

MEDIA CONSUMPTION AND YOUTH VALUES: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF INDIAN FILM INFLUENCE IN PAKISTAN DISTRICT SWABI

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the social, cultural, and moral impacts of Indian cinema (Bollywood) on youth in District Swabi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. With the rapid expansion of digital media and increased access to foreign entertainment, Indian films have become highly popular among Pakistani youth, raising concerns about their influence on local values and behavior. The research is based on Social Learning Theory and Cultivation Theory to understand how media exposure shapes attitudes and perceptions. A quantitative research design was used, employing a cross-sectional survey of 45 respondents aged 15–30 years. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale and analyzed through descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages. The findings indicate that Indian cinema has a moderate influence on youth, particularly in shaping language, communication styles, fashion awareness, and perceptions of relationships. However, the results also show that most respondents do not strongly adopt foreign cultural practices and maintain their cultural identity and moral or religious values. Although many participants recognize that Indian movies portray unrealistic lifestyles and sometimes promote unethical behaviors, they are generally able to distinguish between entertainment and real-life values. The study further reveals concerns about the broader societal impact of foreign media, with many respondents supporting parental guidance and regulatory measures. Overall, the research concludes that Indian cinema influences surface-level behaviors but does not fundamentally alter the core values and identity of Pakistani youth. The study highlights the importance of media literacy, parental supervision, and the development of local media industries to maintain a balanced cultural environment. Future research should involve larger samples and more advanced statistical techniques for better generalization.

Key words ; Indian cinema, Bollywood, youth, media influence, social impact, cultural values, moral values, Pakistan, District Swabi, Social Learning Theory, Cultivation Theory, media consumption, cultural identity, behavioral change, media effects

Introduction

The Indian film industry, commonly referred to as Bollywood, is widely recognized as one of the

largest film industries in the world in terms of production output. Although Bollywood specifically represents the Hindi-language film

sector, it has become a dominant cultural force not only within India but across South Asia and among global audiences. Cinema, as a form of mass media, serves as a reflection of society and plays a crucial role in shaping social norms, cultural values, and behavioral patterns (Ahmed, 1992).

Over the past several decades, Indian cinema has emerged as a significant component of popular culture in the South Asian region. Its influence extends beyond entertainment, contributing to the construction and representation of cultural identity. Historically, the development of Indian cinema coincided with the anti-colonial struggle, during which films were used as a medium to express and define a distinct national identity (Rao, 2007). With the economic liberalization of India in the 1990s, the industry experienced rapid growth and globalization, enhancing its international reach and accessibility (Rajadhyaksha, 2003).

Bollywood films are characterized by their unique blend of music, dance, drama, and emotional storytelling, which contribute to their widespread appeal. The industry produces a large number of films annually and attracts audiences worldwide, making it a major contributor to global media consumption (Dwyer, 2006; Lovgren, 2004). Technological advancements, including the introduction of sound in cinema with *Alam Ara* in 1931, and later the expansion of color television and video technologies, have significantly increased audience access and engagement (Gokulsing & Dissanayake, 1998).

Throughout its evolution, Indian cinema has reflected changing social, political, and economic dynamics. For instance, films produced during the 1970s were heavily influenced by political unrest, while the 1980s saw an increase in the portrayal of violence and action themes. The accessibility of media technologies such as VCRs further expanded viewership, particularly among middle-class audiences (Rajadhyaksha & Willemsen, 1999).

In the contemporary era, Bollywood has gained international prominence through collaborations with global film industries and the inclusion of English subtitles, making its content accessible to

non-Hindi-speaking audiences (Chilana, 2009). Its influence is particularly notable in neighboring countries such as Pakistan and Bangladesh, where linguistic similarities facilitate understanding and consumption of Hindi films (Kaur & Sinha, 2005).

Given its widespread reach and cultural influence, Indian cinema plays a significant role in shaping the attitudes, lifestyles, and value systems of its viewers. Therefore, it is essential to examine its impact on youth, particularly in societies like Pakistan, where exposure to foreign media may influence social behavior, cultural identity, and moral perspectives. This study aims to quantitatively analyze the social, cultural, and moral impacts of Indian movies on Pakistani youth.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the social impacts of Indian movies on the behavior and interpersonal relationships of Pakistani youth in district swabi .
2. To analyze the cultural influence of Indian movies on language, fashion, and cultural preferences among youth.
3. To investigate the impact of Indian movies on the moral values and ethical perceptions of Pakistani youth in district swabi.

