



## The Nexus between Individual Level Influences and Conflict Reporting

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**Abstract:** Peace journalism is a type of journalism that focuses on promoting peace and conflict resolution. This approach to journalism seeks to report on conflict situations in a way that highlights peaceful solutions and minimizes the glamorization of violence. The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of different level of influences on peace journalism. The results showed that different factors affect peace journalism. It is evident that majority of the sampled journalists are strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that “personnel background, professional background, educational level of the journalist, training of the journalist, experience of the journalism, personnel background of the journalist and religious sect of the journalist influences the journalist work in the conflict zone.

**Key words:** Individual level influences. Conflict reporting, Descriptive statistics

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### 1. Introduction

Peace journalism is a type of journalism that focuses on promoting peace and conflict resolution. This approach to journalism seeks to report on conflict situations in a way that highlights peaceful solutions and minimizes the glamorization of violence. The main objective of peace journalism is to promote peaceful coexistence and understanding among diverse groups, while also challenging the narrative that violence is inevitable in resolving conflicts. This type of journalism challenges the traditional notion that war and conflict are the only legitimate news stories, and instead highlights the voices of peace activists, grassroots movements, and alternative narratives that promote peace. Peace journalism is not just about reporting on peace, but also about creating a culture of peace through the media. By presenting peace as a viable and desirable option, peace journalism can contribute to a more peaceful world, where conflicts are resolved through dialogue, negotiation and collaboration, rather than through violence and war (Michelis, 2018).

Peace Journalism is a critical and rapidly evolving field of journalism that seeks to promote peace, reduce violence and conflict, and advance social justice. This type of journalism is grounded in a belief that media can play a powerful role in shaping public opinion, influencing decision-makers, and fostering social change (Seaga, 2011). Unlike traditional journalism, which often focuses on sensationalizing and exaggerating conflict, peace journalism prioritizes the coverage of nonviolent solutions to conflicts and the promotion of constructive dialogue and collaboration. The central objective of peace journalism is to encourage people to work together towards common goals and to reduce the likelihood of violence and conflict (Hoiby & Ottosen, 2017; Hoiby, 2019).

The present study is aimed to identify and assess the journalists' perceptions about the impact of religious and ethnic characteristics in reporting from the conflict zones. Moreover, this study aims to develop a modified and comprehensive model which can elaborately explain various levels of influences in reporting from the conflict zone.

## 2. Literature Review

The role of different level of influences is evident from the literature and according to the Hierarchy of Influence Model, journalists reporting is influenced by a number of levels of influences and media organization is one important influence. Hoiby (2019) stated that media organizations have specific role in conflict reporting. According to the author, it is especially in situation when journalists face threats of kidnapping and when similar crimes are committed against journalist in the conflict zone. The news contents are influenced by entities who have their own policies and economic imperatives (Reese, 2019). Therefore, any risk faced by the journalist be owned by the media organizations. The issue becomes more complex when two levels of influences affect each other as Colistra (2008) argued that organizational influence and extra media influence affects each other and both of them affect within media influences which further affect content influence outcomes. In a study Bartholomé et.al (2015) explored that journalists have an active role in conflict frame building and this role is facilitated by media routine that are embedded in organizational practices.

