

Emerging Trends of Westernization: A case study of Pakistan

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Abstract:

The study is conducted to examine the “Emerging influence of western culture among Pakistani Youth”. Western culture is being inspired and adopted by most of the people of the elite class of Pakistan, since the middle and the lower classes try to follow the upper or the elite class. This research is conducted to get information and evidence regarding this increasing influence. The researcher conducts a survey of random sampling technique to finalize his research. Ten close-ended questions are asked from 15-20 youngsters in National Defence University, Islamabad, to know about their perceptions about westernization or modernization.

Key words:

Influence, Culture, Western practices, Modernization, perceptions, societal changes

Introduction:

Globalization is an era marked by an increase in the expansion of cultures, technology, media and practices. It is the shrinking of time and space which means that the world is now just a click away from our approach. The product of this globalization is an increase in interconnectedness among peoples, cultures, traditions, values and practices¹. One of the major results of globalization is westernization. The process of giving birth to new values and practices around the globe is commonly termed as **Westernization**. These new values and traditions which are different from our national values are termed as **western values** and the adaptation of such traditions and trends by majority is termed as westernization. Westernization has changed the societal setups of the seven continents of the world so drastically that it has been intruded into every aspect of the society. Not a single phase of life is left unaffected by the westernization. Trying to being westernize is usually associated with being modernize. The young generation of Pakistan is getting influenced by this new trend.² The attentions and priorities of the young generation of Pakistan is being substantially changed. They are moving away from their religious and cultural values. Furthermore, our elite class is now following western norms and values and are being westernized which is encouraging the lower and middle classes as well. This drastic change was seen in 1990s onwards. The basic reasons of this transformation were:

I) Globalization

II) British colonialism of India

The ashes of the British colonialism are still found in the mentality of most of the people that live here in the subcontinent. Their main goal was to rule the Indian Subcontinent, but they left behind inferiority complex among majority. People still admire and copy their culture, values, knowledge, trends and language. Colonialism not only marked the spread of Christianity but also their culture and practices. This has been further intensified by post-cold war era which further marked the era of hyper-globalization.

³The research is very **significant** in a way that a very less research has been done on the impacts of westernization in context of the perceptions of the young generation living here in Pakistan about the emerging trends of westernization like what they think about this innovation? Whether they deny this fact or embrace it? There has been a kind of debate on the emerging

¹ Sidra Noreen, Dr. Izhar Ahmad Khan, Dr. Farkhanada Anjum, “Changing Cultural Patterns with Reference to Modernity: Facts from Public Sector Universities in Punjab, Pakistan”, *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, March 01, 2021, Available at: <https://pssr.org.pk/issues/v5/1/changing-cultural-patterns-with-reference-to-modernity-facts-from-public-sector-universities-in-punjab-pakistan.pdf>, Accessible date: January 8,2022.

² Abdul Majid Khan Rana, Muhammad Hussain Chishti, “*HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY; AN EFFECT OF CULTURAL CHANGE ON STUDENT’S PERFORMANCE AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL IN PAKISTAN*”, (Pakistan: Journal of Pakistan Vision, 2019), 2-4

³ Tanveer Hussain, Ashraf Iqbal, Muhammad Asif Yaseen, “Influence of westernized culture on women via television drama and films: a survey of Lahore district”, *Global Regional Review*, 2020, available at: <https://www.grjournal.com/jadmin/Author/31rvIolA2LALJouq9hkR/Wtb5UzFDKo.pdf>, accessible date: January 8, 2022.

influence of westernization and the application of modernity through globalization, but very rare research has been done in order to know about the perceptions and views of the people themselves.

The *purpose* of the study is to explore the perceptions of the young generation living in Pakistan regarding westernization. In this research, the researcher will make an attempt to analyze that how and in what particular aspects is western culture, norms and practices affecting the mindsets of people? ⁴The researcher will try to avoid his own biasness and opinions and will only focus on the views and thoughts of the youth living here. Lastly, in order to have a deeper understanding, the main focus of the research would be on particular trends such as food, attire, language and media.

