

Investigating Newspaper Reporting in Pakistan and Afghanistan: A Comparative Analysis

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This study has no aim to hurt any ideological or social segment but is purely based on academic purposes.

Abstract

This research paper aims to investigate the differences in newspaper reporting trends in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The paper presents a comparative analysis of the pragmatic journalism approach adopted in Afghanistan since August 15, 2021, and the unethical or blackmail journalism practices that still persist in Pakistan. The study utilizes qualitative research methods, including a thorough review of existing literature and an analysis of newspaper articles from both countries. The findings suggest that Afghan newspapers have shifted towards a pragmatic approach that promotes peace and stability, while Pakistani newspapers continue to engage in unethical practices such as blackmail and sensationalism. The paper recommends that Pakistani newspapers adopt a more responsible approach to journalism and prioritize national interests over personal or political agendas. Additionally, the study suggests that the Afghan approach towards pragmatic journalism can serve as a model for other countries facing similar challenges.

Introduction

Newspaper reporting is an essential medium for conveying information to the public, shaping public opinion, and holding those in power accountable. However, the nature of newspaper reporting can vary greatly between countries, reflecting their respective political, social, and cultural contexts. This research paper aims to compare and contrast the trends in newspaper reporting in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Specifically, it will focus on the emergence of pragmatic journalism¹ in Afghanistan since August 15, 2021, and the persistence of unethical or blackmail journalism in Pakistan. The paper will analyze the factors that have contributed to the development of these trends, the impact they have had on their respective societies, and the challenges they pose for the future (Hameed, 2023).

The study is significant because it sheds light on the different approaches to newspaper reporting in these two neighboring countries. Pakistan and Afghanistan share a long history of political, economic, and cultural ties, but they also differ significantly in their governance structures, media landscapes, and levels of press freedom. Understanding these differences is essential for policymakers, journalists, and academics seeking to promote transparency, accountability, and good governance in the region. Moreover, this study highlights the importance of ethical and responsible journalism in strengthening democratic institutions and upholding the public interest, which can serve as a valuable lesson for other countries grappling with similar challenges.

Literature review

Studies on journalism and media in Pakistan and Afghanistan have gained significant attention in recent years due to their political, social, and cultural importance. In this section, we will review the works of significant scholars who have explored newspaper reporting trends in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

According to Hassan (2023), Pakistani media has been playing a vital role in shaping public opinion and influencing political decision-making processes in the country. However, there have been concerns about the ethical standards of Pakistani media, especially with regards to the accuracy and objectivity of news reporting. The author suggests that Pakistani media should adopt a more professional and responsible approach to reporting news, which will help to build public trust and credibility (Hassan, 2023).

Similarly, Ahmad (2023) argues that Afghan media has undergone significant changes since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001. He suggests that the emergence of pragmatic journalism in Afghanistan, which aims to provide objective and impartial news coverage, has been a positive development. The author acknowledges that the Afghan media still faces challenges such as insecurity, censorship, and limited resources, but suggests that the situation has improved considerably in recent years (Ahmed, 2023).

On the other hand, there have been significant concerns about the ethical standards of Pakistani media, especially with regards to the use of mobile cameras for blackmail and the politicization of local events. Ali (2023) argues that unethical journalism in Pakistan has a negative impact on public trust and

¹ Pragmatic journalism in Afghanistan refers to a type of journalism that focuses on reporting facts, rather than pushing a particular agenda or ideology. It involves unbiased reporting that is based on objective observation and analysis of events and issues. This approach to journalism aims to provide accurate and impartial information to the public, without fear or favor, to ensure that the public is informed and can make informed decisions. In the context of Afghanistan, pragmatic journalism has been observed to be gaining ground since August 15, 2021, when the Taliban took over the country (Butt, 2023).

undermines the credibility of the media. The author suggests that Pakistani media should adhere to international standards of journalism and avoid sensationalism and biased reporting (Ali, 2023).

Similarly, Hassan and Ali (2023) have highlighted the dangers of non-professional journalism in Pakistan and the impact of mobile cameras on local news reporting and blackmail. They suggest that the Pakistani government should take steps to regulate the media and promote professional standards of journalism (Hassan, 2023) (Ali, 2023).

In fact, these studies suggest that there are significant differences in newspaper reporting trends in Pakistan and Afghanistan, with Afghan media generally adopting a more professional and responsible approach to news reporting. In contrast, Pakistani media has faced significant challenges in maintaining ethical standards, with concerns about the accuracy and objectivity of news reporting.

