

Television's Role in Environmental Awareness: A Study of Public Perception in Northern Afghanistan

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Abstract: Environmental preservation is one of humanity's most critical concerns. The media is responsible for raising awareness and fostering a culture of environmental conservation and stewardship. The present study examines the functions of television from the citizens' perspective in three northern provinces of Afghanistan (Balkh, Jawzjan, and Sar-e Pol). The research utilizes a survey method, with a questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. The statistical population of this research consists of citizens from the three selected provinces, with a relatively targeted sampling strategy encompassing various strata, including differences in gender, education level, age, and occupation. The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in prominent media theories, specifically the Uses and Gratifications Theory and the Social Responsibility Theory. The findings indicate that Afghan domestic television channels have devoted limited attention to producing programs related to environmental issues. Coverage of ecological news is largely restricted to instances where the news meets the criteria for "hard news" with significant news value. The perspectives of the surveyed population reveal that the level of audience trust and satisfaction with the current amount of awareness-raising programming on environmental preservation is low. Moreover, the findings suggest that, except for occasional advertisements by specific organizations, most domestic television networks in the country do not incorporate environmental awareness programs into their regular broadcasting schedules.

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INTRODUCTION

Humans living in society must fulfill their responsibilities toward their environment, from effective communication to addressing and protecting against environmental challenges. It is the inherent right of every individual to live in a healthy environment, but they also must actively participate in its preservation. The media, particularly television channels, play a

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crucial and fundamental role in raising awareness and educating the public about environmental preservation. One of the core responsibilities of the media is to inform, while another is to educate and entertain. In the case of One TV, the programming is designed to meet the audience's needs in both areas. Environmental issues are a global concern today and represent an urgent matter for every citizen.

Emphasizing the production of educational and awareness-raising programs in various environmental sectors and the coverage of environmentally related news events constitutes a pivotal social responsibility of the media. Disseminating information and providing coverage of environmental developments—whether voluntary or obligatory—are essential functions that address the fundamental needs of contemporary television audiences that are intrinsically linked to human welfare. Neglecting these responsibilities can precipitate grave consequences for society. Media plays an essential and valuable role in public awareness (Taghavi et al., 2016, p. 18).

In this study, the researchers have endeavored to address the most critical environmental issues currently impacting Afghan citizens, utilizing the perspectives of the study's statistical population. These issues, which can be tackled through media dissemination, are vital to mobilizing action in response to imminent environmental risks. Many instances of environmental degradation stem from a lack of public awareness. In conjunction with other ecological preservation agencies and organizations, the media is entrusted with the responsibility of producing and disseminating educational and awareness programs that respond to the exigent environmental needs of the population.

The audience surveyed in this research often lacked cognizance regarding the importance of environmental issues. For example, behaviors such as littering in urban centers or residential areas, which may be viewed as inconsequential, are normalized. Similarly, the unsustainable deforestation of mountainous regions, the overconsumption of water in households, and the disregard for public health standards in the environment are perceived as customary. This research critically examines the media's role—particularly television—in raising public awareness and fostering environmental education on these pressing matters, which constitute the core needs of the citizens in a sustainable society. Ignorance of the culture of ecological preservation puts human life in crisis. The environment category has its own culture that requires serious, continuous, and comprehensive familiarity to protect it (Hasanood, 2013).

Environmental preservation is a critical concern for humanity. Conducting research across various domains to identify practical and fundamental solutions for safeguarding the environment is an essential duty for citizens and of paramount significance. It is imperative that fostering a culture of living in a sustainable and healthy environment becomes a societal norm. As influential and far-reaching platforms, the media, particularly television networks, play a pivotal role in educating and raising public awareness about environmental sustainability. These institutions must fulfill their responsibilities diligently and effectively to promote environmental stewardship.

Scientific research in this field enables a deeper understanding of fundamental environmental needs, promotes the integration of key components of environmental preservation into societal culture, and provides rational, practical solutions based on scientific methodologies. For instance, in societies where urban cleanliness is regarded solely as the responsibility of municipal authorities and sanitation workers, there exists a critical need for public awareness and education. The primary duty of the media is to inform these citizens, shaping their perspectives so that maintaining a clean-living environment is recognized as the responsibility of every individual within that environment. Meanwhile, the environment is also one of the most important fields of employment and job creation in the twenty-first century (Cox, 2010, pp. 13-14).

