



Media Ethics in Pakistan: Exploring Stake Holders' Perceptions

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Abstract

Media have shown tremendous growth in Pakistan especially in field of electronic media during the last one and half decade. This growth raised many questions on the role of media. Media have been criticized for promoting sensationalism, biasness, non-adoption of ethics and irresponsible reporting. This study has been conducted to explore the perceptions of different stake holders regarding the practices of media ethics in Pakistan. Media's Stakeholders i.e. Journalists, Media Teachers and Media Users were surveyed. Perceptions of stakeholders were measured through a survey research. The evaluation of results revealed that "Hierarchy Influences Model" works in case of ethics and attests that ethics is a bi-product and individual media workers, media routines, organizational factors; extra organizational factors and ideologies. In addition to that this model has a lot of influence in shaping media ethics. This study has found a good relationship between Hierarchy Influences Model and Ethics that means adoption of ethics is not only problem of media organizations rather issue of media ethics has to be solved and treated at five levels to get desired results.

Keywords: *Media Ethics, Media Stake Holders, Media Perceptions, Mass Communication in Pakistan. Media in Pakistan*



Introduction

Universal Human Rights Declaration (UHRD) of the United Nations and Constitution of Pakistan assure freedom of expression to the citizens as well as media organizations. However, both documents impose some limitations on press in light of certain codes of conduct for welfare of public and state. Article 19 of the UHRD narrates that everyone has right to freedom of opinion and expression and to seek information and ideas through media while article 29 of the same declaration associates freedom with responsibility and limits. It narrates, “In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights,1948).” Similarly in Pakistan, article 19 of the constitution describes the role of the press: initially, it declares that citizens would have right to freedom and expression and press shall also be free and in later part it associates freedom with reasonable restrictions and law that is in interest of the glory of Islam, state, security defense, friendly relations with foreign states and morality in relation with contempt of court or in relation to an offence (The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan,1973). Therefore press in democratic societies enjoys freedom but with responsibility and adoption of ethics is stressed and encouraged on all esteemed forums. Consequently it is essential to have an opinion of all the stake holders to understand the media industry, regulation and violates ethical codes.

There are mainly three stake holders of media i.e. journalists, academicians and media users. Journalists are reporters, producers, editors etc. and they are responsible for the content being broadcasted on TV channels or published in newspapers. Journalists’



personal traits, e.g. qualification, family background, religious or political affiliations, compel journalists to incline towards their beliefs during discharge of their professional duties besides that their life at work place, salary and overall working atmosphere also has impact on their thoughts and behaviors when it comes to ethics.

Academicians train journalists, analyze media content and study media effects on media users. They are supposed to lay a foundation for journalists' training and give road map to the government for policy making based on research conducted around the globe while governments in developed countries also take academicians on board while policy making and get benefited from their experience .

In case of media freedom, in fact, there are two opinions. One opinion terms media as fourth pillar of the state and considers it important for healthy democracy while the other one concerns that media has taken its freedom for granted without defining the sphere of freedom and violating its clear role to entertain, educate and inform masses.

Media Landscape in Pakistan (Stake Holders)

In Pakistan how media works under the umbrella of government and how government and media influence each other we need to look into some departments which interact with media for registration, regulation, publicity etc. We also need to look into journalistic bodies, groups and associations which would help in understandings media operations and journalists' approach in the field.

Ministry of Information & Broadcasting

According to the official website of Ministry of Information Broadcasting and National Heritage (MoIB) has a cabinet level equivalence and it is responsible to release and publicize government's version of news, unscientific data, pictures, literature, video and print public awareness messages and other miscellaneous items related to media. The ministry has eight wings which consist of Autonomous or Semi-Autonomous Bodies,



Statutory Bodies, Organizations, Corporations, Attached Departments, Sub-Ordinate Offices, Authorities and Other Offices. Its attached departments are Press Information Department, Directorate of Electronic Media and Publications, Department of Archaeology and Museums, National Language Promotion Department, Implementation Tribunal for Newspaper Employees. Among the attached departments two departments deal with media regulation. These departments are Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority and Press Council of Pakistan.

PEMRA

Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority is an independent and constitutional body which was established under an ordinance called PEMRA Ordinance 2002. The said authority was found with the purpose of regulating, facilitating and distributing the private local and foreign television and radio channels in Pakistan. It has mandate to improve the standards of broadcast so that viewers may get variety in content on electronic media with quality and its function is to ensure transparency and accountability of media. The authority consists of twelve members which are appointed by the President of Pakistan. Chairman of the authority is professional having experience in media, business, law etc (PEMRA Legislation Listing).

Press Council of Pakistan

Press Council of Pakistan is an autonomous wing of Ministry of Information Broadcasting and National Heritage which monitors and issues standards of media operations. There are two major aims of council: (a) to receive complaints of any violation of Code of Practice related to media organizations and journalists; (b) and to revise, implement, update ethical code of practice for media organizations, journalists and publishers.