One of the most vital and essential parts of a research is its *literature review*. The literature review provides a researcher with a chance to get some kind of literature about his respective topic by overviewing the already available literature. The already done research on your topic gives you an idea regarding which aspect is more important than other and which one should be discarded. The main goal or aim of this research is to find out the views and perceptions of Pakistani Youth regarding the emerging influence of western norms and practices by conducting a random sampling technique. Especially, the increasing trends of western practices in terms of food, attire, language and media. For that, the researcher overviewed many articles, journals and few books in order to collect data for further analysis.⁵

Methodology:

The *ontological position* of the research is subjectivity. It is subjective because the concept of westernization varies from person to person and from country to country. The researcher has adopted this ontological position because the phenomenon of ‘westernization’ is ever evolving and keeps on changing from time to time. With the enhancement in technology, media and knowledge, the influence of westernization has been increased. Before that people did not admire and follow western values that much especially in the Eastern societies. But now since the global culture is western culture, people are now more towards practicing western norms and being modernize, we can predict that the process of westernization is not constant and is not objective in nature.

The *epistemological position* of the research is critical, which means that the research is both positivist and interpretivist in nature. The researcher will try to explain the influence of western culture and its values by giving some kind of evidence about particular trends that the researcher has chosen for his research i.e., food, attire, language, and media. Moreover, the research is descriptive in which primary as well as secondary knowledge has been inculcated.

⁴ Sultana, Munazza, Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, "Perceptions of Pakistani Society About Western Enlightenment: An Analysis in the Light of Islamic Teachings." *Al-Basirah* 4, no. 1, 2015, available at: [https://numl.edu.pk/journals/subjects/156102667015-AL-BASEERA%207%20\(Vol.4%20-%20Issue.%201\)%20JUN-2015.pdf](https://numl.edu.pk/journals/subjects/156102667015-AL-BASEERA%207%20(Vol.4%20-%20Issue.%201)%20JUN-2015.pdf), accessible date: January 8, 2022.

⁵ Tanveer Hussain, Ashraf Iqbal, Muhammad Asif Yaseen, "Influence of Westernized Culture on Women Via Television Drama and Films: A Survey of Lahore District", *Global Regional Review*, 2020, available at: <https://www.grrjournal.com/jadmin/Author/31rvIolA2LALJouq9hkR/Wtb5UzFDKo.pdf>, accessible date: January 8, 2022.

Primary data was taken from surveys while secondary data was taken from various books, articles and journals. In this way, the researcher has used a mixed approach of methodology.

The researcher has adopted an *inductive reasoning* to explain the problem statement of the research. It is because a survey technique was used to collect data about the topic, and the research will go from specification to generalization. The researcher has used a random sampling technique in order to collect data and choose respondents. The population was randomly selected from within “National Defence University”, Islamabad. Sample size was 15-20 students that were considered as the sample for the whole population. Close-ended questionnaire was the tool for collection of data. In the end, the evaluation of the results was done by using ‘percentage method’.⁶

Conceptual Framework:

The researcher has adopted a conceptual framework for his research. Conceptual framework talks about the explanation of a particular phenomenon or concept which has no fixed meaning or rationality. ‘*Concept*’ basically varies from person to person and its terminologies vary from country to country and from region to region. So, the researchers try to explain such concepts using certain evidence. Just in a similar way, the main phenomenon around which this research revolves is also a concept. Westernization is an ambiguous term which has no fixed meaning.

Xenocentrism:

Xenocentrism is a term of sociology which is associated with the psychology of individuals considering other cultures and traditions as more superior and better than theirs, hence giving more preference to other traditions rather than their own⁷. The concept of xenocentrism is opposite to that of nationalism in which one tends to promote his own national values than others⁸. With the advancement in technology and globalization, it became easier for people to get an exposure of different cultures, traditions, values, and practices of different regions and countries around the world. People now consider the western norms, values and practices as the global norms, values and practices. They admire their values and get obsessed in a way to copy them. In all such process of admiring and copying western cultures, they forget their own national, ethnic and cultural values. It is also believed that the impressions of xenocentrism are distressing, demoralizing and devastating. Such similar trends are being followed among Pakistani youth as well.

