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When Technology Becomes a Policing Agent: Effects of Raids on Restaurants in Leading Crime Shows on the Youth of Pakistan

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Abstract

Objectives: To explore the effects of raids on restaurants shown in crime/investigation shows of Pakistan on the behaviors of youth. **Sample:** Respondents were selected from University of the Punjab (PU) and Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS). **Method:** The methodology used by the study is survey and the questionnaire are of structured pattern and comprised of close ended questions endorsing both Nominal and Likert scales. This study has surveyed among 150 students who were living in hostels in their respective universities. **Theoretical Framework:** Cognitive Dissonance was the theoretical framework for the study which explains about the difference between the beliefs and actions. **Findings:** The results show that the raids on restaurants shown in different crime shows of Pakistan are disseminating information, but that information is not yielded into the behavioral change as expected from the information. **Implication:** These programs are widening the gap between action and thoughts of the youth. The epitome of the study is that unveiling restaurants in crime/investigations shows are creating awareness among the students about food items and their hygiene condition, but the awareness is not yielded into the behavioral change by the students. The study suggests that informing the youth is also necessary, but it is the need of the time to pay more attention towards cleanliness of the restaurants environment than just to inform the youth about not to go on those kinds of restaurants for eating.

Keywords: crime shows, cognitive dissonance, health communication, investigative journalism.

1. Introduction

Investigative Journalism is to probe out the subject beyond the predictions about its surface level. The basic hallmark is that it is not just copywriting and desk work. It is to dig out the hidden facts and secrets, it covers more than one source, and it does not focus on the personal lives (i.e., paparazzi), it is the actual qualification of watchdog role of media (Hunter, 2011). Crime/Investigation programs are part of investigative journalism and have a great viewership because it minimizes the line between entertainment and fact, and instead of direct experiences, many people have agreed that they came to know about crime and the way administration enforces law from media (Prosisie, Johnson, 2004). So, media becomes a policing agent in making the public aware of the laws and the regulations applied upon violating them.

The trend of investigative journalism started from using the police-court column of news as early as 1833 (Health, Gordon, 1981). Investigative Journalism in Pakistan was also practiced since a long time in print media but the real charm was started from 2010 when private television channels introduced crime and investigation shows and live raids were telecasted to probe out the

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illegal practices which were covered by spy camera shoots and exclusive footages. These raids work as the eye opener for the society ranging from medicine to food quality investigation. The programs incorporating those raids in Pakistan include *Sar-e-Aam (ARY News)*, *Jurm Bolta Hai (ARY News)*, *Khoji (Samaa TV)*, *Khufia Operation (Samaa TV)*, *Hathkadi (Jaag TV)*, *Raid (Dawn News)*, *Andher Nagri (92 News HD)* and *Investigation (SBN News)* etc.

Crime/Investigation programs also help administration to know where the illegal activities are practiced and also these programs investigate the crimes on TV in front of its audience. Recently the following programs had exposed many restaurants having low quality of food and poor hygiene conditions at different restaurants in Pakistan. As result, the department of food authority of Punjab's director of Operations, Ayesha Mumtaz, came in action and raided many restaurants and sealed them due to their poor hygienic conditions. It is also reported that one of the famous Fish serving restaurant in Lahore usually store its fish stock in washrooms (Bhatti, 2016). Due to the higher income and the trend of falling prices in South Asia including Pakistan, consumption of meat, fast foods including sugary or fatty foods and the increase of use of western foods are the reasons of opening many restaurants. Most of them don't follow hygiene principles (Murtlock, 2015). After eating one unfit burger from unfit restaurant, one teenager was died within no time (Tribune, 2015). It is also a matter of fact that crime/investigation TV programs are broadcasted in prime-time transmission when mass audience sit in front of their televisions. These programs have significant impact on the audience due to which it has been a hot genre for the purpose of gauging its effects on audience.

