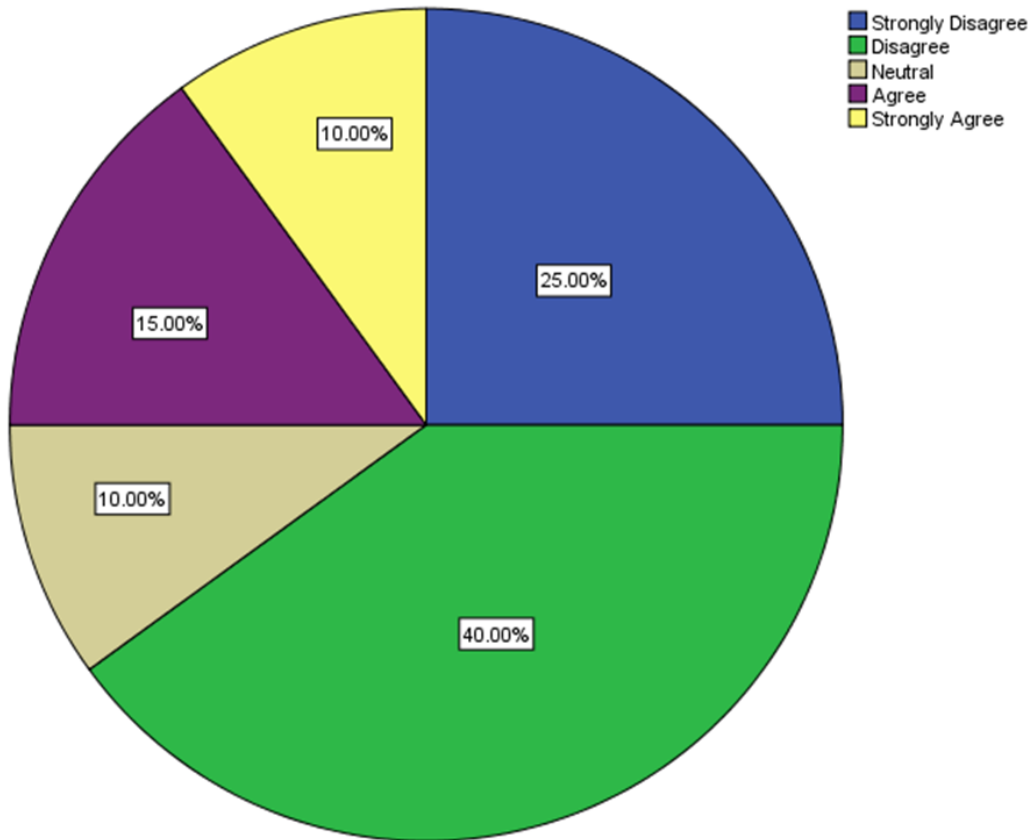


Figure 5.4

Figure 5.4 shows the percentage of people that watch talk shows on Geo News. The total sample size was 200 participants. 10% of participants strongly agreed that they watch talk shows on Geo News. 15% of participants agreed that they watch talk shows on Geo News. 10% of participants were neutral. 40% of participants disagreed that they watch talk shows on Geo News whereas 25% of participants strongly disagreed that they watch talk shows on Geo News. Hence, the figure shows that the majority of the participants do not watch talk shows on Geo News.

5.2.5 Respondents who gain most current affairs information from talk shows

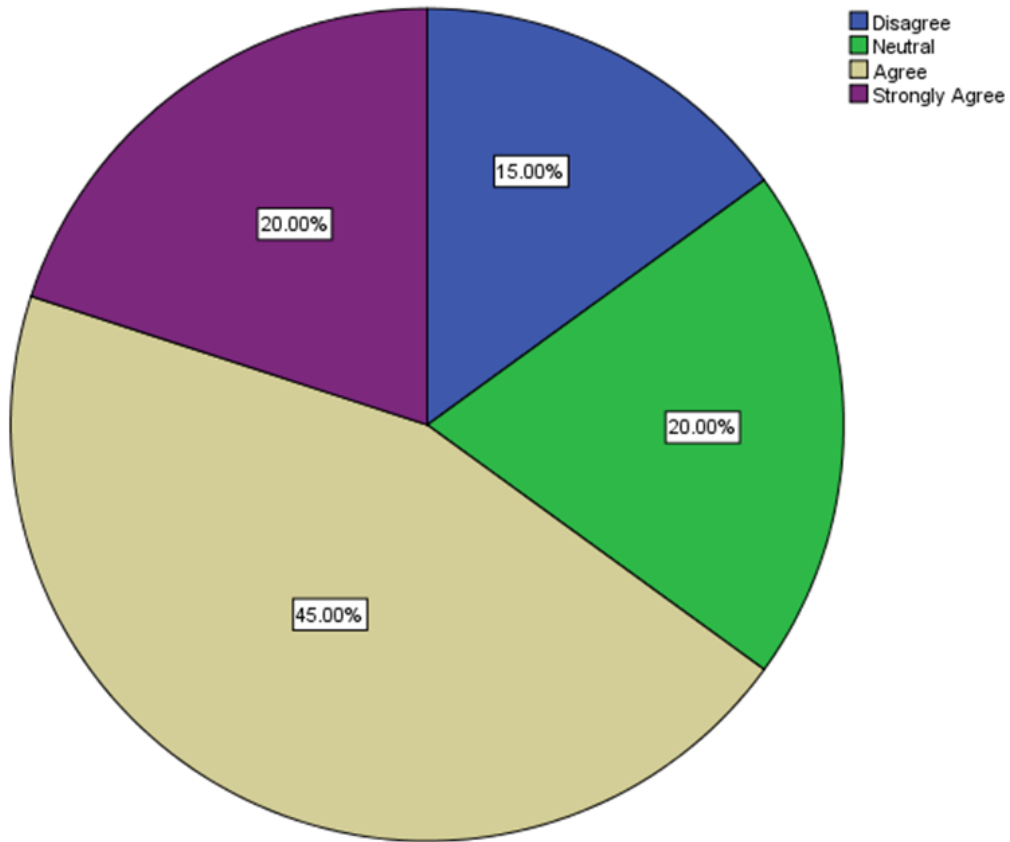


Figure 5.5

Figure 5.5 shows the percentage of participants that gain most of the current affairs information from talk shows. The total sample size was 200 participants. 20% of the participants strongly agreed that they gain most of the current affairs information from talk shows. 45% of the participants agreed that they gain most of the current affairs information from talk shows. 20% of the participants were neutral. 15% of the participants disagreed that they gain most of the current affairs information from the talk shows. Hence, the figure shows that majority of the participants gain most of their current affairs information from talk shows.

5.2.6 Respondents who crosscheck the information gained from political talk shows

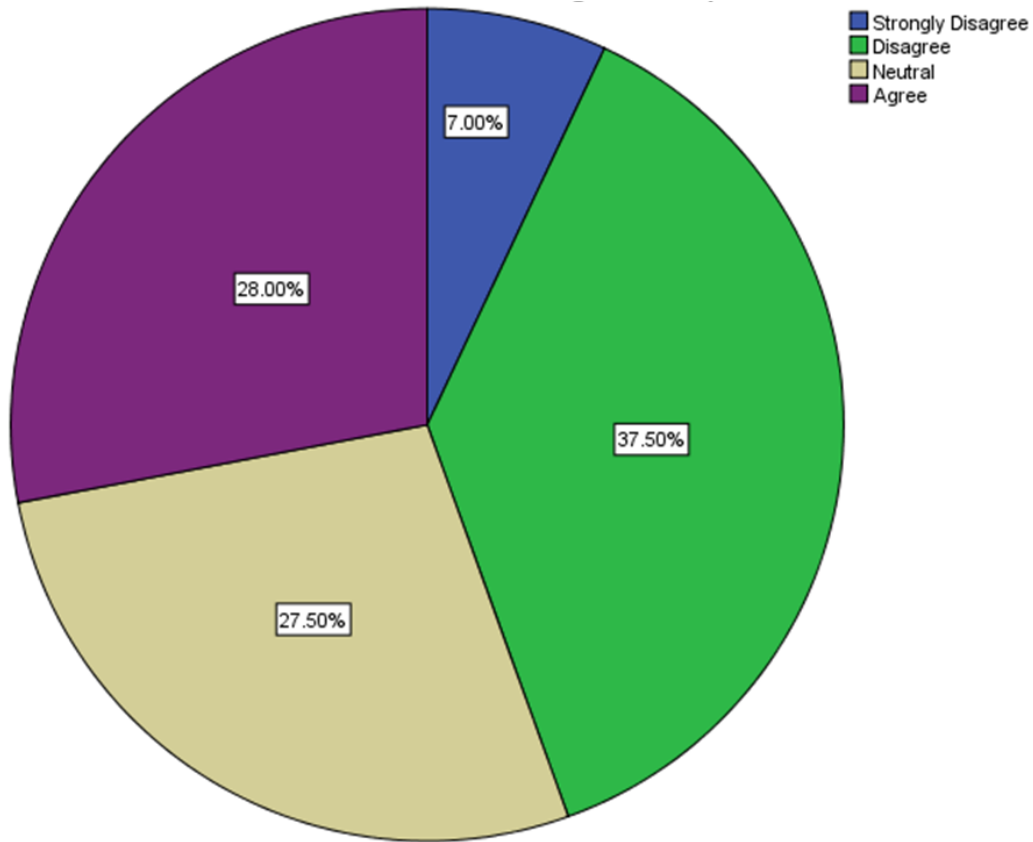


Figure 5.6

Figure 5.6 shows the percentage of participants that crosscheck the information gained from political talk shows. The total sample size was 200 participants. 28% of the participants agreed that they crosscheck the information gained from political talk shows. 27.50% of the participants were neutral. 37.50% of the participants disagreed that they crosscheck the information gained from political talk shows. 7% of the participants strongly disagreed that they crosscheck the information gained from political talk shows. Hence, the figure shows that most of the participants do not crosscheck the information they gain from political talk shows.