Xenocentrism is all about cultural priorities. *Culture*, which is the central unit of any country, the representation of a country, a natural asset.⁹ The connection between culture and society is

⁶ Tanveer Hussain, Ashraf Iqbal, Muhammad Asif Yaseen, “Influence of Westernized Culture on Women Via Television Drama and Films: A Survey of Lahore District”, *Global Regional Review*, 2020, available at: <https://www.grrjournal.com/jadmin/Author/31rvIoIA2LALJouq9hkR/Wtb5UzFDKo.pdf>, accessible date: January 8, 2022

⁷ Scholarly Write-ups. 2022. Understanding Xenocentrism with Examples. [online] Available at: <https://www.scholarlywriteups.com/xenocentrism>, Accessed: January 8, 2022.

⁸ O A. 2022. Reading: Ethnocentrism and Xenocentricism | Sociology. Courses.lumenlearning.com. <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/alamo-sociology/chapter/ethnocentrism-and-xenocentricism>, Accessed date: January 8, 2022.

⁹ Sidra Noreen, Dr. Izhar Ahmad Khan, Dr. Farkhanada Anjum, Ejaz Ashraf, “Modernity and Changing Cultural Patterns in Pakistan”, *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews*, May 13, 2021, available at:

objective and one cannot survive without other. It is the culture that helps us learn customs and behaviors because it gives us the sense to differentiate what is right and what is wrong. Culture covers every single aspect of everyday life. It goes from education to job, from family to marriage, from food to dressing, from language to national values.¹⁰ Hence, one cannot deny the significance of the existence of culture in any society of individuals. Moreover, the culture has the ability to predict the success or failure of any nation. With the increase in modernity, we have seen a considerable change in the cultural values. Such change can also be seen in Pakistan as well. The young generation of Pakistan is shifting its ideals from eastern to western world. They believe that if they follow the western norms and values, they would be termed as the modern youth. They find it their humiliation and feel hesitant in following their own Pakistani cultural values. Gone are the days, when wearing traditional clothes and speaking national language was thought as something of pride. People of the twentieth century are more towards getting modernize and follow foreign cultural patterns and stuff. They got inspiration from foreign fashions and even try to copy them, forgetting the harm that they give to their national values. Lastly, xenocentrism has also caused class differences in Pakistan. This is because our power elite is following their culture and it is evident that the lower and the middle classes try to copy the upper or elite class. This creates societal and class gaps in the society leading towards devastation and chaos in the end.

The researcher has selected four major trends that are facing western influence in order to have a deeper understanding of the concept:

1. Language:

It can be clearly seen in our youth that they are facing an immense confusion regarding their language. They face this dilemma because want to be modernized and Pakistani at a time. We have seen many people trying to copy the language and accent of foreign language, moving away from their national language.¹¹ One cannot deny the fact that English is an international language, but at the same time, we owe some loyalty to the land we live in. Pakistan is our land and we, being Pakistani, are supposed to promote its national values be it on any micro or macro level. Unfortunately, the rise in influence of media and technology has inculcated this mentality in our youth that Urdu is an inferior language to English. We, Pakistanis, admire and copy those who are more fluent in speaking English. We cannot measure the level of harm that we are giving to our national values, traditions, customs, and cultures. The youth need to understand this fact that they can prosper and excel even if they speak and conversate with one another in Urdu, using English only where required. Pakistan will only be able to prosper in the world if its own people learn this fact that they are the ones who are supposed to safeguard this motherland and its culture, maintaining a balance between this choice of language.

2. Attire:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351580506_MODERNITY_AND_CHANGING_CULTURAL_PATTERNS_IN_PAKISTAN, Vol 9, No 3, 2021, 344-349, accessible date: January 8, 2022.

¹⁰ Sidra Noreen, Dr. Izhar Ahmad Khan, Dr. Farkhanada Anjum, “Changing Cultural Patterns with Reference to Modernity: Facts from Public Sector Universities in Punjab, Pakistan”, *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, March 01, 2021, Available at: <https://pssr.org.pk/issues/v5/1/changing-cultural-patterns-with-reference-to-modernity-facts-from-public-sector-universities-in-punjab-pakistan.pdf>, Accessible date: January 8, 2022.

¹¹ Barira Mehmood, “Western culture sway on Pakistan”, *The Nation*, November 16, 2021, available at: <https://nation.com.pk/06-Dec-2015/western-culture-sway-on-pakistan>, accessed date: 8. January 2022.

