

PRESS CLUB PROFILE AND VALUES OF THE SINDH JOURNALISTS IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract

This paper provides some insights regarding a few features of press clubs in Sindh province, Pakistan; because membership of the journalistic organizations is considered by media researchers as one of the indicators of the level of professionalization. Hence, this research reveals not only the membership level but also that what type of journalists are more members of press clubs in Sindh province, either news reporting or newsroom journalists. Further, this study highlights about what perceptions Sindh journalists have developed regarding the press clubs in Sindh province, Pakistan and as well about the practice of sharing individually collected news information with each other by the Sindh journalists at press clubs.

Keywords: *Press Club Perception, Sindh Journalists, Sharing News-Information*

Introduction

By previewing the existing related literature it was found in the view of Pintak L. and Nazir J. Syed (2013) that Pakistan is home to one of the most vibrant emerging media sectors in the Muslim world. However, it has been depicted as the most dangerous place in the world for journalists (See Committee to Protect Journalists, 2010). Therefore, journalists in Pakistan face huge challenges; however the sense of professionalism within Pakistani journalism is clearly growing (see Pintak L. and Nazir J. Syed, 2013). Further regarding journalistic professionalism it was known according to the views of journalism and media researchers that (See Lo 1998: 83; Kirat 1998: 337; Robinson & Saint-Jean 1998: 369) participation or membership of news workers in journalistic organisations is one of the indicators of a degree of professionalism among media workers. In this way, this

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paper provides some insights about the press club membership, how journalists perceive press clubs, and the trend of sharing news information by journalists with each other, and the rejection of press club membership of the journalists in Sindh province, Pakistan.

Method

A self-completion questionnaire was administered to all accessible print and electronic media organizations, and news agencies in Sindh province, Pakistan and all district-level press clubs. The sampling was purposive and opportunistic. The survey included only those journalists who were regularly employed to work for newspapers, magazines, news agencies, public and private television and radio stations. Their professional role statuses were reporters, sub-editors or editors. The survey questionnaire ranged widely about journalists' careers, their training and experience, the media organizations they worked for, their political affiliations, their attitudes to and use of new technologies their membership of press clubs and other organizations, educational backgrounds, and financial and working conditions. A total of 576 journalists filled questionnaires. Further, almost three fifths (59 percent) of the sampled journalists were surveyed at press clubs, and remaining 38 per cent at workplaces and 3 per cent at their homes.

Findings

Demographic Profile

See table 1 the typical Sindh journalist is male (98.1%), speaking the Sindhi language (70.9%) and by religion Muslim (96.7%). Academically, the majority (63.8%) was a university graduate, and the remaining got their final degree from colleges (28.5%) and schools (7.7%). Additionally, it was found that the majority (63.7%) had sought education as a regular student and the remaining (36.3%) as a private student. About the name of the academic institute, the

sampled journalists who had sought their final degree from university (365), among them the majority (54.4%) studied from University of Sindh, Jamshoro and the remaining from Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur (27.2%), University of Karachi (13.2%) and other various universities (5.2%). Moreover, the first highest proportion (42.1%) of them was young - up to 30 years old -, and the second highest proportion (37.5%) between 31 to 40 years old. In terms of salary, the highest proportion (37.7%) had monthly income less than 10,000 (ten thousand) PK rupees, and the second highest proportion (33.3%) either made no answer (13.2%), put a cross symbol (X) (0.9%), or put horrific comments regarding their monthly remuneration (19.1%). And regarding their geographic affiliation it was found that the majority of the surveyed Sindh journalists belonged to rural areas (57.5%), whereas the remaining proportion (42.5%) was geographically affiliated with the urban part of Sindh province.