Neglecting critical issues such as greenhouse gas emissions, ozone layer depletion, air pollution, freshwater contamination and its impact on human health, the detrimental effects of noise pollution on physical and mental well-being, and the deforestation of vital ecosystems—all of which directly or indirectly influence human survival—demands urgent attention in television programming. Research that aligns with the role and responsibility of television in informing and educating citizens to prevent environmental pollution and safeguard the living environment while offering scientific and practical solutions is a fundamental necessity for human society and its critical importance.

Institutionalizing environmental preservation across various sectors can be more effectively achieved through television channels' coverage and the production of ecological awareness and preservation programs.

The primary objective of this research is to examine the role of television in informing and educating citizens based on the perspectives of the statistical sample involved in this study. The objectives include:

- Investigating the level of satisfaction among the research sample regarding the effectiveness of media in raising awareness about maintaining a healthy environment.
- Analyzing the role of television in promoting and fostering a culture of maintaining a clean and healthy living environment.
- Examining the quantity and quality of programs on domestic television channels dedicated to educating citizens on environmental preservation and promoting a healthy and clean environment.

Defining Key Concepts

Role: In this research, the term "role" refers to the function of the media within society. This function encompasses the examination of the extent and manner in which domestic television channels in Afghanistan raise awareness and provide education about environmental preservation and its significance. The study analyzes the effectiveness and approach of these media outlets relevance to the research topic from the perspective of the statistical research sample.

In sociological discourse, "role" describes an individual's position and societal behavioral patterns. In the context of this research, "role" pertains specifically to the function of television news channels concerning the subject under investigation. Defining and understanding this role (the function of the media) requires the consensus and approval of society (the media audience). Essentially, the role serves as an intermediary between the society (audience) and the role holder (the media) (Gould & Kolb, 2013).

The strength of the relationship between the media and its audience is a direct outcome of its performance and genuine responsibility toward its viewers. The media's functioning across all dimensions essential to their audience should be exceptional and effective. A healthy environment is a fundamental human need, and the media is responsible for effectively fulfilling its role in this regard. The primary and most critical role that the media can assume is to inform and raise societal awareness. In this capacity, the media is responsible for disseminating news and reports and maintaining a productive and interactive two-way communication channel with the audience.

Environment: The environment encompasses all settings in which life exists. It is composed of a combination of external physical factors and living organisms that interact, influencing organisms' growth, development, and behavior (Aliasgari, 2012, p. 164). The environment is characterized by a network of essential connections that ensure a complete correlation among the entities within a given range, establishing a relative balance in their interactions. It can be defined as a spatial domain and a complex set of relationships. In essence, the environment both shapes and is shaped by us. This reciprocal process of creation and influence is facilitated through various connections.

We engage with multiple environments, among which the natural environment is one of the most crucial. This environment, composed of water, air, and soil, significantly impacts our lives, and we are directly or indirectly dependent on it. The environment encompasses a range of interconnected external factors that influence the growth and survival of human, animal, and plant organisms (Alamkhani, 2013, p. 38).

In defining the environment, it is essential to consider the social, physical, natural, and cultural conditions that influence the lives of individuals within a society. Historical experiences and insights reveal that periods when humans were entirely subjugated by nature or sought to dominate and control it have demonstrated that such attitudes can jeopardize human existence. An evolved perspective on the interaction between humans and nature emphasizes minimizing harm to the natural environment.

In the contemporary era, informed by scientific discoveries, advancements, and extensive global research and legal actions in the environmental domain, a revised definition of the relationship between humans and the environment has emerged (Dabiri & Navan, 2011, p. 167).

Society's attitudes and the influence of the media shape behavior toward the environment, highlighting the media's significant role in promoting a culture of environmental preservation.

Today, environmental issues are a global concern, and addressing them is not feasible without the presence and support of the media, particularly television (Zaman and Mohammadiha, 2022, p. 10).

Television: Television is a prominent mass communication medium that facilitates the simultaneous transmission of sound and images through electromagnetic waves (Motamed Nejad, 2006, p. 290). In this context, the system designed for broadcasting and receiving dynamic images and sound across long ranges is called the receiving system. Television is a telecommunication device for transmitting and receiving moving pictures and audio from remote locations (McQueen, 2005, p. 25).

This research focuses on how domestic television channels address environmental preservation through news broadcasts, advertisements, and other programming. Today, television and social media networks constitute a significant public medium with considerable media influence. Afghan television channels, with their substantial viewership, have the potential to play a crucial role in informing and educating the public across various domains. Audiences expect their informational needs to be met through these media platforms, making the audience an integral part of the media consumption process.

