



Exploring The Social Responsibilities Of Pakistan's Media, Perceptions Of The Audience

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ABSTRACT

The media must adhere to a set of rules, laws, and ethics in order to protect the privacy of the people. The Pakistani media is widely seen as deficient in this regard. The purpose of this article is to determine the level of social responsibility displayed by Pakistani media. It also examines the perceptions of Pakistani audiences on the deterioration of Pakistani culture due to improper foreign media content in Pakistani media. A questionnaire was used to gather information from 324 people. According to the findings, the public's perspective of media's social responsibility varies depending on the type of media outlet. Female respondents felt that television had a greater sense of social responsibility. According to the survey participants, television is more socially responsible than radio, newspapers, and magazines. Television, on the other hand, is widely regarded as the most detrimental medium in terms of exposure to offensive foreign content. People over the age of fifty, government workers, and those with advanced degrees are more likely than others to believe that television undermines civic responsibility.

Key word: Responsibility, media outlets, PEMRA, Media Ethics, Sensationalism, Political Economy of Media

Introduction

Meant to convey information or express ideas, media refers to any type of mode or channel of communication. After the invention of newspapers, the term "media" was quickly coined. With the emergence of radio, television, the film industry, and the Internet, this term has taken on new meanings. In today's world, media is essential. We can't live without them because they're such an essential component of our daily lives, like clothes and food. We can't ignore the media's important and distinctive function in today's society. Media's primary goals are to inform, educate, and entertain their audiences, all with the goal of influencing their worldviews (Nasir, 2013).

What are the media's responsibilities? Of course, in order to protect and enhance the privacy and dignity of the general public, to bring attention to what is wrong while also demonstrating that no one is flawless, and last, to provide live entertainment while simultaneously informing and educating the public. In addition, avoid being unethical, biased, or exaggerating any news that incites fury in a specific sect; it should be free of rage, unbiased, and not merely for the goal of garnering high ratings (Baker, 2004).

There has been a great deal of criticism of media and professional journalism for focusing on commercial interests and exaggerating their impact after broadcasting restrictions were lifted in 2002, according to NajamudDin (2019). The urban-rural divide in Pakistani media is pronounced in the country's trilingual media landscape. Urdu-language publications have a higher audience than those published in any other language. Although the number of people who read English print media is small in comparison, the publications' influence among decision-makers is enormous. The majority of English-language newspapers are geared toward the urban population and tend to be more cumulative.

In order to better inform the public about current events and help them form more informed judgments about the media's objectivity, they provide comprehensive coverage of all relevant political issues, resolutions, and scenarios (Nasir, 2013). According to their own laws and regulations, the media should be held accountable. Rather than exaggerating and promoting sensationalism, the media should be able to resolve any problem or matter with a constructive attitude. It is the role of the media to serve as a mirror for society, and its primary job is to present the complete world to its viewers through its coverage (Afzal, 2012).

Media play a critical role in keeping the public informed about all the latest news and developments in any field, whether it's sports, climate, law, battle, fitness, business, economy, music, or style. Television, radio, and print media all arose as a result of the scramble to get the best ratings possible. Now anyone can access the latest news online, via television, radio, or print, at any time and from any location (Nasir, 2013).

Media ethics

Applied ethics deals with the specific moral principles and norms of media, which includes electronic media, the cinema and theatre industries, as well as fine arts such as painting and sculpture as well as print media such as newspapers and the internet. Ethical norms in the media include respect for life, the rule of law, and the principles of equality and fairness. Governing bodies have a responsibility to play if the interest of the public is hindered by media that is untrue, unbalanced, or biased, and the media must adhere to particular standards (McQuail, 2005).

Exaggerated slogans and headings should be avoided, according to Hakemulder (1998). Fairness, clarity, and a foundation in fact are all requirements for quality content. Items that are defamatory or obscene should be avoided at all costs. Harm the impression that the audience has of you. The source of any new information must be preserved and respected at all times. All media experts must keep a few things in mind when it comes to moral standards when carrying out their duties. Social Responsibility Theory is summarised by Denis McQuail (2005) in the following manner:

The media has a responsibility to the public that it must acknowledge and uphold. Profession norms and criteria for informal, fair, unbiased and accurate correctness, objectivity and balance are required for these commitments to meet. Laws and ethics should guide the media's actions. Content that could cause violence, civil disorder, or any other harm to minorities shall not be broadcast by the media. The media should reflect the diversity of society through providing access to public rights and freedom of response to the public.

