



Impact of Television Content on the Cultural Perspectives of Youth in Afghanistan: A Case Study, Jalalabad City

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Abstract: This study examines the perceived influence of television content on the cultural perspectives of youth in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. Television remains a key medium shaping cultural awareness and social values, particularly in a context where media expansion intersects with strong cultural and religious sensitivities. The study aimed to examine television watching habits and assess perceived positive and negative cultural influences. A quantitative, descriptive cross-sectional survey design was employed. The target population consisted of youth residing in Jalalabad City, and a sample of 385 participants was determined using Cochran's formula. Data were collected using a researcher-developed structured questionnaire through convenience sampling, resulting in a male-only and relatively educated sample. Reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha (positive impact = 0.763; negative impact = 0.870). Data were analyzed using SPSS 27. Spearman's correlation analysis showed a weak but significant negative association between television watching time and perceived positive cultural influence ($p = -0.186$, $p < .01$), while no significant association was found with perceived negative influence. Kruskal-Wallis test results indicated that perceived positive effects slightly increased with age, whereas perceived negative effects showed minimal variation across age groups, with no significant differences across education levels. Overall, the findings suggest that television content is generally perceived as positively associated with youth cultural awareness and values, while perceived negative influences remain limited. However, the cross-sectional design, male-only sample, and non-probability sampling limit the generalizability of the findings.

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INTRODUCTION

Screens and broadcast media play a major role in shaping how youth (defined in this study as individuals aged 18–30 years) in Afghanistan perceive the world. Television, in particular, is widely recognized as one of the most influential mass media platforms due to its strong visual appeal and continuous presence in everyday life, enabling it to shape social behavior, values,

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and cultural orientations across societies (Haideri, 2015; Wahidi, 2019). Unlike formal educational institutions that are limited by time and space, television can continuously disseminate information, cultural narratives, and social messages to a wide audience, thereby exerting a sustained influence on everyday attitudes and perceptions (Sarukhani, 2004). By early 2025, more than half of the Afghan population had access to mobile connections, reflecting a rapidly expanding digital and media environment (DataReportal, 2025). Globally, streaming platforms now account for a substantial share of television consumption, and similar trends in Afghanistan indicate that television—whether traditional, satellite-based, or online—remains a central source of narratives, cultural models, and social norms influencing young people’s identities and daily lives (Nielsen, 2025).

According to empirical research, young Afghans are especially receptive to new media technologies and frequently incorporate broadcast messages into their daily routines and social attitudes (Zirak et al., 2025). Afghanistan has seen a sharp increase in the number of television stations, both domestic and international, since 2001. But after 2021, political shifts brought more stringent laws governing media access and production, which reduced the amount of programming accessible and complicated the landscape of cultural media, especially in cities like Jalalabad (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Instead of assuming consistent or externally visible impacts, it is crucial to objectively investigate how young people presently view television's cultural function in light of these contextual alterations.

Previous studies conducted in Afghanistan indicate concern over the cultural implications of television, especially foreign-dubbed serials. For example, Daqiq and Hashemi (2021) found that Afghan university students perceived foreign dramas as potentially harmful, citing imitation of foreign lifestyles and erosion of Islamic values. Similarly, Popal, Rohya, and Tayid (2023) reported that exposure to violence-containing television programs among Kandahar University students was associated with negative psychological and social perceptions. While such findings highlight possible risks, they are often based on specific content types, student samples, or descriptive assessments and may not reflect broader urban youth perceptions.

Regional studies from Pakistan and India further show that television content can influence youth behavior, language use, lifestyle, and cultural orientation (Riaz, 2019; Devadas & Ravi, 2013). Research also suggests that individual characteristics such as age, gender, and social context mediate how television messages are interpreted (Qadir & Jullandhry, 2020; Rehman, 2023). At the same time, other studies emphasize that television can enhance cultural awareness and civic engagement when content is locally relevant or socially responsible (Shahzadi & Ahmad, 2018). Together, these findings indicate that television’s cultural influence is not uniform but context-dependent.