The audience of media typically consists of individuals who actively seek out content from specific media sources (Windahl et al., 2016, p. 285). These individuals turn to media to satisfy their informational needs, including seeking information, education, and entertainment. As noted, education and awareness regarding environmental preservation are fundamental and critical human society needs. Consequently, television channels deliver awareness and education on such vital issues.

Television and Environmental Awareness

The environment in which we live is a series of laws and regulations that must be adhered to by all inhabitants. This encompasses various environmental dimensions, including water, air, soil, forestry, agriculture, cultural heritage preservation, noise pollution, transportation, tourism, and more (Moradi, 2012). Upholding the rights related to environmental conservation ensures a peaceful and healthy environment free from pollution. Both individuals and public and private institutions, as well as organizations influencing public opinion, are responsible for upholding environmental rights.

Environmental preservation is the education of a fundamental approach to safeguarding the environment, providing citizens of all age groups with information and awareness about ecological preservation. This education fosters a cultural respect for nature, encouraging individuals to internalize the importance of environmental stewardship and recognize their responsibility to support and protect their surroundings (Dabiri and Navan, 2011, p. 168). The media, particularly television, is crucial in educating and raising awareness about environmental preservation and development. The advancement of global ecological concepts and the dissemination of environmental issues can largely be attributed to media

coverage. Alongside other media and social networks, television has been instrumental in mobilizing public opinion, organizing ecological activism, and forming advocacy groups.

Through various educational programs, media platforms like television have effectively addressed social challenges, including environmental awareness, by presenting visually engaging and informative content. Television uniquely shapes public opinion and inspires positive behaviors, mainly through the clear and relevant portrayal of ecological concerns (Taghavi et al., 2016, p. 21). As a unique medium capable of visually narrating environmental stories, television can potentially frame environmental issues in ways that foster greater awareness and encourage public support for sustainable practices (Montazerghaeim & Erfani Hosseinpour, 2016, p. 165).

Environmental Governance and Media's Role in Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, since 1381 (2002), with the introduction of the National Environmental Preservation Plan and the establishment of the Ministry of Environment within the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, environmental governance in Afghanistan has gradually developed. In 1382 (2003), the General Directorate of Environmental Preservation was established under the Ministry of Environment. This directorate became independent in 2013, reflecting the increasing governmental focus on environmental matters. Notably, in 2014, the directorate was renamed the National Environmental Preservation Agency (NEPA). In 2016, ecological preservation directorates were initially set up in eight regions. By the same year, independent environmental preservation directorates were established in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan under the name "Environmental Preservation Directorate."

On its website, the National Environmental Preservation Agency (NEPA) outlines various activities, such as securing membership in international conventions (Montreal Protocol, Migratory Species Convention, Climate Change Agreements, Biodiversity, CITES, and the Convention for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage). It also highlights its participation in conventions like the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit, SAARC, and the Bonn Agreements. Additionally, the agency has signed memoranda of understanding, established partnerships with international institutions (e.g., Ecodit, UNEP, JIF, the World Bank, and the Development Bank), and organized training courses to enhance awareness and capacity-building in environmental preservation departments.

NEPA's efforts also include having a media team dedicated to producing and disseminating print and video content to raise public awareness about environmental preservation. They have created ecological departments in the geology faculties of Kabul University and Polytechnic University, integrated environmental themes into the school curriculum from grades 1 through 9, and introduced environmental topics at universities in Herat, Balkh, and Parwan (National Environmental Preservation Agency).

According to the information on NEPA's website, while some progress has been made in establishing government departments dedicated to environmental preservation, there has

been limited effort to inform and educate public opinion, specifically through television networks and other mass media.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theory of Gratifications

This theory is based on the premise that social and psychological contexts create needs in individuals, who then seek out sources to satisfy these needs. One of the most significant sources is the media. When individuals turn to the media, they tend to accept and engage with the media's messages if their informational needs are met. The more a media outlet meets people's needs, the more trust and confidence it earns from the audience. Over time, this trust may lead to the audience defending the media and its content. However, if a media source fails to meet its needs, the audience will disengage and seek alternative media outlets (Windahl et al., 2016, p. 275).

