



## **The Linkage Between Organizational Level Influences and Conflict Reporting**

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**Abstract:** This study analyzes the journalists' perceptions regarding the importance of organizational Level Influences in reporting from the conflict zones. The hierarchy of influence model is used selecting the population of the journalists in the conflict zones of Pakistan. The entire population of the journalists who have been involved in reporting from the conflict zones constitute the universe of the study. A total of 29 conflict zones are identified in the country where 3492 journalists are registered with the selected conflict zones' press clubs. The results showed that organizational level influences are perceived with different degree of agreement by the sampled respondents. It is evident that the editorial policies of media organizations have considerable influence on conflict reporting.

**Keywords:** Conflict reporting, Media organizations, Journalists, Conflict zones

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### **1. Introduction**

The container "theory" assumptions, relationships, and ways of measuring of news content with respect to multiple factors involved especially the working dynamic of field reporter. If he works in conflict area, then this container theory has not much to cater actual ground realities when a journalist or field reporter has to face war-like situation just for the sake of getting news or covering any on-going happening. For media content, the container ship is one obvious reference point in terms of the visual containment of culture of particular era. Alexander Klose's the Container Principle: How a Box Changes the Way We Think is an alternative media and design history of the seemingly simplest and most formal of principles. He believes content is not just nothing in the hollow space but it is a framed entity. It involves multiple materiality of frames so boxes and containers (media content) are always formative of thought and cultural practices (Klose, 2015). However, the social-psychological approaches associated with conflict area reporting is not simple a framed-entity, or a container box or any agenda-setting task. It always changes. It changes with time. It changes with location and even it changes with journalist who covers any event on any particular time at any particular area. So, such external social influences always reshape media content and communication process. Although it is quite true that container "theory" involves grandiose and off-putting media content but still influences of surrounded assumptions, relationships, and ways of measuring is never out-of-the-question. It must lead to towards having new theoretical perspective of conflict journalism which helps to draw connections wisely among assumptions, relationships, and ways of measuring by finding similarities and sorting out differences. It can give new dimension to target audience and effects theories which are already in tradition by leading them to get finely drawn and focused social-psychological approaches towards conflict journalism (Brambila, 2017; Jamil, 2017).

As journalism is a unique and specialized career that is not made for everyone, so there are certain qualities needed for a journalist in order to achieve success, not all of which are common or easy. For a Pakistani Journalist, this

profession is not bed of roses at all. It not only calls for a curious mind and the passion for gaining and sharing knowledge but also important to be willing to escape your comfort zone to collect and share information. Pakistani journalist must have some of the necessary qualities, might be inherent parts of a journalist's personality; others, gained through experience and discipline (Neupane and Zeng, 2014; Ola, 2020; Orgeret, 2015). The present study is aimed to analyze the journalists' perceptions regarding the importance of different levels of hierarchy of influence model in reporting from the conflict zones.

## 2. Literature Review

This section reviews the relevant literature concerning journalists' reporting from the conflict zones. Ozgunes & Terzis (2000) argued that media reporting in conflict lead to aggravate the situation between the two countries. On the contrary, others have found that media in conflict reporting helps as a peace agent. However, there is greater role of agenda and outlining setup of the media. It also plays a role in awareness creation among the masses as well as find ways for conflict resolution. The study concluded that a media strategy established between researcher, educator, journalist and peace worker to create an outstanding media space through journalism creativity (Aslam, 2015). According to Demarest & Langer (2018), media may play a role in peace keeping and especially in those cases where the conflict exists across religious and ethnic lines. Their study in the context of Nigeria indicated that reporting from conflict in Nigeria may have a role in peace journalism, and there is willingness among the journalists in Nigeria to avoid the escalatory language. However, the scarcity of resources and capacities hinder the in-depth analysis of the driver of conflict.

