

## Perceived Commercial Influence upon the Journalists in Sindh Province, Pakistan

Bashir Ahmed Memon<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Siddique Soomro<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

*This study aimed to assess the impact of perceived commercial influence upon the surveyed journalists in Sindh province, Pakistan. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted, and a close-ended questionnaire was administered for data collection. A sample of 250 journalists from various subdivisions of the Hyderabad Division was selected by employing a purposive sampling technique. Thus in the result, subject to demographic details, it was observed that the majority of the surveyed journalists were male, aged between 31-40 years, having sought a bachelor-level education, and being employed by Sindhi language print media news organizations with professional experience of up to 10 years. In addition, it was found that out of the total of four sources of commercial influence measured in this study, advertising was found on the top followed by economic considerations, public relations agencies, and business people in influencing the news workers' journalistic profession.*

**Keywords:** Commercial influence, journalists, advertisers, economic

### INTRODUCTION

Commercial pressure is faced increasingly by the news industry, even in most democratic countries. That creates a risk for owners and advertisers to influence and undermine the independence of media workers, resulting in the disservice of news media to democracy. (Tomaz et al., 2022). A blog post published on Yellowbrick reports that in the digital era, the influence of advertising on news substance has increasingly become predominant. Thus, there is a probability that the pressure of advertisers on news organizations may lead to conflicts of interest and compromises in journalistic integrity. So journalistic integrity must be defended and sustained in the face of such commercial pressures (Yellowbrick, 2023).

In such a context, this study is to assess the impact of perceived commercial influence on journalists in Sindh Province, Pakistan. First defined separately from the term commercial influence, according to Power thesaurus, the word 'commercial' means an advertisement in a common media format, usually radio or television. And the word 'influence' means power to affect, control, or manipulate something or someone, or the ability to change the development of fluctuating things such as conduct, thoughts, or decisions (see power thesaurus).

---

<sup>1</sup>Department of Media and Communication Studies University of Sindh, Jamshoro  
bashir.memon@usindh.edu.pk

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer, Department of Media and Communication Studies University of Sindh, Jamshoro

However, in the perspective of this research endeavor, the term commercial influence is inclusive of not only advertisers but also other factors, such as economic considerations, business people, and public relations agencies. Hence, to be specific, its operational definition as a construct (perceived commercial influence: PCI) in the questionnaire of this study is that it refers to a news worker's comprehension of prospects and hindrances that are part of his work environment. Perceived commercial influence included a total four items: (1) advertisers; (2) economic considerations; (3) business people; and (4) public relations agencies. It is measured on a six-point scale, where the answer category ranges from 1 (irrelevant to one's work) to 6 (greatly influential).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The fact that the majority of media outlets must rely on advertising revenue to fund their operations presents one commonly mentioned conflict in journalism: there is a conflict between journalistic and commercial goals. In order to preserve independence and professionalism, newsrooms created verbal and frequently bodily barriers to divide the business's journalistic and financial divisions (Coddington, 2015). Furthermore, Coddington (2015) vividly describes how this so-called "wall" can serve as a sign of trustworthiness and veracity because news workers might have felt more authorized to turn down outside influences in the newsroom. This wall has grown increasingly permeable due to mounting economic pressures and shifts in the media landscape. Economic effects are being felt in the everyday routines and practices of individual journalists as well as at the organizational level.

On an organizational level, media firms were able to combine content creation and take control of packaging, distribution, and consumption locations at an organizational level thanks to new technology (Salamon, 2016). However, new media also increased competition for public attention, which further divided audiences. Advertisers started moving to media that could target customers more precisely online, while traditional media were incapable of capturing the attention of large audiences (Picard 2005). Newsrooms have reorganized and committed fewer resources to cover the same range of issues in order to stay financially viable (Lee-Wright 2012 & Ferrucci 2015). According to Lewis, Williams, and Franklin (2008) and Jackson and Moloney (2016), PR material is reproduced as original journalism, content creation is outsourced, and pay for contract and freelancing labor has decreased (Cohen, 2015). With less time and money to devote to in-depth reporting and extensive research, all these variations may make individual

reporters more susceptible to commercial pressures. Additionally, news management discourse is reducing the rhetorical barrier separating editorial and advertisement to a single line (Coddington, 2015; Artemas, Vos, & Duffy, 2016).

