

JOURNALIST'S KNOW-HOW ABOUT JOURNALISTIC CODE OF ETHICS AND LAWS IN CRISIS REPORTING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

The study aims to analyze the level of awareness of media professionals about the national and international laws and ethics in crisis and conflict reporting and its effects on their performance. Journalists are facing problems in the coverage of crisis and conflict due to lack of national and international laws and ethics. For this study, the researchers used quantitative methodology, while survey technique was used for data collection. The researchers used questionnaire consisted 19 close-ended questions as data collection tool, whereas, random sampling method was used and collected data from 635 journalists in Peshawar, Charsadda and Swat districts. The data was interpreted through Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS: version-19). The study revealed that (53%) of the journalists have poor knowledge about laws and ethics, while (66.1%) have less awareness about Geneva Convention of 1949. The research also disclosed that (64.4%) of them have less understanding regarding Additional Protocol & International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR-1960), (69.9%) haven't awareness about the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1738 of 2006, (76.1%) of them have no knowledge about 'Charter of Safety of Journalists' working in war zones (2008), whereas (62.9%) of the media

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professionals have poor understanding of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity 2012. The research explored too that (63.3%) of the journalists have knowledge regarding Article 19 of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan. The study confirmed the hypothesis on the base of correlation test that Laws and ethics .091 with a significant value of 0.049 with journalists' performance. From the statistical values, it is confirmed that there is a positive relationship between Laws & ethics and performance. The laws and policies related to the crises reporting management are not implemented in the fields but only explained and defined in the papers, so their implementation is required for the enhancement of journalists' performance.*

Keywords

Relationship, Laws & Ethics, Crisis Reporting, Performance of Media professionals, Peshawar, Charsadda, Swat, KP, Pakistan

Introduction

National and international laws do not exist which can assure the safety of media professionals in the country in the crisis and conflict situation. Zaidi (2015) explored in his report published in 'Daily Dawn,' a leading Pakistani English newspaper, that there is now law in the country that guarantee the protection of the media workers, while still they are working their jobs in risky situations. He also exposed that the law makers, justice experts and human rights specialists also raised voice for the protection of the journalists as they claimed and rightly so that media men are the most vulnerable group of the society. He reported that even a single case has not been decided about any killed journalist in the country. He further said that seven people were killed because they connected to the Wali Baber judicial case proceeding. He disclosed that no lawyer is ready to deal the case of any killed media professional in the country¹. Mike Dobbie et al (2013) explored in their report that from 2000 to 2006, 18 journalists were killed,

and from 2000 to 2012 eighty four reporters got slaughtered, while in 2013 eight media workers got killed in the various parts of the country. They reported that in Baluchistan, KP and FATA the working condition is very poor, only 25% journalists have paid while the rest of the others are on daily wages, by-liners or free lancers in the area. Journalists hailing from these areas are working in very threatening situations, while they haven't any security awareness and training to protect them.² Knowledge about laws and policies can surely overcome these problems of the journalists.

On the basis of international statistics Pakistan was declared as one the dangerous countries for the media professionals. International Federation of Journalist (2016) released the slew journalists' report of the different countries, in that Pakistan is the 3rd most dangerous country after Iraq and Philippines. The statistics of the report exposed that 115 journalists had been killed from 1990 to 2015 in the different parts of the country reportedly. It has also been reported that many of the foreign journalists were also killed in Pakistan, Syria and Iraq. The report also stated that most of the media workers in Pakistan were killed in the cross-fire in different parts of the country. In Baluchistan 29 media worker had been killed and 27 in KP and FATA³. It is concluded that most of the media men were killed in crisis-firing⁴.

Media professionals censor their information to secure themselves, their families and cyber accounts because they are afraid of pressure groups of their respective areas. Yesil (2014) said that pressure groups don't leave any way out to journalists. Its mean that journalists censor their information according to the interests of the pressure groups all over the world, otherwise either they will get killed or the organization will fire them from job. The owners of the media outlet also get threats from these groups no matter they belong to state or non-state⁵. The owners pressurize the reporters and editors to cut the information which is creating problems for the pressure groups. Hayes, Scheufele and Huges (2006)

revealed in their study that due to the economic, social, government and legal boundaries, the journalists and media organizations imposed self-censorship for their safety both inside and outside the field⁶. Tapsell (2012) disclosed in his study that the journalists and media outlets gather investigative and public interest but they couldn't disseminate freely, but scanned it as a self-censorship according to the will of the pressure groups of the area, otherwise they face the bad consequences of the original facts they present⁷.