They must be accountable to the public and their owners as well as to the people they are reporting to. The purpose of this study was to determine how socially responsible Pakistani media sources are perceived by the public. If and to what extent foreign content is harming our culture, the study examines the extent to which local media is compromising its social obligation of being fair, factual and authentic while highlighting the needs and concerns of Pakistanis.

Objectives

To see if Pakistani media outlets are perceived as socially responsible by their audiences. To further explain how Pakistani media is being harmed by indecent and unsuitable information from foreign media, here are some examples:

To provide light on the question of whether and to what extent Pakistan's media's social responsibility has been compromised by the country's political economy.

A Critical Analysis of the Literature

Traditional media has a tendency to set an agenda and impose trends based on predetermined criteria. It's as a result of this that traditional media's economics overuse lifestyle stories and celebrity-centered material in order to promote brands, services and people and therefore increase advertising income (Ravi, 2012). It is the role of the media to educate and inform people, good and bad, according to Nasir (2013). The media's effect is so great that nothing can be done to counteract it, the mind and the senses at the same time. It is the duty of the media in a modern and free society to guarantee that the public is well-informed.

Khichi (2016) argues that the media has a significant role in influencing public opinion and perceptions. The media should refrain from exaggerating or sensationalising news that may elicit a strong emotional response from the viewers, and they should ensure that their content is free of hatred and bias. As a result, the media must ensure that media consumers' rights are protected by adhering to high social, cultural, and ethical standards. The media bears a responsibility that is intrinsically linked to the state of society. Responsibility for media organisations, regardless of medium, rests squarely on the shoulders of its audience members. It's important to make sure that the pursuit of sensationalism doesn't come at the expense of ethical norms. People's access to diverse forms of media is a gift. However, when manipulations begin, things can go much worse. Institutions such as the Pakistan Press Council must pay attention in order to stop the decay (Dutta, 2011).

A wide variety of information and content are available on television, making it the most widely used medium. Many of us believe that television is a useful medium for disseminating information and raising awareness about a wide range of subjects, particularly (Nity and Singh, 2017). Media organisations' moral

perspective is influenced when their social obligation is demonstrated in concrete ways. Media perspectives are subject to a wide range of constitutional and non-constitutional modifications (Bardeol, 2004).

The media has the potential to influence public opinion and behaviour, and since the launch of private television channels in Pakistan, commercialization and competitiveness have reached their pinnacle, which ultimately affects the media's social responsibility. Since ratings are becoming increasingly important in Pakistan, there is an urgent need for people with appropriate and responsible aptitudes to fill this gap (Khan et al., 2013).

Principles such as media ownership as public trust and a commitment to society are part of social responsibility theory as outlined by McQuil (2005; McQuil, 2005). Media information, especially news, should be objective, relevant, and truthful in order for it to be credible. He goes on to say that while press freedom and freedom of speech are important, they should be balanced with checks and balances and self-regulation. To examine the concept of social responsibility in media, Middleton (2009) says that present media regulation/legislation should be examined to see how it affects concerns of social responsibility.

In order to create a two-way or dual interaction-based forum with social, moral, and ethnic values, media with social responsibility must follow innovative strategies (Zhang, 2017). Broadcast media must firmly prevent indecent and improper exposures that undermine society norms, beliefs, practises, and moral standards (Shahid 1994).

What are the questions you want to investigate?

RQ 1: How socially responsible do Pakistani media outlets appear to the general public?

RQ 2: To what extent do Pakistani media outlets hurt our culture by broadcasting foreign content?

Does the political economy of Pakistani mass media compromise the social responsibility of the media in public perception?

Theoretical Conceptualization

The researchers used the principle of social responsibility as a guide in their investigation.

Theory of Social Responsibility

The Commission on Freedom of the Press, established in the United States in 1949, is credited with helping to inspire the development of the press's social responsibility paradigm in the mid-twentieth century. To quote the authors of "Four Theories of Press," "pure libertarianism is archaic, out of date, and outmoded." Siebert Peterson and Schramm After that, Social Responsibility theory reinstated Libertarian thought. The term "social responsibility" refers to the right of the public to access a free press free of censorship, but the media must agree to refrain from public scrutiny and have their content reviewed by a public panel. Private ownership and fact-based, interpretative or investigative reporting are the hallmarks of the social responsibility theory. Accurate and truthful reporting is aided by the application of this principle (Siebert, Peterson & Schramm, 1949).