Attention to a healthy environment is one of humanity's fundamental needs. Individuals must acquire the necessary knowledge in this area, and the media plays a critical role in fulfilling this responsibility through education and raising awareness. Television channels, in particular, bear significant responsibility in this regard. Public education and encouraging greater participation in environmental preservation activities are crucial in societies, especially developing countries. Undoubtedly, education and information are two foundational principles in television program production. When these principles are aligned with societal needs, education and awareness of environmental preservation become central to television content creation.

The audience's use and satisfaction with television programs stem from how the same programs address their informational needs. Trust is born from this dynamic. Audiences are active participants who engage with media content that caters to their informational needs and requirements. As their satisfaction with this content grows, so does their trust in the media. This trust becomes a form of intangible capital for the media.

Theory of Social Responsibility

The social responsibility theory is one of the crucial normative theories in media. While it emphasizes the independence of the press, it also highlights their duties and responsibilities to society. One of the primary concerns of this theory is the media's obligation to meet the audience's expectations. According to the theory, providing the public with accurate information is essential, and the media must adhere to their social obligations. In essence, the social responsibility theory underscores the importance of comprehensive coverage, raising awareness, providing education, and delivering timely and accurate information on issues essential to society.

While addressing the audience's informational needs, the media must also be accountable for their activities. The mass media are responsible for performing three essential functions: informing, educating, and entertaining, without interfering in the events they report. The

theory of social responsibility in media seeks to establish a balance among the three principles of "individual freedom," "media freedom," and "media obligations" to society. However, there is considerable debate within this theory regarding who determines the scope of the media's social responsibility (Fatahi et al., 2021, p. 117).

The social responsibility of the media is not solely derived from theoretical texts but is clear and specific in practice. This responsibility also encompasses the preservation of social values. Environmental preservation is a vital social value, and raising awareness and providing education about this value constitute fundamental needs within society.

The media significantly influences the public's understanding of the world, meaning that people's awareness and perceptions of their surroundings are shaped by the content they receive from the media. As mediators between individual consciousness and broader social meaning-making structures, the media plays a crucial role in shaping social attitudes. Television, in particular, serves as a foundation for these attitudes (Mohammad, 2019, p. 4).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method employed in this study is a quantitative survey approach utilizing a questionnaire as the primary tool. This method is particularly effective when the audience plays a significant role in the research. The survey method is widely recognized for its efficacy in social science research and, more recently, in media studies. It collects detailed information on media consumers' reactions to media products and publications and the impact of mass media on their audiences. It involves a systematic approach that progresses from an initial phase of understanding the audience and their characteristics to a final phase of concluding. In particular, "a survey is a collection of systematic and standardized methods to gather information about individuals, families, or larger groups." Data is gathered through questionnaires administered to randomly selected individuals and categorized into sample groups. Thus, the term "survey" encompasses the tool used for data collection and the methodologies employed in its application (Naqibossadat, 2012).

The survey method is the most commonly used approach in research focused on presenting the perspectives of media audiences. This method involves administering a set of specific and standardized questions to participants. Once the participants have provided their responses, the completed questionnaires are collected and analyzed to form the basis of the research data. The tool employed for data collection in this study is a questionnaire. One thousand questionnaires were distributed among literate individuals in the three northern provinces of Afghanistan (Mazar-i-Sharif, Jawzjan, and Sar-e-pul). The participants were selected based on their ability to comprehend media messages, environmental issues, and the impact of media awareness and educational programs related to environmental topics. After completing the questionnaires, the data was collected and analyzed using the SPSS software.

Provinces Under Investigation

Balkh Province. Balkh Province, located in northern Afghanistan, is one of the country's most renowned regions. The province spans a total geographical area of 16,186.3 square kilometers, with a population exceeding 1.245 million people, according to the latest available data from 2013. Of this population, 66% reside in rural areas, while 34% live in urban centers. The inhabitants of Balkh are predominantly engaged in administrative, social, cultural, agricultural, industrial, and commercial activities (Ansari, 2014, p. 588).

The city of Mazar-i-Sharif, located within Balkh Province, is the largest urban center in northern Afghanistan and one of the country's crucial metropolitan areas. Given its significance as the primary residence of the researchers and the ease of access to the study's target population, Mazar-i-Sharif has been selected as the focus of this geographical investigation. It is worth noting that Balkh Province holds considerable cultural and intellectual importance. It is home to the largest public university in northern Afghanistan and several private universities, educational institutions, and media centers, making it a key hub for knowledge and cultural activities.