5.2.7 Respondents who develop their political perspectives from information gained via talk shows

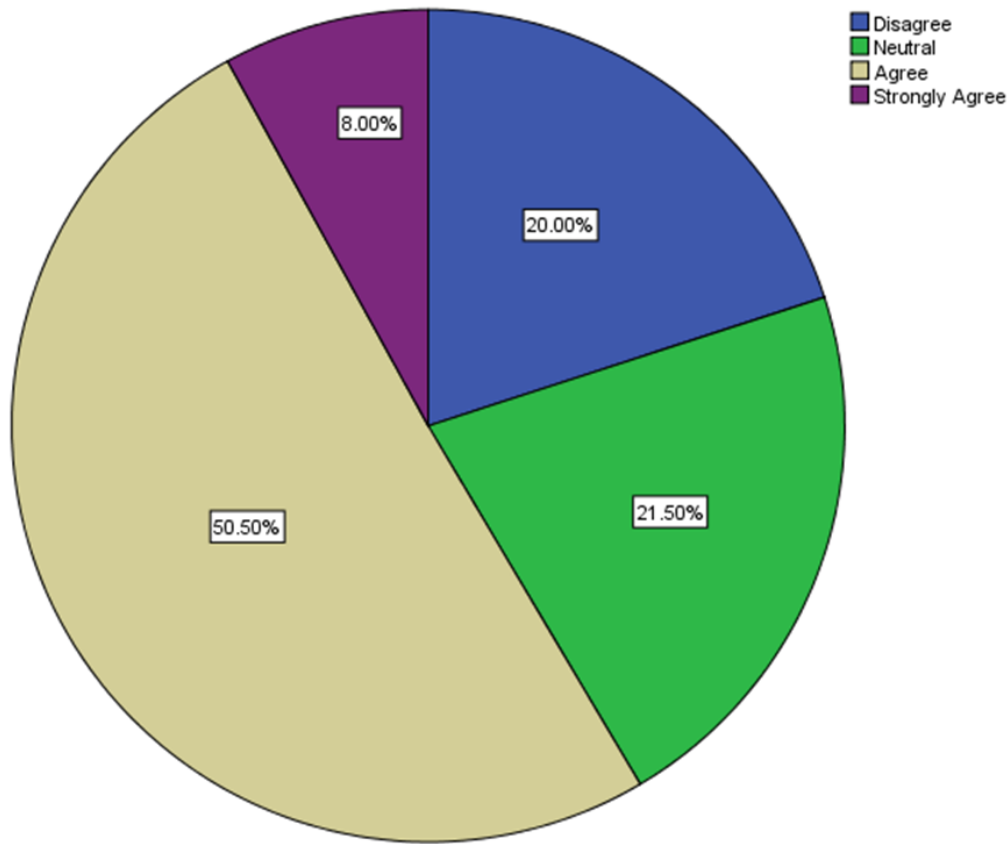


Figure 5.7

Figure 5.7 shows the percentage of participants that develop their political perspectives based on the information they gain from talk shows. The total sample size was 200 participants. 8% of the total participants strongly agreed that they develop their political perspective from information gained from talk shows. 50.50% of the participants agreed that they build their political perspective from the information gained from talk shows. 21.50% of the participants were neutral. 20% of the total participants disagreed that they develop their political perspective from information gained from talk shows. Hence, the figure shows that majority of the participants develop their political perspective from information gained from talk shows.

5.2.8 Respondents who consider the political analysis on talk shows to be accurate

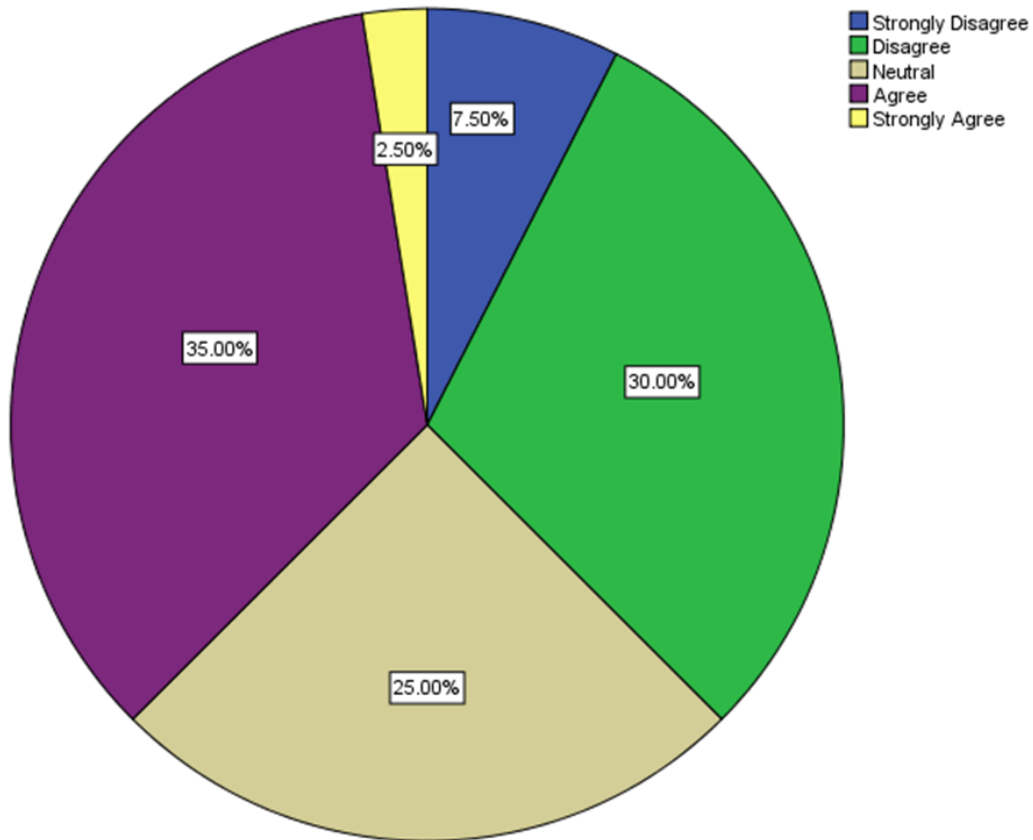


Figure 5.8

Figure 5.8 shows the percentage of participants that consider political analysis on talk shows accurate. The total sample size was 200 participants. 2.50% of the total participants strongly agreed that they consider the political analysis on talk shows to be accurate. 35% of the participants agreed that they find the political analysis on talk shows to be accurate. 25% of the participants were neutral. 30% of the participants disagreed that they consider the political analysis on talk shows to be accurate whereas 7.50% of the participants strongly disagreed that they consider the political analysis of talk shows to be accurate. Hence, the figure shows that an equal percentage of participants agreed and disagreed with this statement.

5.2.9 Respondents who watch talk shows that support their political perspective

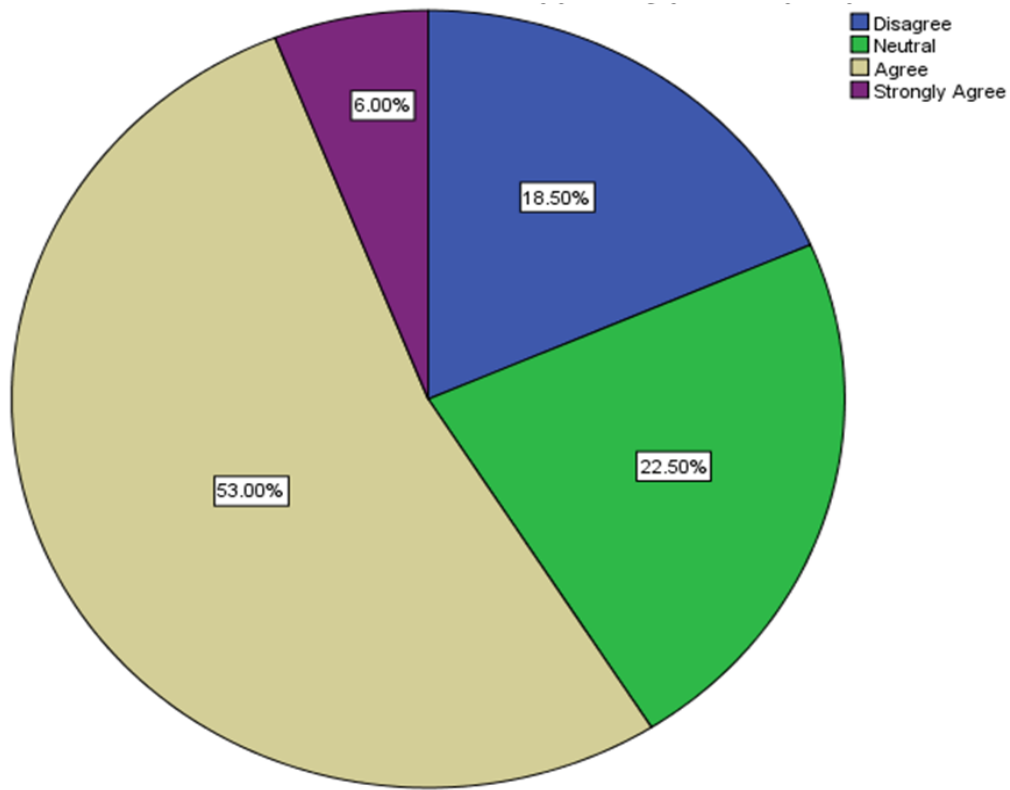


Figure 5.9

Figure 5.9 shows the percentage of participants that watch talk shows that support their political perspective. The total sample size was 200 participants. 6% of the total participants strongly agreed that they watch talk shows that support their political perspective. 53% of the participants agreed that they watch talk shows that support their political perspective. 22.50% of the participants were neutral. 18.50% of the total participants disagreed that they watch talk shows that support their political perspective. Hence, the figure shows that the majority of the participants watch talk shows that support their political perspective.