Research questions

1. What are the social impacts of watching Indian movies on the behavior and interpersonal relationships of Pakistani youth in district swabi?
2. How do Indian movies influence the cultural values, language, and lifestyle preferences of Pakistani youth?
3. What impact do Indian movies have on the moral values and ethical perceptions of Pakistani youth in district swabi ?

Problem Statement

The rapid proliferation of digital infrastructure, expanding internet connectivity, and the emergence of ubiquitous online streaming platforms have exponentially enhanced the absolute reach and viewing frequency of Indian

cinema among Pakistani youth. This continuous, often unmediated exposure has triggered deep socio-cultural concerns among parental units, academic educators, religious authorities, and institutional policymakers regarding the long-term integrity of local social norms, native cultural traditions, and baseline moral tenets. While certain scholars argue that foreign media consumption acts as a positive conduit for modernization, psychological cosmopolitanism, and healthy recreation, an alternative body of empirical research suggests that it poses an existential threat to native value infrastructures by instigating identity crises and unchecked cultural dependency. Given these highly polarized perspectives, there exists a critical academic need to collect and systematically analyze localized empirical data. This study directly addresses this empirical gap by evaluating the specific social, cultural, and moral consequences of watching Indian movies within the specific context of youth situated in District Swabi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Literature Review

Media, particularly films, play a significant role in shaping perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors among youth. Indian cinema (Bollywood) has a strong influence in Pakistan due to linguistic and cultural similarities. Studies suggest that Indian movies often portray Muslims and Pakistan in a negative light, associating them with terrorism and hostility, which may influence the religious perceptions of Pakistani youth (Nasir, Shaukat, & Asif, 2022).

Furthermore, exposure to foreign media content has been linked with changes in social and moral values. Research indicates that media content, including films and television, can affect the psychological and social development of youth by promoting imitation of lifestyles, fashion, and social norms (Amin, Juni, & Ali, 2014). Similarly, Qamar et al. (2012) argue that the increasing influence of Indian and Western media contributes to the erosion of traditional cultural and family values in Pakistani society.

The concept of media influence can also be explained through social learning theory, which

suggests that individuals learn behaviors by observing media content. Studies indicate that youth often imitate language, dressing styles, and behaviors shown in films. For instance, Bollywood movies have contributed to the blending of Hindi and Urdu language among Pakistani youth, reflecting cultural diffusion (Hussain, 2024).

In addition, media serves as a form of escapism, especially for young audiences. Thompson (1995) explains that films provide symbolic experiences that allow viewers to temporarily escape from their real-life conditions. This escapism can make foreign cultural elements more appealing and desirable. Similarly, Bollywood films are widely consumed for entertainment, leading to increased admiration for Indian celebrities and lifestyles among Pakistani youth (Sajid, Minhas, & Butt, 2022).

Moreover, previous research highlights that Indian media content influences cultural practices such as dress, festivals, and lifestyle choices. Youth often adopt these cultural indicators, sometimes at the expense of their indigenous values (Khan, Arshad, & Ali, 2020). This growing influence is evident in everyday conversations, where young individuals frequently discuss Indian films, songs, and celebrities. At the same time, some scholars argue that media influence is not entirely negative. Films can also promote modern values, gender awareness, and social change, as seen in the evolving representation of women in Indian cinema (Scrase, 2002). However, the extent and direction of influence depend on the audience's social and cultural context. In conclusion, the literature suggests that Indian movies have a multidimensional impact on Pakistani youth, affecting their social behavior, cultural identity, language, and moral values. While some effects may be positive, such as exposure to new ideas, the dominant concern among researchers remains the potential erosion of local cultural and religious values.

Theoretical Framework

To systematically evaluate and interpret the multi-dimensional empirical realities of media

influence on young populations, this research investigation is structurally anchored within two foundational communication paradigms: Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory and George Gerbner's Cultivation Theory.