Academia and Journalists

There are eight institutions in Rawalpindi-Islamabad offering mass communication degrees. A decade before the boom of media journalism had least to do with journalism or mass communication degree but now in metropolitan cities media education is gaining ground and media houses are demanding graduates having relevant degree those know about basics of news values and have news sense (Gulzar, 2005). On other hand in rural areas district correspondents are discouraged with little or no support from organization in terms professional and financial terms.

Media Bodies and Associations

A number of journalist's bodies and associations are working in Pakistan with a claim to ensure the protection, welfare and rights of journalists. Besides working for journalists' rights these organizations also influence policy making and legislation process because during policy making government consult these representative bodies. Speaking in terms of factors influence media content these bodies and associations would be termed as 'pressure groups'.

Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists

The most important journalists' bodies are Pakistan Union of Journalists' (PFUJ) and Press Clubs. PFUJ is registered with International Union of Journalists and it has network of thirteen Unions of Journalists (UJ's) nationwide.

Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors

The Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE) was founded in 1957 as a representative body of newspapers' editors to raise the voice for freedom and defense of press and to ensure the right of access to information and speech. CPNE has also formulated code of ethics having seventeen points enclosing basic journalistic ethics such as dispelling sensationalism, violence, discrimination (About CPNE).



Pakistan Broadcasters Association

Pakistan Broadcasters Association (PBA) was formed in 2005 with claim to be the representative body of broadcasters, advertisers and media buying houses. It is responsible for protecting its members in every lawful manner observing its code of conduct called “Memorandum of Association of the Pakistan Broadcasters Association.” Although nature of business of all these stake holders is different however PBA intends to resolve their issues especially that are financial to promote healthy business trends. It is also responsible for transparent Television Audience Measurement (TAM) commonly called ratings of channel.

All Pakistan Newspapers Society

All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS), previously called The Pakistan Newspapers Society was established in 1950 but could not create an impact. Later, in 1953 all of existing groups were merged by setting a head office at Karachi. APNS sensitized newspapers’ owners to reach at common goal of interests and to lay down rules for advertising agencies and publishers using the tools such as security deposits, clearance schedule and penalty charges in case of dues. It only doesn’t handle the complaints of the members but also settles the disputes among the members. Hence, the major significance of APNS is that of bridge between publishers and advertisers and it has merged as representative body of magazines and newspapers across the country.

Press Clubs and Associations

Press Clubs have been established on districts levels. Press Clubs are administered by governing body that is elected by members of press club. Besides that various other associations also exist such as sports journalists association, parliamentary reporters’ association, crime reporters associations.



Press Freedom in Constitution

Government of Pakistan gave its first constitution on March 23, 1956 after nine years of independence. The said constitution guaranteed the right of freedom of expression under article 8 whereas it didn't guaranteed freedom of press. Constitution of 1956 was based on Government of India Act of 1935 and it was abrogated by Field Marshal Ayub Khan. The second constitution was promulgated in 1962 which also ensure right to freedom of expression but didn't cover area of freedom of press. After General Yahya Khan abrogated this constitution the democratic government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto gave the constitution of 1973 which is considered a "constitution with consensus" because all the religious and political parties had expressed satisfaction over it. This was the first constitution after the independence which covered freedom of expression and speech along with freedom of press. However, freedom of press was not absolute because it can be misused by certain elements and may cause defamation, harm to national interest and security. The press was given freedom but certainly with some compulsions (Naqvi, 2013).

Factors that Affect Journalists to Write Unfair and unbalanced reports

Sensitive issues: The first reason as explained in (Harper.2008) is when journalists faced with sensitive issue like ware or election, the possibility of their story to be slanted to one side will increase.

Politics: Politics is another reason journalists who are suppressed by the government would present the story through the government perspective. They would not have a freedom to present the opposite side of what the government is advocating.



Bias: is the third factor that leads journalists to write unfair and unbalanced news. Journalists own personal bias, stereotype and subjective judgment result unfairness in the news report (Retief, 2002: 193-194).

The media agenda: is another reason that shapes the news in to one side and make the story totally unfair and unbalanced (MacDonald and Petheram, 1998: 62).

Financial problem: would some time be the factor for this ethical problem. The reporter who has got freebies from a particular organization would finally end up with writing“ too much praise „for the company (Sanders, 2003:122).

Journalist attachment: to a particular group, or company will pledge journalist to present the fact one sided or unfairly (Bell, 1998:16).

The Major Factors of Journalists that Influence Ethical Decision Making

Process in the Newsroom

Individual

As an individual, journalists are very much influenced by their internalized set of beliefs in the way they report. Masterson and patching (1997) argues that journalist are very much influenced by their biases their perception of the audience, and their own interpretation of the core „news value“ of consequences proximity, conflict, human interest, novelty, and prominence.