Attire sense is also being changed among Pakistani youth which can be illustrated in their fashion sense. One cannot deny the fact that foreign fashion is greatly adopted by the youth. Their priorities and inclination are more towards western practices and dressing codes. Shalwar kameez is no more seen as the dressing code which is adopted by the youth of this era. Wearing jeans and t-shirts are one of the most admired clothes when it comes to the youth of Pakistan. Moreover, since our elite class is inclined to adopt western clothes and dressing.¹² The middle and the lower classes follow the elite class and so is the change in their dressing sense as well. This is affecting the national identity of the country, providing unmeasurable harm to the national culture. The country is losing its national identity among the nations of the world in the process of copying them and adopting their cultures.

3. Food:

We have seen that there is an increasing number of franchises that are being opened throughout Pakistan and their fast food are youth's favorite food to eat. People now prefer dining out instead of dining in because this trend of increased westernization has made people rely more on ordering food online than cooking it at home. Youth's eating habits and also their preferences terms of eating are being changed. The first branch of McDonald's was opened in Pakistan in 1998. But now we can see that there is an immense increase in their outlets throughout the country (almost 71 outlets). It is because their demand is getting high day by day. In the initial phases of the establishment of such restaurants, they were usually meant for the elite class, not for everyone. But now most of the people are managing their expenditures in such a way that they can now order easily from such restaurants. This could be seen easily when you pay a visit to any nearby restaurant or a fast-food franchise.

4. Media:

One of the influences of western culture is in the form of their media. People living here in Pakistan are getting so inspiration Hollywood movies, dramas and series. Netflix tsunami is getting over every individual regardless of his age or gender. If this is not westernization, then what it is? Making idols from their industry, following their fashion sense and spending more and more time on social media is all what we call western influence.

Research Design:

The researcher has applied an empirical study and for the purpose of data collection, he has used a *quantitative method*. In a quantitative research, close-ended questions were asked with fixed choices to the audiences. Small data was taken, and a descriptive detail was made about the concerned topic. Researcher has conducted a survey in order to get information about the emerging influence of the western culture in our society, especially among the youth of Pakistan.

The research design was *descriptive* as well as *exploratory*. The phenomenon of westernization was described, analyzed and explored by the researcher.

¹²Global Media and Social Sciences Research Journal, "Effects of Pakistani Modern Drama on Youth: A Survey of Lahore District", *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2021, available at: <http://cppg.fccollege.edu.pk/changing-trends-in-the-lifestyle-of-pakistani-urban-youth-glimpses-from-lahore/>, accessible date: January 9, 2022.

Population:

Randomly selected people from within National Defence University, Islamabad ranging from 17-25 years of age.

Sampling Technique:

Random sampling technique within the premises of the university was used as the university has majority teenagers and youngsters of undergraduate level.

Sample Size:

15-20 students were supposed as the total population of the survey.

Survey Tool:

Close-ended questions were asked in the survey.

Statistical Tool:

‘Percentage method’ was used for results evaluation.¹³

Result representation of the survey:

Option 1 in the graph:

Strongly Agree

Option 2 in the graph:

Agree

Option 3 in the graph:

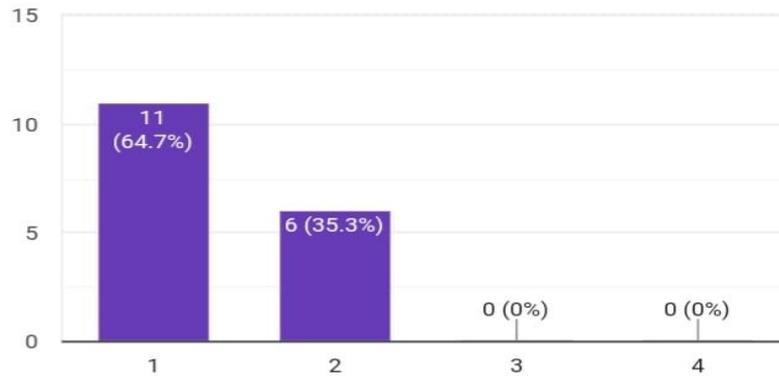
Strongly Disagree

Option 4 in the graph:

Disagree

1. Do you think that westernization is taking place of our culture?

¹³ Tanveer Hussain, Ashraf Iqbal, Muhammad Asif Yaseen, “Influence of Westernized Culture on Women Via Television Drama and Films: A Survey of Lahore District”, *Global Regional Review*, 2020, available at: <https://www.grjournal.com/jadmin/Author/31rvIolA2LALJouq9hkR/Wtb5UzFDKo.pdf>, accessible date: January 9, 2022.