The literature review suggests that television's cultural impact on youth is intricate and contingent upon context, rather than consistently beneficial or detrimental. Afghan-based studies primarily emphasize concerns related to foreign-dubbed serials, violent programming, and perceived threats to religious and cultural values, particularly among university students

and urban youth populations (Daqiq & Hashemi, 2021; Popal, Rohya, & Tayid, 2023; Hatef, 2024). At the same time, regional research from Pakistan and India demonstrates that television content can significantly shape youth language use, lifestyle preferences, fashion, and social attitudes, while also highlighting the moderating roles of age, gender, education, and broader social environments (Riaz, 2019; Devadas & Ravi, 2013; Qadir & Jullandhry, 2020; Rehman, 2023). Importantly, other scholars argue that when television content is culturally proximate, educational, or socially responsible, it can Afghan-based studies primarily emphasize concerns related to foreign-dubbed serials, violent programming, and perceived threats to religious and cultural values, particularly among university students and urban youth populations (Daqiq & Hashemi, 2021; Popal, Rohya, & Tayid, 2023; Hatef, 2024). At the same time, regional research from Pakistan and India demonstrates that television content can significantly shape youth language use, lifestyle preferences, fashion, and social attitudes, while also highlighting the moderating roles of age, gender, education, and broader social environments (Riaz, 2019; Devadas & Ravi, 2013; Qadir & Jullandhry, 2020; Rehman, 2023).

Based on cultivation theory, which says that watching TV for a long time can slowly change how people see social reality (Gerbner et al., 2002), and the idea of cultural proximity (Straubhaar, 1991), this study aims to give context-sensitive evidence from Jalalabad City. Understanding how youth perceive television's cultural influence is particularly important in Afghanistan, where young people constitute a large proportion of the population and where subtle shifts in values or norms may have broader social implications.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine youth television viewing habits in Jalalabad City and to assess how television content is perceived in relation to positive and negative cultural impacts. Specifically, the study focuses on understanding the association between television exposure and cultural awareness, value orientation, and perceived cultural Understanding how youth perceive television's cultural influence is particularly important in Afghanistan, where young people constitute a large proportion of the population and where subtle shifts in values or norms may have broader social implications.

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The specific objectives of the study are:

- To examine the television watching habits of youth in Jalalabad City.
- To assess the perceived positive cultural effects of television, including cultural awareness, respect for religious and national values, understanding of Afghan customs, and social engagement.
- To evaluate the perceived negative cultural effects of television, such as concerns related to foreign media exposure, immoral scenes, or value distortion.

In line with these objectives, the study addresses the following research questions:

- What are the television watching habits of youth in Jalalabad City?
- How is television perceived to positively influence the cultural perspectives and social attitudes of youth?
- What negative cultural effects, if any, do youth in Jalalabad City associate with television content?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative research approach to examine the perceived influence of television content on the cultural perspectives of youth in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. Quantitative research is suitable for this study as it allows for systematic measurement and statistical analysis of variables, providing objective insights into the relationship between television content and youth cultural perspectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Research Design

A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was used to collect data at a single point in time. This design is appropriate for understanding the current perceptions and experiences of youth regarding television content.

Population and Sampling

The target population for this study consisted of youth residing in Jalalabad city. Using Cochran's formula, a sample size of 385 participants was determined to ensure representativeness and statistical reliability. The participants were selected using a non-probability convenience sampling method, as respondents needed to be accessible and willing to participate in the survey.

Ethics and Consent

Ethical considerations were addressed in accordance with standard academic research practices. Formal institutional ethical review was not required for this study as it involved a non-invasive, anonymous survey with adult participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection, participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity throughout the study.

Data Collection Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed specifically for this study. The questionnaire was adapted from existing validated instruments and translated into Pashto language, then back-translated to ensure accuracy. A pilot test with 30 participants was conducted to assess clarity and comprehension. The questionnaire included items measuring both the positive and negative impacts of television content on youth cultural perspectives. Positive and Negative Impact scores were computed as the mean of the corresponding items, with missing data handled using case-wise deletion.