The findings of Relly & Bustamante (2014) showed that the journalists' practice was influenced by organizational-level influences, including newsroom policies and financial arrangements with government and business. Rawan & Hussain (2017) revealed that in addition to the media organization, conflict area reporting is also influenced by factors such as ethno political affiliation of the journalists. Similarly, strong influence of certain political group on media houses and the active censorship by media practitioners that change the conflict reporting to war journalism. The findings also indicated that in Pakistan's Karachi city the conflict reporting is strongly influenced by certain ethnic groups such as the *Muttahida Qaumi Movement* (MQM). There has been evidence that lack of democratic system, high level of violence, economic inequalities, severe threats to human rights and internal conflict are some of the social indicators that creates threats to the journalist lives and outcomes of the news reporting (Brambila, 2017). Jan & Hussain (2020) identified the factors affecting media reporting in Pakistan. Their findings revealed that reporting from the conflict areas are influenced by factors such as patriotism and economic incentives accruing to the media organizations. These include among others advertisements, because media is dependent on advertisement. The findings further indicated that journalists are threatened by certain ethnic groups such as *Muttahida Qaumi Movement* (MQM) in a situation when institutional mechanisms are weak and the media is subdued such as in case of Karachi conflict. Ola (2020) indicated that political motives during the elections leads to electoral violence on the journalists. In certain African states election characterized in various African States based on un-certainty, disappearance of journalist, violence and killing. While Bustamante & Relly (2016) have shown that journalists' lives are threatened by violent environment such as that prevails in Mexico, which has led to the death of journalist on mass scale. Relly & Bustamante (2014) also showed that there are individual influences such as handling the violence, lack of training in conflict reporting and safety concern, which has a strongest pressure on media reporters. Eti (2009) explored that the organizational level influence, news room policies, and journalistic practices influence conflict reporting. Media have also been shown to have a role in conflict management to the society as it is the voice of the people.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Sampling

Using the appropriate statistical methods, the sample size is determined based on the size of the total population that is being studied. For the purpose of selecting the number of journalists, a technique known as SRS is utilized. After the target areas have been determined, the actual sample size, denoted by the letter "n," is computed.

The total number of journalists living in the 29 zones that were chosen amounts to 3398 people. Using the aforementioned calculation, we can determine that the sample size is 358, with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. In order to choose representative samples from each combat zone, we utilized the following formula:

$$n_i = n \cdot N_i/N$$

Where, n = Total Sample size,  $n_i$  = Sample Size to be selected from  
Samples selected from the 29 conflict zones in Pakistan.

Based on the literature review, a close-ended questionnaire has been developed. The relevant variables related to problems faced by the journalists in conflict zones are incorporated in the questionnaire. The questionnaire comprises of the following sections:

Initially, the information related to sample respondents are asked. The information is about age, education, job description, fields of study, training, experience and nature of conflict covered.

The second section of the questionnaire is designed to solicit information about the perceptions of journalists working in conflict zones on important indicators taken from the hierarchy of influence model and which are hypothesized to influence their reporting in case of conflict situations. The perceptions of the journalists were recorded using Likert scale method.

The collected data were coded and entered into SPSS data editor. Findings of the analysis were recorded and discussed. The results are compiled and discussed in light of the literature.

### 3.2 Validity Test

The Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is used to determine whether the survey has a similar pattern of responses

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.893
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square Significance	23548.618 0.000

Source: Authors own Calculation

Because the Chi-Square values are significant at the 1% level, the items are appropriate for factor analysis. We may use the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO) test to see if the items are eligible for factor analysis. Factor analysis is suitable if the KMO value is more than 0.50. As a consequence, we conclude that the items are adequate for factor analysis. The factor analysis is used to determine the number of components for variables.

Table 2: Total Variance Explained for Individual Level Influences

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	18.523	83.652	83.652	18.523	83.652	83.652
2	0.592	2.974	86.626			
3	0.576	2.431	5.405			
4	0.475	1.043	3.474			
5	0.376	0.995	2.038			
6	0.286	.816	1.811			
7	0.165	.786	1.602			
8	0.143	.688	1.474			

Source: Authors own Calculation. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

### 4. Results and Discussions

The next section presents the sample respondents' response to different individual 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 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 Individual Level Influences in conflict Reporting

Category of influence	Perceived degree of influence					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Agreement Index
Personnel background of the	101	113	43	51	50	0.23

journalist						
Professional background of the journalist	87	120	36	56	59	0.17
Educational level of the journalist	101	120	25	61	51	0.22
Training of the journalist	91	144	34	54	35	0.28
Experience of the journalist	103	123	26	61	45	0.25
Gender of the Journalists	93	124	31	43	67	0.19
Ethnicity of the Journalist	89	141	47	61	20	0.30
Religious sect of the journalist	97	128	38	72	23	0.28