Social Learning Theory

Formulated by Albert Bandura (1977), Social Learning Theory posits that human individuals acquire complex cognitive structures, behavioral repertoires, and interpersonal attitudes by directly observing, processing, and subsequently imitating external social models operating within their environment. In contemporary high-density media ecologies, mediated characters serve as highly persuasive, proxy social role models for young audiences. When Bollywood cinematic actors and actresses are framed within highly glamorous, socially privileged, and aesthetically attractive configurations, they turn into highly salient behavioral archetypes for young viewers. Young audiences actively observe these idealized media figures and subsequently replicate their concrete dressing habits, expressive communication mechanisms, specific hairstyles, relationship choices, and macro-lifestyle orientations within their own real-world environments.

Cultivation Theory

Complementing this operational framework, George Gerbner's Cultivation Theory (1986) asserts that long-term, sustained, and cumulative exposure to a relatively uniform stream of media representations works to systematically cultivate, shape, and stabilize overarching viewer conceptions of macro-social reality. Heavily exposed individuals—classified as "heavy viewers"—gradually internalize the specific ideological assumptions, behavioral distributions, and normative value metrics structurally embedded within their preferred media content. Within the context of this thesis, repeated and intensive

exposure to Bollywood cinematic narratives causes youth to gradually perceive the highly stylized values, romantic constructs, consumerist dynamics, and ultra-modern urban lifestyles projected on screen not as artificial dramatic formulations, but as baseline normal, highly objective, and culturally desirable components of standard everyday reality.

Research methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research methodology to examine the social, cultural, and moral impacts of Indian cinema on youth. A cross-sectional descriptive survey design was employed to collect standardized and objective data from respondents, enabling the measurement of behavioral patterns and attitudinal changes. The target population comprised young individuals aged 15–30 years who regularly watch Indian movies, including male and female students from intermediate colleges and universities in District Swabi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Using a simple random sampling technique, a sample of 45 respondents was selected to ensure equal participation probability and reduce sampling bias. Data were collected through a structured, close-ended questionnaire divided into four sections: demographic information, social impacts, cultural influences, and moral values. Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. To ensure validity, the instrument was reviewed by academic experts, while reliability was tested through a pilot study using Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha \geq 0.72$), confirming acceptable internal consistency. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS and MS Excel, applying descriptive statistical tools such as frequencies, percentages, and mean values. Ethical considerations were strictly followed, including voluntary participation, informed consent, and the right of respondents to withdraw at any stage.

Result and discussion

Response Frequencies for Attitudinal and Behavioral Metrics

OPERATIONAL SURVEY ITEM	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
V1: Movie watching influences my daily lifestyle.	6.7%	22.2%	26.7%	22.2%	20.0%
V2: I actively adopt fashion styles seen in Indian movies.	0.0%	31.1%	20.0%	26.7%	22.2%
V3: Indian cinema affects my language accent / way of speaking.	8.9%	33.3%	15.6%	28.9%	13.3%
V4: I spend more time watching movies than interacting with family/friends.	6.7%	17.8%	15.6%	42.2%	17.8%
V5: Indian movies influence my ideas about friendship and relationships.	8.9%	28.9%	26.7%	22.2%	13.3%
V6: Indian cinema promotes cultural values different from our local culture.	8.9%	44.4%	15.6%	24.4%	6.7%
V7: Watching Indian movies directly reduces my interest in local traditions.	15.6%	15.6%	28.9%	31.1%	8.9%
V8: I feel intensely attracted toward Indian culture after watching movies.	4.4%	11.1%	24.4%	35.6%	24.4%
V9: Watching Indian movies systematically weakens our cultural identity.	6.7%	13.3%	35.6%	31.1%	13.3%
V10: Indian movies influence my understanding of right and wrong.	4.4%	28.9%	28.9%	28.9%	8.9%
V11: Indian movies exert a net negative effect on youth behavior.	13.3%	26.7%	33.3%	20.0%	6.7%
V12: Indian cinema actively promotes unethical real-world behaviors.	13.3%	37.8%	26.7%	20.0%	2.2%
V13: Watching Indian movies directly undermines my moral/religious values.	4.4%	17.8%	17.8%	40.0%	17.8%
V14: Indian movies generate unrealistic expectations about real life.	24.4%	35.6%	13.3%	15.6%	11.1%
V15: Indian movies have more negative than positive effects on youth.	20.0%	37.8%	20.0%	17.8%	