Riva- Palacio (2006) explored that due to the pressure groups of the area the journalists and media institutions self-censor the information which is dictated by the pressure groups, as they can't publish or broadcast the information against the willing of these groups. He also revealed that when journalists cross the limits or ignore the aspects of the story then they use self-censorship for their protection. It is observed that the journalists are making the information subjective unintentionally on the basis of self-censorship due to the threat to their personal and family security⁸.

For both physical and psychological safety, the media workers are imposing self-censorship during feeding information. International Media Support (2009) reported that in the Musharraf regime media flourished in Pakistan and a lot of newspapers, FM radio stations and television stations launched. The report explored that media followed the liberal laws and freedom in the country, which break the state monopoly on the media. According to the report, the free media hit the politicians and civil society of the country. Due to the effects of the society the government also imposed laws for the regulation of the media to control it. The report also exposed that due to the free media workers and outlets, they also face physical and psychological problems in the field⁹. Physical attacks on reporters, editors, cameramen, photographers and owners increased. So, the media professionals and owners followed their own self-censorship for their safety indoor as well as outdoor of the media organizations.

Objectives

- To analyze the level of knowledge and awareness of the media professionals regarding national ethics and Laws.
- To examine the level of awareness of journalists about international laws and ethics
- To measure the level of awareness of media workers about laws and ethics of crisis reporting.
- To explore the national strategy on safety of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa journalists.

Hypothesis

There is a strong relationship between awareness of laws and ethics of crisis reporting and performance of media professionals of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Literature Review

It is a big issue round the globe that one can't find a universal policy for the protection of the media workers. An organization working for the security of journalists known as Organization for Security Co-operation Europe (2014) reported that threats and violence against journalist, as well as weak judicial prosecution of perpetrators are serious challenges in Kosovo to the freedom of media. In 2011, twenty seven cases of attacks, with 7 threats and 9 violent attacks are reported against journalists, none of which were prosecuted, while in 2012 the reported cases were 24 with 10 threats and five violent attacks¹⁰. Adams (2004) explored that in Latin America the main threats are against journalists' safety and press freedom. There are many types of attacks which are rooted in large legal, political, social and economic problems that affected the practice of journalism throughout the entire region. He divided threats to journalists into two groups such as Physical attacks and Non-physical attacks. Physical attacks include any threat of assault or assault on a journalist and media staff or media outlets, such as bombing, beating,

kidnapping, torture and murder. Non-physical attacks include restrictive press laws, censorship, lack of legal protection for journalists, and expulsion from the country. He further elaborated that between 1988 and 1999, 1,731 journalists were assaulted, 87 journalists were kidnapped, and 250 media organization were attacked in the region. Journalists in Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala and Haiti receive death threats and must go into hiding for fear of their lives. Between 1993 and 2003, 437 journalists were killed throughout the world for their work¹¹. United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization (2014) condemned all such attacks and violence against journalists and media workers worldwide. It also urged member countries to prevent violence against journalists and media workers to ensure accountability, bring perpetrators of crimes before justice, and ensure that those victims have access to proper remedies. It further called upon states to promote a safe and enabling environment for journalists and media workers to perform their work autonomously and without any unnecessary interference.

It is further disclosed that in the past decade, more than 700 journalists had been killed for bringing news and information to the public. In the year 2012, 123 journalists and other media workers had been killed and in 2013 these figures decreased slightly to 91, but still represented the second deadliest year for journalists. These figures did not include those journalists who suffered on a daily basis from non-fatal attacks, including enforced disappearance, torture, arbitrary detention, intimidation and harassment in both conflict and non-conflict situations. There are specific risks faced by women journalists which include sexual attacks¹².

The law ensures limited protection for war and conflict reporting journalists. Lisosky and Henrichsen (2011) said that the protection status of journalists in international law is not limited to armed conflict situations. International human rights law is not dependent on the lawful status of the conflict and those rules will protect journalists at all times. Also, journalists' organizations that provide practical assistance to journalists, do not

distinguish between war journalists and other journalists in vulnerable situations. It is vital to note down that the protection of journalists outside armed conflict will require various approaches than the protection of war journalists. In armed conflict war journalists are threaten more than other journalists to be accidently hurt in the crossfire or to be unnoticeably targeted or targeted faster in the process¹³. However, journalists targeted or accidently killed in other dangerous situations are of equal importance to the realization of the right to information and the right of freedom of expression. The protection of all journalists is significance.