According to Ravi (2012), the media have a role to resolve participation through dialogue and to promote public rights and major social comforts for all citizens. "Differences of the position of a specific obligation within the total organisational complex," according to McQuail (2003), are implied by the term "social responsibility." In this way, there are multiple tiers of accountability in the media; there's the media institution itself, the individual media owners, the organisation as a whole with its management, the professional employees, and the individual author or company itself.

Respect for human dignity, the reporting of the truth, and nonviolence are all part of the press's social role. Each country has an own way of affirming human dignity, but when they come together, they believe that no one has a pure stature. Truth-telling is a secret principle. No harm is done to those who are unarmed in nonviolent behaviour (Christian and Nordenstreng, 2004).

In order to boost ratings and revenues, financial interests shift the standards and motivations of news reporting away from serving the audience (Day, 2006; McChesney, 2003). Journalists, according to the social responsibility theory of the press, must safeguard the public interest, provide critical awareness, and make information understandable to the public. It also provides the criteria for newsworthiness and proposals for professional journalism codes of ethics, according to social responsibility theory (Hodgkiss, 2017). Social Responsibility Theory's primary functions Organize the rules and regulations of the media. Ensure that a journalist's interests are protected and secured. Journalists need to raise their game. Those who defy any law, regulation, or habit should be dealt with harshly.

Focuses on Social Responsibility Theory The right to express anything you want. Ethics in the workplace. Allow for private rights. In order to maintain public services, the government must ensure. All social responsibilities should be fulfilled by the media; if not, the government will do so.

Methodology

It's a quantitative study. A questionnaire was used to collect data for the study, which was done via a survey. Variables in the self-administered questionnaire included demographic characteristics of the respondents, their exposure to and interest in Pakistani media, as well as their views on their media's social responsibilities and their belief in Pakistani media's objectivity. In order to be included in the study, participants had to be at least 20 years old and live in the city of Islamabad. There were 324 people that took part in the survey. All of the participants in the survey were from Islamabad, Pakistan. This study used convenience sampling.

In this case, the term "data analysis" is

Following data collection via the survey technology, relevant descriptive and inferential statistics have been applied using SPSS. Data was analysed using the survey method, simple percentage statistics, frequency, mean, standard deviation, etc. in order to achieve the study's goals.

Information about the Sample's Demographics

Male respondents comprised 57% of the sample, while female respondents comprised 43%. Males made up a larger percentage of the population than females. There were 58% singles and 42% married people who took part in the survey. Most of the participants were young, well-educated, media professionals, and experts in Pakistani journalism. In addition, people of all ages attempted the survey, which revealed a wide range of demographics.

In this poll, however, the majority of participants were under 30 years old and linked with a variety of academic institutions, offices, and faculty departments. Sixty-one percent of those polled were under the age of 30, 19 percent were between the ages of 31 and 40, 11 percent were between the ages of 41 and 50, 5 percent were between the ages of 51 and 60, and 5 percent were over the age of 60. 5 percent were from Matric level, 11 percent from Intermediate, 40 percent from Graduation, 26 percent from Masters, and 18 percent from MPhil/PhD level in terms of education. There were more than 80% with at least a high school diploma, indicating a well-educated population. Viewed by Audiences, the Media's Social Responsibility

Results showed that television was viewed as more socially responsible than the other three Pakistani media outlets, based on its higher mean in all demographic categories

The table. The public's perception of Pakistani media's social responsibility

Demographic Variables	To what extent do you feel that following Pakistani media outlets are socially responsible?							
	Television		Radio		Newspaper		Magazines	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Gender								
Male	3.37	1.389	3.22	1.202	3.30	1.187	3.01	1.287
Female	3.18	1.241	3.13	.992	3.35	1.076	2.89	1.178
t-test	5.693	8.509			1.509		1.094	
p- value	.018	.004			.220		.296	
Monthly Income								
Up to 25,000	3.93	1.086	3.32	.819	3.46	.881	3.79	1.067
26,000-50,000	3.94	.754	3.00	.986	3.19	.980	3.50	.971
51,000-75,000	3.86	.941	3.11	1.050	2.99	.958	3.46	.913
76,000-100,000	4.72	5.684	3.28	1.158	3.20	1.138	3.50	1.220
Above 100,000	4.04	1.084	3.19	1.219	3.04	1.246	3.38	1.218
ANOVA		5.118		.850		1.138		2.635
p- value		.001		.495		.338		.034
Education								
Matric	4.06	.966	3.71	.588	3.29	.588	3.76	.903
Intermediate	3.86	1.032	3.22	1.294	3.19	1.151	3.84	1.141
Graduation	4.46	4.576	3.35	1.051	3.22	1.077	3.59	1.094