5.2.10 Respondents who watch talk shows that oppose their political perspective

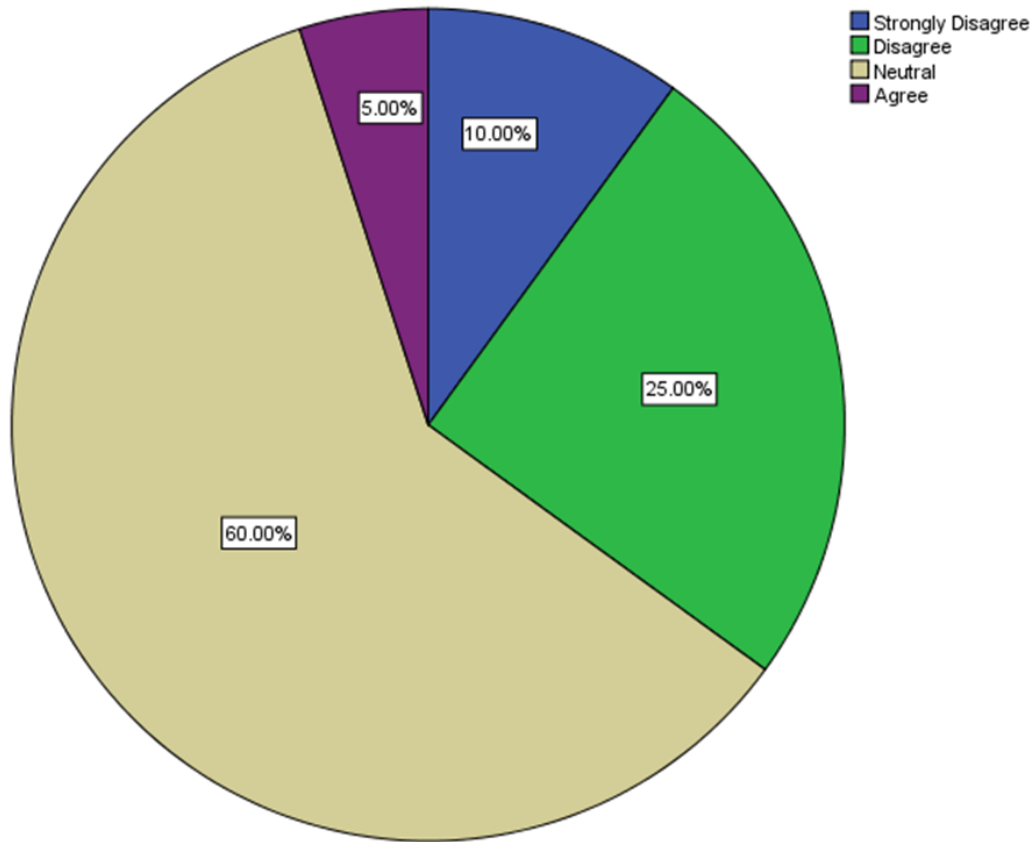


Figure 5.10

Figure 5.10 shows the percentage of people who watch talk shows that oppose their political perspective. The total sample size was 200 people. 5% of the total participants agreed that they watch talk shows that oppose their political perspective. 60% of the participants were neutral. 25% of the participants disagreed that they watch talk shows that oppose their political perspective whereas 10% of the participants strongly disagreed that they watch talk shows that oppose their political perspective. Hence, the figure shows that most of the participants were neutral when it comes to watching talk shows that oppose their political perspective.

5.2.11 Respondents who think biasness exists in political talk shows

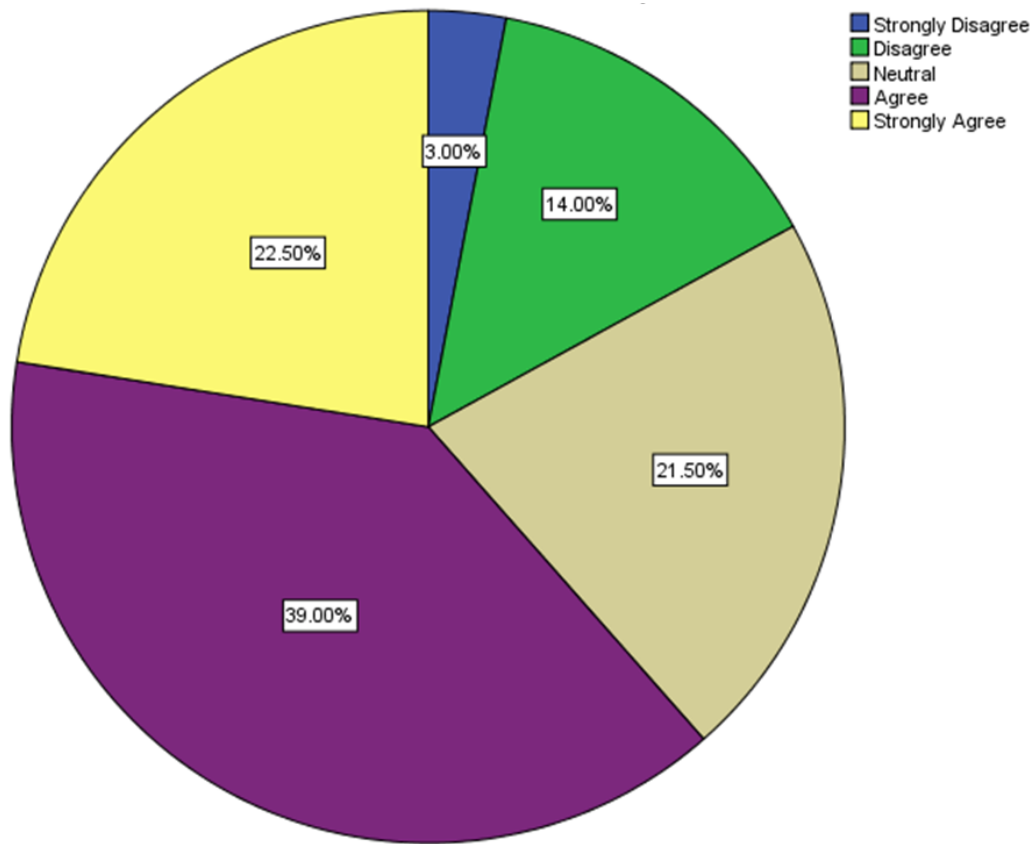


Figure 5.11

Figure 5.11 shows the percentage of participants that think biasness exists in political talk shows. The total sample size was 200 people. 22.50% of the total participants strongly agreed that biasness exists in political talk shows. 39% of the participants agreed that biasness exists in political talk shows. 21.50% of the participants were neutral. 14% of the participants disagreed that biasness exists in political talk shows whereas 3% strongly disagreed with this statement. Hence, the figure shows that the majority of the participants agree that biasness exists in political talk shows.

5.2.12 Respondents who think their favourite talk show anchorperson is biased

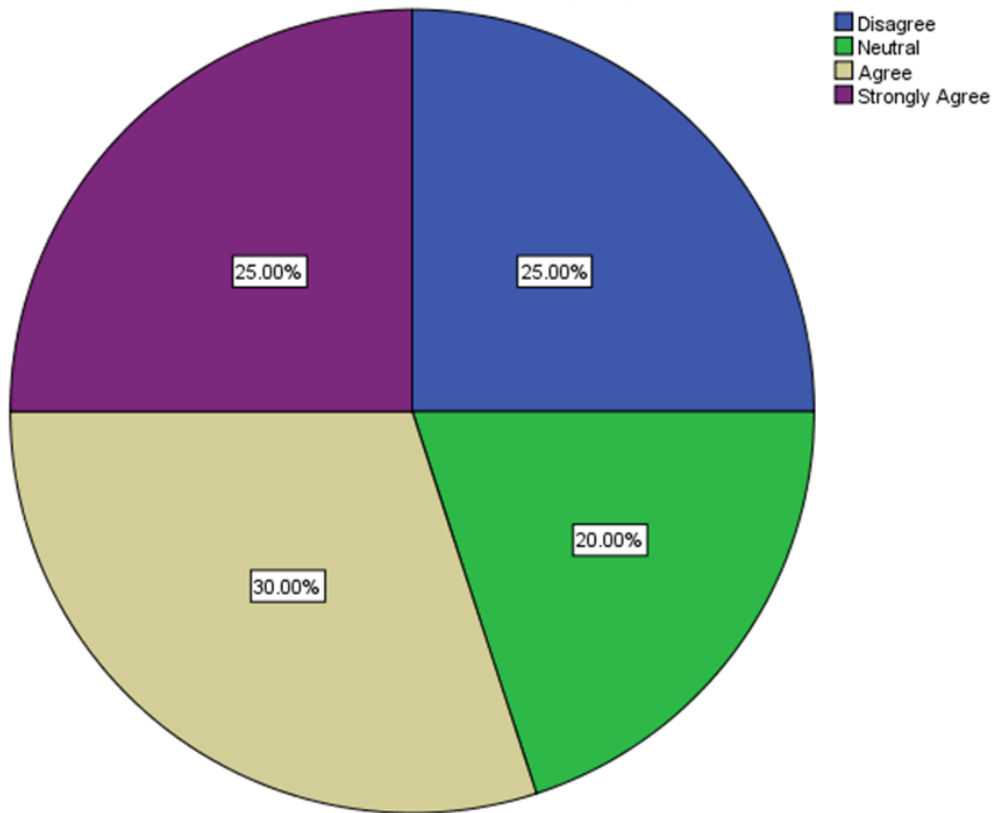


Figure 5.12

Figure 5.12 shows the percentage of participants that believe their favourite talk show anchorperson is biased towards a particular political party. The total sample size was 200 participants. 25% of the total participants strongly agreed that their favourite talk show host is biased towards a particular political party. 30% of the participants agreed that their favourite talk show host is biased towards a particular political party. 20% of the participants were neutral. 25% of the participants disagreed that their favourite talk show host is biased towards a particular political party. Hence, the figure shows that most of the participants agree that their favourite talk show host is biased towards a particular political party.