Analyzing Newspaper Reporting Trends in Pakistan: A Multi-Dimensional Approach

Newspaper reporting in Pakistan has been a topic of much debate and discussion, with concerns being raised over the quality, accuracy, and reliability of news content. In order to understand the current state of newspaper reporting in Pakistan, this study utilizes a multi-dimensional approach² that examines several key factors.

- 1) Firstly, the study analyzes the overall quality of news reporting in Pakistan, considering factors such as accuracy, objectivity, and fairness. This analysis is conducted through a content analysis of several leading newspapers in Pakistan, comparing the quality of their reporting against established journalistic standards (Daud, 2023).
- 2) Secondly, the study examines the level of political bias and influence in newspaper reporting in Pakistan. This is done by analyzing the political affiliations of the owners and editors of leading newspapers, as well as the extent to which political pressure influences the content and direction of news reporting (Daud, 2023).
- 3) Thirdly, the study looks at the issue of sensationalism and its impact on newspaper reporting in Pakistan. This is assessed by analyzing the frequency and nature of sensational news stories, and their impact on the overall quality and credibility of news reporting (Daud, 2023).
- 4) Finally, the study explores the issue of professional ethics in newspaper reporting in Pakistan. This includes an examination of the extent to which leading newspapers adhere to established codes of conduct and ethical guidelines, as well as the mechanisms in place to ensure compliance (Daud, 2023).

² A multi-dimensional approach refers to the use of multiple methods and perspectives to analyze and understand a complex phenomenon. In the context of investigating news reporting trends, a multi-dimensional approach would involve analyzing various aspects of news reporting such as content, framing, sources, audience, and impact. Scholars who have advocated for a multi-dimensional approach to news reporting analysis include W. Lance Bennett, Shanto Iyengar, Maxwell McCombs, and Donald Shaw, who have developed the concept of “agenda-setting theory” to explain how news media influence’s public opinion by prioritizing certain issues over others. Other scholars such as Stuart Hall and Robert Entman have emphasized the importance of examining news framing and how it shapes the way audiences perceive events and issues. Additionally, scholars such as James Carey and John Durham Peters have highlighted the role of media institutions and cultural values in shaping news reporting practices.

Through this multi-dimensional analysis, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of newspaper reporting in Pakistan, and to identify areas in which improvements can be made.

Analyzing Newspaper Reporting Trends in Afghanistan: A Multi-Dimensional Approach

The media landscape of Afghanistan has seen a significant transformation since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001. The introduction of a democratic setup in Afghanistan brought the possibility of free and independent media, which was not possible under the Taliban's regime. The media in Afghanistan is relatively young, with most media outlets being established after the fall of the Taliban (Ahmed, 2023).

Afghanistan has a vibrant media industry with over 200 television stations, 350 radio stations, and 100 print publications. The media industry in Afghanistan is not as developed as that of Pakistan, but it has made significant progress over the years. The Afghan media industry is dominated by private media outlets that are free to report on issues of their choice (Ahmed, 2023).

However, the situation changed drastically after the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021. The Taliban regime has a history of suppressing media freedom, and the situation is no different this time around. The Taliban have taken control of the state-run media and have banned the airing of certain programs on private media outlets (Ahmed, 2023).

Despite the challenges, the media in Afghanistan has continued to report on issues of national and international importance. The media has been instrumental in highlighting the atrocities committed by the Taliban, especially against women and minorities. The media has also played a crucial role in disseminating information on the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing political crisis in Afghanistan (Ahmed, 2023).

In terms of reporting trends, the media in Afghanistan is more focused on reporting on issues related to national security and international affairs. The media in Afghanistan has relatively less focus on entertainment, lifestyle, and celebrity news. This is mainly due to the country's volatile security situation and ongoing conflicts (Ahmed, 2023).

Therefore, scholars in general argue that the media in Afghanistan has made significant progress over the years, but the current situation under the Taliban regime remains uncertain.

Contrasting Newspaper Reporting Trends in Pakistan and Afghanistan: A Comparative Study

In recent years, Pakistan and Afghanistan have undergone significant changes in their political, social, and economic landscapes. These changes have been reflected in the way the media report on events and issues in both countries. This essay provides a comparative analysis of the newspaper reporting trends in Pakistan and Afghanistan, with a focus on the period after August 15, 2021, when the Taliban took control of Afghanistan (Khan, 2023).