TABLE 1: Composition of the Sindh Journalists by Demographic Variables

Gender	Number	Percentage (%)
Male	565	(98.1)
Female	11	(1.9)
Ethnicity/Mother language		
Sindhi	405	(70.9)
Urdu	104	(18.2)
Siraiki	24	(4.2)
Other	38	(6.7)
Religion		
Muslim	551	(96.7)
Hindu	14	(2.5)
Other	5	(.9)
Level of education		

Gender	Number	Percentage (%)
School	44	(7.7)
College	163	(28.5)
University	365	(63.8)
Mode of education		
As a private student	197	(36.3)
As a regular student	346	(63.7)
Name of academic institute		
University of Sindh, Jamshoro	198	(54.4)
Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur	99	(27.2)
University of Karachi, Karachi	48	(13.2)
Other	19	(5.2)
Age		
0-30 years (Young)	239	(42.1)
31-40 years (Mature)	213	(37.5)
Over 40 years (Old)	116	(20.4)
Monthly Income		
Less than 10,000 Rs.	217	(37.7)
Above 10,000 Rs.	168	(29.2)
No answer	76	(13.2)
Put (X) cross symbol	5	(.9)
Commented instead of revealing Income	110	(19.1)
Geographic Affiliation		
Rural journalists	331	57.5
Urban journalists	245	42.5

Professional Description

In the context of some professional specifications as mentioned in table 2 it was found that the majority of the Sindh journalists (68.4%) worked as news-reporters whereas the remaining proportion (31.6%) were newsroom workers having various roles mainly related to news

editing and controlling the flow of news. When analysed in the regard of media organisation type it was observed that the majority (61.3%) worked in print media and the news-workforce worked in broadcast (32.5%) and wire-service (6.3%) media organisations. Finally in the perspective of professional seniority it was known that the majority of the Sindh journalists (68.2%) enjoyed above 5 years journalistic experience; and the remaining proportion of the sampled journalists had professional experience of about 3 years (20.1%) and about 5 years (11.6%).

TABLE 2: Composition of the Journalists by Profession-Related Variables

<i>Profession Related variables</i>	Number	Percentage (%)
Journalist type		
Newsroom	182	(31.6)
News-reporting	394	(68.4)
Total	576	(100)
Organisation type		
Print	353	(61.3)
Broadcast	187	(32.5)
Wire-service	36	(6.3)
Total	576	(100)
Job seniority		
About 3 years	116	(20.1)
About 5 years	67	(11.6)
Above 5 years	393	68.2
Total	576	(100)

Press Club Membership

As shown in table 3 out of 567 respondents the overwhelming majority (71.1%) said that they were members of press clubs established in their district areas; however, the remaining proportion (28.9%) reported that they were not members of any press club or

other journalistic organisation. So this finding indicates towards a characteristic of professionalism existing among the Sindh journalists in Pakistan. However, when this finding regarding press club membership of the journalists in Sindh was compared with the findings of the journalists in the following countries in this context the journalists in Sindh were by this measure, more professional; because the percentage figures of Hong Kong 18% (Chan, Lee, & Lee, 1998: 41), France 37% (McMane, 1998: 199), Brazil 28% (Herscovitz & Cardoso, 1998: 424), Algeria 48% (Kirat, 1998: 337), Canada 48% female and 40% male (Robinson & Saint-Jean, 1998: 369), Taiwan 65% (Lo, 1998: 83) and West Germany 56% (Schoenbach, Stuerzebecher, & Schneider, 1998: 221) were lower than the percentage figure of journalists in Sindh (71.1%). In contrast, the membership figure (71.1%) of the journalists in Sindh was almost equal to the membership figure of the journalists in East Germany 69% (Schoenbach et al., 1998: 221) and less than that of journalists in Australia, 86% (Henningham 1998: 100) and particularly Finland where all journalists of the print as well as broadcast media were members of the Union of Journalists in Finland (Heinonen, 1998: 173).