Investigative journalism is recognized internationally. It did a remarkable job in many societies. For example, the practices of corruption were very common in Nigeria and the programs, having the genre of investigation, played a crucial role in neutralizing the culture of corruption. The research methodology of the following exploration was occupying survey and focus group method as data collection apparatus. People do believe that investigative journalism is much needed to put a check on the practices of government institutions and people also demand that the journalists must have access to the information so they could expose the bad practices (i.e., corruption) of the institutions. Providing the same, the Nigerian society led toward the sustainable development at one time.

As it is mentioned earlier that these use the investigative way of journalism, and it is very popular in the viewers. As in Canada, several studies have been conducted on the role of the selected kind of programs which indicated that more than ninety percent people did believe that if we talk about the crimes, media is used as the primary source for information (Rosner, 2008). Which means that technology becomes an agent to maintain the balance in an untraditional (unlike CCTV cameras) way.

The effects of these programs have manifolds. Even the Judicial system is affected by these programs. A survey concluded that 79 % of the people believed that juries (of the judiciary) have made their judgments on the bases of portrayal of the crime on television (Robbers, 2008). The people have become addicted to it which makes them appear in primetime slots of televisions which telecast their transmissions nationwide. "If being addicted to these programs is actual crime, the entire country would be in lockup" (Roush, 2008: 31). Gallup conducted a survey in 1981 from one thousand respondents and concluded that ninety-four percent of the respondents considered investigative journalism one of the most important components for helping the administration to put the criminals behind the bar as well as awaking the people about the criminal activities.

Another study found that the police officers believed on the media's coverage of crimes especially about largely organized crimes which involved violence. Twenty officers were interviewed who confessed that the public opinion made by these programs also influenced the police behavior (Dubois, 2002).

If we consider the ethical dilemmas of societies then the selected shows are in debate since so many years. Sometimes it is observed that crime and investigation shows are shattered the ethical dilemmas but due to its role of disseminating awareness among masses, their acceptance level is higher despite having big ethical issues (Ongowo, 2011). This result is concluded by comparing quality and tabloid newspapers of Kenya named as *The Sunday Nation* and *The Weekly Citizen* using the method of content analysis and by doing in depth interviews of Kenyan journalists.

When it comes to expose corruption then it is considerably consensus between the fabrics of a society that violation of ethical considerations might be compromised, and this should not limit the exploration of the corruption scandals. In Tanzania, private owned newspapers have exposed

more illegal (i.e., corruption) practices than the newspapers of the government. But here the thing which need to be noticed is that all the scandals exposed were revolved around ethical violation (Manara, 2011).

The connection between media and health is the same as it is linked with media and development. Media is not supposed to give an injection to the patient. But it is used to give information for the precautionary measures of any disease. And it is the universal truth that “prevention is better than cure” (Knowles, 2016). Media disseminate information which is useful to prevent oneself from diseases. It is explored by conducting research through survey method and it was found that 39 % of the people turn on their TVs for health information and 37 % prefer to go to professional doctors (Schwitzer, 2005).

People do not expose only to the selected kind of programs for health information, rather they also expose themselves to other genres also for the matter to evaluate their health. Like in 1996, a survey was conducted which found that the tendency of the adolescents to watch soap operas, movies etc. was positively associated to their degree of dissatisfaction of their bodies and their wish to be thin. More than five million people in America are affected by eating disorders every year (Mental..., 2005).

In 1992, an investigative story was on-aired on ABC channel about the repacking and redacting of the meat. As a result, the company of the Food Lion Supermarket dropped its assets by 1.9 billion US dollars which was 11 % less than the previous sale of the food products of the company (Scott, 1997).

So, it is evident that the investigative journalism is popular among the people around the world, and it has a profound effect on its viewers as well as it is helpful for administration to understand crimes. The selected type of programs has been under discussion of scholars since a long time ago.

This study will contribute to knowing how the raids on restaurants in crime/investigation shows are affecting people especially how the youth of Pakistan perceive the information disseminated through these programs and how they evaluate that information in their daily life. The basic objectives of the study are to find out the cognitive effect of the selected kind of programs on youth to know that the selected programs are disseminating significant information regarding conditions of food restaurants or not; and to find out the relationship between the cognitive effect and the behavioral change from the information sought from the following programs. It will also help to understand whether the youth are changing their behavior according to the information or not. The youth is selected as sample by the study because it is considered as the backbone of any society because of their potential and will to work. It is necessary to have the mind clear and have a direct and a straight way to the goal. If there are certain confusions in the minds of youth, they would not be able to work to their full potential. And the students studying in the universities are selected as sample frame because they live far from their homes and usually eat food outside.