A study conducted by Voakes (1997) found that personal, intrinsic values, does influence the decision making process of journalists. Studies have shown that journalists are drawn to the profession by a sense of social responsibility. This includes journalists strive to report the truth in fairness and as accurately responsible on order to serve the public interest (Kovach and Rosenthal 2004).



Small group

This news room culture norms can be interpreted as the small group social influence, and is confirmed by Schultz's (1998) 1992 media and democracy survey that colleagues are consistently the most significant source of guidance for the journalists surveyed. Findings invokes (1997) survey support this view as it is found that colleagues and editors often embolden a journalist to take some risk ethically. So editors and managers are also influencing journalists to seek other perspectives in their daily decision making process. Within the newsroom culture, it is the fellow journalists and editors that one mostly seeks advice and help from. This is crucial as the more experienced senior journalists and editors will be able to help journalists make ethical journalistic decisions.

Organization

It is also found in Voakes (1998) study that the organization continues to highly influence decision making by scoring the highest value. Another study by Johnstone et al (1973) found that the type of organization have a bearing on how a journalist define his responsibilities. It also found that the larger and more powerful news organizations allow the journalist to play a more active role in their decision making process.

Professional Problems

It has been sufficiently demonstrated that journalists in all mass media organizations joined the profession without having journalistic qualification. Those, from language and literature background were dominating the field (Birhanu, 2009: 95).

Economic Factors

Journalism is one of the profession which gives lower salary for its practitioners in a developing countries like Ethiopia, (Kasoma, Journalism Ethics in Africa, 1994:106), (Sanders, 2003:122). This situation aggravate the issue of creditability, balance, objectivity and fairness may not given due attention by the journalists. As a result,



“accepting freebies, gifts ,favors ,free travel, special treatment or privileges can compromise the integrity of journalists and their employers. Nothing of value should be accepted.” A bribe, the journalists should know and understand that it is intended to influence his or her journalistic professional work (Kasoma, 2000: 96).

Political Factors or Personal Agenda

The need to satisfy the political leaders and individual vested interest are also another reason for the journalists to create a story. Journalists who are affiliated with political parties or to some cases will be pressured to write false propaganda. The definition shows that propaganda is a way of transmitting ones interest through lying reports to get public acceptance. As a result propaganda can also invoke fake reporting (propaganda,2011).The ethical issue usually revolves around the degree to which outside relationship and vested interests are likely to influence one’s professional judgment(Day, 2003:220).

Psychological factors

Sometimes journalists fabricate news stories or feature articles just because they enjoyed to be admired and loved by the staffs, bosses and by the readers (Shapiro, 2006). “A deep desire to get in to the paper; „the thrill of getting a good story“ and especially to make the front page”, is another reason for journalists to fabricate, (Ibid).The other form of psychological factors as written by Shapiro is that journalists try to deceive in their writings because they want to avoid rejection.

Self-Censorship

This is one of the main reasons that journalists practice omission especially in the environment where suppression exists, journalists will self censor themselves and omit important detail of facts. Kasoma express this situation as “the most malignant journalistic (Kasoma, 1994).



Theoretical Framework of the study

Social Responsibility Theory was originated in the United States in the 1940s, amid concerns about the power of the press. The theory called on the free press to use its freedom to serve the public through informed reportage and diverse views. The “critics” were journalists who rejected the restraints of objective professional reporting and practiced more interpretive, partial forms of journalism such as investigative reporting and activist journalism (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956).

Social Responsibility is good enough to describe the role of press in favor of society however implication of all the normative theories including the social responsibility theory is highly generalized. At the time when technology and distribution systems are multiplying these theories lack the direct connection with media systems, values of independence, market and different levels of control (McQuail, 1997). Therefore, Shoemaker and Reese's Hierarchy of Influences Model will be utilized here.

Shoemaker & Reese (1994) presented a “Hierarchical Influences Model” which explains that media content is influenced at five levels (hypothesis of this study supports influence of this model with on ethics). These levels are 1) Individual Level; 2) Media Routines; 3) Organizational Influence; 4) Influence from outside media organizations; 5) Influence of Ideology.

Literature Review

Ethics are the generalized rules of conduct that guide towards the principles of morality and give a map of action in certain situations. Over the period of time philosophers have given guidelines of ethics for analyzing the behavior but they do not give magic answers in every situation because there is no perfect answer to every problem as the problems vary society to society. However moral virtues lies between the two



extremes. Aristotle defined these two extremes by saying “too much and too little food spoils the health”. (Dominick, 2010, p. 434).