TABLE 3: Composition of the Journalists by Press Club-Related Variables

<i>Press Club Related variables</i>	Number	Percentage (%)
Press club/organisation Membership		
Yes	403	(71.1)
No	164	(28.9)
Total	567	(100)
Perception about press clubs in Sindh		
Social club	130	(23.3)
Newsgathering organisations	177	(31.8)
Both	250	(44.9)
Total	557	(100)

<i>Press Club Related variables</i>	Number	Percentage (%)
Share information with colleagues?		
Yes	298	(55.6)
No	62	(11.6)
Sometimes	176	(32.8)
Total	536	(100)
Is membership rejected at press clubs?		
Yes	246	(45.5)
No	174	(32.2)
I do not know	121	(22.4)
Total	541	(100)

As table 4 indicates, there were some very interesting findings regarding the press club membership of journalists in Sindh. Firstly, from the perspective of journalist type it was found that the proportion of newsroom workers who were not members of press clubs was much bigger (73.8%) than the percentage of those who were members (13.9%). In contrast, the percentage of news-reporting journalists who were press club members was higher (86.1%) than that of non-members (26.2%). In this way it seems that press club culture in Sindh is dominated by news-reporting journalists rather than their newsroom colleagues who seem to have comparatively less representation in the press clubs. Secondly, in regard to organisation type, in print media the proportion of press club members was higher (65.8%) than that of non-members (50.6%) However, in broadcast and wire-service media the proportions of press club member journalists (29.0% and 5.2% respectively) were less than the proportion of non-member news professionals (40.9% and 8.5% respectively). In other words this finding indicates that among print journalists the dominant proportion is of those who are press club members whereas among broadcast and wire-service journalists the greater proportions are of those who were not members of press clubs. Thirdly, in terms of job seniority it was observed that among cubs and junior journalists the proportion of those who were members (10.2% and 9.4%

respectively) was on average less than the proportion of non-members (43.9% and 17.1% respectively). Conversely, among seniors the proportion of those who were press club members (80.4%) was two times bigger than that of non-members (39.0%). This finding serves as a very strong indicator of the fact that senior journalists have high representation in the press clubs of Sindh. Fourthly, in regard to age in the “young” age category the proportion of non-members was much bigger (68.5%) than press club members (30.9%). However, the proportions of member journalists who were in the “mature” and “above 40 years old” categories (43.1% and 25.9% respectively) were comparatively greater than the proportions of non-members in these categories (24.7% and 6.8% respectively). That shows that young journalists have little representation in the press clubs of Sindh. These findings support a complaint commonly heard from young journalists in almost every district of Sindh, that senior journalists have established a monopoly over the press clubs and that they do not easily let the newcomers become a member of these organisations. Finally, analysing press club membership in terms of geographical affiliation, in rural areas the proportion of press club members was much higher (73.7%) than that of non-members (19.5%); in urban areas, the proportion of non-members (80.5%) was greater than that of members (26.3%). Such findings suggest that it is harder to get press club membership in urban areas than in rural, particularly, due to the monopoly established upon the press clubs by the senior cadre of journalists, a complaint heard from junior journalists both in discussions as well personal conversations and focus group.

TABLE 4: Distribution of the Journalists by Press Club Membership

<i>Selected variables</i>	Press club membership		
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
Type of journalist*			
Newsroom	56(13.9)	121(73.8)	177(31.2)
News-reporting	347(86.1)	43(26.2)	390(68.8)
Total	403(100)	164(100)	567(100)
Organisation type†			
Print	265(65.8)	83(50.6)	348(61.4)
Broadcast	117(29.0)	67(40.9)	184(32.5)
Wire-service	21(5.2)	14(8.5)	35(6.2)
Total	403(100)	164(100)	567(100)
Job seniority‡			
About 3 years (Cub)	41(10.2)	72(43.9)	113(19.9)
About 5 years (Juniors)	38(9.4)	28(17.1)	66(11.6)
Above 5 years (Seniors)	324(80.4)	64(39.0)	66(68.4)
Total	403(100)	164(100)	567(100)
Age category§			
0-30 years (Young)	124(30.9)	111(68.5)	235(41.7)
31-40 years (Mature)	173(43.1)	40(24.7)	213(37.8)
Above 40 years (Old)	104(25.9)	11(6.8)	115(20.4)
Total	401(100)	162(100)	563(100)
Geographical affiliation 			
Rural journalist	297(73.7)	32(19.5)	329(58.0)
Urban journalist	106(26.3)	132(80.5)	238(42.0)
Total	403(100)	164(100)	567(100)

* $X^2 = 191.90$, $p = 000$, $df = 1$; † $X^2 = 11.46$, $p = 003$, $df = 2$; ‡ $X^2 = 101.54$, $p = 000$, $df = 2$; § $X^2 = 70.16$, $p = 000$, $df = 2$; || $X^2 = 138.29$, $p = 000$, $df = 1$.