Raids on restaurants shown in crime/investigation programs are selected because it is part of our commonsense observation that most of the restaurants in Pakistan (especially located near universities) are not up to the mark of quality food. They do not even follow basic hygiene principles. It can also be observed that many people are eating food items on vendors like ice cream and the other traditional food items like *Gol Gappa* (a traditional food of Pakistan which has crispy spheres and funnel cake which is filled with flavored water). It is proved that the air pollution caused by the traffic effect the vendors' products which ultimately effect health negatively (Kongtip, 2006). And the unit of analysis for the study is the students living in hostels who are supposed to visit the restaurants frequently. So, raiding restaurants in television crime/investigation programs are selected to know how they affect the minds of the students and what the students do with the information perpetuated through crime/investigation programs regarding restaurants.

2. Materials and methods

The study found its conceptual roots in Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) model which will help to explore the perception and effect about the information disseminating in the selected programs, and attitude attribute of the model will help to understand the perception before and after exposure to the subject and practices model will further lead the study to know the behavioral effect of the information and perception. Underpinning ‘Cognitive Dissonance’ and ‘Unhealthy food restaurants.

The study has also utilized the theory Cognitive Dissonance as conceptual foundation. Cognitive dissonance refers to a situation involving conflicting attitudes, beliefs or behaviors. This will help to understand whether the information perpetuating through these programs yield into behavioral change, or it is becoming an agent of widening the gap between thoughts and actions.

As it is mentioned earlier that for purpose of gauging the effects of raids on restaurants shown in television crime/ investigation program, youth of Pakistan is selected as sample. Furthermore, a student living in a hostel is selected as unit of analysis from the student's sample frame of the population youth. 150 of the students living in University of the Punjab (No. 1 in ranking in public sector universities of Lahore) and Lahore University of Management Sciences which claimed to be at top in the private sector universities of Lahore ([Topuniversities..., 2015](#)). Survey method is used, and a questionnaire is developed comprising 17 questions. The questionnaire contains Nominal and Likert level of scales.

3. Discussion

Media can play a significant role in educating masses regarding a crime ([Piza et al., 2019](#)). This can be seen in the context of social media ([Xu et al., 2020](#)). Even the main stream media can play a significant role to help the law and enforcement agencies in educating the masses and publishing a criminal ([Mirkhalili, 2019](#)). Crime/Investigation shows are educating people in the limelight of entertainment. These programs also contain the content which is not healthy if it is exposed prematurely. These programs are educating people in respect to their health issues. In the light of Cognitive Dissonance, the study aimed to focus on the difference between the cognitive beliefs and behavioral actions. And the results show that the youth who are exposing themselves to the programs are not being able to transfer the salience of the information to their behavioral change. And as a result, the information yielded from the selected programs are becoming the cause of widening the gap between the beliefs and actions of the students regarding their eating habits on restaurants. The one gap might also influence another. Like if someone believes that eating bad quality food will not affect his or her health so much, that belief might lead that individual to believe that smoking might also results the same. This can be evidenced as the true picture of having cognitive dissonance ([Harmon-Jones, 2019](#)).

The first research object aimed to know the perception of youth about the information disseminated in crime/investigation programs and the second research objective was to explore the behavioral effect. And by the additional support of KAP model, it was helpful to gauge what is the condition of their knowing about the facts being disseminated and the attitude being developed from that information and what is the condition of their behavior ultimately.

From the results, it can be said that if the youth is exposing to the selected programs, they will be educated about crime trends. Consequently, the more they will see the more they will be educated about the illegal practices on restaurants and health issues. This qualifies and endorses one of the important function of media which is education ([Christakis et al., 2019](#)).