V16: Access to Indian movies should be restricted for young viewers.	8.9%	42.2%	26.7%	17.8%	4.4%
OPERATIONAL SURVEY ITEM	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
V17: Indian movies are a safe source of entertainment without serious harm.	2.2%	33.3%	33.3%	24.4%	4.4%
V18: Parents must actively monitor what young people watch on screen.	26.7%	20.0%	37.8%	15.6%	0.0%
V19: Overall, Indian movies influence youth behavior in District Swabi.	13.3%	37.8%	28.9%	17.8%	2.2%

Analytical Interpretation & Discussion

The statistical findings presented in Table 4.6 offer a nuanced view of media influence, indicating that while Indian cinema noticeably affects outward behavioral expressions and situational expectations, it does not fundamentally alter the core cultural identities or religious value structures of young viewers.

Analysis of Social and Behavioral Impacts

The data reveals a clear and measurable media influence on everyday social behaviors, particularly language use and personal communication styles [cite: 235, 251]. Item V3 demonstrates that 42.2% of respondents agree or strongly agree that Indian movies affect their way of speaking or dialect, whereas 42.2% express disagreement. This split indicates a substantial linguistic impact within a key segment of the sample, matching the findings of Khan and Raza (2015), who documented the steady integration of Hindi phrases into the daily vernacular of Pakistani students due to regular exposure to Bollywood content. Similarly, Item V5 shows that 37.8% of participants acknowledge that cinema shapes their perceptions of friendship and personal relationships, outnumbering the 35.5% who disagree. These localized field results provide direct empirical support for Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory. Media characters presented in attractive settings serve as functional behavioral models, leading young viewers to adopt their phrases, dialogue styles, and relational frameworks through observational learning and imitation. However, the data also highlights clear limits to this social influence. Item V4 shows that a significant majority—60.0%

of respondents—disagree or strongly disagree that movie consumption reduces their interaction with family and friends, while only 24.5% report a negative impact on their time management. This is a critical finding: it shows that while young viewers replicate superficial behavioral elements observed on screen, cinema consumption is not replacing or undermining their real-world social networks or traditional primary relationships. Thus, the concern that media consumption causes social isolation or completely breaks down local peer and familial interactions is not supported by the survey data.

Analysis of Cultural Impacts

The cultural metrics present a mixed picture characterized by high cultural awareness alongside low personal adoption. Item V6 shows strong consensus, with 53.3% of respondents recognizing that Indian movies promote a cultural value system distinctly different from their local culture, while only 31.1% disagree. This indicates that the sample possesses a clear understanding of the cultural differences between foreign media content and their native traditions. Yet, when evaluating actual behavioral shifts, Item V2 shows that 48.9% of participants state they do not adopt fashion styles seen in Indian movies, compared to 31.1% who do. Furthermore, Item V8 reveals that 60.0% of respondents do not feel personally attracted to Indian culture after watching these films, with only 15.5% expressing attraction. Most importantly, Item V9 shows that 44.4% of the participants do not believe that watching Indian cinema weakens their core national or cultural identity, whereas only 20.0% believe it does [cite:

. This pattern directly addresses the debate surrounding "cultural invasion". While theorists like Sultana (2020) caution that transnational media globalization can lead to cultural homogenization and weaken local identities, the empirical data from District Swabi suggests that young viewers maintain a resilient sense of local identity. They consume foreign media as an entertainment asset without experiencing a fundamental shift in their underlying cultural self-perception. This finding aligns with Potter's (2013) emphasis on active audience interpretation, showing that local social networks, institutional education, and community environments help insulate and protect core cultural identities from external media influence.

Analysis of Moral and Ethical Impacts

The moral dimension reveals a similar pattern, where high ethical concern coexists with steady personal values. Item V12 shows that 51.1% of respondents believe that Indian cinema promotes unethical real-world behaviors such as violence, disobedience, and inappropriate relationships, while only 22.2% disagree. Additionally, Item V14 demonstrates strong agreement (60.0%) that cinema generates unrealistic expectations regarding life, romance, and material success, consistent with the findings of Ali (2016) and Gerbner's Cultivation Theory, which explains how heavy media exposure can distort expectations of social reality. These results show that youth recognize the potentially negative moral themes present in mainstream entertainment. However, when asked about direct personal impact, the trend changes. Item V13 demonstrates that 57.8% of respondents explicitly disagree or strongly disagree that watching Indian movies directly undermines or alters their own moral or religious values, whereas only 22.2% report a negative personal effect. This confirms that the sample can critically distinguish between mediated entertainment and their personal moral framework. They recognize that certain media content depicts unethical actions, but they do not adopt those behaviors themselves. This capacity for critical separation

limits the immediate psychological impact of media, showing that deep-seated moral frameworks and religious convictions remain stable even in the face of regular exposure to foreign entertainment media.