The gender aspect of journalism has also been analyzed by Orgeret (2015). In conflict zone female journalists, face more safety challenges. Moreover, exploring the significance of the gender; the study argue that conflict reporting is likely to be covered more professionally if groups of journalists covering the conflict are heterogeneous. Hoiby (2017) elaborated that men and women both are targeted in the challenge of sexual violence in war and conflict zone. The study reported that man fatalities are less to visible to public discussion as compare to women vulnerability. This paper indicated the paradigm of journalist safety to female-victims and male-aggressor direction, means discriminating against women and underestimating the vulnerability of men colleagues. Studies have also highlighted ethical reportage in a war and conflict zone and issues and challenges in reporting information (Wilson & Ibrahim, 2018). The risk to journalists has also been investigated in terms of gender differences. Waisbord (2013) argued that female journalists are similar to the male journalists in their potential of conflict reporting. Moreover, Female journalists, have an extra advantage in entry into private spaces or accessing female sources which are not accessible to male journalists in time of conflict reporting. Moreover, the study argue that female have an advantage in situation because shape shifting can protect them from dangers in the field. Such evidence has negated the traditional view in which war journalists have been described as masculine personality with hard work, self-sufficiency who face and encounters dangerous environment.

The impact of gender and journalism has been the subject of studies. Ross (2002) indicated in a study that women face problem in the journalism industry dominated by men. Nonetheless, the study also shows that women working in decision making position would have an impact on developing a women-friendly news agenda. According to Steiner (2017), different standard of judgments are used for men and women journalist who report on war and conflict. Those women who are mothers and who go to war zones face condemnation while on the contrast men get escaped from public criticism. The author further argues that women are at high risk of sexual violence and harassment and such women have often been found not reporting their stories because of the fear of job loss. The role of gender in journalism has been the subject of many studies and women have been found to be facing problem in their promotion due to male attitudes and women are underrepresented in media organizations (Gallagher, 2001) and women journalists have faced violence during reporting (Sreberny, 2014; Brambila & Hughes, 2019). The study is aimed to evaluate the various levels of hierarchy of influence model using the data gained from the perceptions of the journalist across provinces of Pakistan. Taking insights from the available literature and the concluding remarks in section 3.8, the following null hypotheses are tested in the study.

## 3. Methodology

The following section elaborates the methodology adopted for the study. The primary focus of the first section is on the instruments that were utilized in the administration of the survey, as well as the pre-testing of those instruments

and the data gathering process. This study uses Simple Random Sampling (SRS) technique. The quantitative data is collected using questionnaire. The relevant variables are incorporated in the questionnaire. The hierarchy of influence model is used selecting the population of the journalists in the conflict zones of Pakistan. The entire population of the journalists who have been involved in reporting from the conflict zones constitute the universe of the study. A total of 29 conflict zones are identified in the country where 3492 journalists are registered with the selected conflict zones' press clubs. The nature of conflict in these areas are ranging from religious (Swat, Dir Upper, Dir Lower, Buner, Peshawar, Bajaur, Waziristan (N), Waziristan (S), Mohmand and Orakzai) to Sectarian (Gilgit), while in some areas, the nature of conflict is mix of Sectarrians & Religious (Kurram), Ethnic & Religious (Baluchistan) and ethnic, sectarian & religions (Karachi). This information is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Information about the Conflict Zones, Numbers of Journalists and Nature of Conflict