Why there is need of ethics in case of media and why media entities should adhere to ethical values, we see that (Croteau & Hoynes, 2011, p. 37) identifies two models of mass media i.e. Market Model and Public Sphere Model. The Market Model observes media just as any other market oriented product that seeks profits, organizations have competitions and demand, supply is in accordance with requirement of consumers. Whereas Public Sphere Model has macro level approach that observes media’s role affective that circulates the knowledge, ideas, enhances social education, affects behaviors and serves public interest through substantive and diversified content. (Belsey, 1998), argues that on one hand journalism is a market driven industry while on other hand it is journalism - a professional phenomenon that has strong base of values and ethics at its core and this ethical virtue makes journalist a public servant.

Central core of law and ethics are same however there is difference of understanding. Ethics focuses what is good or bad whereas law evaluates actions in terms of right or wrong (Emmons Jr, 2010). There is also a debate that whether ethics can be taught or not for instance (Freud, 1923/1961) believed that teaching about ethics won’t always produce moral behavior because moral development is complete when a person is six years old whereas (Flexner, 1930) believe that ethics is subject just as social or natural sciences and it can be taught.

Shoemaker & Reese, 1994, attached a lot of importance with source of information that ultimately influences media content. (Haunter n.d.), argues that traditional news reporting heavily relies upon press releases and notes released by government, police and other companies. On one hand journalists have to presume that their sources are dependable and on other hand sources often promote their goals and



reporters go by their version without investigating facts. (Reavy, 2013), argued that in mainstream media journalists heavily rely on official sources thus power gain advantages. The author suggests that inclusion of official and non-official sources will bring diversity and credibility to the news.

In Pakistan, Article 18 of “Government Servants Rules and Conduct 1964” doesn’t permit any personnel to communicate unofficially directly or indirectly unless authorized or directed (Civil Services Academy). In this scenario Article 19 - A of (The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973) comes in play that ensures that every citizen would have right to know and he/she would have access to information pertaining to matters of public interest. After the eighteenth amendment in Constitution of Pakistan, “Right to Know” was inserted after Article 19 in the chapter of Fundamental Rights (18th Amendment 2010).

In reality people do not exercise their right to information directly and go to media for the information and it is important for media to use these laws (Article 19 Training Manual). This responsibility also comes on the shoulders of journalists that they practice investigative journalism by using the laws for access to information (Abdullah & Reshmi n.d.). Speaking on the forum of “Academia and Civil Society Round Table Conference”, heads of media schools in Pakistan said that citizens are unaware not sensitized of their right to know and media professionals are not interested in using this tool to gain the information (Pakistan Needs Citizens-Centric Information Policy).

Research Questions

RQ 1- Whether and to what extent media workers take interest in ethics when they have good working environment?

RQ 2- Whether and to what extent decision power comes from media owners?

RQ 3- Whether and to what extent media are controlled by financial means?



Research Design

Researchers usually use one research method and when problem is complex and they have to investigate different angles and dimensions they combine research methods. In case of this research only one method was sufficient to explore the various dimensions of the topic.

Keeping in requirement and nature of the study survey research methodology was used. The population of study was divided into three strata: 1) Journalists; 2) Media Teachers; 3) Media Users. A total 250 respondents from these strata were surveyed: 100 were journalists, 100 were students and 50 were the media teachers.

The questionnaire was divided into three categories. Section A was dealing with media laws, legislation, controlling bodies and policies. Section B was dealing with media ownership, commercialism, ideology and media routines whereas Section C was dealing with journalists, working environment, securities, issues, concerns and solutions.

The respondents were surveyed with questionnaire that was designed using Likert Scale.

For the survey of journalists four media houses were selected. The selection was made on the basis of cross media ownership. Three of these media houses were private i.e. Jang Group, Nada I Millat Group and Pakistan Group. These three groups have English and Urdu publications as well as television channels. The fourth was state owned news agency Associated Press of Pakistan (APP). APP has English, Urdu, Video, Pashto, Saraiki and Arabic news services. Television channels and newspapers are fed by the news agency on subscription basis.

Nawa-I-Waqat is known for its strong base of ideology. This group is considered as the rightist that supports Ideology of Pakistan, whereas Jang group has a big infrastructure, a leading TV channel and it has been through various controversies such as



blaming Inter Intelligence Agency for the attack on Hamid Mir. These two media groups have huge share in the market while Pakistan group doesn't have a big infra-structure and it is still considered to be an emerging group. Besides having newspapers Pakistan Group owns television channel however it is yet striving to make its prominent place in the market.

The government news agency was included in the strata because it neither has market capturing issue nor have financial problems as it comes under the umbrella of Ministry for Information. Hence, 100 journalists were selected from these four media groups (25 each). List of journalists were obtained from the all four organizations and they were surveyed using random sampling technique.

Teachers of all the universities having department of mass communication and media sciences in Rawalpindi and Islamabad were surveyed.