TV Watching Time

Participants reported varying television watching habits, which were measured using four frequency categories: Daily 1–2 hours (29.1%), Daily 3–4 hours (16.4%), Several times a week (34.5%), and Occasionally (20.0%). For the purposes of correlation and group comparison analyses, these categories were assigned ordinal scores from 1 to 4, with higher scores indicating more frequent viewing. This coding approach ensures consistency when examining relationships between television watching time and both positive and negative impact scores, while accommodating differences in frequency and duration of viewing reported by participants.

Reliability of the Instrument

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with the following results:

Number	Variable Name	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
1	Positive Impact	0.763	10
2	Negative Impact	0.870	10

These values indicate that the questionnaire is reliable for measuring the intended variables.

Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was designed in three sections: demographic information, ten items assessing perceived positive effects of television, and ten items assessing perceived negative effects. Content validity was confirmed by several experts, and reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha (as reported above). The questionnaire was distributed to participants via Google Forms and shared through WhatsApp, allowing respondents to complete it voluntarily and anonymously.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 27. Both descriptive statistics (such as mean, frequency, and percentage) and inferential statistics were used to examine the relationships between television content and the cultural perspectives of youth. The analysis aimed to identify both the positive and negative influences of television media.

After conducting a normality test, the data were found to be non-normally distributed; therefore, non-parametric statistical tests were applied. TV watching time was coded based on participants' reported categories (Daily 1–2 hours = 1, Daily 3–4 hours = 2, Several times a week = 3, Occasionally = 4) and converted to approximate hours per week for correlation analysis, with higher scores indicating more frequent viewing. Spearman's rank-order correlation was used to examine the relationship between TV watching time (hours/week) and the Positive and Negative Impact scores, which were computed as the mean of the relevant questionnaire items with missing responses handled by listwise deletion. In addition, Kruskal–Wallis H tests were conducted to compare differences in positive and negative impacts across demographic groups, specifically age and education level. The questionnaire was developed based on prior studies and adapted to the local context, translated into Dari,

and pilot-tested with 30 youth to ensure clarity and reliability and Participation was voluntary, and respondents' anonymity was maintained.

FINDINGS

This section presents the main findings of the study derived from the analysis of the collected data. It summarizes participants' television watching habits and highlights the descriptive and inferential results related to the perceived positive and negative impacts of television content on the cultural perspectives of youth in Jalalabad City.

DEMOGRAPHY

Table1. *Gender of Participants*

Gender	Frequency(n)	Percentage (%)
Male	385	100.0
Female	0	0

All participants in the study (N = 385) were male, accounting for 100% of the sample. No female participants were included.

Table2. *Age of Participants*

Age	Frequency(n)	Percentage (%)
18-22	86	22.3
23-26	233	60.5
27-30	66	17.1
Total	385	100.0

The participants' ages (N = 385) were grouped into three categories. The majority of participants, 233 individuals (60.5%), were aged 23–26 years, followed by 86 participants (22.3%) in the 18–22 years' group, and 66 participants (17.1%) in the 27–30 years' group. Most participants were young adults between 23 and 26 years old, indicating that the study primarily reflects the perspectives of early adulthood. The age distribution provides a balanced representation of youth in different age ranges.

Table3. *Education level of Participants*

Educational Level	Frequency(n)	Percentage (%)
Primary Education	1	.3
12 th Grade	76	19.7
14 th Grade	28	7.3
Bachelor Degree	254	66.0
Master Degree	26	6.8
Total	385	100.0

The educational background of the participants (N = 385) shows that the majority, 254 individuals (66.0%), held a Bachelor's degree. This was followed by 76 participants (19.7%) with 12th grade, 28 participants (7.3%) with 14th grade/intermediate education, 26 participants (6.8%) with a Master's degree, and only 1 participant (0.3%) with primary education.

The sample is relatively well-educated, with most participants having completed higher education. This indicates that the findings primarily reflect the perspectives of educated youth.