No.	Conflict Zone	No. of Press Club	No. of Journalists	Nature of Conflict
1	Swat	05	95	Predominantly Religions
2	Dir Upper	03	22	Predominantly Religions
3	Dir Lower	01	26	Predominantly Religions
4	Buner	01	15	Predominantly Religions
5	Peshawar	01	540	Predominantly Religions
6	Bajaur	02	34	Predominantly Religions
7	Waziristan (N)	01	24	Predominantly Religions
8	Waziristan (S)	01	15	Predominantly Religions
9	Mohmand	01	18	Predominantly Religions
10	Kurram	01	16	Predominantly Sectarrians & Religions
11	Orakzai	01	12	Predominantly Religions
12	Karachi	01	2150	Predominantly Ethnic, Sectarrian & Religions
13	Gilgit	01	75	Predominantly Sectarrian
14	Quetta	01	162	Predominantly Ethnic, Religious, Sectarrian
15	Kohlu	01	8	Predominantly Ethnic
16	Noshki	01	12	Predominantly Ethnic
17	Awaran	01	11	Predominantly Ethnic
18	Mastung	01	13	Predominantly Ethnic
19	Khuzdar	01	9	Predominantly Ethnic
20	Dalbanddin	01	14	Predominantly Ethnic, Religious, Sectarrian
21	Harnai	01	10	Predominantly Ethnic
22	Turbat	01	12	Predominantly Ethnic
23	Panjgur	01	10	Predominantly Ethnic
24	Gwadar	01	22	Predominantly Ethnic
25	Loralai	01	11	Predominantly Religious
26	Zhob	01	14	Predominantly Religious
27	Chaman	01	28	Predominantly Religious
28	Pashin	01	10	Predominantly Religious
29	Dera Bugti	01	10	Predominantly Ethnic
30			<b>Total: 3398</b>	

Source: Authors own Calculation from Press Clubs of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

After constructing questionnaire, 30 sample respondents were selected for pilot test. The pilot study was carried out in three different press clubs such as Swat press club, Gilgit press club and Peshawar press club. Taking the review of

literature into consideration, the research questions were designed for the purpose of pilot studies: 1) What are the journalists' perceptions regarding the importance of different levels of hierarchy of influence model in reporting from the conflict zones? 2) Whether there is variation in journalists' perceptions with respect to the influences on reporting from the conflict zones across different provinces? 3) Whether religious and ethnic characteristics of journalists have impact on reporting from the conflict zones? In order to obtain answers to these questions, a survey questionnaire was developed. It consisted of different sections, personal information and demographics. Eight questions each pertained to individual level of influences and routine level of influences. Three questions pertained to organizational influences; seventeen questions were associated with extra media level of influence. Four questions pertained to support the ideological level of influences, and twelve questions were connected with perceptions about the influences on news reporting. On the basis of the collected data, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were estimated of scale items of different influences of Hierarchy of influence model. The reliability of the questionnaire was compared with the previous studies. The issues related to validity and reliability are also essentially addressed using Cronbach Alpha technique. On the basis of the collected data, an analysis of reliability was conducted, i.e., Cronbach's alpha was calculated. The Cronbach's Alpha is used in this study to assess the internal consistency and reliability of scales. The internal consistency of several scales of individual level influences, routine level influences, organizational level influences, extra media level of influence, and ideological level of influences have been examined.

Table 2: Reliability Test

Job Description	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Internal Consistency
Individual level influences	08	0.893	Good
Routine level influences	08	0.738	Acceptable
Organizational influences	05	0.743	Acceptable
The extra media level of influence	17	0.711	Acceptable
The ideological level of influences	04	0.843	Good
Perceptions about the influences on news reporting	12	0.722	Acceptable

Source: Authors own Calculation

The alpha value for scale 1 "individual level influences" has a value of 0.893, which is regarded exceptionally excellent based on the data. As given in Table 4.1, there is internal consistency in all questions on the scale. There is also plenty of evidence of internal consistency for influences at the routine level. The alpha values for the scales "Routine level influences" and "organizational influences" are 0.738 and 0.743, respectively, which are satisfactory. Similarly, the "extra media level of influences" score is 0.711, which is likewise adequate. The alpha value for Scale 5 "the ideological level of influences" is 0.843. As a result, each question on the scale has internal consistency.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

The next section presents the sample respondents' response to different organizational level of influences that affect conflict reporting. The respondents were asked on a scale of 1 to 5 whereas, 1 means they are strongly agreed with the particular notion, 2 means agreed, 3 means neutral, 4 means disagreed, and 5 means strongly disagreed (means not influential at all).