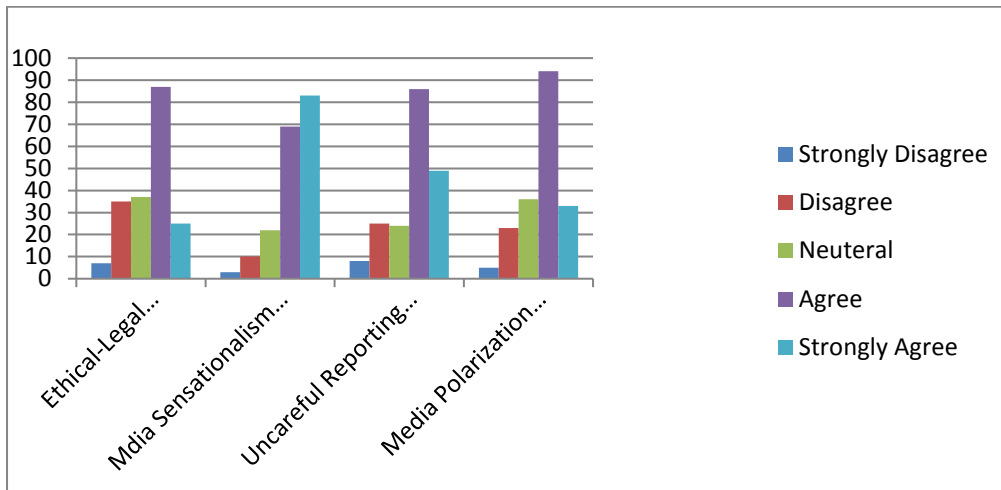
Hundred media users; those were university level students at Rawalpindi and Islamabad Universities were surveyed. Fifty male students were surveyed from Islamic International University (IIU) and fifty students were selected from Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU). These universities were selected because both have segregated mode of education and we could get diverse opinion.

Data Analysis

Availability of Ethics and their implementation

Media ethics guide the media towards the moral attitude, values, code of conduct and ethics. A complete ethical-legal narrative is available in Pakistan. Let it be Constitution of 1973, penal code, laws or code of conduct; all these documents provide substantial guideline for adoption of ethics. It is apparent from the Figure 1: Media Ethics – An Accumulative Prospective that stake holders of media (45%) agree that “Ethical-Legal Code of Conduct” is available however there is lack of implementation.

Figure 1: Media Ethics – An Accumulative Prospective



A majority (43%) strongly agree followed by (35.5%) that agree that due to commercialism media indulges itself into sensational programming while (44.5%) agreed following by (25.3%) who strongly agree that media has been careless while reporting on matters of national security. Regarding the polarized attitude of media and political parties (48.7%) respondents agreed that media shows polarity towards different pressure groups and political parties.

Individual Media Workers

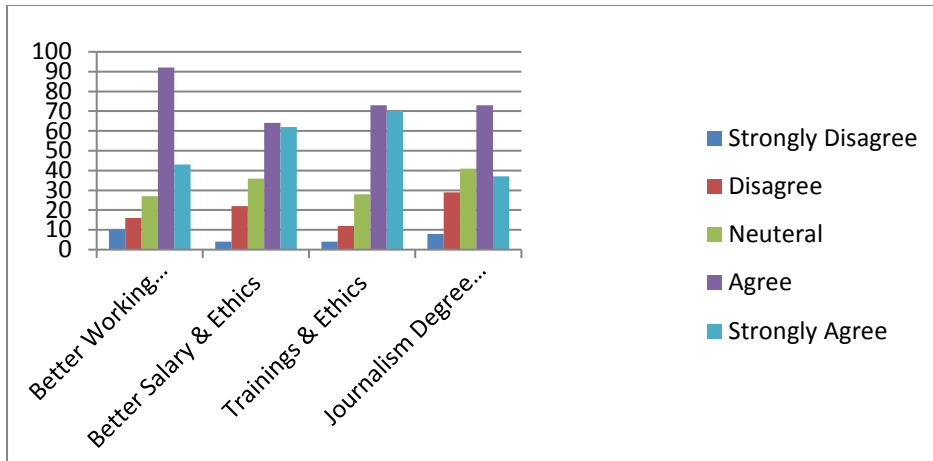
Individual media workers have a lot of contribution in shaping the media content. It is apparent from the Figure 2 that individual media workers adopt ethics when they have better working condition, salary, trainings and relevant degree.

(47.7%) respondents agreed that better working conditions for journalists pave path for adoption of media ethics. In connection to that we can see that (33.2%) strongly agreed while (32.1) agreed that journalists are not well paid and they often have to worry about their salaries and they don't have job security.

Figure 2 is evident that respondents were affirmative on the point that time to time journalists need training of stress management, new technologies and ethics. On this point (37.8%) were agreed while (36.3) were strongly agreed to this statement. While (37.8%)

respondents also agreed that journalists having media degrees understand journalism values and ethics well comparatively to those who didn't attend media school.