An organization working for the safety of journalists International Media support (2009) reported that Pakistan is the deadliest country in the world, from 2008 to May 2009, 18 journalists were killed in the various parts of the country. The most alarming area for the journalist is the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and terrorism affected areas where they face threats, cruelty and targeted killings and locals are spreading propaganda as the media professionals are spy and agents of the other countries. Threats and intimidation against journalists and media workers is done by the state and non-state actors is common activity in widespread. Some regions are effectively No-Go areas for journalists whereas reporters working in conflict areas have adapted self-censorship in order not to provoke the conflicting parties. Due to this, control have been put on free flow of information and some parts in FATA, KPK and Baluchistan, which is the cause of lack of information. The report disclosed that there is a great need to provide journalists security through risk-awareness training and knowledge about the conflict sensitive journalism. The report recommended that for the improvement of the safety media staff needs risk and conflict awareness training and its response mechanism¹⁴.

Describing about the factors Khan and Rehmat (2011) find out that how a journalist stays safe during covering conflict zone in the tribal areas and KPK. They

proclaimed that journalists in KPK facing different security risks working with foreign news organizations such as non-state and state actors, targeted attacks, personal and family threats, kidnapping, lack of conflict reporting skills, lack of security provided by the concerned organizations during coverage, threats from political, social and business groups. They argued that the journalists hailing from KPK facing these threats due to the lack of safety awareness and training. They also revealed the problems and hurdles as well as the threats faced by FATA journalists. FATA journalists are facing the problems and threats from state and non-state actors such as drug trafficking and smuggling, Frontier Crime Regulation (FCR), abduction, target killing, high value job, lack of conflict coverage skill, ignorance from the journalists' ethics, restriction on access to information and culture constrains. They believed that all these problems are faced by journalists from FATA due to the unawareness of safety journalism in the area. They recommended to these journalists of KPK and FATA that there could be reduction in threats and they become safer personally along with family relations, if they are provided with safety and security training and by implementation of safety protocol within media organizations. In analysis of news or event care of journalist safety should be considered, coordination between media and security agencies, follow the laws and ethics of journalism during covering an event and training of coverage of conflict zones¹⁵.

The literature review explored that media professionals are facing these problems due to folded policies of the media organizations. It is hypothesized that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa journalists are facing personal, family and cyber security due to the folded policies of the government, journalist unions and international protection organizations.

Research Methodology

Quantitative methodology was adopted for this study. The researchers applied survey technique because

quantitative approach was more suitable for this research to find out the view point of the journalists regarding the association between awareness of safety measures in crisis reporting and its effects on the performance of the media professionals of KP. The journalists working in KP was the universe, where the researcher collected data from the journalists affiliated to three press club including Peshawar, Charsadda and Swat. The area was selected due to the current conflict and the war against terrorism. The researcher also selected this population because the journalists of the areas have a lot of experience in the coverage of war and terror in this area. In the present study, the researchers collected data through random sampling technique. The data was collected through questionnaire from the 635 journalists of three press clubs by random sampling technique. Total respondents Swat, Charsadda and Peshawar were 135, 70 and 430 respectively (n=635), whereas, the response rate was 73.8%.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

It is a fact that rules and regulation is a part of life, which give guidance and directions to the public to bring harmony and security in the society but at the same time proper training is also needed for the implementation of such laws, policies, ethics and regulations.

As previously discussed that to make sure that irregularities are there in the society and in a particular filed, then the policy makers intended to prepare laws and policies to ensure security and safety of the staff. Knowledge about the laws and policies regarding coverage of crisis reporting of the respondents shows table 1 that is 46.9% have good knowledge, while 53% have very poor knowledge about laws and polices about coverage of crisis situations. It is shows that when the laws and policies are known by a reporter he/she would perform better.

Table 1 knowledge about laws and policies regarding coverage of crisis

Variables	F	%
Yes	220	46.9
No	249	53.1
Total	469	100.0

Geneva Convention is one the basic platform where one can find every type of law as security of the people is the fundamentals of this convention. The table 2 illustrates that 33.9 % have excellent knowledge and 66.1% have very poor knowledge about Geneva Convention of 1949. The table also demonstrates that 35.6% have excellent knowledge, 64.4% have poor awareness about the additional protocol & International convention on civil and political rights (ICCRP-1960).

Table 2 Knowledge about Geneva Convention 1949 and The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCRP-1960)

Geneva convention 1949			ICCRP-1960		
Variables	F	%	Variable	F	%
Yes	159	33.9	Yes	167	35.6
No	310	66.1	No	302	64.4
Total	469	100.0	Total	469	100.0

Article 19 of the constitution of Pakistan is giving a guarantee of freedom of expression and fundamental rights of mankind. Knowledge about article 19 of the constitution of Pakistan freedom of speech (1973) shows in table 3 that is 63.3% have good knowledge and 36.7% have poor

knowledge regarding freedom of information. The table also demonstrates that 30.1 % have excellent knowledge and 69.9% have very poor understanding about Un Security Council Resolution 1738 of 2006.