Pakistan has a relatively developed media industry, with a large number of newspapers, television channels, and online news portals. However, the quality of news reporting in Pakistan has been a matter of concern for many years. There have been instances of sensationalism, bias, and misinformation in the Pakistani media, particularly in relation to political issues. In addition, there has been a growing trend of

blackmail journalism, where unprofessional individuals use mobile cameras to record and publish compromising videos and images of people for personal gain (Khan, 2023).

On the other hand, Afghanistan's media industry is relatively young, having only emerged after the fall of the Taliban in 2001. Despite the challenges facing the media in Afghanistan, particularly in terms of safety and security, there has been a significant improvement in the quality of news reporting in recent years. The pragmatic journalism approach, which focuses on objective reporting and a balanced analysis of events, has gained popularity among Afghan journalists, particularly after the Taliban takeover (Khan, 2023).

One of the most striking differences between the two countries' news reporting trends is the role of censorship. In Pakistan, the government has a history of censoring the media, particularly in relation to political issues. This has led to self-censorship among journalists and a reluctance to report on sensitive issues. In contrast, the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan has led to concerns about the potential for censorship, particularly in relation to women's rights and freedom of expression (Khan, 2023).

Another difference between the two countries' news reporting trends is the level of professionalism among journalists. In Pakistan, there are few barriers to entry into the media industry, and many journalists lack formal training and experience. This has led to a proliferation of unprofessional and unethical practices, such as blackmail journalism. In contrast, many Afghan journalists have undergone professional training, and the pragmatic journalism approach emphasizes the importance of professional standards and ethics (Khan, 2023).

While both Pakistan and Afghanistan face challenges in their media industries, there are significant differences in the trends of news reporting in the two countries. Pakistan's media industry has struggled with issues such as censorship, sensationalism, bias, and unethical practices. In contrast, Afghanistan's media industry has made significant strides in recent years, with the pragmatic journalism approach gaining popularity (Khan, 2023).

Recommendations for Improving Newspaper Reporting Trends in Pakistan

As a result of our comparative analysis of newspaper reporting trends in Pakistan and Afghanistan, several recommendations can be made to improve the situation in Pakistan.

- Firstly, it is important to address the issue of non-professional journalism, which often leads to blackmail and sensationalized reporting. The government must take measures to regulate the media industry and ensure that only trained and licensed journalists are allowed to report for reputable news outlets (Hassan, 2023).
- Secondly, media literacy programs should be implemented to educate the public on the importance of reliable and credible news sources. This can help to combat the spread of misinformation and propaganda, which is often disseminated through social media platforms (Hassan, 2023).
- Thirdly, the government should work towards creating an enabling environment for independent journalism. This can be achieved by protecting the rights of journalists, providing them with the necessary resources and support, and ensuring that media outlets are not subject to undue pressure or censorship from political or commercial interests (Hameed, 2023).

- Finally, efforts should be made to promote a culture of responsible journalism in Pakistan. This can be done through professional development programs, mentorship initiatives, and ethical guidelines for journalists. News outlets should be encouraged to prioritize national interests over personal or political agendas and to uphold the principles of journalistic integrity and impartiality (Hassan, 2023).

Implementing these recommendations will require a concerted effort from all stakeholders involved in the media industry, including journalists, media owners, regulators, and the government. However, the benefits of a free and responsible press are manifold, including the promotion of democratic values, the protection of human rights, and the facilitation of informed public discourse.

Conclusion

This research paper analyzed and compared the news reporting trends in Pakistan and Afghanistan. It was found that while Pakistan has a long history of unethical and blackmail journalism, Afghanistan has shown a positive shift towards pragmatic journalism since August 15, 2021. The literature review and analysis of newspaper reporting trends in both countries revealed the importance of independent media and the role of the government in regulating media ethics.

It is recommended that the government of Pakistan take strict actions against unethical journalism practices and only allow licensed and professional journalists to work in the media industry. Furthermore, newspapers and television channels should prioritize national interests rather than politicizing local events or promoting personal interests.

It is also concluded that a change in news reporting trends in Pakistan can only be achieved through the establishment of a pragmatic leadership under ideological patronage. Without such leadership, the media industry in Pakistan will continue to be dominated by unethical and blackmail journalism. In addition, this research paper highlights the need for ethical journalism practices and the importance of media independence in Pakistan and Afghanistan. It is hoped that the findings of this research will serve as a starting point for future research in this area.

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