5.2.13 Respondents who are tolerant of opposing political perspectives

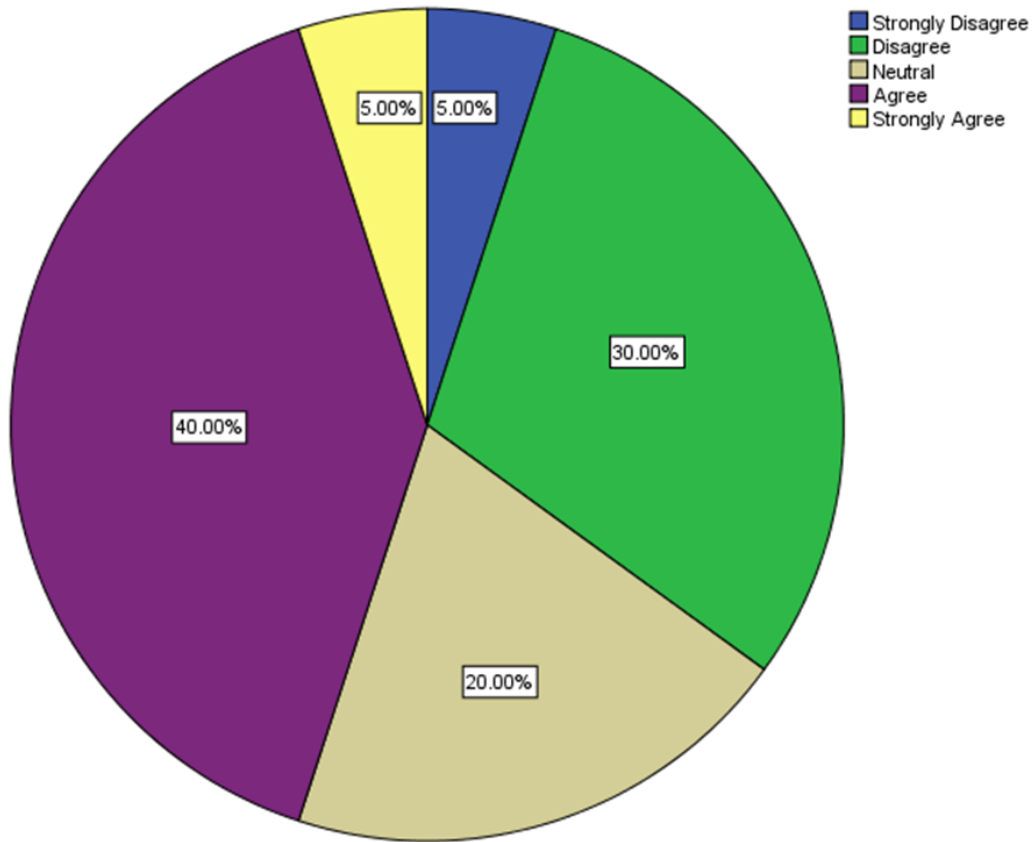


Figure 5.13

Figure 5.13 shows the percentage of participants that are tolerant towards opposing political perspectives. The total sample size was 200 participants. 5% of the total participants strongly agreed that they are tolerant of opposing political perspectives. 40% of the participants agreed that they are tolerant towards opposing political perspectives. 20% of the participants were neutral. 30% of the participants disagreed that they are tolerant towards opposing political perspectives whereas 5% of the participants strongly disagreed with this statement. Hence, the figure shows that the majority of the participants are tolerant of opposing political perspectives.

5.2.14 Respondents that only support Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)

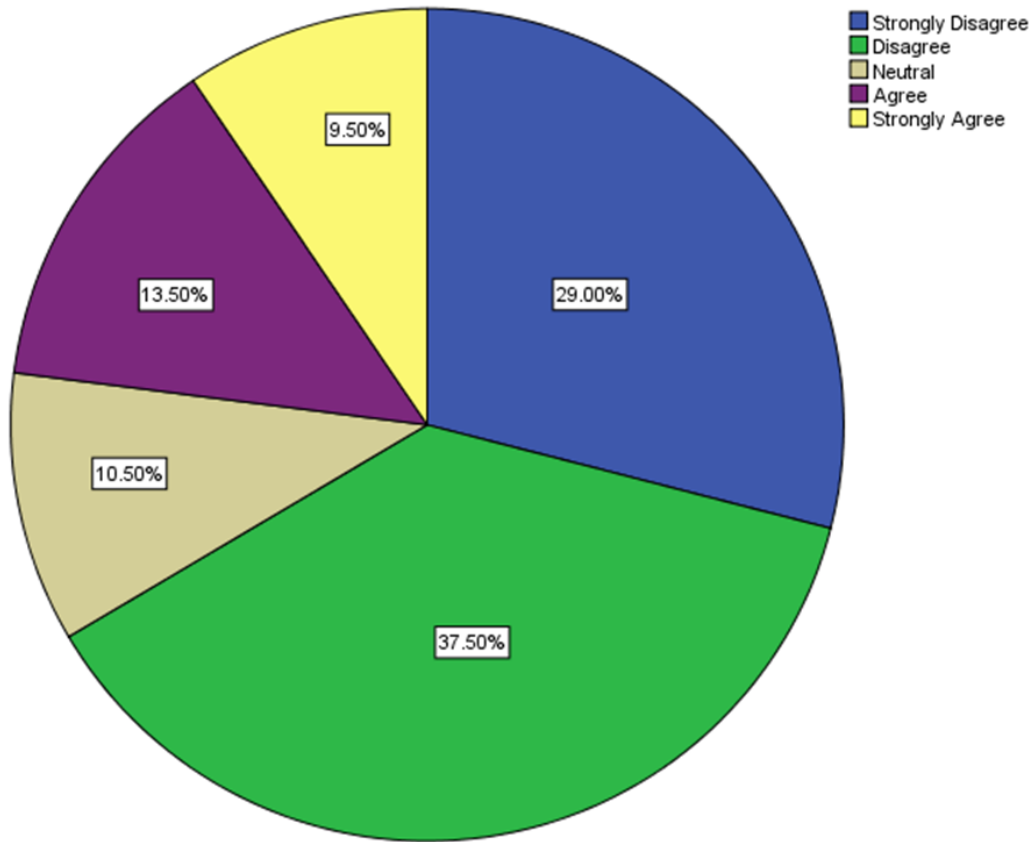


Figure 5.14

Figure 5.14 shows the percentage of participants that support Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz). The total sample size was 200 participants. 9.50% of the participants strongly agreed that they support Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz). 13.50% of the participants agreed that they support Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz). 10.50% of the participants were neutral. 37.50% of the participants disagreed that they support Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) whereas 29% of the participants strongly disagreed to this statement. Hence, the figure shows that majority of the participants do not support Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz).

5.2.15 Respondents that only support Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf

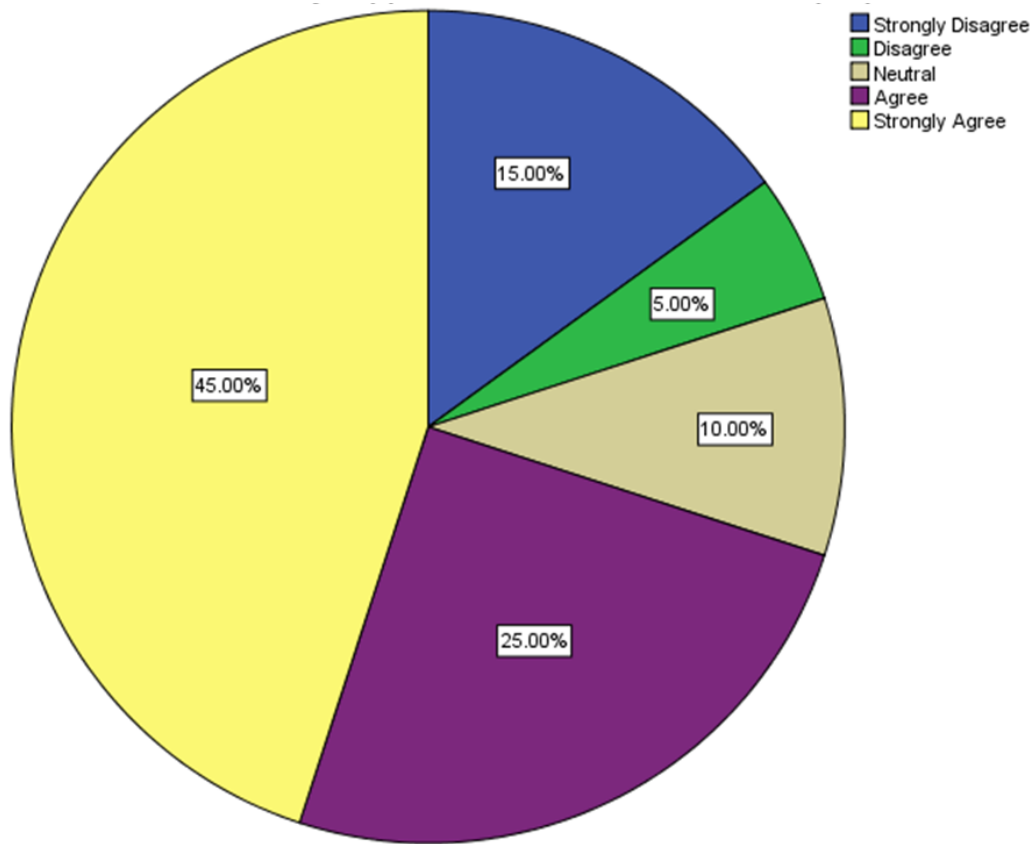


Figure 5.15

Figure 5.15 shows the percentage of participants that support Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf. The total sample size was 200 participants. 45% of the participants strongly agreed that they support Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf. 25% of the participants agreed that they support Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf. 10% of the participants were neutral. 5% of the participants disagreed that they support Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf whereas 15% of the participants strongly disagreed to this statement. Hence, the figure shows that majority of the participants support Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf.

5.2.16 Respondents that do not support any political party

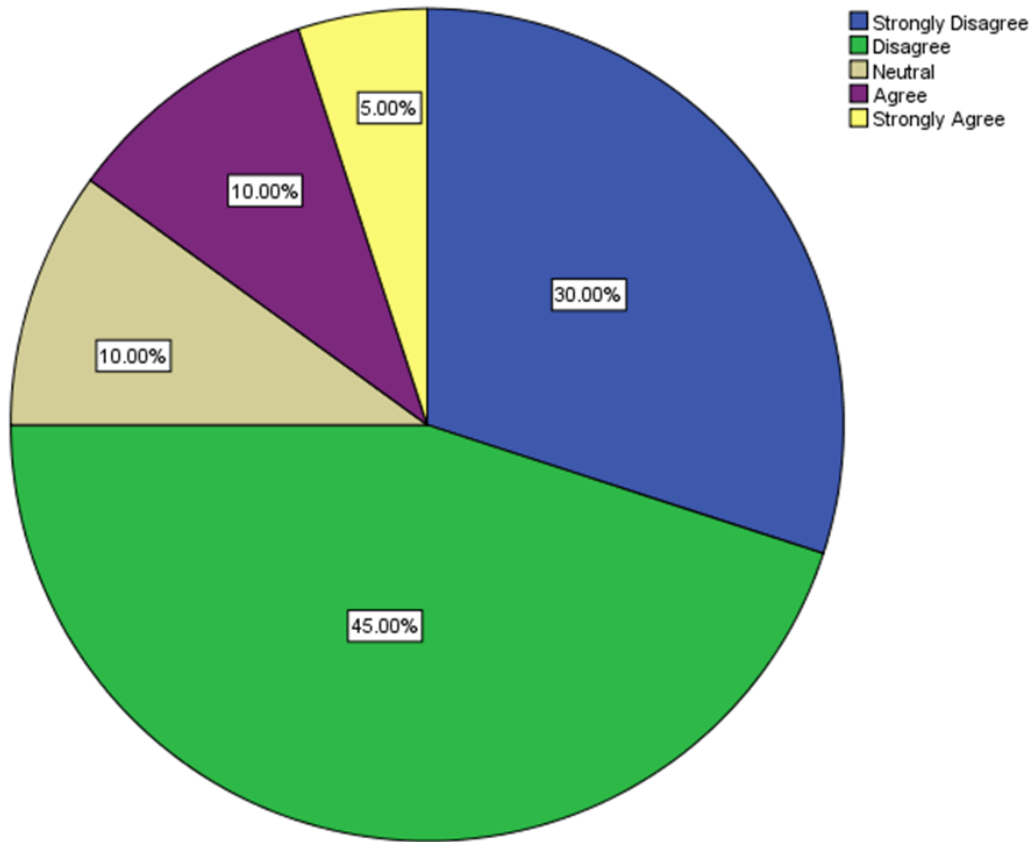


Figure 5.16

Figure 5.16 shows the percentage of participants that do not support any political party. The total sample size was 200 people. 5% of the total participants strongly agreed that they do not support any political party. 10% of the participants agreed that they do not support any political party. 10% of the participants were neutral. 45% of the participants disagreed that they do not support any political party whereas 30% of the participants strongly disagreed to this statement. Hence, the figure shows that the majority of the participants do support any political party.