Table4. Show TV watching Time

Category	Frequency(n)	Percentage (%)
Daily 1-2 hours.	112	29.1
Daily 3-4 hours.	63	16.4
Several times in a week	133	34.5
Occasionally	77	20.0
Total	385	100.0

The television watching habits of participants (N = 385) varied across different frequencies. 133 participants (34.5%) reported watching television several times a week, 112 participants (29.1%) watched 1–2 hours daily, 63 participants (16.4%) watched 3–4 hours daily, and 77 participants (20.0%) reported watching television occasionally.

The data shows diverse viewing patterns among participants, with most youth engaging in television consumption at least several times per week. This variability provides a solid basis for analyzing the impact of television content on cultural perspectives and social attitudes.

Table5. Show Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness, and Kurtosis for Positive Television Content
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	N	Minimum	Maximum	Medium	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Error
Watching TV educational programs has increased my level of cultural awareness.	385	2.00	5.00	4.0000	3.9117	.60595	.124	.248
Through religious and ethical programs, my respect for religious values has increased.	385	2.00	5.00	4.0000	4.3351	.65307	.124	.248
Through family programs, I have gained a better understanding of the value of Afghan customs, cultural heritage, and language.	385	1.00	5.00	4.0000	3.8078	.74961	.124	.248
Television programs strengthen youth's mindset to accept positive roles in society.	385	1.00	5.00	4.0000	3.7325	.80920	.124	.248

Through television debates and discussions, my understanding of social issues has increased.	385	2.00	5.00	4.0000	3.8000	.73172	-1.233	.124	1.511	.248
Television content helps in efforts to preserve Afghan culture.	385	1.00	5.00	4.0000	3.7896	.74645	-1.639	.124	3.028	.248
Through television cultural programs, I have learned to respect the cultures of other nations.	385	1.00	5.00	4.0000	3.8442	.68589	-1.542	.124	2.964	.248
Television programs encourage youth to engage in social services and positive change.	385	1.00	5.00	4.0000	3.8571	.68682	-1.844	.124	4.825	.248
Through television, I have gained a better understanding of the importance of my religious and national values.	385	1.00	5.00	4.0000	3.7974	.72922	-1.733	.124	3.459	.248
Television programs enhance the exchange of ideas and tolerance among youths.	385	1.00	5.00	4.0000	3.8338	.68344	-1.745	.124	3.893	.248

The descriptive statistics for the ten items measuring the positive effects of television content on Afghan youth in Jalalabad city (N = 385) indicate that participants generally agree with the statements regarding the influence of television. The Valid N = 385, showing that all participants provided complete responses for all items.

The mean scores for the items range from 3.733 to 4.335 on a 5-point Likert scale, suggesting an overall agreement that television content positively affects cultural awareness, respect for religious and national values, understanding of Afghan customs and traditions, and engagement in social and civic activities. The highest mean (4.335) was observed for the item measuring increased respect for religious values through religious and ethical programs, indicating strong agreement among participants. Other items, such as enhancing youth's mindset to accept positive social roles (M = 3.733) and gaining a better understanding of social issues through television debates (M = 3.800), also reflect moderate to high agreement. Furthermore, the median value for all positive impact items is 4.00, reinforcing that the central tendency of responses reflects overall agreement with the positive effects of television content. All items exhibit negative skewness, ranging from -1.035 to -1.844, suggesting that most participants tended to choose the higher agreement categories. Kurtosis values vary between 1.092 and 4.825, indicating that responses are generally clustered around the mean, with some items showing more peaked distributions.

Overall, these findings suggest that television content plays a significant role in shaping the cultural perspective of youth in Jalalabad city, promoting cultural awareness, respect for both Afghan and international values, and encouraging positive social participation.