Table 3. Knowledge about Article 19 of Pakistan 1973 and UN Security Council Resolution 1738 (2006)

<i>Article 19, Pakistan</i>		UN Security Council Resolution 1738 (2006)			
Variables	F	%	Variable	F	%
Yes	297	63.3	Yes	141	30.1
No	172	36.7	No	328	69.9
Total	469	100.0	Total	469	100.0

Awareness about international laws is necessary for the journalists to become safer in the coverage of wars and conflicts. About the query knowledge about Charter for the safety of Journalists working in war zones or dangerous areas (2008) the table 4 illustrates that 23.9% have excellent knowledge, whereas, 76.1% have very poor information about the charter of safety of journalists working in war zones 2008. The table also demonstrates that 37.1% have excellent knowledge, while 62.9% have poor understanding about United Nation Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity 2012.

Table 4. Knowledge about Charter for the safety of Journalists working in war zones or dangerous areas (2008) and UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity 2012

<i>Charter of war zones (2008)</i>			<i>UN plan of action</i>		
Variables	F	%	Variable	F	%
Yes	112	23.9	Yes	174	37.1
No	357	76.1	No	295	62.9
Total	469	100.0	Total	469	100.0

Knowledge about different laws and policies regarding coverage of crisis is also improving the performance of the media professionals. The table 5 shows that 57.1% have excellent understanding, whereas, 42.9% have poor understanding regarding knowledge about National and International media laws and ethics.

Table 5 knowledge about national and international laws and policies regarding coverage of crisis

Variables	F	%
Yes	268	57.1
No	201	42.9
Total	469	100.0

Professional code of conducts is also a major element in the protection of personal and family safety. The table 6. illustrates the perspective of respondents regarding lack of code of conducts which protect them during crisis reporting, out of the total respondents 17.7 % respondents strongly agreed that there is lack of code of conducts to protection them, 31.6 % were agreed 19.6% said there is only a little code, 20.5% disagreed, while the 10.7% were strongly disagreed. So, it's concluded that code of conduct for protections to journalists was not prepared by their organization which protect them during crisis.

Table 6. Response regarding professional code of conduct which protects journalists during crisis reporting

Variables	F	%
Strongly Agree	83	17.7
Agree	148	31.6
Neutral	92	19.6
Disagree	96	20.5
Strongly Disagree	50	10.7
Total	469	100.0

The table 7 illustrates the opinions of respondents regarding the implementation of code of conduct for the protection of their professionals during crisis reporting, out of the total respondents 15.1% respondents told that the steps to implement such code of conduct has not been taken, 33.7 % has agreed that haven't taken any step, 24.5% has said only a little efforts has been done, 19.8 % disagreed, while, 6.8% strongly disagreed but they said that their organization has taken steps to implement code of conduct that ensure safety of the media professional during crisis.

The table also illustrates the fulfillments of responsibilities of respondents regarding protection to their profession during crisis reporting, among them 6.8% strongly agreed that they never fulfill the responsibilities, 35% agreed that they didn't fulfill the responsibilities to follow the code of conduct, 28.1% replied only a little they are following, 22.2% disagree, while the remaining 7.9% strongly disagree with the assumption, but they said that they fulfill the responsibilities.

Table 7. Opinion regarding haven't initiated effective steps for the implement of such code by the organization and fulfillment of these responsibilities

Steps for implementation			Agreement to fulfillment		
Variables	F	%	Variable	F	%
Strongly Agree	71	15.1	Strongly Agree	32	6.8
Agree	158	33.7	Agree	164	35.0
Neutral	115	24.5	Neutral	132	28.1
Disagree	93	19.8	Disagree	104	22.2
Strongly Disagree	32	6.8	Strongly Disagree	37	7.9
Total	469	100.0	Total	469	100.0

The table 8 reveals the values of Laws & ethics as .091* with a significant value of 0.049 with journalists' performance. From the statistical values, it is confirmed that there is a positive relationship between Laws & ethics with performance.