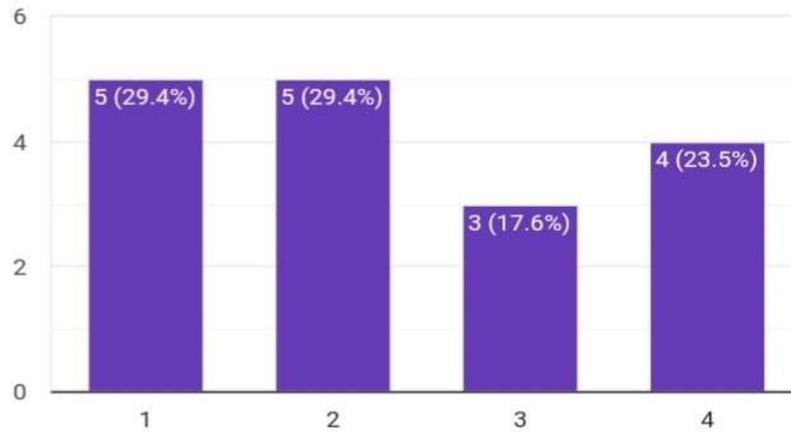
The result of the first question shows that majority (64.7%) from the respondents is accepting the fact that western culture is being adopted and accepted in Pakistan.

2. Do you prefer wearing western clothes and conversate in English over wearing eastern clothes and speaking Urdu respectively?



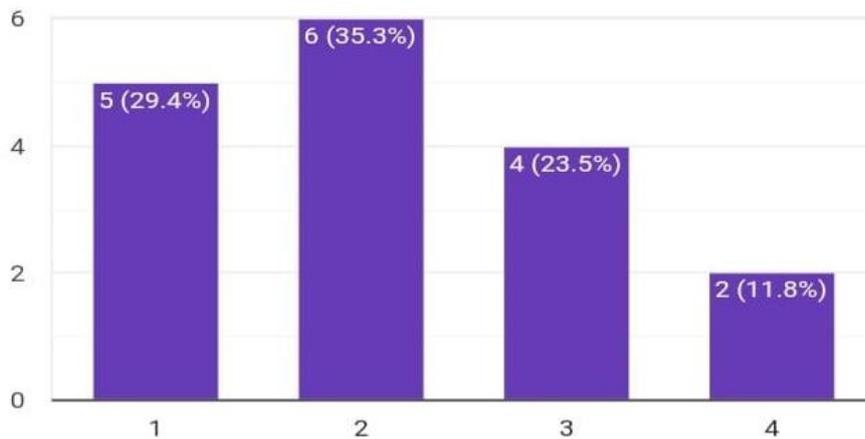
The results show that the respondents are not totally accepting the change in their preferences. 29.4% deny and at the same time 29.4 accept this fact.

3. Do you feel more confident when you conversate in English with your fellows?



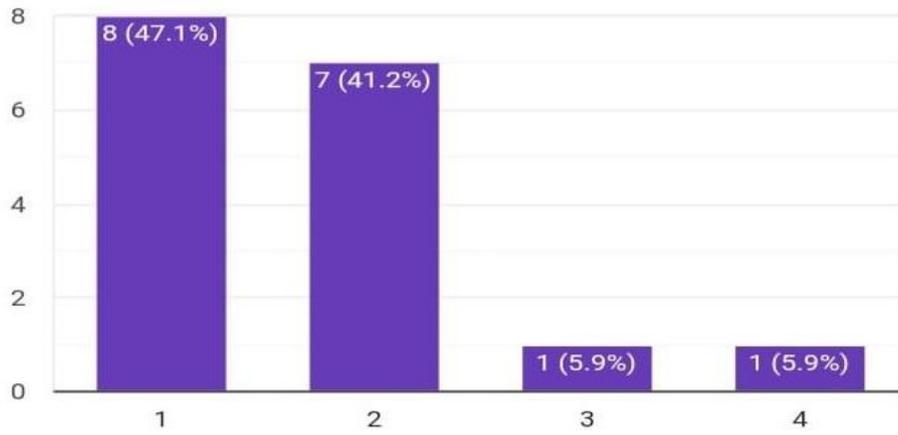
The results show that the youth feel more confident when they speak in English. 29.4% strongly agree and at the same time, 29.4% agree.