Table6. Show Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness, and Kurtosis for Negative Television Content Effects

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Medium	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Foreign films and dramas have distanced Afghan youth from their own values and traditions.	385	1.00	5.00	2.0000	2.0494	.76045	.124	.248
Television programs encourage youth to imitate the lifestyles of foreign people.	385	1.00	5.00	2.0000	2.1221	.78273	.124	.248
Due to television advertisements, the desire for a luxurious and highly fashionable lifestyle has increased.	385	2.00	5.00	2.0000	2.2493	.63466	.131	.262
The broadcast of immoral scenes on television has a negative impact on the behavior of youth.	385	1.00	5.00	2.0000	2.1013	.83080	.124	.248
Exposure to foreign cultures through television has made Afghan youth indifferent toward Afghan traditions.	385	1.00	5.00	2.0000	2.1532	.75684	.124	.248
Some TV programs create distrust toward family values.	385	1.00	5.00	2.0000	2.1377	.73546	.124	.248
Watching too much television content leads to a decrease in the religious feelings of youth.	385	1.00	5.00	2.0000	2.1974	.78229	.124	.248
Due to foreign dramas and films, youth regard the value of their own customs and traditions as less important.	385	1.00	5.00	2.0000	2.1896	.81515	.124	.248
Some television programs present a distorted view of the roles of women and men.	385	1.00	5.00	2.0000	2.1299	.76292	.124	.248

Due to television content, youth have become distanced from their national identity.	385	1.00	5.00	2.0000	2.2727	.86054	1.489	.124	1.918	.248
Valid N	385									

The descriptive statistics for the ten items measuring the negative effects of television content on Afghan youth in Jalalabad city (N = 385) are presented in the table above. The Valid N = 385, showing that all participants provided complete responses for all items.

The mean scores for the negative effects items range from 2.049 to 2.273 on a 5-point Likert scale, suggesting that participants generally disagree or only slightly agree with the negative impact of television content on their values, behaviors, and cultural identity. The lowest mean (2.049) corresponds to the item "Foreign films and dramas have distanced Afghan youth from their own values and traditions," indicating strong disagreement among participants. The highest mean (2.273) is observed for "Due to television content, youth have become distanced from their national identity," though still indicating moderate disagreement overall.

In addition, the median value for all negative impact items is 2.00, further confirming that the central tendency of responses reflects overall disagreement with the negative effects of television content.

All items show positive skewness, ranging from 1.346 to 2.414, indicating that the majority of responses are on the lower end of the scale (disagreement with negative effects). Kurtosis values range from 1.918 to 4.496, suggesting that some responses are moderately to highly clustered around the mean, indicating consistency in participants' perceptions.

Overall, these descriptive statistics suggest that Afghan youth in Jalalabad city perceive the negative effects of television content to be minimal, with most participants disagreeing that television significantly harms their cultural values, religious feelings, or national identity. This contrasts with the generally higher agreement observed for the positive effects of television content.

Table7: Scale Summary Statistics for Positive and Negative Television Content Effects

Scale	N	Mean	SD	Median
Positive Impact	385	3.87	0.68	4.00
Negative Impact	385	2.15	0.76	2.00

Table 7 presents the summary statistics for the positive and negative television content scales. The results indicate that respondents reported a relatively high level of perceived positive effects of television content (M = 3.87, SD = 0.68, Median = 4.00). In contrast, the perceived negative effects were comparatively lower (M = 2.15, SD = 0.76, Median = 2.00).

Table8: Spearman's Rank-Order Correlations between TV Watching Time, Positive Impact, and Negative Impact

			TV watching Time	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
Spearman's rho	TV watching Time	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.186**	-.082
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.109
		N	385	385	385
	Positive Impact	Correlation Coefficient	-.186**	1.000	-.250**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	385	385	385
	Negative Impact	Correlation Coefficient	-.082	-.250**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.109	.000	.
		N	385	385	385

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 8 shows Spearman's rank-order correlations between TV watching time, perceived positive impact, and perceived negative impact. The results show a weak but statistically significant negative correlation between TV watching time and positive impact ($p = -.186$, $p < .01$), indicating that higher coded values of watching time are associated with slightly lower positive impact scores; however, this relationship is weak and should be interpreted cautiously due to the ordinal nature of the viewing-time variable. The correlation between TV watching time and negative impact is not statistically significant ($p = -.082$, $p = .109$), suggesting that the amount of television watched is not meaningfully related to perceived negative cultural effects. In contrast, a statistically significant negative correlation exists between positive and negative impacts ($p = -.250$, $p < .01$), indicating that respondents who perceive television as having stronger positive cultural influences are less likely to perceive it as harmful. Overall, the findings suggest that perceptions of television's cultural influence among youth in Jalalabad are shaped more by subjective evaluation than by viewing duration alone.