Figure 2: Individual Media Workers

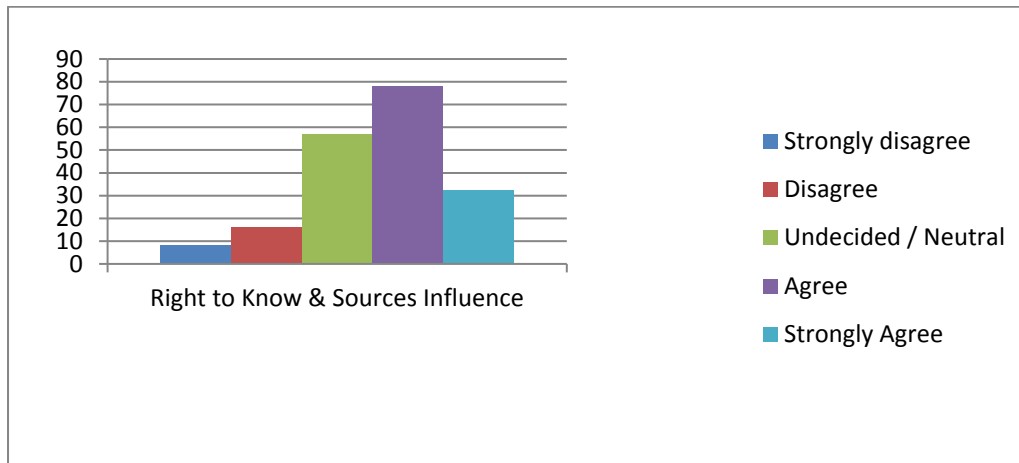


Media Routines

It is routine of journalists that they rely heavily on official and other sources for news. Therefore sources play vital role in content formation and many a times sources they give their own prospective that how they look at the things rather than being on neutral side. Reports consider these reports factual and they don't investigate for their facts.

If a journalist becomes independent of the sources he/she can become more accurate and neutral. This is possible by practicing the "Right to Know Law". It is apparent from Figure 3 that (40.4%) respondents agreed that influence of sources on content can be minimized by exercising "Right to Know" law for obtaining information of public interest.

Figure 3: Media Routines

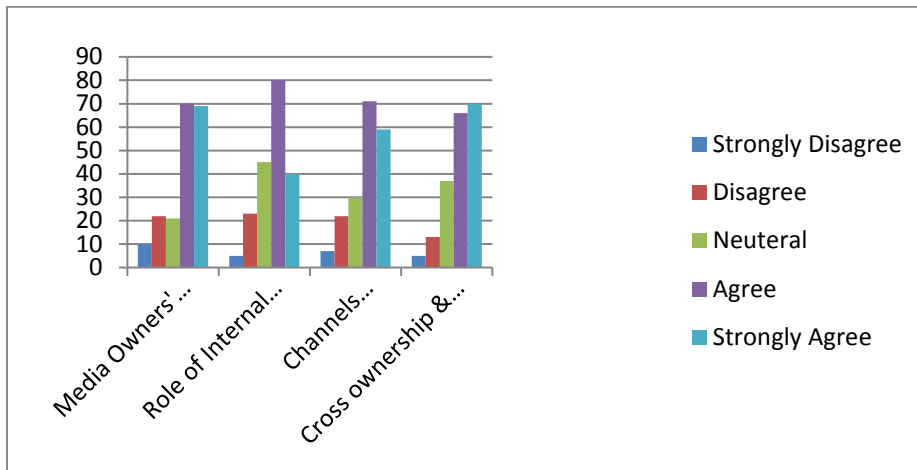


Organizational Influence

Organization and its policies have a lot of influence on content and ethics. (36.3%) of the respondents agree while (35.8%) strongly agree that media owners are business oriented and ethics are not their priority. Similarly, (41.5%) respondents were of the view that control of content lays in the hand of media owners therefore role of internal ombudsman can't be effective.

Stakeholders affirm that when there are excessive TV channels they indulge themselves into unhealthy competition and stress profit over quality. On this point (36.8) were agreed while (30.6) were strongly agreed. In addition to that (36.3%) respondents strongly agreed while (34.2%) agreed that cross media ownership gives power to media owners for manipulation of content.