On a separate level, journalists' perceptions of influences and autonomy may be highly affected by the trend toward commercialized reporting and fewer resources (Örnebring et al., 2016). Hanitzsch and Mellado (2011), for instance, discovered that Western nations have relatively low levels of perceived economic influence. According to Hanitzsch and Mellado (2011), 419, this prompts them to state that "the power and consequences of economic influences, although they objectively exist, may not appear particularly obtrusive in the journalists' perceptions." Corresponding to this, Örnebring et al. (2016, 320) contended that "journalists do not necessarily 'see' external autonomy issues as directly affecting their internal (workplace) autonomy," particularly commercialization. The writers did note, however, that the perceived autonomy of journalists was impacted by the level of commercialization present in a given media system.

Because journalism is more market-driven than other types of media, it has an awkwardly intimate relationship with the interests of the lifestyle industries. Fashion journalists collaborate with apparel companies, food journalists with eateries, and so on. Travel mediemen have an understanding of air companies and lodging suppliers. Though it is occasionally regarded as journalistically "impure," a growing body of scholarly work on lifestyle journalism has pushed for a different understanding of the genre as one in which commercialism is an essential but tense part of lifestyle journalism's identity (Hanusch, Hanitzsch & Lauerer 2017). In actuality, commercialism hasn't always been seen as a danger to the professionalism of journalism in other countries. Due in part to the media organizations' connections to foreign publications and publicity, commercialism has allowed lifestyle journalists in China, where media has traditionally been an extension of state ideology, some latitude to practice a level of professionalism that would not be feasible otherwise (Li, 2012). By drawing readers who discover certain lifestyle themes interesting and advertisers looking to reach those readers, publishing on lifestyle topics has evolved into a means for mainstream newspapers and magazines to build a consumer trademark or image (Kristensen & From, 2012).

Freebies, PR, and advertising are just a few of the commercial forces that lifestyle journalists frequently deal with (Hanusch, 2012; Hanusch, Hanitzsch & Lauerer, 2017).

Lifestyle journalists must walk a narrow line between acknowledging their economic dependence and resisting it while keeping their autonomy.

According to qualitative research, there is a relationship between the institutional context of a journalist's beat (travel, fashion, beauty, etc.) and their employment standing (permanent or freelance) that affects how straight these influences are handled and the plans they employ to deal with them (Hanusch, Hanitzsch & Lauerer, 2017). Independent, business journalists that face greater financial instability are more likely to be directly impacted by commercial interests (Rosenkranz 2015; Hanusch, Hanitzsch, and Lauerer 2017; & Pirolli 2017).

Folker H. et al. (2020) conducted a study on more than 600 Australian journalists. This study reported that freshmen journalists experience greater compression, including magazine journalists and those who work in the fields of travel, fashion, and beauty journalism.

Mahmood, F. (2018) surveyed a random sample of 250 journalists who belonged to the major cities of Pakistan. As a result of that survey, journalists expressed that the news media is influenced by advertising and public relations done by corporations. And such influence is put on the journalists by their ownership policies. Thus, corporations make investments and maintain influence over media organizations by providing advertisements to them. Whereas, in return, corporations ask for favorable media coverage, set their agendas, and boost their positive image. Hence, due to such a trend, journalists have to compromise on their professional ethical values.

Moholi, F. (2015), in his thesis for a master's degree, mentions that the government of Lesotho is the highest advertiser in print media. Thus, the government uses advertising as a tool to gag media freedom and freedom of expression through the media. The government also uses advertising as an incentive for journalists, as media organizations and journalists give it positive and higher media coverage.

According to the mail survey by Solely and Craig (1992) on the topic of "Adverting Pressures on Newspapers," almost 90 percent of the respondents have been pressured by advertisers due to the type and content of stories. Additionally, one-third of them expressed that advertisers were successful in manipulating the news in their papers. Even half of them admitted that there was pressure from within their newspapers to write stories to delight advertisers. Finally, seventy-seven percent said that they were also pressured to kill stories (see Solely & Craig, Dec., 1912).