Table9: Kruskal–Wallis Test Results for Differences in Positive and Negative Impacts across Age Groups

Age Group	N	Positive Impact Mean Rank	Negative Impact Mean Rank
18–22	86	171.93	166.73
23–26	233	197.50	200.57
27–30	66	204.56	200.50
Total	385	—	—

The Kruskal–Wallis H results indicate differences in the perceived impact of television content across age groups. For Positive Impact, the mean ranks are 171.93 for the 18–22 age group, 197.50 for the 23–26 age group, and 204.56 for the 27–30 age group. This suggests that older participants perceive slightly higher positive effects from television content, indicating a gradual increase in perceived positive influence with age.

For Negative Impact, the mean ranks are 166.73 for the 18–22 age group, 200.57 for the 23–26 age group, and 200.50 for the 27–30 age group. These values show that younger participants report the lowest perceived negative effects, while the 23–26 and 27–30 age groups have similar perceptions of negative impacts, indicating minimal differences between these older groups.

Overall, the mean ranks suggest that perceived positive effects of television content tend to increase slightly with age, whereas perceived negative effects show little variation across age groups, with the youngest participants reporting the least negative influence. This aligns with the study's overall finding that participants generally perceive minimal negative effects from television content.

Table 10: Post-hoc Comparisons of Age Groups on Positive and Negative Television Content Effects Using Dunn–Bonferroni Test

Comparison	Positive Impact Z	Positive Impact p (adj)	Negative Impact Z	Negative Impact p (adj)
18–22 vs 23–26	-2.85	0.013	-2.38	0.051
18–22 vs 27–30	-3.41	0.002	-2.29	0.066
23–26 vs 27–30	-1.06	0.867	0.05	1.00

The post-hoc pairwise comparisons using the Dunn–Bonferroni procedure were conducted to further examine age group differences in negative television content perceptions. The results indicated that the 18–22 age group differed significantly from both the 23–26 group ($Z = -2.85$, Bonferroni-adjusted $p = 0.013$) and the 27–30 group ($Z = -3.41$, Bonferroni-adjusted $p = 0.002$), suggesting that younger participants perceived the negative effects of television content as lower compared to older youth. No significant difference was observed between the 23–26 and 27–30 groups ($Z = -1.06$, Bonferroni-adjusted $p = 0.867$), indicating similar perceptions of negative television effects among these older age groups. These findings confirm that age plays a role in the perceived negative impact of television, with younger participants reporting comparatively less negative influence, while differences between the two older age groups are negligible.

Table 11: Kruskal–Wallis Test Results for Differences in Positive and Negative Impacts across Education Levels

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
Kruskal-Wallis H	7.325	6.318
df	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.120	.177

To investigate variations in perceptions of positive and negative impacts across educational levels, a Kruskal-Wallis H test was used. Neither the positive impact scores ($H(4) = 7.33, p = .120$) nor the negative impact scores ($H(4) = 6.32, p = .177$) showed statistically significant differences. These results imply that participants' perceptions of both positive and negative effects are not significantly impacted by education level.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that television content has a predominantly positive influence on the cultural perspectives of youth in Jalalabad City, Afghanistan, with negative effects generally perceived as minimal. Participants reported that television contributes to greater cultural awareness, respect for religious and national values, understanding of Afghan customs, and increased social and civic engagement. These findings are consistent with cultivation theory, which posits that repeated exposure to television shapes perceptions of social reality and normative behaviors (Gerbner et al., 2002), as well as the concept of cultural proximity, which suggests that audiences selectively adopt media elements that resonate with local values (Straubhaar, 1991).