4. If you're given a choice between fast food from KFC or McDonalds and home cooked food, you would prefer fast food?



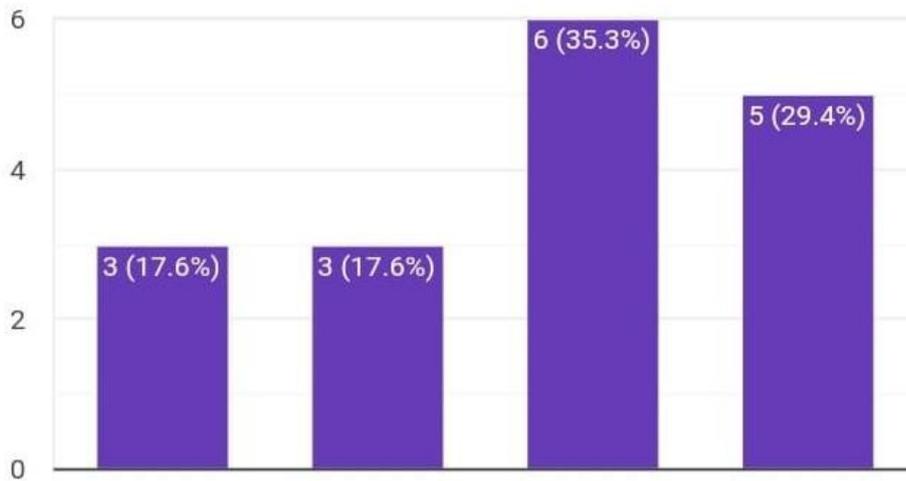
The result of this question shows that the respondents would prefer fast food over home cooked food (a majority of 35.3%).

5. Has Netflix taken place of local tv channels?



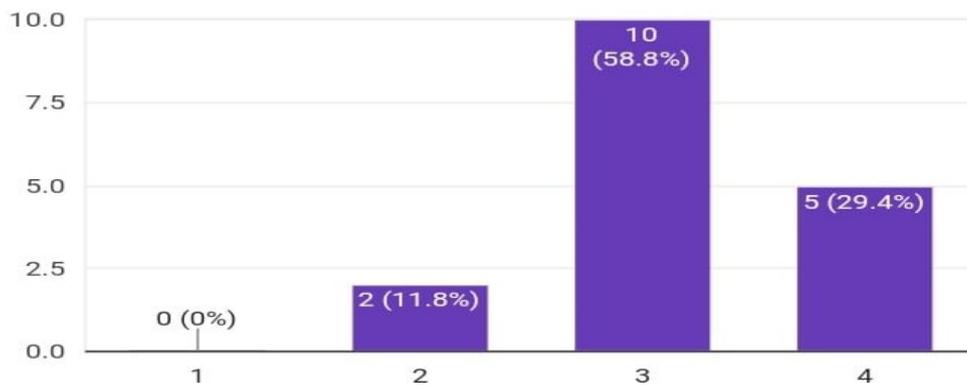
The results show that a majority of 47.1% strongly agrees that Netflix is now at the place of local tv channels.