5.2.17 Respondents who equally criticize every political party

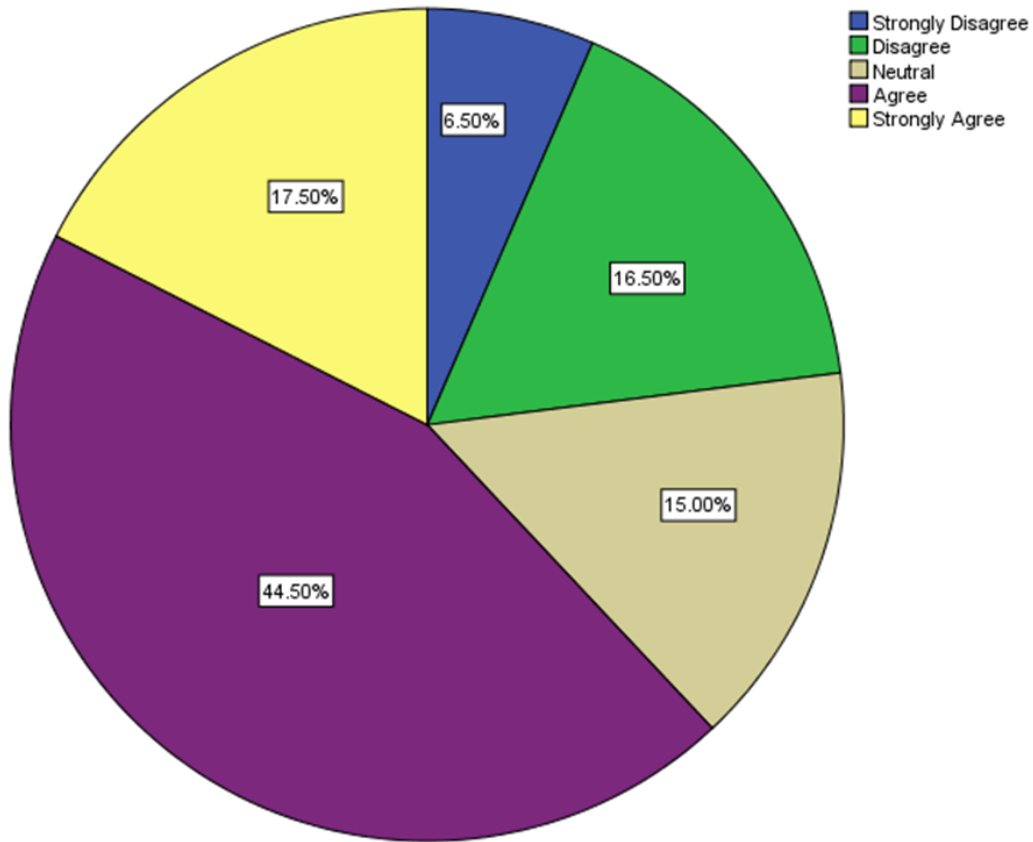


Figure 5.17

Figure 5.17 shows the percentage of participants that equally criticize every political party. The total sample size was 200 participants. 17.50% of the total participants strongly agreed that they criticize every political party equally. 44.50% of the participants agreed that they criticize every political party equally. 15% of the participants were neutral. 16.50% of the participants disagreed that they do not criticize every political party equally whereas 6.50% of the participants strongly disagreed to this statement. Hence, the figure shows that most of the participants criticize every political party equally.

5.2.18 Respondents who calmly listen to opposing arguments

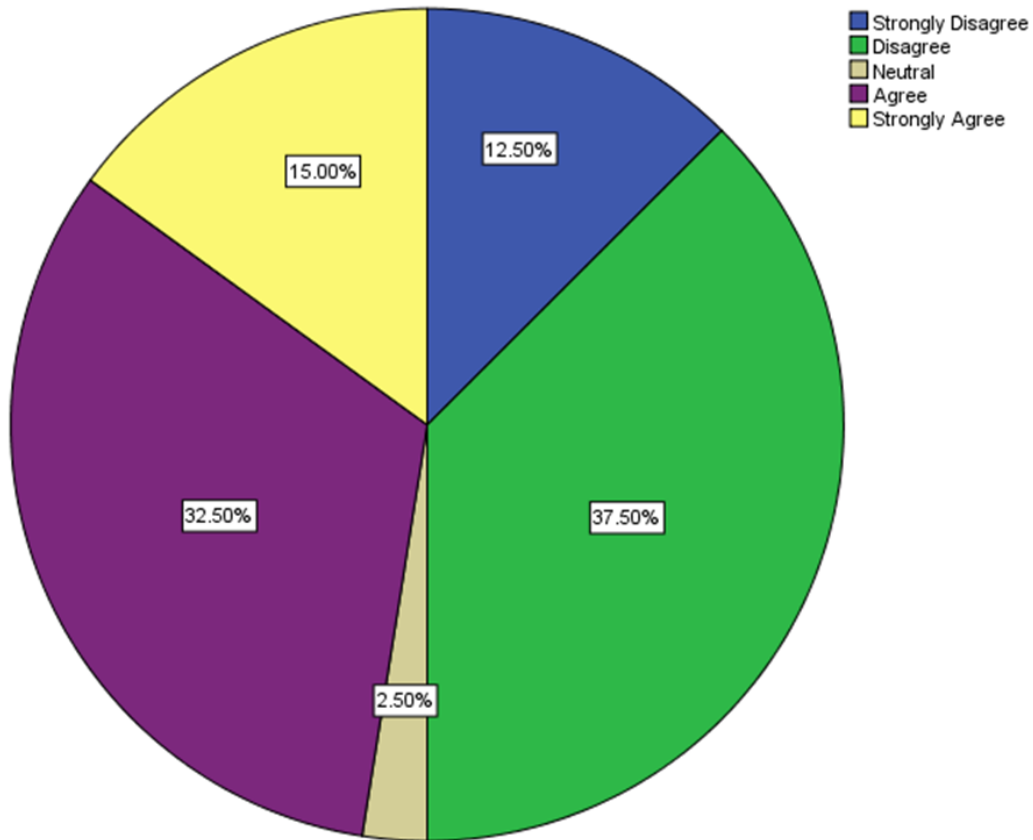


Figure 5.18

Figure 5.18 shows the percentage of participants that calmly listen to opposing political arguments. The total sample size was 200 participants. 15% of the total participants strongly agreed that they calmly listen to opposing political arguments. 32.50% of the participants agreed that they calmly listen to opposing political arguments. 2.50% of the participants are neutral. 37.50% of the participants disagreed that they listen to opposing arguments calmly whereas 12.50% of the participants strongly disagreed with this statement. Hence, the figure shows that the majority of the participants did not calmly listen to opposing arguments.

5.2.19 Respondents who become harsh with people who oppose their political stance

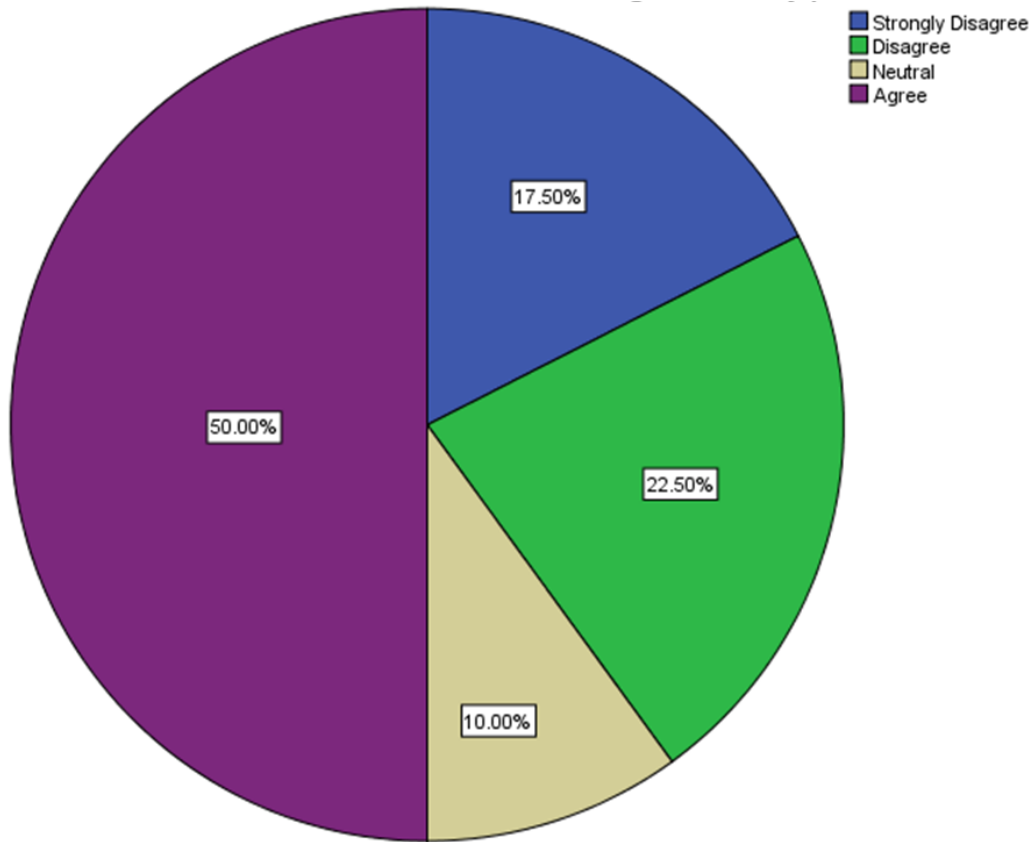


Figure 5.19

Figure 5.19 shows the percentage of participants who become harsh towards people who do not agree with their political stance. The total sample size was 200 participants. 50% of the total participants agreed that they become harsh towards people who do not agree with their political stance. 10% of the participants are neutral. 22.50% of the participants disagreed that they become harsh towards those who oppose their political stance whereas 17.50% of the participants strongly disagreed with this statement. Hence, the figure shows that the majority of the participants become harsh towards people who oppose their political stance.