More specifically, most of the students believe that crime/investigation shows are working for the betterment of the society by exposing the crime trends happening in the Pakistani society. One of them is the bad practices on restaurants including the facts about the food quality served on the restaurants. The students pay significant attention towards these programs. And it is also common belief that the bakery and other food items which used as raw material in baking for the final food items are not up to the mark to be used. And the factories producing these kinds of products unveiled by these programs are just damaging the health of the students. They do believe that the vendors and the road shops having food items are just the factories of diseases.

The results also showed that the youth is not being able to yield that information into their behavioral change and it endorsed the results of a previous study ([O'Reilly, 2018](#)). And as a result, that information is transformed into confusion among the minds of the students. And the more they will be exposed to that type of programs, the more they will be the victim of inconsistencies between their thoughts and actions.

Most of the students often go outside the campus or home specially the students living in hostels for eating the food do not check the food quality before eating it. Although these programs are showing the poor health and hygiene conditions on restaurants. The students are becoming conscious about the shown facts, but they not only go to the restaurants but also eat that kind of food which is exposed in those programs without checking the condition of them. Although more than half of the students tried to quit eating from these type of diseases factories but most of the

students go at least once in a week. And the fact remains in its original shape while ordering the food items online as well. So, the study has observed that it is evident that the youth exposing to the programs under discussion are cultivating cognitive confusion (Alshboul, 2017; Cox, 2021; Mandela, 2019; Uchôa, 2019).

However, some of the students tried to escape themselves from the facts shown in the selected episodes of the programs by changing the channels and at the same time the most of them also in support of the argument that those who are involved in such kind of practices must be raided and exposed. And if it happens continuously, the youth will become more confused while yielding the information in behavioral affect.

4. Results

Table 1. The youth is being educated from the crime/investigation shows.

Questions	Yes	No	Sometimes	Never
Do you watch crime shows like Sar-e-Aam etc?	34 %	14 %	46 %	6 %
Do you think that these types of programs are educating people about crimes?	54 %	8 %	36 %	2 %
Do you also pay attention to crime shows regarding information about restaurants?	53 %	13 %	28 %	6 %