Perception Regarding Press Clubs in Pakistan

The local press clubs which have been established in every district and almost every sub-division of Sindh seem more organised than any other journalistic organisations in Sindh. Generally all those who join the news media as a profession appear to aspire to be members of the press club of their district. In this regard when it was enquired from the journalists in the sample as to how they perceive the phenomenon of press clubs in Sindh province, the response was (See table 3) that out of a total of 557 the highest proportion (44.9%) termed the press clubs not only 'news gathering organisations' but also 'social clubs'. However, the other proportion of slightly lower than one third (31.8%) of the journalists reported that they deemed press clubs just 'news gathering organisations', and on the contrary the remaining proportion of over one fifth (23.3%) said that press clubs in Sindh are like 'social clubs'. In conclusion, the survey indicates that the highest number of Sindh journalists perceived the press clubs as social clubs as well as newsgathering organisations.

TABLE 5: Distribution of the Journalists by Press Club Perception

<i>Selected variables</i>	Perception regarding press clubs in Sindh			
	Social clubs (%)	News-gathering organisations (%)	Both (%)	Total (%)
Journalist type*				
Newsroom	24(18.5)	70(39.5)	79(31.6)	173(31.1)
News-reporting	106(81.5)	107(60.5)	171(68.4)	385(68.9)
Total	130(100)	177(100)	250(100)	557(100)
Geographic affiliation†				
Rural	99(76.2)	91(51.4)	134(53.6)	324(58.2)
Urban	31(23.8)	86(48.6)	116(46.4)	233(41.8)
Total	130(100)	177(100)	250(100)	557(100)

* $\chi^2 = 15.62$, $p = 000$, $df = 2$: † $\chi^2 = 22.74$, $p = 000$, $df = 2$.

Other interesting variations among the journalists in Sindh regarding the press club perception were that, (see table 5) first, from the perspective of journalist type among newsroom workers the proportion of those who considered the press clubs in Sindh to be news-gathering organisations (39.5%) was higher than those who deemed the press clubs to be social clubs (18.5%) and 'both' (31.6%). However, in contrast, among news-reporting professionals the proportion of those who perceived the press clubs as just social clubs (81.5%) was much greater than those who called the club a news-gathering organisation (60.5%) or 'both' (68.4%). Thus the findings indicate that there is a clear-cut difference in opinion of newsroom and news-reporting journalists regarding press clubs in Sindh. For the newsroom staffers, the press clubs are more news-gathering organisations, but in the consideration of news-reporting professionals they are more social clubs. Secondly, in regard to the geographic affiliation it was observed that among rural journalists the highest proportion (76.2%) was of those to whom the press clubs seemed to be social clubs; among urban journalists the biggest proportion (48.6%) was of those who considered the press clubs news-gathering organisations. In summary, the findings point out that rural journalists make more use of press clubs as social clubs, whereas the urban journalists use press clubs as news-gathering organisations.

Sharing News Information

As presented earlier (See table 3) 31.8% of the journalists surveyed reported that press clubs in Sindh are exclusively 'newsgathering organisations'; an additional proportion of more than two fifths (44.9%) said that press clubs are not only 'newsgathering organisations' but also 'social clubs'. A further function of Sindh press clubs is as a place where journalists can share information with each other. Out of a total of 536 the considerable majority of the journalists (55.6%) responded 'yes' they shared news information with other journalists at their press clubs (See table 3). Almost one third (32.8%)

said they share, 'sometimes'. The remaining proportion of slightly over a tenth (11.6%) responded 'no' they do not share news information with other journalists. Hence, the findings regarding the sharing of news information with each other by journalists clarifies the concept of press clubs in Sindh more as 'newsgathering organisations' and less as 'social organisations'.