5.2.20 Respondents who cut off people over political differences

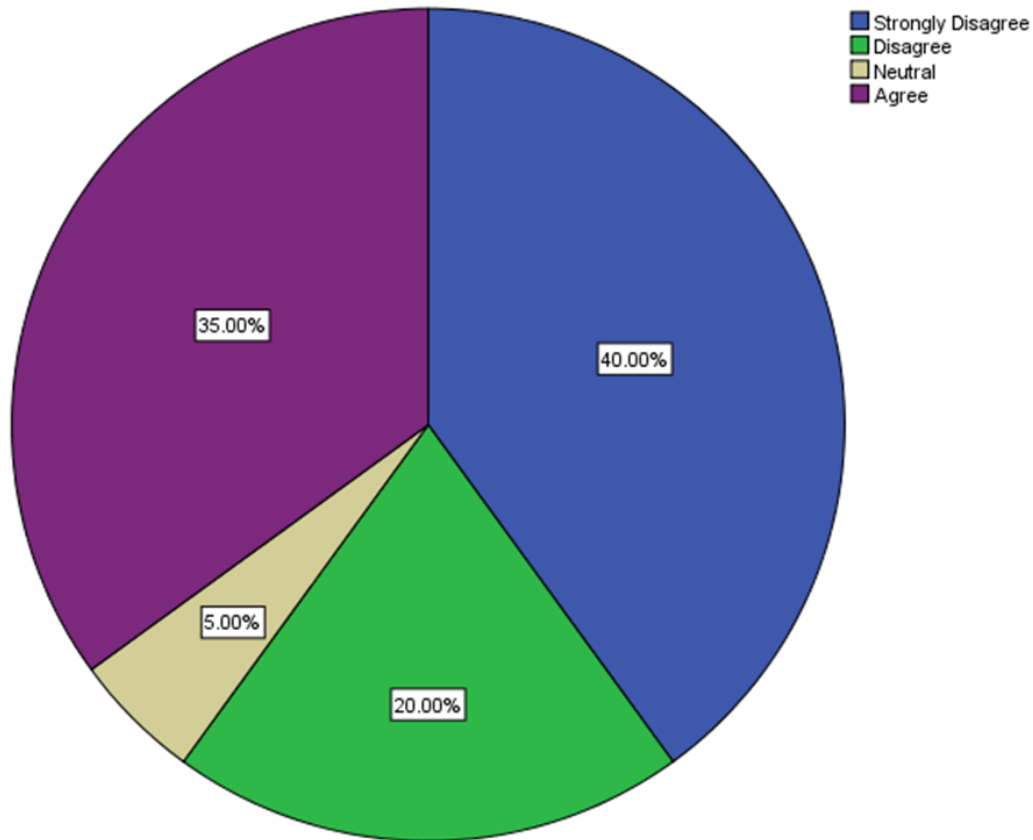


Figure 5.20

Figure 5.20 shows the percentage of participant who have cut off people in the past over political differences. The total sample size was 200 people. 35% of the people agreed that they had cut off people in the past who did not agree with their political stance. 5% of the participants were neutral. 20% of the participants disagreed that they had cut off people in the past who did not agree with their political stance whereas 40% of the participants strongly disagreed with this statement. Hence, the figure shows that the majority of the participants had not cut off people in the past based on political differences.

5.2.21 Respondents who have become more politically active

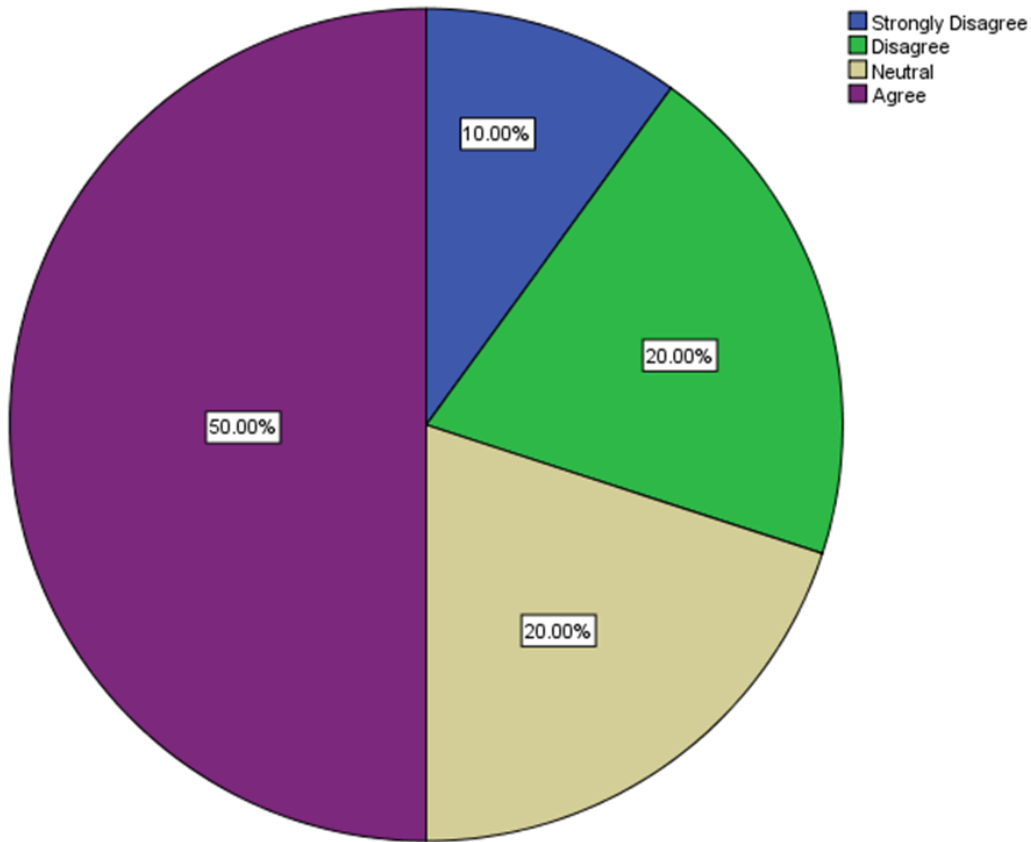


Figure 5.21

Figure 5.21 shows the percentage of participants who have been involved in more political activities since April 2022. The total sample size was 200 participants. 50% of the participants agreed that they had been involved in more political activities since April 2022. 20% of the participants were neutral. 20% of the participants disagreed that they had become more involved in political activities since April 2022 whereas 10% of the participants strongly disagreed with this statement. Hence, the figure shows the majority of the participants had become more involved in political activities since April 2022.

5.2.22 Respondents who express their political opinion even when others find it offensive

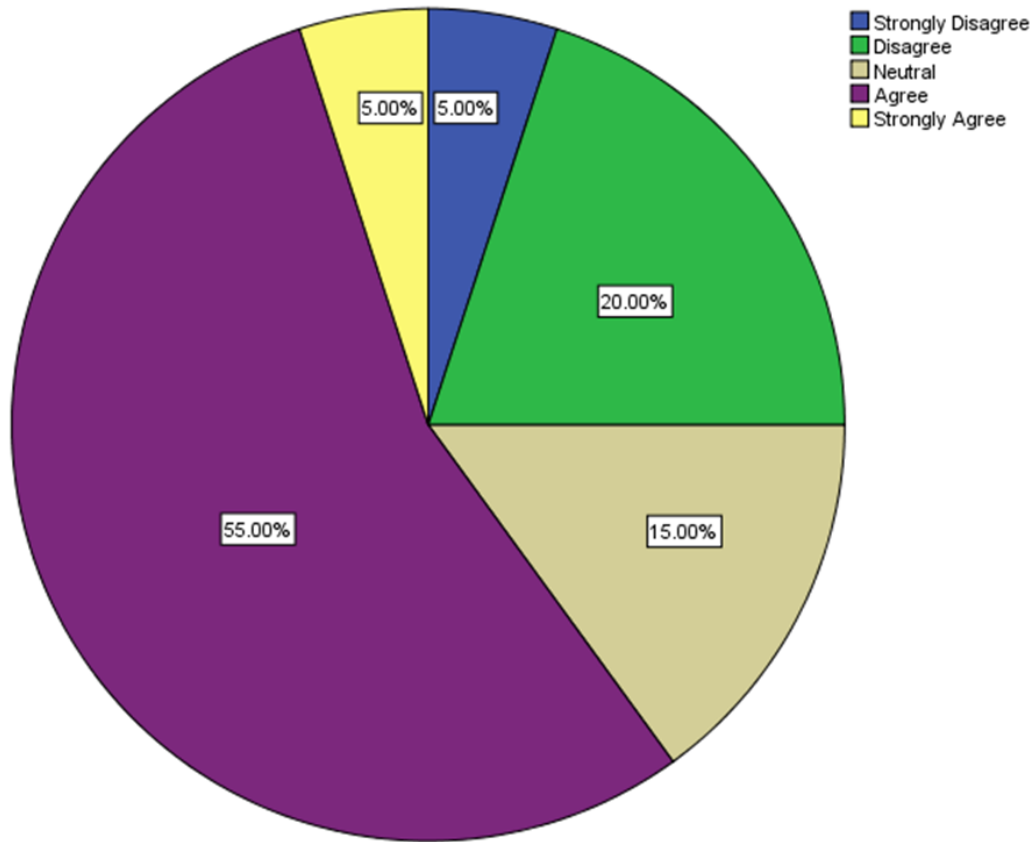


Figure 5.22

Figure 5.22 shows the percentage of participants that express their political opinion even when others find it offensive. The total sample size was 200 participants. 5% of the total participants strongly agreed that they express their political opinion even when others find it offensive. 55% of the participants agreed that they express their political opinion even when others find it offensive. 15% of the participants were neutral. 20% of the participants disagreed that they express their opinions when others find it offensive whereas 5% strongly disagreed with this statement. Hence, the figure shows that the majority of the participants expressed their political opinions even when others found it offensive.