Table 8 Correlation between awareness about laws and ethics and its effects on the performance of media professionals in Peshawar, Swat and Charsadda

Correlations

		Laws &ethics	PERF
Laws ethics	& Pearson	1	.091*
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.049
	N	469	469

Results and Discussion

It is a general fact that socialization is best remedy for the solution for personal and family protection, while journalists' socializations is also needed for the media professional and their families security. For the socialization, it is important to know the policies, laws, restrictions, limitation and conditions, and the journalists should also know about different national and international laws and policies for their personal, family security¹⁶.

Knowledge about the laws and policies regarding coverage of crisis reporting of the respondents shows that a majority (53%) of them have very poor knowledge about laws and policies about coverage of crisis situations. The results of the study also disclosed that majority (66.1%) of the media professionals have less knowledge and understanding of the Geneva Convention of 1949, while most of them (64.4%) have less understanding regarding additional protocol & International convention on civil and political rights (ICCRP-1960). The outcomes of the

research also revealed that most (69.9%) of the media professionals have less knowledge about the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1738 of 2006, and 76.1% have poor information about the charter of safety of journalists working in war zones (2008), whereas 62.9% of them have poor understanding of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity 2012.

The results also unveiled that majority (63.3%) of the journalists have good knowledge about Article 19 of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan. Due to insufficient understating of national and international laws, the media professionals are facing personal, family and cyber security (Adams, 2004, Lisosky and Henrichsen, 2011, Khan and Rehmat, 2011, Organization for Security Co-operation Europe, 2014, United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2014).

International News Safety Institute (2013) explained the laws and rules for the safety of the media professionals that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, stated that:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers (p11)¹⁷.

The Geneva Convention 1949 stated that the media workers who are covering information in hostile area would be considered as civilians.

It also says: “The ICCPR clarifies that the State must ‘undertake the necessary steps, in accordance with its constitutional processes and with the provisions of the present Covenant, to adopt such laws or other measures as may be necessary to give effect to the rights recognized’ in the Covenant” (p11)¹⁸.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1738 (2006) condemns attacks against the media professionals. According to the media professionals in the hazards conditions and situations, deal them as civilians.

The plan of action on the Safety of Journalists and Issue of impunity 2012 developed a strategy to work together for the protection of media workers and 2 November was declared an international day to end the impunity for crimes against media professionals.

Charter for the safety of journalists working in war zones or dangerous areas (2008), was developed in 2002 by “Reporter without Borders”, an organization working for the prevention of the journalist.

Its aim was to ensure that the eight principles were adopted by media houses. If carried out, these principles would help prevent and reduce dangers to media workers in such situations. These principles form the basis of the planning and preparation, which is outlined in this document¹⁹.

Another objective of the study was to find out the code of conducts prepared by their organizations for personal, family and cyber security. The results disclosed that according to respondents, majority (20.5%) of the media professional disagreed that there is code of conduct which protected them during crisis reporting. So, it's concluded that there is code of conduct for the protections of journalists' profession in low quantity and quality but not in appropriate manner. The study also explored the opinions of respondents regarding the implementation of code of conduct (which exists) for the protection of their profession during crisis reporting, whereas the journalists (37.7 %) replied that very little action has been taken to implement such code of conduct for the security of the media professionals by their respective organizations. So, it's concluded that steps to implement code of conduct for protections of journalists' profession have been taken to a little extent. The outcomes also disclosed that little ratio (35%) of the media professionals are not fulfilling the responsibilities of their organizations for their protection during crisis reporting. So, it's concluded that they fulfill these responsibilities to some extent, which also an affect their personal, family and cyber safety.

Conclusion

The study also concluded that majority of the media professionals have poor knowledge and awareness about different journalistic laws, ethics and policies of protection for them and their family and how to improve performance in the crisis coverage. Many among them have either no or very less knowledge about Geneva Convention 1949, additional protocol & International convention on civil and political rights (ICCRP-1960), United Nations Security Council Resolution 1738 of 2006, charter of safety of journalists working in war zones (2008), United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity 2012, Article 19 of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan. Due to insufficient understating of national and international laws, the media professionals are facing personal, family and cyber security threats (Adams, 2004, Lisosky and Henrichsen, 2011, Khan and Rehmat, 2011, Organization for Security Co-operation Europe, 2014, United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2014). It is also concluded that most of the organizations do not have its own cod of conducts for the protection of their staff in the red-zones.

Recommendations

- The journalists should have to follow fundamentals of news in the news report.
- It is also essential for the reporters to ensure objectivity and balance in the news report.
- Stay impartial and avoid becoming a party to a particular group.
- The professionals need to avoid sensational and exaggerated words in their news reports.
- The media professionals also to follow national and international ethics and laws.
- Never violate curfew and never travel in an active conflict zone without proper permission from the authorities

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