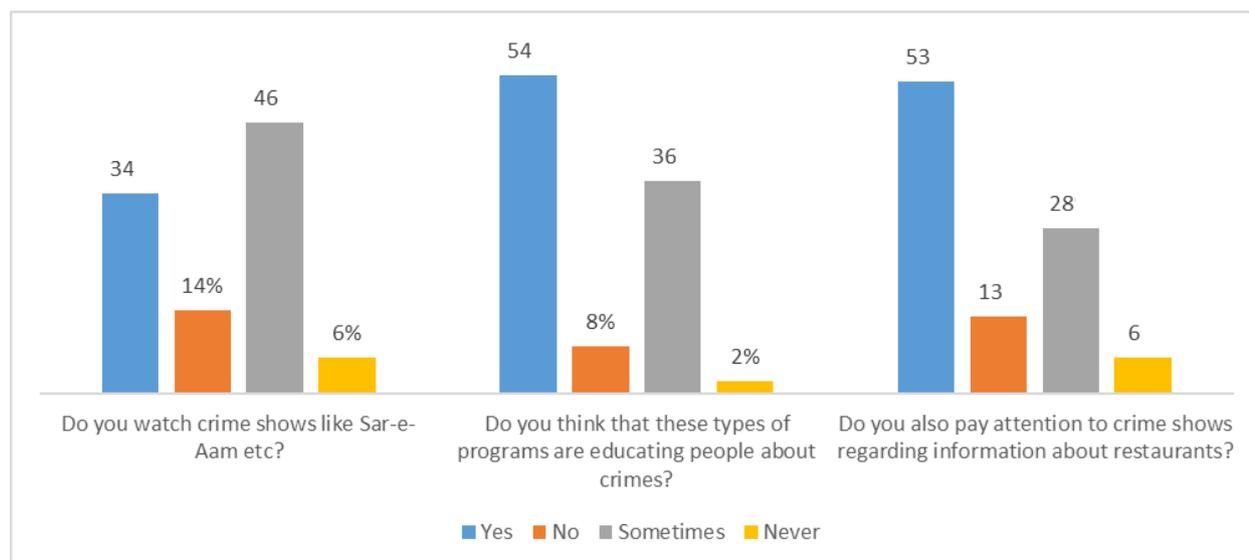


Fig. 1. The youth is being educated from the crime/investigation shows

The study found that 34 % of the youth admitted that they have exposed themselves to the crime shows and 46 % said sometimes they like to watch them. So collectively 80 % of the youth watched. And 14 % said they did not watch and 6 % said they never watched and hence 20 % said they somehow do not like to watch the selected programs. Among the 80 % and also the other 20 % who didn't want to expose themselves to the selected programs, 80 % of the youth believe that these programs are educating about crimes and 10 refused to think in the same manner. 81 % also pay their attention to information regarding restaurants sometimes or all the time which means that the raids on restaurants also watched with interest.

Table 2. Unhealthy food restaurants and the role of crime/investigation programs

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Most restaurants in Pakistan don't follow hygiene principles.	55 %	32 %	11 %	2 %	0 %

The products made by the factories used in food items are below the average quality to be used (i.e. sick oil).	22 %	48 %	22 %	8 %	0 %
The People are becoming educated about these unhealthy products due to the crime shows.	2 %	36 %	2 %	6 %	12 %

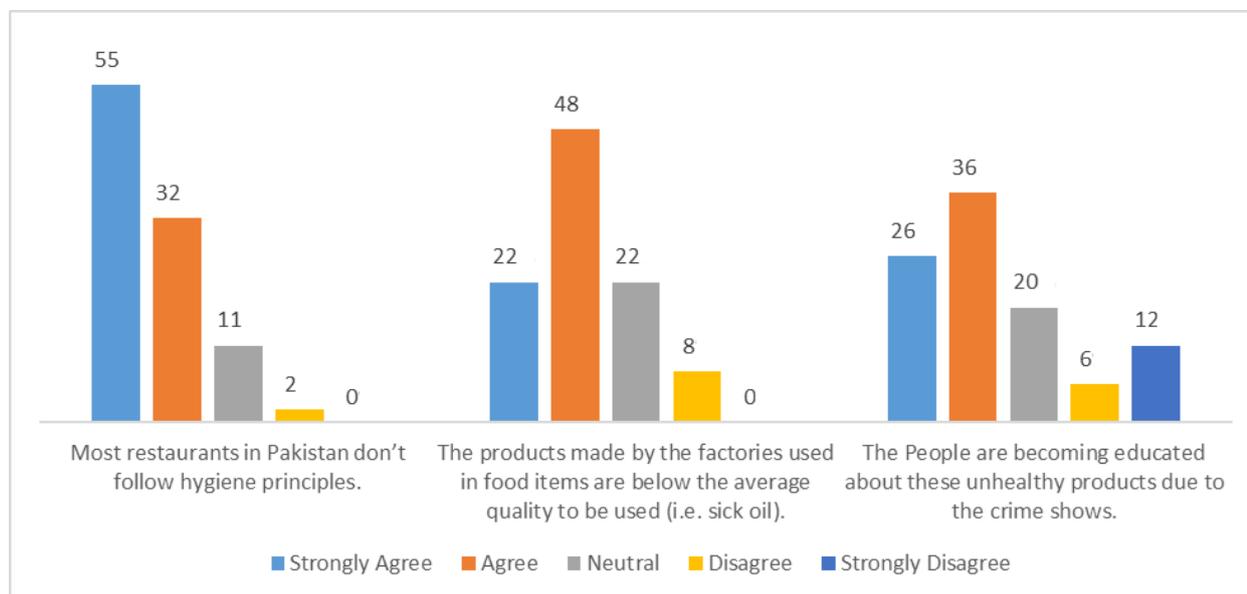


Fig. 2. Unhealthy food restaurants and the role of crime/investigation programs

The facts about the restaurants are not much in favor of health and hygiene principles. Because it is found that 55 % of the youth strongly believed that most restaurants didn't follow health and hygiene principles in Pakistan and 32 % also did agree with the same perceived fact. While 11 percent remain silent on the question and the percentage of not believing this information as a fact was 2 %. Overall, 87 % did believe that it was a fact that most restaurants were not following hygiene principles in Pakistan. 70 percent of the youth also did believe that the material made by the factories which was used to bake the items like oil are not up to the mark to be used to bake food items. Whereas only 8 % didn't agree to this. 62 % agreed that the crime/investigation shows disseminated information regarding the bad practices in factories and due to this information, the people have been educated while 18 % still thought that something more to be done in the selected programs.