6. Is following a western norms and culture a sign of modernization?



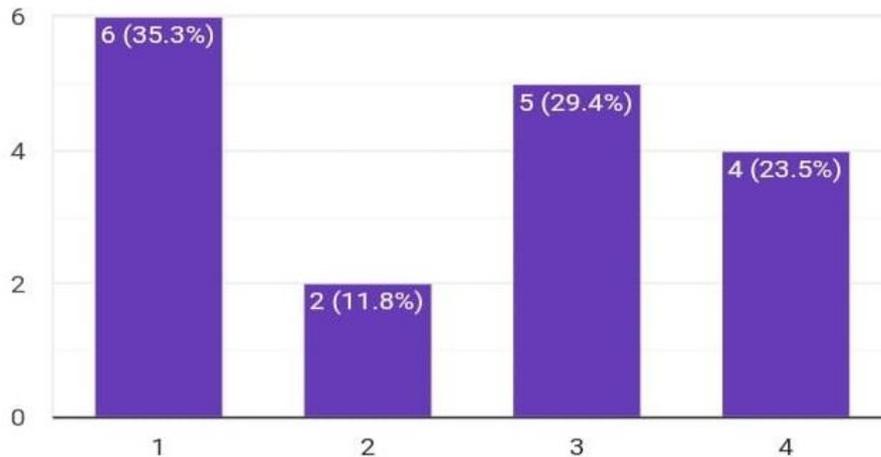
The results show that the youth do not believe in this fact that western norms are a sign of modernization.

7. Will Pakistan more prosper if its people start following western norms, neglecting national norms?



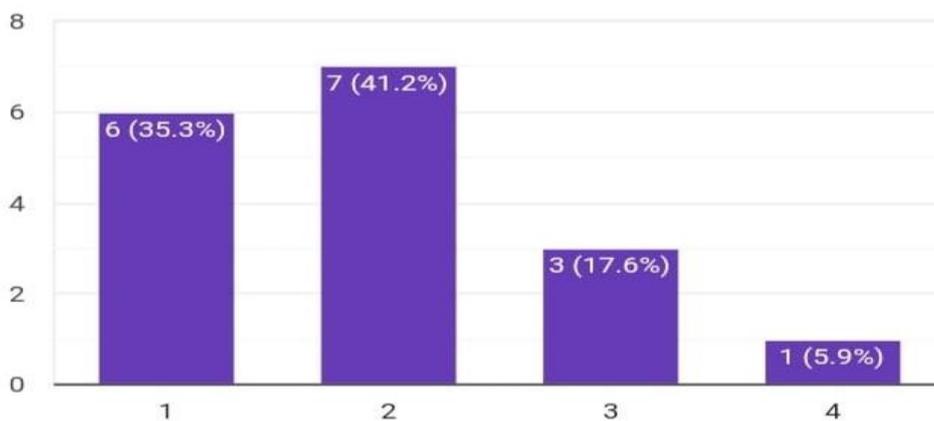
The results show that a majority of 58.8% youth is not in the opinion that Pakistan should keep following western norms and culture.

8. Is rising KFC and McDonalds outlets a sign of emerging westernization in Pakistan?



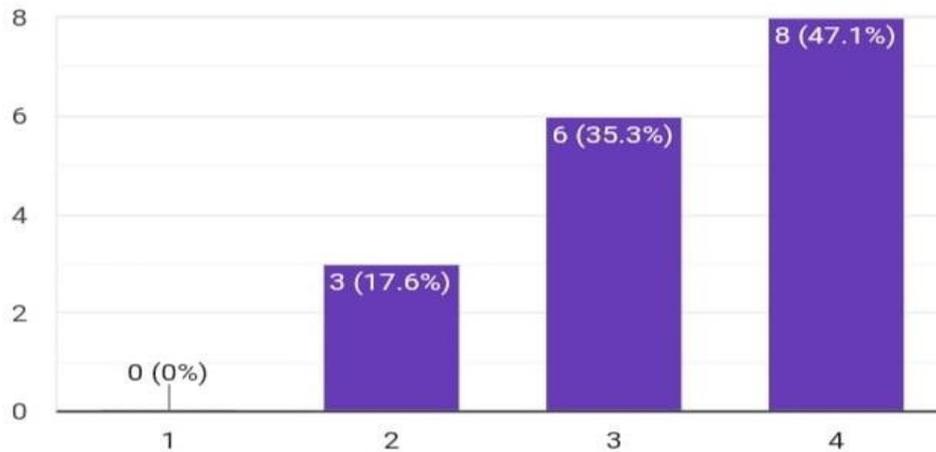
According to the results, one of the signs of westernization in Pakistan is rising franchises of KFC and McDonalds.

9. Do you listen to western music and follow western celebrities?



According to the result of second last question of the survey, a majority of 41.2% youngsters follow and like western celebrities and fashion.