Masters	3.98	.927	2.86	.952	2.99	1.030	3.19	1.087
MPhil/PhD	3.98	1.051	3.10	1.280	2.98	1.263	3.34	1.148
ANOVA	1.412		2.119		1.188		1.459	
p- value	.230		.078		.316		.215	
Occupation								
Private Job	3.92	1.004	3.16	1.007	3.19	1.043	3.47	.982
Government Job	4.11	.887	2.94	1.308	2.89	1.141	3.67	1.171
Businessman	4.02	1.000	3.46	1.129	3.40	1.144	3.60	1.086
At Home	4.85	6.715	3.07	1.112	3.05	1.121	3.41	1.219
Professionals	3.98	.927	3.16	1.102	2.78	1.101	3.20	1.114
Student	3.98	.904	3.27	1.036	3.32	.956	3.61	1.073
ANOVA	1.045	1.262			2.331		.845	
p- value	.391	.280			.042		.519	

Male respondents also believe that Pakistani media sources, save for the newspaper, are more socially responsible. As a result of its smaller audience, radio was found to be Pakistan's least socially responsible media channel by the audience's standards. Television's Radio's p-value (.004) was significantly different from the p-value (.018) for men, and the p-value (.004) for men was significantly different from the p-value (.018) for women; both men and women have different means, and men believe that television and radio are considerably more socially responsible. In some cases, newspapers and periodicals are viewed as culpable (Sometimes responsible, sometimes not). Respondents with a monthly household income of more than \$100,000 perceived television to be more socially responsible than those with less than \$100,000. According to their audience, how socially responsible are Pakistani media outlets?

According to the results, the audience believes that television and magazines have a greater social responsibility than radio and the newspaper. In terms of gender answers, television and radio had significantly different t-test values. It is clear that television's ANOVA value (5.118) and magazine's t-test value (2.635) relating monthly family income both had significant values, which indicates that respondents' replies are various. Conversely, when it comes to occupation, the newspaper's t-test and p-value are both significant (2.331 and .042, respectively). Pakistani television is seen as more socially responsible than other media channels by female respondents.

Implications of Pakistani Media's Distribution of Foreign Content on Our Culture

Men's opinions differed from women's, with one believing that foreign influences impair our culture. The newspaper's t-test and p-value demonstrated a significant difference between the two groups. Our culture is being harmed by television's foreign content, as seen by the increased television mean. When it comes to hurting our culture by presenting foreign information, the results of radio and the newspaper are practically same and considered normal.

RQ 2: To what extent are Pakistani media outlets' audiences concerned that foreign content is damaging their country's culture?

Our culture is being harmed by foreign content broadcast on our airwaves and on television, as evidenced by more sophisticated media. Foreign content is being shown at an alarmingly high rate among males, those who live at home, and those who live in rural areas, according to the comments of respondents.

Disparity in the Media's Social Responsibilities

There were significant differences in responses based on respondents' ages in the radio t-test ($p=.018$), whereas magazines had a $p=.000$ p-value for the gender variable, indicating that media outlets are repressing or compromising their social responsibilities to varying degrees. Television compromises more on social responsibility than other media outlets, according to the age of respondents. Compared to other media outlets in Pakistan, magazines are seen as the least compromising.

Is Pakistan's political economy compromising the media's social responsibility in the eyes of Pakistanis in any way?

The fact that television had a higher mean across all variables indicated that it is viewed as Pakistan's most socially irresponsible media outlet. It was found that newspapers had a very low mean in all variables, which indicated that they rarely strayed from social responsibility.

On the other hand, significant values of magazines and radio showed that their responses of respondents area almost diverse to each other.