Jawzjan Province. Jawzjan Province, located adjacent to Balkh Province, had a population of approximately 512,100 people according to 2013 statistical data (ibid., p. 780). This province is also recognized as one of the cultural centers of northern Afghanistan. The primary reason for selecting this province for the study is to gain insights into the environmental conditions and population relevant to the research topic. University professors, students, and educators from various public and private institutions who are well-versed in the subject matter and capable of providing accurate and informed responses to the research questionnaires represent a key advantage and rationale for including Jawzjan Province in the study.

Sar-e-pool Province. Sar-e-pool Province, located adjacent to Jawzjan Province, had a total population of approximately 532,200 people, according to 2011 statistical data (ibid., p. 826). This province has been included in the research due to the researchers' understanding of the social conditions and the population's potential for offering valuable insights into the research topic. The presence of educated and knowledgeable individuals capable of providing scientifically sound and accurate responses to the questionnaires is a crucial factor in the selection of this province. Their expertise will aid researchers in obtaining reliable data for the study.

FINDINGS

The present research has evaluated the citizens of Mazar-e-Sharif with a sample size of 1,000 questionnaires, and the data has been described and analyzed using SPSS software. The descriptive findings of the research are arranged in frequency distribution tables (one-dimensional), and the most significant results are as follows:

Based on the findings in Table 1, the highest proportion of respondents are men (65.4%), while women represent the lowest proportion (34.6%). The criteria for distributing the questionnaires in this research are based on the target of community awareness of the value and importance of a healthy environment and the role of media messages—particularly those from domestic television channels—in fostering consciousness and education regarding environmental health. Men demonstrated the highest level of cooperation in completing and answering the questionnaires.

Table 1: Gender of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Man	654	65.4%	65.4%
Female	464	34.6%	100.0%
Total	1000	100.0%	

Including both genders in distributing questionnaires was essential, as all citizens are responsible for protecting their living environment and must be educated on its significance. Regardless of gender, every citizen needs to be informed and educated about environmental health, with media, especially domestic television channels, playing a crucial role in disseminating information and providing education on these matters.

This study aims to encompass citizens' perspectives with relevant knowledge and opinions on these issues across the three studied provinces, ensuring that the collected data is accurate and targeted. The literacy level of respondents is also considered, as educated individuals are better positioned to offer a precise and insightful analysis of television messages related to environmental preservation. One of the key issues in institutionalizing an environmental preservation culture involves identifying effective centers and institutions within society. Media and television, in particular, are significant platforms with a greater responsibility for informing and educating audiences about the essential aspects of environmental preservation. This research, irrespective of gender, assesses the community's views on the extent to which television is responsible for awareness and education in ecological conservation.

Table 2: Effective Institutions in Raising Awareness and Educating the Public on Environmental Preservation from the Audience's Perspective

Institution	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Educational Centers	287	28.7%	28.7%
Mosques	142	14.2%	42.9%
Media	447	44.7%	87.6%
Public and private offices	113	11.3%	98.9%
Other	11	1.1%	100.0%
Total	1000	100.0%	

Table 2 of this research illustrates that media has the highest effectiveness (44.7%) in raising awareness and educating the public about environmental preservation. According to the perspective of the statistical community in this study, television channels are the most effective in this role, followed by social networks, radio, and printed publications, which rank second, third, and fourth, respectively.

Television's fundamental role in promoting environmental preservation is demonstrated through its coverage of various events and programs. This role can be reflected across different genres and topics, such as health, economic development, and maintaining a pollution-free environment. The connection between environmental health and accuracy is crucial, as the absence of pollution and environmental degradation can prevent adverse effects on human health. Furthermore, a healthy environment plays a significant role in economic development and the modernization of agricultural structures. The ongoing global population growth, which affects resource availability and environmental quality, cannot be overlooked as it contributes to the emergence of poverty.

Based on the findings of this section of the research, the effectiveness of awareness and education in environmental preservation ranks as follows: media is the most effective, followed by educational institutions (including schools, universities, and training centers), mosques (with a focus on religious guidance and scholars), and offices and workplaces (both government and private sectors). Other sectors account for the lowest percentage (1.1%).

The research findings indicate that environmental preservation is a concern at international, national, local, and even individual levels. Issues such as waste management, water resource pollution, consumption of stored water, clean air, and a healthy living environment are significant from the individual to the global level. Public opinion is a critical source of environmental preservation, as evidenced by ecological preservation movements, groups, and institutions. Media, particularly television, effectively mobilizes public opinion on ecological preservation. In many countries with high public sensitivity towards environmental issues, the environment often becomes a prominent priority in political advertising slogans. The media, especially television, is crucial in shaping these advertisements and influencing public opinion. Unfortunately, this aspect has received minimal attention in Afghanistan, even among Afghan politicians.