5.2.23 Respondents who support their preferred political party even if they make derogatory remarks

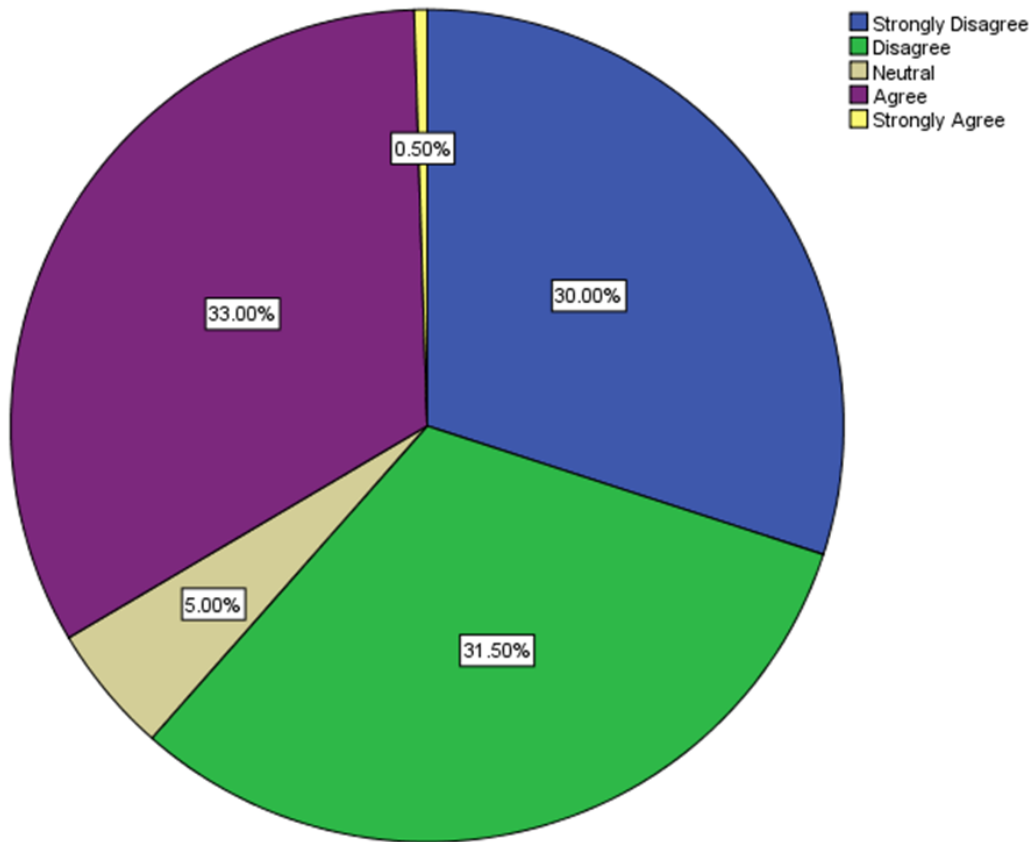


Figure 5.23

Figure 5.23 shows the percentage of participants that support their preferred political party even if they make derogatory remarks. The total sample size was 200 people. 0.50% of the total participants strongly agreed that they support their preferred political party even if they made derogatory remarks. 33% of the participants agreed that they support their preferred political party even when they made derogatory remarks. 5% of the participants were neutral. 31.50% of the participants disagreed that they support their preferred political party even if they made derogatory remarks whereas 30% of the participants strongly disagreed to this statement. Hence, the figure shows that majority of the participants do not support their preferred political party when they make derogatory remarks.

5.2.24 Respondents who find reasons to defend mistakes of their preferred political party

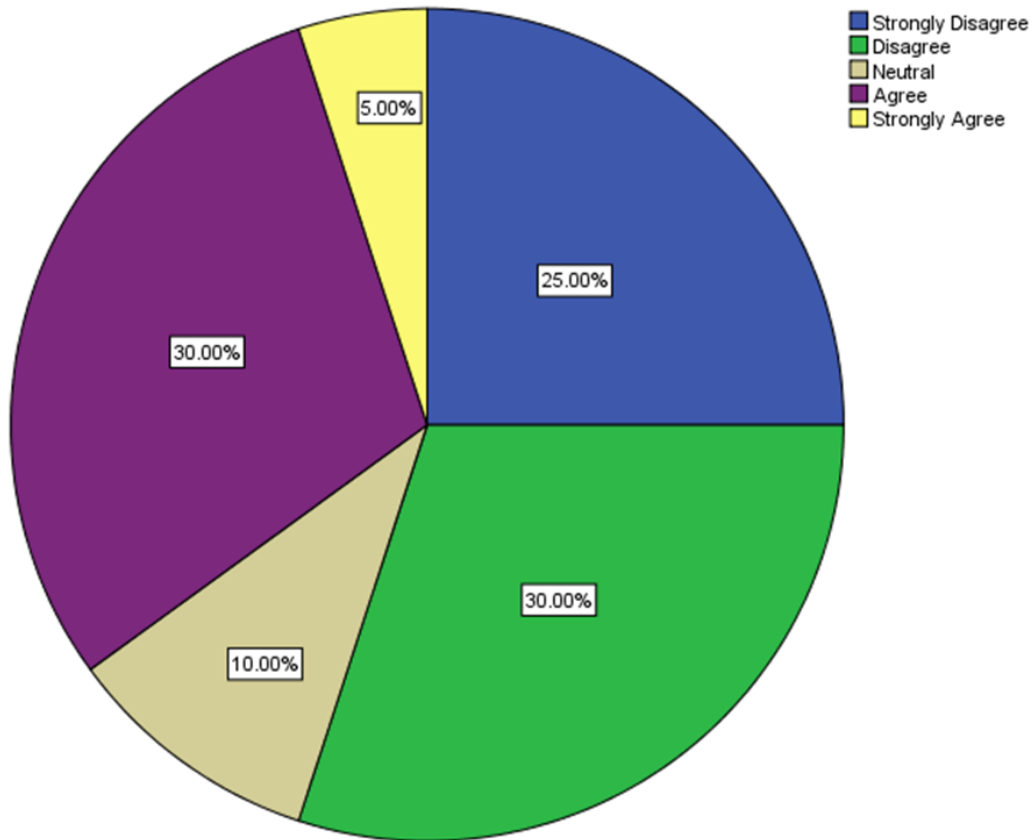


Figure 5.24

Figure 5.24 shows the percentage of participants that find reasons to defend the mistakes of their preferred political party. The total sample size was 200 people. 5% of the total participants strongly agreed that they find reasons to defend the mistakes of their preferred political party. 30% of the participants agreed that they find reasons to defend the mistakes of their preferred political party. 10% of the participants were neutral. 30% of the participants disagreed that they find reasons to defend the mistakes of their preferred political party whereas 25% of the participants strongly disagreed to this statement. Hence, the figure shows that majority of the participants do not find reasons to defend the mistakes of their preferred political party.

5.3 Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1

Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to interpret the data for hypothesis testing. For the content analysis, the Chi-square test of likelihood was applied to assess the association between variables by studying and closely observing the pattern of the categorical representations within the talk shows. The Chi-square test is applied to determine association between media partisanship and selected talk shows.

H₁: Media partisanship is reflected in selected talk shows.

H₀: Media partisanship is not reflected in selected talk shows.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig	Conclusion
Chi-square	31.357	2	.000	Significant

Table 5.25

As the p-value was less than 0.05, therefore Chi-Square test showed that there was a statistically significant association between the variables. So the proposed hypothesis stands approved. This means that there is a close relationship between that media partisanship is clearly reflected in the selected talk shows, as shown in the findings.

Hypothesis 2

Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to interpret the data for hypothesis testing. For quantitative analysis, to check the relationship between the variables, Spearman's Rho test was applied as the variables had a relationship of association and the data type was ordinal.

H₂: Audience polarisation is a direct effect of media partisanship.

H₀: Audience polarisation is not a direct effect of media partisanship.

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	N	Sig (2-tailed)	Conclusion
Spearman Rho	200	.040	Significant

Table 5.26

Table 5.26 shows the 2-tailed significance value of developing political perspective based on information gained from talk shows and supporting derogatory remarks of the preferred political party. The 2-tailed significance value is 0.04 which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted that audience polarisation is a direct effect of media partisanship.

5.4 Discussion and Analysis

This study aimed to analyse media partisanship in the prime-time talk shows aired on the popular news channels of Pakistan, Geo News, and ARY News. The objectives of the study were to examine whether partisanship exists in the selected talk shows, and to explore the effects of media partisanship on audience polarisation. Talk shows on news channels influence state policy, emerging national interests, and structural and political systems. Television uses a variety of effects, such as monochrome, background music, catchy tickers, etc. because it is an audio-visual medium, to leave a lasting impact on viewers (Baloch et al., 2018). On many different levels, television can transform society. Television content, especially news, have an impact on people's attitudes and are making them more politically aware. It has the power to influence political viewpoints and spark interest on a personal level. To shift public perceptions at the national level, political reform needs high-profile objectives. News outlets politicise issues like religion, patriotism, and security that unite every person for a change at the national level. According to Ahmed et al. (2014), the main way to inform people about local, national, and international events and raise awareness among them is through electronic media. This has an effect on society's social, cultural, economic, and religious aspects.

The general findings of the study indicate that the selected shows, Off The Record and Capital Talk, are aligned with particular political parties in Pakistan. From the language of the talk show hosts to how they portray each political party, it is clear that they lean toward one or the other. For ARY News, as it portrays PTI Chairman Imran Khan and PTI actions in a positive light, it shows that the channel and show support PTI more than PML(N), which is mostly portrayed negatively. The reverse is the case for Geo News and the talk show Capital Talk hosted by Hamid Mir. Both shows and channels have their own respective biases. This shows that the media in Pakistan is partisan when it should be neutral (Ahmad et al., 2014). Neutrality in journalism is essential but as the study has shown, the major news channels of Pakistan are not neutral and strongly support one party or the other. Similarly, the survey also showed how people's opinions are influenced by what they watch on talk shows. Not only that, they also prefer watching the talk show and news channel which clearly supports their preferred political party. Due to this reason, the Pakistani audience is becoming increasingly polarised due to media partisanship.