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 journalists are strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that “Personnel background of the journalist have a considerable influence on conflict reporting?” (214 out of 358 (i.e., 59.77%)). Majority of the sample journalists strongly agreed and agreed with the statement that “Professional background of the journalist has a considerable influence on conflict reporting” (207 out of 358). Moreover, majority of the sample journalists are either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that “Educational level of the journalist has a considerable influence on conflict reporting” (221 out of 358). Majority of the sample journalists are either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that “Training of the journalist have a considerable influence on conflict reporting”. A total of 226 are either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that “Experience of the journalism have a considerable influence on conflict reporting.” Most of the journalists are either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that “Female Journalists are more vulnerable to threats than men” (217 out of 358 sample journalists). Most of the journalists are either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that “Personnel background of the journalist have a considerable influence on conflict reporting” (230 out of 358 sample journalists). Most of the journalists are either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that “Religious sect of the journalist influences the journalist work in the conflict zone” (235 out of 358 sample journalists). These results enable us to accept our hypothesis 3 that “The religious affiliation, ethnicity and origin of the journalist have significant influence on the perceptions of the journalists”.

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,  $X^2(1, N = 358) = 73.24, p < 0.05$ . Hence, we observe significant differences in respondents’ perception about various items of individual level of influences.

Table 4: Results of Chi Square Test

Items	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.
Personnel background of the journalist	67.17 <sup>a</sup>	0.00
Professional background of the journalist	43.04 <sup>a</sup>	0.00
Educational level of the journalist	75.91 <sup>a</sup>	0.00
Training of the journalist	80.13 <sup>a</sup>	0.00
Experience of the journalism	75.16 <sup>a</sup>	0.00
Gender of the Journalists	51.96 <sup>b</sup>	0.00
Ethnicity of the Journalist	98.34 <sup>b</sup>	0.00
Religious sect of the journalist	81.83 <sup>b</sup>	0.00

Source: Authors own Calculation. a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 50.0.

### 5. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Peace journalism is a type of journalism that focuses on promoting peace and conflict resolution. This approach to journalism seeks to report on conflict situations in a way that highlights peaceful solutions and minimizes the glamorization of violence. The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of different level of influences on peace journalism. The results showed that different factors affect peace journalism. It is evident that majority of the sampled journalists are strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that “personnel background, professional

background, educational level of the journalist, training of the journalist, experience of the journalism, personnel background of the journalist and religious sect of the journalist influences the journalist work in the conflict zone. In conclusion, the findings of this study on journalists' perceptions of the importance of different levels of hierarchy of influence model in reporting from conflict zones provides a foundation for future research in this area. The proposed areas of future research would contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of the hierarchy of influence model in conflict zone reporting and its impact on journalism practice.

This study is limited to Pakistan. In future, a longitudinal study could be conducted to track changes in journalists' perceptions of the hierarchy of influence model over time. This would provide a deeper understanding of how the influence of the model changes in response to shifting political, social, and cultural factors in conflict zones. Moreover, a qualitative study could be conducted to further explore the subjective experiences of journalists who use the hierarchy of influence model in their reporting from conflict zones. This study could be based on in-depth interviews with journalists to gain a more nuanced understanding of the role of the hierarchy of influence model in their reporting practices.

Future research could explore the practical implications of the hierarchy of influence model for journalism education and training. This could include an examination of how the model is taught to journalism students and how it is used in real-world reporting situations. The rapid growth of digital media has had a profound impact on journalism and reporting from conflict zones. Future research could explore the role of digital media in shaping journalists' perceptions of the hierarchy of influence model and how it is used in reporting from conflict zones in the digital age.

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