Table 3. Eating habits of the students and poor food quality

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students often go outside to eat food especially the students living in hostels.	54 %	37 %	8 %	0 %	0 %
Students become conscious about eating food on restaurants after watching crime shows.	21 %	42 %	17 %	13 %	5 %
It is the common practice by students not to check the food quality and hygiene principles before eating from vendors or restaurants outside the campus.	32 %	45 %	12 %	6 %	4 %

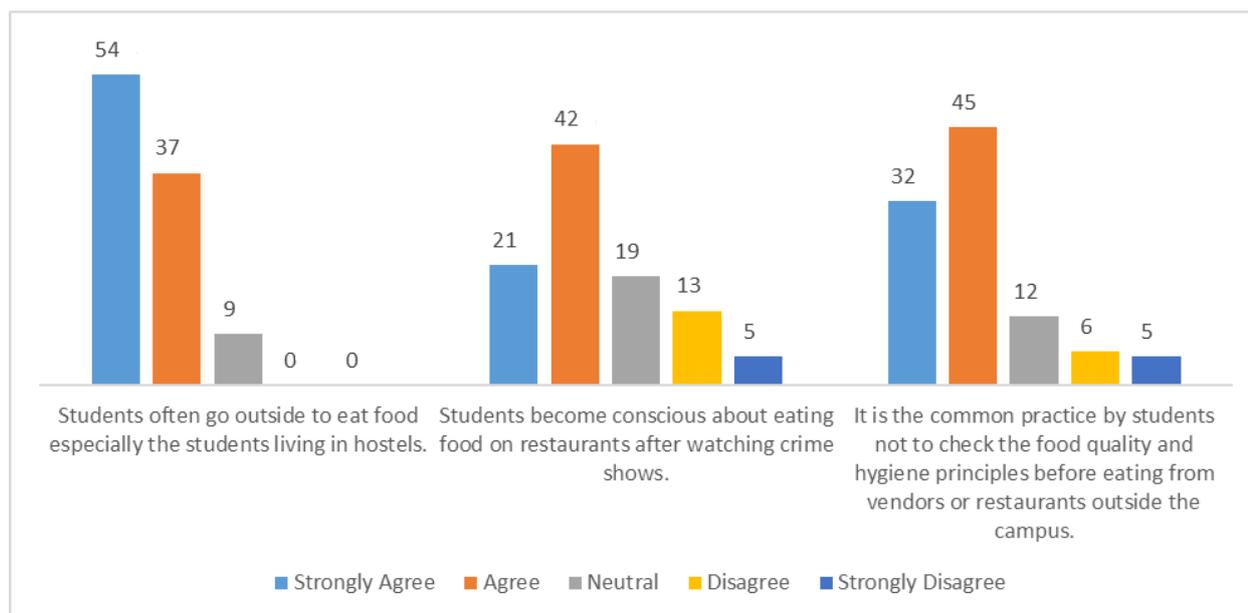


Fig. 3. Eating habits of the students and poor food quality

As discussed earlier, the students often go outside for eating. It is found that 91 percent of the students often went to the restaurants to eat food and majority of the 91 % were living in hostels. Interestingly, not a single student living in hostel disagreed to that. Now the more interesting fact is that 63 % believed that students became conscious about the food quality served on the canteens, on the restaurants or on the vendors and only 18 % thought adversely. And the fact became darker when it is observed by the study that 77 % of the students didn't check the same food quality, they were becoming conscious about. So, there is a clear distinction between the perception and the behavior.