10. Do you think that we Pakistanis should keep following western trends and traditions?



The results of the final question show that the youth actually feel for their national identity to remain preserved. A majority of 47.1% youth do not want Pakistan to keep following these western trends in their country because they know that it will discredit their own culture and trends.

Results & Discussion:

When we conducted the survey, the results show that all the population think that the westernization is taking place in our society and in survey the whole population (100%) voted that westernization is taking place over our national norms. When we questioned about the preferences on attire and language, We made the choice between the national language and local clothes over western clothes and English language then the half of the population prefer the western dress and language (50%) and half of the population prefer their local dress and Urdu language (50%). So, the result is that both the cultures in the context of language and attire are same. When we questioned about the superiority of English language indirectly then more than half of the population (61%) prefer English language and but some of the students disagreed to feel confident when they talk in English (39%). Then we asked question about the choice of the fast food and homemade food then majority (65%) of the population selected fast food and some of them selected homemade food (35%). Then we asked a question about the media preferences and here we compared Netflix with the local TV channels then the results are that majority of people voted in favor of Netflix (88%) and about (12%) a very less amount of people voted in favor of local TV channels. Then we want to know about those as western norms and culture is a sign of modernization. Then about one third of the population think that it is a sign of modernization, but majority of the population were against it and they voted in a disagreed form. The statistical representation is (35%) are agreed that western norms and cultures are sign of modernization but majority (65%) think that it is not. After this we asked about the prosperity of the Pakistan if the people follows western norms on national norms. Then overall result was that many people's neglect it and a very few people are agreed, the statistical view is that (11%) are agreed about that if people follow west then Pakistan will be prosper but majority (89%) will think against it. Then we questioned about food that either increasing fast food chain of KFC's and Mc Donald's is a sign of westernization in Pakistan. Then results are that almost half of the population (47%) is agreed that fast food chain is a sign of westernization, and the remaining population are against it and about (53%) of the

population is disagreed. Then we questioned about the western music and western celebrities and tell them about following that on social media then majority of the population agreed about listening to western music and following western celebrities. The statistical results are that (76%) peoples were agreed that they follow western celebrities and listening to western music and the remaining peoples about (24%) were not following the western celebrities and listening to western music. At last, we asked a question about the keep following of western trends and traditions by Pakistanis, then results are that (17%) peoples were agreed and about (83%) peoples were disagreed with keep following western trends and traditions.

The data collected in survey show that there is a major impact of westernization in Pakistani society and all the sample size voted that changing occurs and when we moved to analyze the data in the context of language and attire that half of the sample size agreed that western culture is adopted in both these areas, and we can say that the changes are emerging in our society in respective areas. The majority of our population also said that they think confident/superior when they talk in English. The majority of people also prefer the fast food over homemade food and also due to this the chain of fast-food franchise is also increasing in Pakistan. In media context we also saw that majority of the people prefer the Netflix over the local TV channels and they also prefer the western content over local made content. we also saw that western norms and culture is a sign of modernization then people neglect it and asked that modernization is different from westernization. The prosperity of Pakistani society is dependent on following western norms and cultures and the results were against this and results show that the prosperity of society is in following their own national norms .The results of survey also told that in media Pakistani people follow the celebrities of west and they listen western music and majority were agreed. The Pakistani society needs to keep follow their own values rather than following western culture and norms. By seeing all over the survey those peoples in Pakistani society are following the western culture but they want to change it into national norms and cultures, but the western roots are strongly emerged in our society .

Conclusion:

The researcher would like to say in the end that whichever traditions and trends get famous in the world, it is on the individual's choice whether to adopt it or not. ¹⁴It is of no doubt that the western norms are taking roots in our society, but the time has not gone too far to get things assembled. The situation is not worsened but it will get if the society does not realize it on time that they are the ones who are supposed to protect their national identity and culture.

Areej Haider & Ameer Hamza are students of International Relations at National Defense University, Islamabad.

¹⁴ Tanveer Hussain, Ashraf Iqbal, Muhammad Asif Yaseen, "Influence of Westernized Culture on Women Via Television Drama and Films: A Survey of Lahore District", *Global Regional Review*, 2020, available at: <https://www.grrjournal.com/jadmin/Author/31rvIoIA2LALJou9hkR/Wtb5UzFDKo.pdf>, accessible date:

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