TABLE 0: Distribution of the Journalists by Sharing-News-Information

<i>Selected variables</i>	News-Information-Sharing			
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Sometimes (%)	Total (%)
Job seniority*				
About 3 years (cubs)	46(15.4)	16(25.8)	41(23.3)	103(19.2)
About 5 years (juniors)	28(9.4)	11(17.7)	20(11.4)	59(11.0)
Above 5 years (seniors)	224(75.2)	35(56.5)	115(65.3)	374(69.8)
Total	298(100)	62(100)	176(100)	536(100)
Age category†				
0 – 30 years (young)	111(37.4)	34(54.8)	77(44.3)	222(41.7)
31 – 40 years (mature)	117(39.4)	14(22.6)	68(39.1)	199(37.3)
Above 40 years (Old)	69(23.2)	14(22.6)	29(16.7)	112(21.0)
Total	297(100)	62(100)	174(100)	533(100)
Geographic affiliation‡				
Rural	205(68.8)	21(33.9)	102(58.0)	328(61.2)
Urban	93(31.2)	41(66.1)	74(42.0)	208(38.8)
Total	298(100)	62(100)	176(100)	536(100)

* $\chi^2=11.73$, $p=0.19$, $df=4$; † $\chi^2=10.60$, $p=0.31$, $df=4$; ‡ $\chi^2=27.51$, $p=0.00$, $df=2$.

Additionally, very striking variations were found in the responses of journalists subject to sharing news information with other journalists (See table 6). Firstly from the perspective of job seniority among cubs, the higher proportions were of those who do not share (25.8%) and share-sometimes (23.3%) compared with those who shared-fully (15.4%). In a similar vein among juniors as well, the higher proportions were of those who reported not sharing (17.7%) and only share-sometimes (11.4%) compared with those who shared-fully (9.4%). In contrast, however, among senior journalists the bigger proportion was of those who mentioned that they shared news information fully (75.2%) compared with those who did not share (56.5%) and shared-sometimes (65.3%).

In conclusion, the findings showed that the trend of sharing news information with other colleagues is found more among senior professionals compared with juniors and cubs. Secondly, with regard to age categories it was observed that among the young category of news-workers the bigger proportions were of those who did not share (54.8%) and shared-sometimes (44.3%) compared with those who shared-fully (37.4%). And among the mature category of journalists the proportions of those who shared-fully (39.4%) and sometimes (39.1%) were equal, however, higher than those who did not share (22.6%); whereas, among the old age category the proportion of those who shared-fully (23.2%) was greater than those who shared-not (22.6%) and shared-sometimes (16.7%). In this way again the above results indicate that in the context of age the trend of sharing news information is more stable among old and mature news professionals compared with their young age colleagues. Thirdly, subject to geographic affiliation it was observed that among rural journalists the proportion of those who shared-fully (68.8%) was bigger than those who did not share (33.9%) and shared-sometimes (58.0%); inversely, whereas among urban journalists the proportion of those who did not share (66.1%) was greater than those who shared-fully (31.2%) and sometimes (42.0%). Thus the findings made clear that news

information sharing is found more among rural journalists compared with their urban counterparts.

Membership Rejection in Sindh Press Clubs

As discussed earlier in Sindh the young age and new-comers in news media, for the most part, grumbled in personal conversations with the researcher that they have difficulty in getting press club membership. This practice of not allowing press club membership to new-comers was one of the core reasons for the trend of establishing more than one press club. To assess this trend further, it was asked whether any journalist gets rejected from membership of the press club due to a violation of press club constitution or journalistic ethics. In response as presented in table 3 out of a total of 541 the highest proportion of over two fifths (45.5%) reported 'yes' the press club membership of the journalists is rejected whereas in contrast a proportion of around one third (32.2%) said 'no'. However, the remainder proportion of over one fifth (22.4%) responded that they 'Do not know'. Thus the findings pinpoint that, to some extent, in the press clubs of Sindh the action of membership rejection is practiced, because the highest proportion of journalists endorse to such a practice.