Macro-Evaluation and Institutional Regulation

At the macro-level, the sample expresses caution regarding the overall impact of foreign media. Item V15 shows that 57.8% of respondents believe that Indian cinema ultimately carries more negative than positive consequences for youth, compared to 22.2% who disagree. Reflecting this concern, Item V16 shows that 51.1% of participants believe that access to Indian movies should be restricted for young viewers, while 22.2% oppose regulatory restriction. Furthermore, Item V18 indicates that 46.7% of respondents support active parental monitoring of youth media consumption. Finally, Item V19 confirms that 51.1% of the sample believes that Indian movies exert a definitive, measurable influence on youth behavior within District Swabi. These macro-level findings indicate that while individuals report personal resilience against media influence, they favor structural safeguards—such as parental monitoring and regulatory oversight—to manage the broader societal impact of foreign media on the community.

Summary and Conclusion This research thesis systematically evaluated the social, cultural, and moral impacts of watching Indian cinema on youth populations using localized data from District Swabi. By integrating Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory and George Gerbner's Cultivation Theory, the study examined how foreign entertainment content interacts with the behaviors and attitudes of contemporary youth. The empirical results indicate that while Indian cinema exercises a noticeable, moderate influence on surface-level behaviors—such as language accent, expression styles, fashion awareness, and immediate relationship expectations—it does not fundamentally reshape or undermine the core cultural identities, traditional practices, or religious value frameworks of young Pakistani viewers. Sociologically, the study demonstrates

that young viewers are not passive consumers who automatically absorb media messages. Instead, they show a strong capacity to critically evaluate media content, allowing them to enjoy foreign cinema as a form of entertainment while retaining their personal moral frameworks and community identities. The data shows that fears of widespread cultural erasure or moral decline are not supported by the evidence. However, the study also highlights significant concerns among youth regarding the projection of unrealistic lifestyles and unethical behaviors on screen, leading to support for parental guidance and institutional regulation. In conclusion, the impact of Indian cinema on youth is moderate and variable, shaped by individual viewing habits, family environments, educational background, and media literacy levels.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the empirical findings and analytical conclusions of this study, the following policy actions are recommended:

Strengthening Active Parental Guidance

Given that 46.7% of respondents support parental oversight, parents should maintain an active role in monitoring and guiding the media consumption habits of adolescents. Rather than relying on simple prohibition, parents should discuss media themes with young viewers to help them process cinematic depictions of relationships, materialism, and violence, reducing the risk of unrealistic expectations.

Implementation of Institutional Media Literacy Programs

Educational institutions, colleges, and universities within District Swabi should introduce formal media literacy workshops and short courses. These programs should focus on building critical thinking skills, enabling young people to analyze media content objectively, deconstruct commercial motives, and separate dramatic fiction from real-world social conditions.

Structural Revitalization of Local Media Industries

To address concerns regarding cultural diffusion and the adoption of foreign traditions, the domestic Pakistani film, television, and digital media industries must produce high-quality, engaging entertainment products. By creating attractive content that directly reflects local histories, native languages, and positive social realities, local media can strengthen cultural identity and reduce dependence on foreign entertainment assets.

Reform of Regulatory Frameworks and Content Classification

The Pakistan Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) and associated film censor boards should enforce clear, age-appropriate rating systems and content warnings for broadcast and digital streaming networks. These regulatory measures should focus on limiting unsupervised access to highly violent or ethically permissive content, ensuring better protection for younger audience segments.

Directions for Future Academic Research

Given the sample limitations of this study (N = 45), future researchers should execute larger-scale, nationally representative surveys utilizing advanced inferential statistics to improve the reliability and generalizability of the findings. Additionally, longitudinal studies and comparative designs should be conducted to evaluate the shifting impacts of diverse media sources—including Hollywood, Turkish dramas, and digital social media platforms—on youth identity development over longer periods.

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