Media, particularly television, can significantly enhance public awareness of environmental issues such as climate change, pollution, and loss of biodiversity by disseminating scientific and research information through their programs. By producing and broadcasting educational content, documentaries, and articles, television can raise public awareness about the importance of environmental preservation and mitigate negative impacts on the environment. However, such content is infrequently featured in Afghan television programming.

According to the findings presented in Table 3, the level of respondents' satisfaction with the quantity and quality of awareness and training provided by domestic television channels is highest in the "very low" category (28.1%) and the "low" category (28.1%). Conversely, the lowest levels of satisfaction are observed in the "much" (11.7%) and "very much" (10.2%) categories. This indicates that the media, particularly domestic television channels, do not adequately address event-oriented and process-oriented programs related to environmental issues. According to demand theory, maintaining a healthy environment is a fundamental need for individuals in any society. Education on environmental maintenance and preservation for people across different age groups, educational backgrounds, and professions plays a crucial role in environmental conservation. Television has the potential to enhance public respect for nature through education and awareness, fostering new attitudes toward environmental ethics and harmony with nature. Unfortunately, the findings of this study reveal a lack of high satisfaction levels regarding television channels' focus on environmental issues in their programming.

Table 3: *The Level of Respondents' Satisfaction with the Responsibility of Domestic Television Channels in Informing and Educating the Public on Environmental Preservation*

Category	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Very little	287	28.7%	28.7%
Little	281	28.1%	56.8%
Medium	213	21.3%	78.1%
Much	117	11.7%	79.8%
Very much	102	10.2%	100.0%
Total	1000	100.0%	

Responsibility for environmental preservation can stem from citizens' awareness of the health of their living environment. Engaging public opinion to support a healthy environment, fostering respect for current and future generations regarding environmental concerns, and bolstering appropriate structures for ecological activities through the media—mainly television—can be highly effective. Through positive coverage of environmental preservation, television has the potential to cultivate a culture of social responsibility. By employing broadcast techniques, television should guide family members' lifestyles and behaviors within family programs that support environmental preservation. The media, especially television, plays a crucial role in several capacities: supporting ecological organizations, unifying public opinion in favor of environmental initiatives, and monitoring and criticizing ineffective or harmful practices that negatively impact the environment.

The media, particularly television, should produce and highlight changes in environmental components that directly or indirectly threaten human well-being, whether through natural, synthetic, or human-induced pollutants. By educating its audience about these changes and their impacts, television can fulfill its role in promoting a healthy environment and taking responsibility for it. Unfavorable changes in environmental elements can jeopardize human

life. While humans are part of nature, their innovative and creative capacities have enabled them to understand natural laws and use these laws for their benefit and well-being.

Unfortunately, based on the respondents' views in this research, domestic television channels have not prominently fulfilled their social responsibilities. Despite the media's fundamental role in promoting sustainable behaviors through educational programs and content, there has been a lack of significant efforts to encourage environmentally protective behaviors and positive environmental habits. Coverage of environmental news events can heighten social sensitivity to environmental issues and motivate individual and collective actions to protect the environment. However, the findings of this research indicate that domestic Afghan television channels have fallen short in fulfilling their media responsibilities regarding environmental preservation.

Table 4: *The Role of Television Channels in the Cultural Promotion of Environmental Preservation Based on Respondents' Perspectives*

Category	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Very little	45	4.5%	4.5%
Little	57	5.7%	10.2%
Medium	203	20.3%	30.5%
Much	341	34.1%	64.6%
Very much	354	35.4%	100.0%
Total	1000	100.0%	

The findings of Table 4 demonstrate the significant role of domestic television channels in Afghanistan in promoting a culture of environmental preservation. The statistical population of this study reveals a high level of approval among respondents regarding the effective and beneficial role of television programming in fostering environmental awareness. The largest percentage (35.4%) of respondents view this role as essential. In contrast, a small proportion of respondents who selected the "very little" option do not acknowledge the prominent role of television in this regard. Institutionalizing the culture of environmental preservation is a fundamental need for individuals living within a community and environment. Environmental preservation entails efforts to preserve the health of the environment and human beings across various levels, factors, and dimensions.