The descriptive results showed that participants largely disagreed with statements related to negative cultural impacts, such as moral decline, imitation of foreign lifestyles, or value distortion. This perception is reinforced by the inferential analysis and the weak correlation between TV watching time and negative impacts, which was not statistically significant, indicating that increased exposure does not inherently lead to negative cultural perceptions. The negative correlation between TV watching time and positive impact should be interpreted cautiously, as it reflects the ordinal coding of viewing frequency rather than a true reduction in positive influence. Overall, these results suggest that the positive cultural influence of television remains stable among youth in Jalalabad.

The depth of these interpretations is further supported by prior Afghan research. For example, qualitative work at Takhar University found that a large proportion of Afghan youth believe foreign dubbed serials can negatively influence values such as morality and daily behavior (Daqiq & Hashemi, 2021), yet this study's participants did not strongly endorse those negative perceptions, suggesting contextual variation within Afghanistan. This difference may be due to localized viewing habits, content preferences, and the evolving media environment following years of regulatory and social change in Afghan media.

Contextual factors help explain the low perceived negative effects, including selective viewing habits, a restricted content environment, and the use of a general measurement scale that did not capture exposure to specific foreign or violent content. Comparatively, regional studies show that exposure to foreign or violent television may influence behavior, language, or lifestyle (Riaz, 2019; Popal, Rohya, & Tayid, 2023), highlighting the importance of considering local cultural context in assessing media effects.

The Kruskal–Wallis test results revealed that age significantly influences perceptions of negative impact, while perceptions of positive impact were consistent across age groups. This suggests that younger and older youth may differ in their sensitivity to potential negative influences, potentially due to maturity or levels of critical media awareness. Education did not significantly affect perceptions, reflecting a relatively homogeneous, educated sample. Gender effects were not tested, but prior research indicates that gender can moderate responses to media content (Qadir & Jullandhry, 2020).

Importantly, these findings have practical and policy implications. Television programming in Afghanistan, particularly culturally relevant and educational content, can be strategically used to enhance civic engagement, promote national and religious values, and support social cohesion. Policymakers and media regulators should consider content guidelines, youth media literacy initiatives, and the promotion of locally relevant programming to maximize positive cultural outcomes and minimize potential risks.

Limitations include male-only participants, convenience sampling, and self-reported data, which may introduce social desirability bias. These factors limit generalizability, indicating that future research should include female participants, probability-based sampling, and content-specific exposure measures.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that television content, as perceived by urban male youth in Jalalabad, largely fosters positive cultural awareness and values, while perceived negative effects remain limited. The findings underscore the importance of context-sensitive programming, media literacy, and evidence-based policy frameworks to ensure television continues to function as a constructive cultural and educational tool within Afghan society.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the cultural perspectives of youth in Jalalabad City, Afghanistan, are generally perceived to be positively associated with television content. Participants reported that while negative effects are generally thought to be negligible, television appears to help raise cultural awareness, strengthen respect for religious and national values, foster understanding of Afghan traditions, and encourage social and civic engagement. These findings are supported by statistical analyses, including Kruskal–Wallis tests showing that age is associated with perceptions of negative impacts, while education level shows no significant association with either positive or negative perceptions.

Spearman’s correlation results further indicate a weak negative association between TV watching time and perceived positive impact, with no statistically significant relationship between watching time and perceived negative impact. Overall, the findings suggest that youth perceptions of television’s cultural influence are shaped more by how content is interpreted and evaluated than by the amount of television watched, with those perceiving stronger positive effects being less likely to view television as culturally harmful.

However, the generalizability of these results is limited, as the study included only male, urban, and relatively educated participants.

Recommendations

- Develop local TV programs that reflect Afghan culture and traditions.
- Provide media literacy training to help youth critically analyze TV content.
- Monitor and limit foreign programs with potentially negative cultural effects.

- Encourage youth to watch programs promoting social responsibility and positive values.
- Conduct future research on the impact of TV by gender and region.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are available from the author upon reasonable request.

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