Table 4. Addressing 3rd person effect variable, what the individuals say about themselves

Questions	Yes	No	Sometimes	Never
Do you think every Student go to restaurants to eat food at least once in a week?	54 %	16 %	23 %	17 %
Do you feel that whenever you will go outside for eating something, you might become victim of bad food quality?	33 %	20 %	42 %	4 %
Do you check the food quality before eating it?	33 %	30 %	32 %	5 %
Do you ever try to quit going to the restaurants due to the unhealthy practices?	36 %	25 %	33 %	5 %
Do you take into account the facts show in the selected programs before ordering food online (i.e. on phone)?	21 %	65 %	7 %	7 %

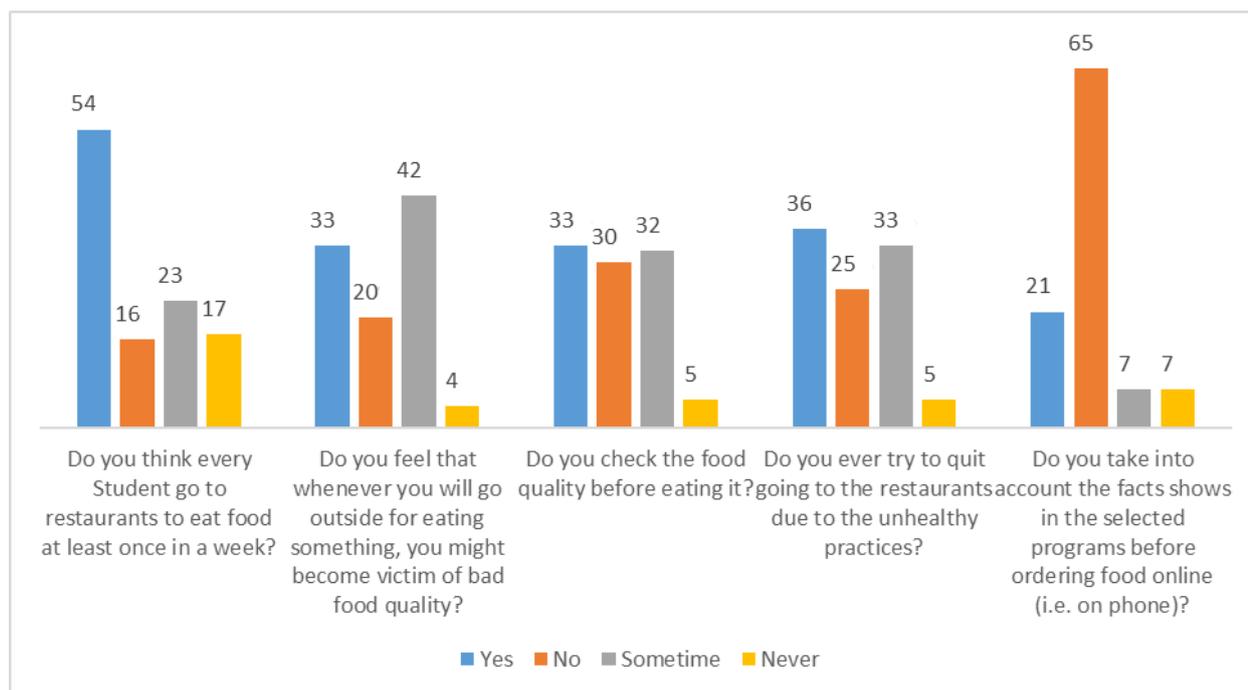


Fig. 4. Addressing 3rd person effect variable, what the individuals say about themselves

While gauging the difference between the 3rd person effect which is a believe that the media is affecting others but not ‘me’, it is found that 70 % of the students went outside the campus for eating the food on restaurants at least once in a week. But some or more of them could went multiple times in a week. Even then 70 % went once in a week, 75 % out of 100 believed that they may have become the victim of bad food quality every time they went for eating outside. The 55 % individuals who participate in the study checked the food quality before eating but they didn’t think most of the students did the same. 69 % tried to quit going outside to eat but 31 % did not even try. As a matter of fact, 55 % checked the food quality before eating, 65 % of the total did not bother it while ordering online. It can also mean that they did not want them to become the victim of bandwagon, or they didn’t want to leave negative impression about their personality. Anyhow, majority of the people wanted to quit going for eating something outside and they became more conscious about their eating habits.