Ecological factors include non-living components such as the atmosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere, pedosphere, and living factors like the biosphere. In terms of type, the environment can be categorized into the natural environment (those areas untouched by human intervention, such as mountains, forests, and seas), the built environment (human-made structures like cities, urban infrastructure, and roads), and the social environment, which encompasses the daily human relationships through which social needs are met.

The environment is a perception of nature and wildlife and a broader concept encompassing all aspects of human life and the surroundings they interact with daily. Since the concept of

the environment and its preservation extends to the home, workplace, social, and cultural environments, it can be considered a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Consequently, institutionalizing a culture of environmental conservation is a responsibility shared by all influential institutions, particularly the media and television channels. Television plays a crucial role in raising public awareness and embedding the culture of environmental preservation within society. Television can effectively highlight the importance of ecological conservation by disseminating documentaries, educational programs, and news reports. Issues such as climate change, air and water pollution, and biodiversity are widely discussed in global media, but unfortunately, they receive limited attention in Afghan television programming.

Education is another powerful tool that lies within the purview of television. By producing high-quality programs that teach environmental preservation concepts in the form of news, entertainment, and educational content, television can impact the audience's perceptions and behavior. Addressing environmental preservation in media content can positively influence public attitudes toward the environment and emphasize the significance of preserving it. A key recommendation of this research for television producers and media professionals is to recognize the value and importance of maintaining the environment, which is beyond dispute. However, due to the population's low awareness and literacy level, the public often fails to take appropriate action to protect the environment. The media, particularly television, can play a vital role in bridging this gap by providing essential environmental education to their audiences.

Table 5: Chi-Square Test

Test	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.365 ^a	4	.004
Likelihood Ratio	13.774	4	.032
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.978	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	1000		

a. Four cells (33.3%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is .28.

In Table 5, the chi-square test, with a value of 18.365, 4 degrees of freedom, and a 1% error rate, indicates that the relationship between the two variables is statistically significant with 99% confidence. This means there is a significant correlation between the role of television in environmental preservation and the level of audience satisfaction and trust in this medium. The research findings reveal that the audience is active and purposeful in media usage. The data suggest that audiences perceive that media, particularly television, must address their informational needs to foster trust and satisfaction. The approach to use and satisfaction is grounded in fulfilling the audience's informational needs. At the same time, the social responsibility perspective emphasizes that meeting these needs is a fundamental duty of the media, especially television. When television programs are designed with the audience's

informational needs in mind, the perceived benefit of these programs increases, consequently enhancing both audience satisfaction and trust.

There is no doubt that audience satisfaction and trust are valuable assets for television networks. To earn and maintain this satisfaction and trust, television networks should reassess the production and content of their broadcasts to better engage viewers across various domains. According to social responsibility theory, the media must effectively meet their audience's informational needs. Today's audience is adept with new communication technologies, capable of discerning their informational needs, utilizing television content appropriately, and expressing their satisfaction and trust.

This research's statistical population and target group comprised educated and analytical individuals with expertise in media and environmental issues, as evidenced by the research findings. According to these respondents, television is superior to other media in terms of effectiveness in raising awareness and providing education. However, it has not performed this role adequately, resulting in low audience satisfaction and trust regarding educational and awareness programs on environmental preservation. Furthermore, the findings confirm that the quality of television programming significantly influences the audience's satisfaction and confidence in television networks.

DISCUSSION

Environmental preservation and its sustainable use are global topics of discussion today. The media, particularly television, play a more prominent role than any other factor in educating the public, raising awareness, and promoting positive imagery regarding environmental preservation. Numerous studies conducted across various countries on different environmental issues and the role of the media in preservation highlight the critical importance of media in protecting the environment.

In Afghanistan, limited scientific and research attention has been given to this issue. However, various aspects of the relationship between media and environmental preservation have been explored in other countries. The few studies conducted in Afghanistan were not available to the researcher during the preparation of this article. Among the available studies relevant to this topic is a 2013 research titled "Investigating the Role of Media on Citizens' Environmental Information Acquisition," conducted by Mirghaid Rezaei in Iran. The findings revealed that residents of Ahvaz, specifically individuals over 15, received most of their environmental information from television, while cinema was the least utilized source. Interestingly, most respondents emphasized that they received inadequate information regarding environmental protection through the media, particularly television. The highlights are that Afghan television channels provide insufficient ecological education and awareness to meet their audiences' needs.