It is also important to note that Capital Talk failed to provide an adequate level of both perspectives. There were hardly, if any, guests from PTI on the Geo News talk show Capital Talk. As this is reflected in the data, it is also an indicator of the partisanship that exists in the news channel and its show. By not presenting both perspectives equally, the show is shaping the news in a particular way that suits its preferred political party. Previous research on this topic has also validated the results of the present study (Yousaf et al., 2020). Media partisanship is explored and highlighted multiple times as news channels continue to support particular political parties and figures. People who hold certain political beliefs deem the news sources credible if they are in line with those beliefs (Ilyas and Ahmad, 2020). Parallel to this, media outlets that spread a message presented in a particular way give their audience confirmation of their political stance, which reinforces their convictions. According to a study, news channels are associated with specific political parties because they obtain benefits from such parties, such as money and ad packages (Baloch et al., 2018). These advantages cause news outlets to become biased and predisposed towards a specific political party, which results in partisanship in the media. Similarly, when it comes to the public, people choose to watch the news outlet that supports and views as credible their favoured political party. Due to this reason, both Geo News and ARY News have a divided audience with polarised opinions where they strongly support one party and oppose the other with a strong sense of hatred.

On the other hand, ARY News was facing a boycott from PML-N due to which guests from the said political party or its allies refused to come to the talk shows as mentioned by the host of Off The Record (Sarwar et al., 2020). Hence, the panel of discussion in ARY's Off The Record only included PTI leaders most of the time. The panel of discussion in both talk shows overtly shows where the news channel's preference lies. Most of the politicians, analysts, and lawmakers invited in Off the Record are those that support the ideology of PTI and its chairman Imran Khan. Whereas, almost all the guests invited to Capital Talk's panel of discussion are those that are against the ideology of PTI and in favor of the PML-N's ideology. This means that people who watch ARY News will primarily get news from PTI's perspectives where their wrongdoings may be overlooked (Sarwar et al., 2020). Similarly, Geo News viewers will get PML(N)'s side only which could focus on their positive aspects and only highlight PTI's negativity. News media should be presenting both sides from a neutral viewpoint so that the

audience can form their own opinions (Baloch et al., 2018). However, neither Geo News nor ARY News appears to be doing so. This is evident in the findings as the language of the Geo News talk show Capital Talk host Hamid Mir could only be observed in a total of 14 times in 144 episodes, which clearly shows that they do not represent both perspectives equally. As a result, the audience receives one-sided news from the show or channel they choose to tune into.

The magic bullet theory is evident here in full effect as the audience's opinions are being moulded by the media. As the present study has found, 65% of the respondents gain most of their information from talk shows but only 28% crosscheck the information to see how credible it is. The underlying premise of the magic bullet theory is the analogy that the media's message is comparable to a bullet being fired from the media gun into the audience member's mind (Borah, 2015). News outlets frequently convey messages and information to their viewers, and the majority of the time, those viewers accept those messages as true and begin to hold those views. As it explains why and how people are significantly impacted by news channels, the magic bullet theory is applicable in this situation. The polarisation of audiences is caused by the fact that news media content involves disseminating information, which recipients do so without challenging it. This theory also provides an explanation for how news media affects public opinion. They accept the message and believe it to be true, which drives them to adopt firm ideas that are consistent with the portrayal of the news programme they are viewing.

People watch these talk shows and believe whatever information is being told, not knowing that each channel has its separate agenda and has framed every piece of news in a way that seems suitable to them. The framing theory and agenda setting theory are also clearly applicable in this case as well and support the findings of the study. Political talk shows cover current events from a variety of perspectives because each analyst has their own point of view. Every news outlet presents the news story in a way that strengthens the backing of a specific political party (Ilyas and Ahmad, 2020). For instance, whereas Geo News frames its stories to assist PML(N), ARY News frames it to favour PTI. Each channel's listeners tune in to reinforce their worldviews by repeatedly viewing the same type of frame. As the present research found, 58% of the participants agreed that they develop their political perspectives from the information they gained from talk shows. As a result, due to how each political party has been framed by the

news media channels, this framing may cause polarisation among the audience, which may result in the audience vehemently supporting only one political party while fiercely opposing the other.

The literature also sheds light on how the media plays a significant role when it comes to shaping public perceptions. Multiple studies have also previously focused on ARY News and Geo News to understand how credible news can be considered among different audiences, especially when it comes to being biased (Yousaf et al., 2020). The media develops a political agenda in addition to informing the audience. People learn about politics through the media, which plays a big part in influencing their political ideas. According to a study, Pakistan's general elections in 2013 saw a significant rise in voter turnout thanks in large part to the media (Ali and Rahman, 2019). People's political ideas are claimed to be shaped by the media by how they prioritise certain topics while downplaying others. Voting for new parties over existing parties was influenced by exposure to certain media channels (Ali and Rahman, 2019). Similar to this, when a particular political party was supported by the media during an election, voter support for that party increased.

Therefore, the study has met its objectives answered its research questions. It was found that media partisanship is strongly reflected in prime-time talk shows on Pakistani news channels. It has further found that audience in Pakistan holds polarised opinions which are largely because of the talk shows they choose to watch. This not only affects people individually but also influences their relationships as they express their thoughts and opinions even if they are considered to be offensive. As a result, it has created a more divided society. Rather than being unified for the betterment of the country, Pakistanis are being divided over their political opinions and often act upon them in a way that can be harmful to those around them. Media can greatly influence people, which is why it is important for it to be neutral. When the media becomes biased, people start seeing only in black and white and disregard that there may be a third way which is grey. This leads to intolerance which leads to chaos and disunity within a society, which is something very evident in Pakistan right now. The media understands its power which is why it continues to set its agendas, but it should also do what is better for the public. Hence, the media has an important role to play in shaping opinions and perspectives, which is why it must take into account the problematic tendencies and take responsibility to do better.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study focused on media partisanship and its effects on audience polarisation with a case study of the top two news channels in Pakistan, Geo News and ARY News, and their prime-time talk shows. Political parties have caused divisions within the Pakistani population. Instead of approaching issues neutrally, people are now more inclined to hold extreme beliefs. The overall results of the study suggest that the selected programmes, Off The Record and Capital Talk, are in support of specific political parties in Pakistan. It is clear from ARY News' positive portrayal of PTI Chairman Imran Khan and PTI actions that the channel favours PTI over PML(N), which is typically presented unfavourably. The opposite is true of Hamid Mir's talk show Capital Talk on Geo News. Both the shows and the stations have their own prejudices. This demonstrates that Pakistan's media is biased when it ought to be neutral. The study has proven that Pakistan's major news outlets are not impartial and aggressively favour one party or the other, despite the fact that impartiality in journalism is crucial. The survey revealed this as well, demonstrating how what individuals see on talk shows affects their opinions. Furthermore, they prefer to watch the news and talk programmes that openly support their chosen political party. This is the cause of the growing polarisation of the Pakistani audience as a result of political media coverage. Additional research is necessary to find out the unique effects of this issue on the audience in order to better comprehend the situation-specific effects of the political biasness that is present in the news media in Pakistan.

6.1 Limitations

Following are the limitations of this study:

- The study is only limited to two talk shows of ARY News and Geo News.
- The sample size for survey is only 200 which can be an issue when generalising the findings and results for the Pakistani population.

6.2 Recommendations

The research was conducted to evaluate how Pakistani media are partisan and biased toward a particular political party that supports their agendas. Therefore, the broadcasted content is not neutral, rather is strongly aligned towards a single party. Accordingly, the research makes the following recommendations for future studies:

- The research recommends studying more political talk shows that are aired in Pakistan to gain a better understanding of the content.
- A more representative sample is recommended with a larger sample size for future research in this area to increase generalisability.

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APPENDIX

Coding Sheet

Coder:

Name of Talk Show:

Name of Channel:

Year:

Content Categories:

Categories	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Tone of Anchor toward PTI				
Tone of Anchor toward PMLN				
Language of Anchor towards PTI				
Language of Anchor towards PMLN				
Body Language of Anchor with PTI members				
Body Language of Anchor with PTI members				
Conduct of Anchor with PTI members				
Conduct of Anchor with PMLN members				
Portrayal of PTI Chairman Imran Khan				
Portrayal of PMLN Chairman PM Shehbaz Sharif				
Portrayal of PTI Actions				
Portrayal of PMLN Actions				

Questionnaire

Screener

(a) Do you watch political talk shows?

Yes/No

(b) Do you watch ARY or Geo news?

Yes/No

If not, kindly terminate this questionnaire

Age:

(a) 30-40

(b) 41-50

(c) 51-60

(d) 61 and above

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I regularly watch primetime political talk shows on news channels					

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<p>2. I mostly watch talk shows on ARY news</p>					
<p>3. I mostly watch talk shows on GEO news</p>					
<p>4. I gain most information about current affairs from talk shows</p>					
<p>5. I cross-check the information I gain from political talk shows</p>					
<p>6. I develop my political perspectives from the information that I get from talk shows</p>					
<p>7. I find the political analysis on talk shows to be accurate</p>					

MEDIA PARTISANSHIP AND ITS EFFECTS ON AUDIENCE POLARISATION

8. I watch talk shows that support my political perspective					
9. I watch talk shows that oppose my political perspective					
10. I think biasness exists in political talk shows					
11. I think that my favoured talk show anchor person is biased towards a particular political party					
12. I am tolerant towards opposing political perspectives					
13. I only support PMLN					
14. I only support PTI					
15. I do not support any political party					

MEDIA PARTISANSHIP AND ITS EFFECTS ON AUDIENCE POLARISATION

16. I equally criticise every political party					
17. I calmly listen to opposing arguments					
18. I become harsh towards those who do not agree with my political stance					
19. In the past, I have cut off people who do not agree with my political stance					
20. Recently, I have become more involved in political activities					
21. I express my political opinion even if others find it offensive					
22. I support my preferred political party even if they make derogatory remarks					

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23. I find reasons to defend the mistakes of my preferred political party					
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