Figure 4: Organizational Influence

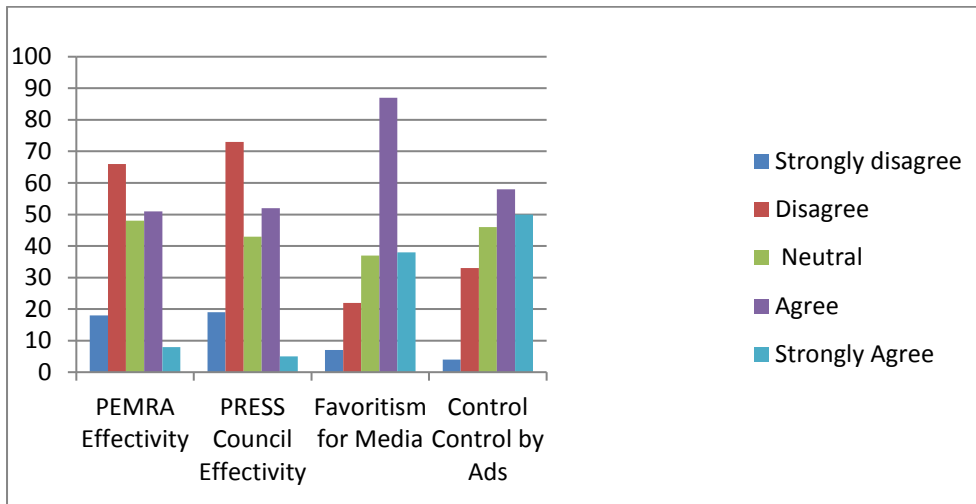


Extra Organizational Influence

There are two controlling bodies in Pakistan to regulate the electronic and print media i.e. Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) and Press Council of Pakistan (PCP). Both of these bodies have an essential role to play in regulating the media content and it has direct effect on ethics as well. Details about these bodies have been given in chapter of introduction.

In response to the question that whether PEMRA is playing an effective role in regulating the electronic media; (34.2%) Stakeholders expressed their disagreement with the statement. Regarding the PCP, similarly (37.8%) were disagreed with the statement that PCP is playing an effective role to regulate the print media.

Figure 5: Extra Organizational Influences



Moving forward, Figure 5 illustrates that (45.1%) media's stake holders agreed to the statement that regulating bodies and government have favoritism for media entities while (30.1%) agree and (25.9%) strongly agreed that government tries to control media content by stopping and awarding ads.

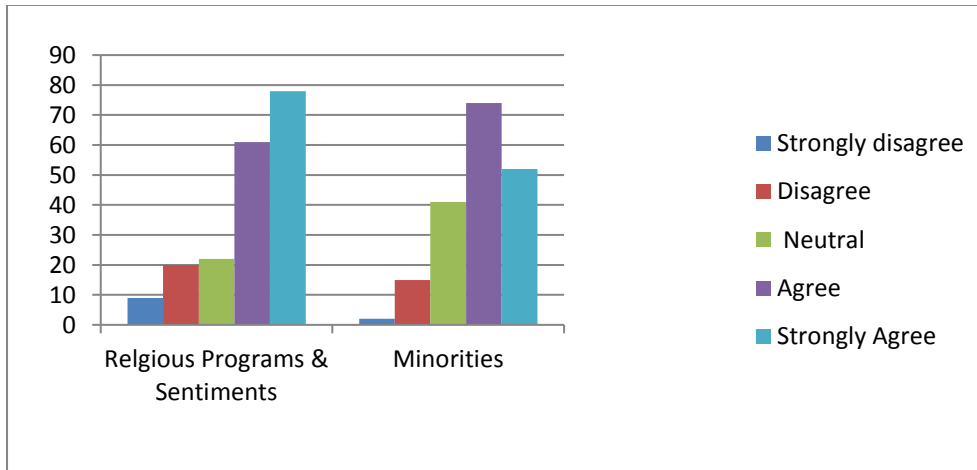
Influence of ideology

Pakistan was found on the basis of Islamic Ideology and its citizens are very sensitive on the religious matters. Article 19 of the Pakistani Constitution also bounds media to look the interest of the glory of Islam and its integrity. However, it is apparent of Figure 6 that (40.4%) respondent of the study strongly agreed followed by (31.6%) respondents those agree that religious programs are hosted by non-experts and sentiments of public are hurt when mistake is made.

Flag of Pakistan has two colors white and green. The green color represents Muslims while the white color represents the minorities. Therefore the flag symbolizes commitment with the Islamic ideology and protection of minorities' rights. Respondents of the study (38.3%) agree and (26.9%) strongly agree that minorities need representation

in the media. The question was posed in this manner with an intention to explore that whether stakeholders would like minorities to be in the media.