Discussion

The media has some basic and fundamental rules, regulations, ethics and laws. Social responsibility of media includes strengthening and ensuring the privacy and dignity of the public as well as to highlight what is wrong. But nowadays, media is totally focusing on their own corporate benefits, personal desires of media owners, make strategies according to sponsors and media governing bodies. This study has the basic purposes of analysing to what extent Pakistani media is socially responsible in the eyes of the audience regarding objectivity, authenticity, ensuring moral beliefs and societal norms. This study has also been conducted to find out how Pakistani media compromises their social responsibility for the sake of the own financial benefits of media owners and media controllers.

Respondents who participated in the survey had different occupations; 23 percent were doing the private job, 11 percent were government employees, 15 percent were businessman, 18 percent were at home, 16 percent were professionals, and 17 percent were students. This shows that the data has been collected from all segments of society. 23 percent of respondents were doing private job shows that huge numbers of people were in private sectors. Similarly, 22 percent were rural respondents, 55 percent were urban, and 23 percent were Semi-urban respondents. This means that this survey covers almost all types of public in Pakistan. 55 percent were enjoying new technologies, modern tactics, and updated daily use item, which creates their mentality more critical and experienced. At last, in the demographic variables, the monthly family income of the respondents according to mean was 3.53 that show that the monthly family incomes of respondents were near above 76000 Pakistani rupees.

This study refers to the statement said by Shahid (1994) that "Vulgarity is synchronised not only by prescription but perhaps more productively by the written and oral codes". All indecent exposures in mass media, which are against the social norms and values of the society and against the journalistic ethics, such wicked material considered regretful in the society will be counted as atrocious and vulgar, should be evaded from the media. The result of the study showed that television is focusing and showing a higher amount of foreign content while results of radio and newspaper are almost equal and observed as normal regarding harming our culture by showing foreign content. This result interlink with the work of Bittner (1989), who writes about the responsibility theory that "a press has the right to criticise government and institutions but also has certain basic responsibilities to maintain the stability of society".

According to the results, the higher mean of television in all the demographic variables showed that television is more socially responsible than the other three Pakistani media outlets. While results identified that radio is least socially responsible in the eyes of the audience may be due to its less listening trends among the audience. Newspaper and magazines almost considered as occasionally responsible (Sometimes responsible, sometimes not). In the variable of Monthly family income, television and magazines p-values showed significance value. This shows that there is a significant difference between their mean and values (McQuail, 2005).

The higher mean of all the media outlets, including television, radio, newspaper and magazine, shows that respondents think that all the media outlets of Pakistan give much priority to their financial interest rather than fulfilling their social responsibility. Results showed that television pays more priority to its financial interests as compared to other Pakistani media outlets. Newspaper and radio comparatively considered as giving less priority than television and magazines because advertisers and sponsors are fully dependent on these two media outlets. This result refers to the Herman and Chomsky statement that the majority of the revenue media gains from advertising by following financial benefits and biased strategies regarding media content (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). (Herman and Chomsky, 1988).

Result also showed that television is giving higher priority to financial interest by compromising its social responsibility than any other media outlets. The audience is also not satisfied with the quality of Pakistani media content. The audience also opines that television is also promoting sensationalism and exaggeration on less important issues. Besides these factors, the audience is entirely dependent on television because of its diversity of programmes, dramas, sitcoms, awards, films, serials etc. (Siraj, Hussain, 2017). (Siraj, Hussain, 2017).

Conclusion

The average monthly household income of Islamabad residents was found to be between 76,000 and 100,000 Pakistani rupees, according to the findings of the research study (Mean 3.53). Television is the most frequently utilised medium (up to four hours per day), while magazines are the least frequently used (up to one hour). In comparison to radio, newspaper, and magazine readers, television viewers spend 73.5 percent

of exposure and attention (75.9 percent). According to the results of a survey on how much people agree that foreign content in Pakistani media is damaging our culture, television is the main outlet that does this by airing foreign content frequently. This finding held true across all three demographic variables (gender, occupation, and geographic location).

In Pakistan, television is the most popular medium for promoting social responsibility, with a mean of about 3.75%. (Gender, occupation, family monthly income and education). Suppression and compromise of Pakistani media's social responsibility are made more difficult by television than by radio and print media. Consequently, we may deduce that the Pakistani audience is not happy with the level of social responsibility that Pakistani media outlets are pursuing Media coverage of human rights issues.

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