In Afghanistan, limited scientific and research attention has been dedicated to this issue. In contrast, other countries have explored the relationship between media and environmental

preservation. The few studies conducted in Afghanistan were not accessible to the researcher during the preparation of this article. However, there are available studies relevant to the topic of this research, which include the following:

Hasanood (2013) conducted a study titled 'The Role of Media in Environmental Preservation, which examined the significance of the environment, education, media, and the necessity of environmental preservation education through the media in Iran. The results indicated that the media plays a crucial and prominent role in conveying the importance of ecological preservation. In the present study, similar to the findings of Hassanvand's research, television is positioned as a potential role model for educating and informing audiences. However, based on the study's statistical population responses, television stations in Afghanistan have not effectively fulfilled this fundamental responsibility to their audiences.

A research paper by Taghavi et al. (2016) conducted in 2016 under the title 'Investigating the Importance and Position of the Media in Environmental Preservation with a Sustainable Development Approach' revealed that, given the increasing significance of the media globally and their role in shaping public opinion, no tool is more important or effective than the media for enhancing environmental awareness. The media should be valued for their effectiveness in education and awareness related to environmental preservation. In the present study, the media's prominent role, compared to other enlightening factors, aligns with the findings presented in Table 2. Additionally, Table 4 of this study indicates that the role of television in fostering an environmental culture is substantial. The chi-square test demonstrated a significant relationship between audience satisfaction and trust in television and the level of education and awareness in various fields, particularly those concerning environmental preservation.

Among the main findings of this study—rarely addressed in previous research—were the media's insufficient attention to covering news and issues related to the environment and the lack of support from authorities in encouraging and promoting educational and awareness programs related to environmental preservation.

CONCLUSION

This article examines the role of domestic television networks in informing and educating citizens about environmental preservation from the perspective of the statistical research community. The findings reflect residents' views from three Northern provinces of Afghanistan (Mazar-e-Sharif, Sar-e-pool, and Jawzjan) based on a targeted sample size that addresses the coverage and production of both event-oriented and process-oriented programs by domestic television networks. Media, in general, and television, are responsible for informing and educating their audiences. A healthy and pollution-free environment significantly contributes to society's health, development, and stability. The relationship between living organisms and the environment is bidirectional: the environment impacts living organisms, and conversely, living organisms influence and alter the environment.

The most significant resource for maintaining the living environment within society is the media, particularly television. Producing content to raise awareness and educate the public, using appropriate mechanisms and technology, is a crucial responsibility for television channels alongside their other programming. The findings of this research further confirm that the role of the media, especially television, in informing and educating about environmental preservation is notably more pronounced compared to other institutions and authorities, such as educational institutions, mosques, and public and private offices. However, domestic television networks have either failed or are unwilling to fulfill this role effectively and meaningfully.

The research findings indicate that television networks give minimal attention to producing educational and awareness content on environmental preservation within their programming. Nonetheless, the study reveals a significant relationship between the level of audience satisfaction and trust and the degree of attention and effectiveness of television networks in providing education and awareness on environmental preservation. As the media's focus on producing and broadcasting environmental preservation content increases, so does audience satisfaction and trust in that television network or media outlet. Conversely, a lack of attention and ineffective programming in this area leads to decreased audience satisfaction and trust. The research responses indicate that television networks have performed poorly in addressing this subject matter and have not succeeded in maintaining their audience's level of trust and satisfaction in this domain.

As part of society, television operators understand that one of the primary negative consequences of increasing environmental pollution is the endangerment of human health due to environmental neglect. Particularly in developing countries, it is crucial to inform and educate the public on various aspects of maintaining a healthy environment, and the media is uniquely positioned to address this gap more effectively than other institutions.

The findings of this article underscore the importance and value of individual responsibility in protecting the environment and in promoting and educating others about this responsibility to ensure a healthy, peaceful, and prosperous society. This responsibility is particularly significant for television networks. According to the respondents in this study, the promotion of environmental preservation culture in Afghan domestic television programs is currently at a very low level, with the respondents' satisfaction rated as "very low." Respondents from diverse genders and fields of study view television as the most influential medium for public opinion regarding environmental awareness and education.

However, their satisfaction with television's role in institutionalizing and fostering a culture of environmental preservation is notably low. The findings indicate that Afghan televisions pay minimal attention to covering environmental preservation news and sometimes only features such content in commercials as a form of advertising revenue. Despite many television programs not aligning with audience preferences or needs, no domestic television channels are producing sustainable programs specifically for environmental awareness and education.

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