Table 5. Escaping from viewing but agreed to continue unveiling

Questions	Yes	No	Sometimes	Never
Do you change your channel while crime shows unveiling restaurants?	20 %	33 %	42 %	4 %
Do you think that crime shows should continue unveiling bad practices of restaurants by raiding them?	61 %	10 %	22 %	12 %

It is also found that 20 % of the total students change their channels while the selected programs unveiling restaurants by raiding those which meant that they tried to seek escape from the information disseminating through those programs and 42 % of the students sometimes changed their channels. So, overall 62 % of the students changed their channels often during the restaurants being raided. But 66 percent strongly wanted that crime/investigation shows should continue raiding the restaurants and 22 % believed that these programs are helpful in disseminating significance information and due to the fact that they are educating people, so it is a positive activity if they continue raiding restaurants.

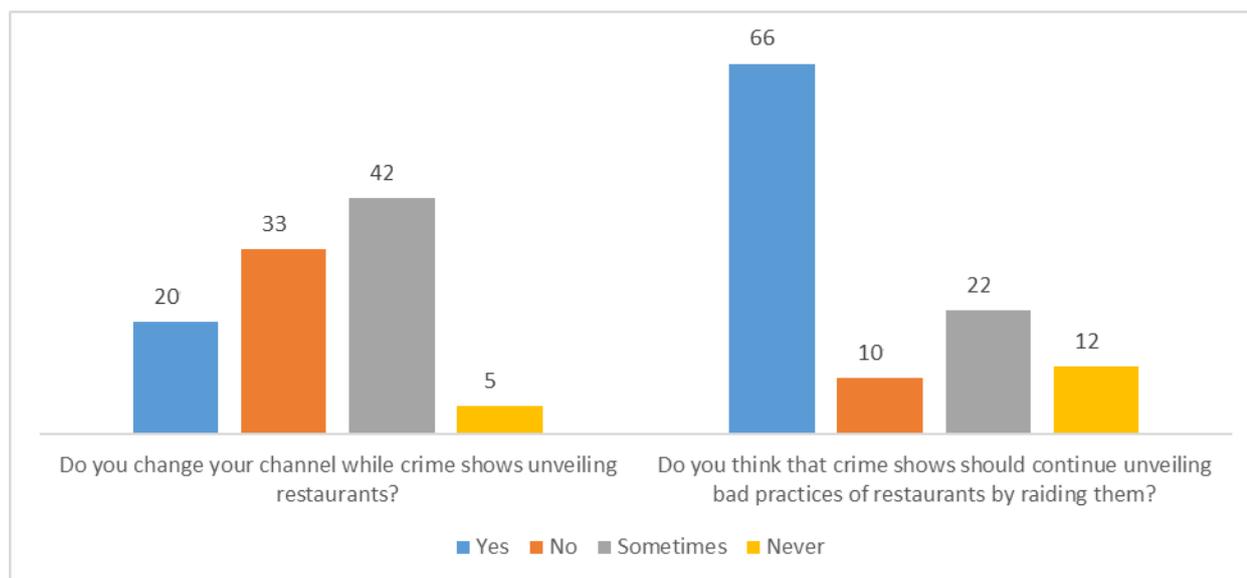


Fig. 5. Escaping from viewing but agreed to continue unveiling

5. Conclusion

The epitome of the study is that unveiling restaurants in crime/investigations shows are creating awareness among the students about food items and their hygiene condition, but the awareness is not yielded into the behavioral change by the students. This study focused on the crime and investigation programs and proposing that when the students read or listen the news about Ayesha Mumtaz's stories of investigating restaurants, the cognitive dissonance effect might double its impact. The study suggests that informing the youth is also necessary, but it is the need of the time to pay more attention towards cleanliness of the restaurants environment than just to inform the youth about not to go on those kinds of restaurants for eating.

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