TABLE 7: Distribution of the Journalists by Membership Rejection in Sindh press clubs

<i>Selected variables</i>	Membership rejection in press club?			
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Do not know (%)	Total (%)
Job seniority*				
About 3 years (cubs)	25(10.2)	28(16.1)	50(41.3)	103(19.0)
About 5 years (juniors)	26(10.6)	16(9.2)	21(17.4)	63(11.6)
Above 5 years (seniors)	195(79.3)	130(74.7)	50(41.3)	375(69.3)
Total	246(100)	174(100)	121(100)	541(100)

<i>Selected variables</i>	Membership rejection in press club?			
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Do not know (%)	Total (%)
Age category†				
0 – 30 years (young)	68(27.8)	73(42.4)	83(68.6)	224(41.6)
31 – 40 years (mature)	112(45.7)	60(34.9)	29(24.0)	201(37.4)
Above 40 years (Old)	65(26.5)	39(22.7)	9(7.4)	113(21.0)
Total	245(100)	172(100)	121(100)	538(100)
Geographic affiliation‡				
Rural	186(75.6)	117(67.2)	22(18.2)	325(60.1)
Urban	60(24.4)	57(32.8)	99(81.8)	216(39.9)
Total	246(100)	174(100)	121(100)	541(100)

* $\chi^2 = 64.98$, $p = 000$, $df = 4$; † $\chi^2 = 57.54$, $p = 000$, $df = 4$; ‡ $\chi^2 = 1.17$, $p = 000$, $df = 2$.

Moreover, regarding the rejection of press club membership some significant differences were found among journalists (See table 7). Firstly, in regard to job experience, among both the cubs and the junior category of the journalists the highest proportions (41.3% and 17.4% respectively) were of those who said that they know nothing about press club membership rejection. In contrast, among the senior news professionals the biggest proportion (79.3%) was of those who responded 'yes' that press club membership of journalists is rejected in some situations. That finding highlights the fact that compared with cubs and junior journalists, senior journalists are well aware of press club matters because they are more dominant in the clubs. Secondly, from the perspective of age category, the highest proportion of the young reported that they know nothing regarding membership rejection from the press clubs; the biggest proportions of those in the mature and old age category (45.7% and 26.5% respectively) were aware of the fact that the press club takes action to reject membership of journalists from the club. Again this finding is

consistent with the idea that older journalists tend to dominate what happens in the press clubs and these journalists are “in the know” about the inner workings of the clubs. However, the majority of cubs and junior news-workers mentioned that they did not know about the membership rejection of journalists from press clubs; because due to not being allowed by senior journalists to become members of the press club they remain unaware of such things. Finally, in consideration of geographic affiliation it was also significant to know that among rural journalists the highest proportion (75.6%) mentioned that press club membership of the journalists gets rejected; however, among urban journalists the biggest proportion (81.8%) was of those who said that they know nothing about press club membership rejection. In summary, the finding indicates that it is more likely that newcomers to journalism in urban areas tend to be kept from entering the press club by senior colleagues more than those in rural areas.

Discussion and Conclusion

As put in the beginning that participation of journalists in journalistic organisations is one of the indicators of a degree of professionalism among journalistic corp. So by analysing the above mentioned empirical data it was found about some press club features that the majority of the Sindh journalists are members of the press clubs. However those who reported news and worked for print media on average were more press club members than those who worked in newsroom and were employed by broadcast and wire-service media. Moreover analysed in the context of job experience and age the data mentioned that senior and those who aged between 30 to 40 years were more members of the press clubs those who were junior and less than 30 years.

Regarding press club perception it was observed that Sindh journalists perceive and use to press clubs both as newsgathering organisations and social clubs. But the perception of press clubs as

social clubs on average was higher among those who reported news; whereas the perception of press clubs as newsgathering organisations was larger among those who worked in newsrooms. Additionally the majority of the journalists also mentioned that they share individually collected news information with each other at press clubs. However the trend of sharing news information on average was found higher among rural journalists compared with their urban counterparts.

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