Figure 6: Influence of Ideology



The Way Forward

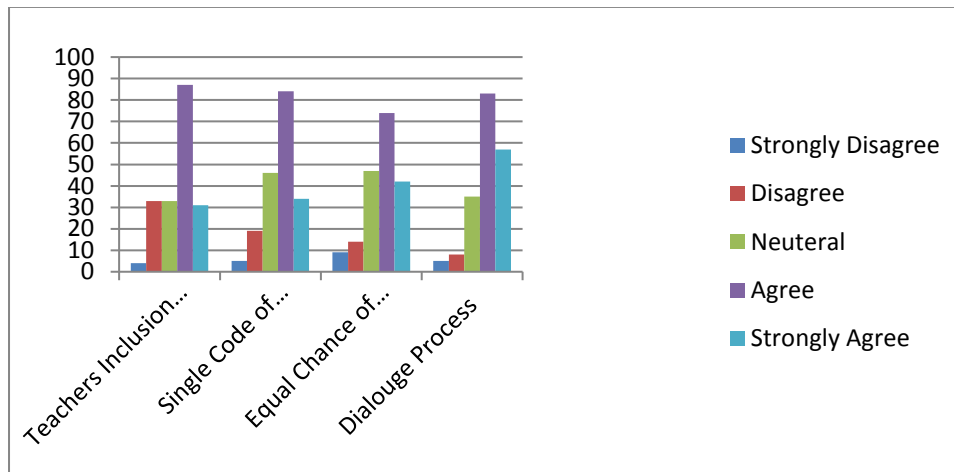
Media teachers and professors possess an important position in media landscape. They build the whole media empire by educating the forth coming journalists, supervising and conducting researches. However, it is apparent from the Figure 7 that according to stakeholders of media, teachers are often ignored in policy making. (45.1%) respondents agreed to this statement.

It was clear from the Figure 7 that there exists legal-ethical narrative but there is lack of implementation. This part could be considered as extension of that question which is giving solution to the problem that how implementation of legal-ethical conduct would be possible.

A great majority (43.5) agreed that there should be one code of conduct for media with the consensus of all the stake holders that could easily be adopted. It can be observed that various organizations and associations have given their own code of conduct on their websites. Let it be minorities, government opposition party or any other opposition group it is moral obligation of media to give opportunity to opposing groups to express their

point of view. On this statement (38.3%) respondents while (24.4%) remained neutral on it.

Figure 7: The Way Forward



Results and Findings of the Study

Following are the major findings of the study.

- Regarding the availability of ethical-legal narrative it was found that ethical-legal narrative is available however there is lack of implementation.
- Regarding the current situation of media ethics, three areas were explored i.e. sensationalism for the sake of commercialism, reporting on sensitive issues such as matters of national security and polarization of media towards certain groups and political parties.
- The findings are apparent from Figure 1 that media for the sake of commercialism and to get heavy ratings media have gone for the sensational content.
- It was found that media have been careless while reporting on the sensitive matters such as national security (as Pakistan is in state of war).
- It was also found that media shows polarization towards certain groups and political parties.



- Regarding the Individual Media Workers it was found that media workers are more likely to think of ethics when they have better working conditions, better salary packages, time to time training about ethics. In vice versa case ethics is not going to be a priority for the individual media workers.
- Hence, the hypothesis: “Media workers are likely to take interest in ethics when they have good working environment. (As per stake holder’s perceptions)” is proved.
- It was also found that journalists who have gone to journalism schools or have possess relevant degree they understand ethical values better than those who do not possess the degree or have not gone to journalism schools.
- Regarding the influence of sources, it was found that in presence of a legal procedure available which gives access to public (as well as journalists) to the information of public called “Right to Know” law; with its exercise journalists can decrease the influence of sources on the content.
- Regarding the influence of media organizations it is apparent from Figure 4 that media owners profit oriented and ethics are not their priority and when owners have strong hold in the organization, they owners have control of content therefore and internal ombudsman could not be properly functional.
- Hence the hypothesis: “Decision power in regards to content comes from media owners. (As per stake holder’s perceptions)” is valid.
- It was found that excess of television channels in the market creates an unhealthy competition and quality of content is compromised over quality for sake of profit.
- Regarding the cross ownership it was found that media owners get power over the content manipulation.



- Regarding the media regulating bodies i.e. PEMRA and PCP it is apparent from Figure 5 that they are not playing their proper role in regulating the electronic and print media.
- It is apparent from Figure 5 regulatory bodies and government has favoritism for media organizations and government tries to control the media by stopping and rewarding advertisements.
- Hence, hypothesis: “Media are controlled by financial means” (as per stakeholders’ perceptions) is proved.
- Regarding the religious Islamic ideology it found that media has not been careful while handling religious programs and these programs are hosted by non-professional hosts and they become reason to hurt the sentiments of public in appropriate content goes on air.
- Hence, hypothesis “The general forces operating to shape media content also shape media ethics” is supported.

Conclusion

On the basis of the findings of the study it can be concluded there is a strong relationship with Hierarchy Influences Model and ethics. Hierarchy Influences Model shapes the media ethics. It could be in form of media workers who put their effort to get the news and its processing. It may be in form of sources that provide news. It could be in form of organizations that pay the media worker for their work and draw policy lines and look for profit and revenue. It may be in form of extra organizational influences that might try to control the media for their agenda through finance or power and it might be the ideology could be having impact on ethics and its adoption.



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