Table 3: Sample Respondents' Perceptions about Organizational Influences in conflict Reporting

Statement	Perceived degree of influence					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Agreement Index

The editorial policies of media organizations	92	151	31	46	38	0.30
Publishing or broadcasting a story	94	142	23	52	47	0.26
The editorial policy of organization	87	124	32	68	47	0.19
Job Security	81	120	36	72	49	0.16
Financial Pressure	98	113	28	73	46	0.20

Source: Authors own Calculation

The results showed that extra media level influences are perceived with different degree of agreement by the sampled respondents. It is evident that majority of the sampled journalist 243 (67.87 %) are either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that “The editorial policies of media organizations compromise on the quality reporting of conflicts”. Majority of the sampled journalists 236 (65.92%) strongly agreed and agreed with the statement that “You can't enforce your organization to publish/broadcast a story if they don't want”. Moreover, majority of the sample journalists 211(58.93 %) are either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that “If you don't follow editorial policy, there is a threat to your job”. Majority of the sampled journalist 201 (56.14%) are either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that “job security has considerable influence on conflict reporting”. Majority of the sampled journalist 211 (58.93 %) are either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that “financial pressure has considerable influence on conflict reporting”.

Table 4 present the values of Chi-square for all statements of Table 3. The Chi-Square statistics (rounded to two decimal places) with asymptotic significant p values are reported. For all items, the percentage of respondents who agreed differ from the respondents who do not agree. For example, for item 1  $\chi^2(1, N = 358) = 78.63, p < 0.05$ . A similar pattern is observed for all other items of organizational level of influence. Hence, we observe significant differences in respondents' perception about various items of organizational level of influences.

Table 4: Results of Chi Square Test

Questions	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.
The editorial policies of media organizations	78.63 <sup>a</sup>	0.00
Publishing or broadcasting a story	73.02 <sup>a</sup>	0.00
The editorial policy of organization	45.93 <sup>a</sup>	0.317
Job Security	42.21 <sup>a</sup>	0.00
Financial Pressure	49.16 <sup>a</sup>	0.00

Source: Authors own Calculation

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study analyzes the journalists' perceptions regarding the importance of organizational Level Influences in reporting from the conflict zones. The hierarchy of influence model is used selecting the population of the journalists in the conflict zones of Pakistan. The entire population of the journalists who have been involved in reporting from the conflict zones constitute the universe of the study. A total of 29 conflict zones are identified in the country where 3492 journalists are registered with the selected conflict zones' press clubs. The results showed that organizational level influences are perceived with different degree of agreement by the sampled respondents. It is evident that the editorial policies of media organizations have considerable influence on conflict reporting. This study suggests that government and civil society must ensure the security of tribal journalists. In order to improve the professional skills of the journalists, proper training programs should be initiated. The government must ensure pleasant environment where journalists feel safe and compensate with all facilities.



Since, the study finds that organizational level influences affect the conflict reporting. Hence, it is suggested that professionalism should be adopted by each and every member of the journalistic fraternity, and an investigative approach toward journalist should be taken during conflict reporting. The reporter should not be biased towards any stake holder, and be balanced while reporting. Moreover, government and media owners should give proper training to journalists before sending them for conflict reporting. This study has implications for journalists and journalism. Such studies can be very supportive for validation of diverse theoretical preposition of the influences of various level of hierarchy model with relevance to conflict area media coverage and reporting by adding more valuable insights into exiting literature. Journalist working in conflict zones must have some of the necessary qualities, might be inherent parts of a journalist's personality; others, gained through experience and discipline. Further, this study suggests that media should enhance its integrity and credibility. Through fairness, unbiasedness and investigative reporting of any issue, the media can enhance its integrity and credibility. It can be achieved by reporting black as black and white as white. Certainly, media can enhance its prestige in presence of a lot of new media platforms. For this, the traditional media should take care of ethics, professional norms and ensure their implication. Moreover, a comparative study may be conducted to compare the perceptions of journalists working in different regions of the world. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of the hierarchy of influence model in different conflict zones and how cultural and regional differences impact journalists' perceptions and decision-making.

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