## **OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTION OF THE STUDY**

### **Objective:**

- To assess the impact of perceived commercial influence (Advertisers, Economics considerations, Business people, Public relations sections/agencies upon journalists in Sindh province.

### **Research Question:**

- Does perceived commercial influence (Advertisers, Economic considerations, Business people, and Public relations sections/agencies) has influence upon journalists in Sindh province?

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study was to measure the perceived commercial influence on journalists in Sindh Province, Pakistan. For that purpose, following existing literature in the domain and considering the research objectives, the researchers carried out a survey to investigate the research questions. Surveys have widely and successfully been used in media research for a long time. Say Wimmer and Dominick (2013) that surveys have a diversity of benefits, like investigating problems in real settings, being cost-effective, collecting a large volume of data with comparative ease, and not being constrained by geographic boundaries. Gunter (2000) also emphasizes survey by terming it a suitable strategy to quantify and measure phenomena numerically. The researchers carried out a cross-sectional survey in this study. As it involves “observations of a sample that are made at one point in time” (Babbie, 2013, p. 109), exploratory studies are frequently cross-sectional.

## **POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

The researcher regarded only those journalists as members of the respective district press clubs at district headquarters. However, considering the vast area of study, the researchers covered Hyderabad division, which is governmentally separated into the following nine districts: Thatta, Sujawal, Hyderabad, Jamshoro, Badin, Tando Muhammad Khan, Matiari, Tando Allahyar, and Dadu. The study is just focused on those journalists who worked in the district headquarters of the Hyderabad division. As district headquarters are government apparatus, i.e., police and district governments, they work actively in district headquarters. Thus, these cities are comparatively more developed than the other sub-districts.

In the absence of a complete database of journalists, the researchers were obliged to focus on reporters, correspondents, and journalists affiliated with various media groups or organizations in English, Urdu, and Sindhi. Thus, a sample of available respondents was purposefully selected from the population. "You use purposive sampling to select members of a difficult-to-reach, specialized population" (Neuman, 2014). A sampling technique called Purposive allowed the researchers to embrace respondents nominated for specific features, work for a particular media, and select samples non-randomly. Only those journalists were surveyed who were associated with media organizations and worked in the capacity of a full-time journalist, correspondent, reporter, and/or sub-editor.

## DATA COLLECTION

A closed-ended questionnaire was adapted, encompassing the construct of perceived commercial influence (see Lee et al., 2015). It was administered to subjects by researchers in person. This interaction ensured that respondents were directed in the event of any misunderstanding. Further, for simplicity and validity, the data instrument was also translated into Urdu and Sindhi. For both languages, capable bilingual individuals were employed. Then two other experts in both languages were hired for back translation into English. That translation was also revised and studied by a bilingual professor. Whereas, for confirmation of the reliability of research design and field procedure, a pilot study was conducted on a sub-sample.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### Demographic and Professional Profile of the Surveyed Journalists

#### Demographic profile:

**Table 1:** Demographic Characteristics of the Journalists

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	248	(99.2)
Female	2	(0.8)
<i>Age category</i>		
Up to 30 years	76	(30.4)
31 to 40 years	97	(38.8)
Above 40 years	77	(30.8)
<i>Education</i>		
Intermediate and less	64	(25.6)
Bachelor	111	(44.4)
Masters	75	(30.0)

<i>Monthly income</i>		
Nil/Voluntary	111	(44.4)
Up to 20000/= PKR	104	(41.6)
Above 20000/= PKR	35	(14.0)

See Table 1, for reporting that almost all journalists were male. Age-wise, the majority (69.6%) of the respondents were up to 40 years old. Regarding education level, the highest proportion of the journalists had a bachelor's degree. Thus, essentially, the typical journalist was male and belonged to an age category that ranged from 31 to 40 years old. In the context of education, the typical journalist had a maximum bachelor degree. Whereas, in regard to monthly income, the highest proportion of them worked voluntary, in other words, unpaid.

### **Professional profile:**

**Table 2:** Profession-Related Characteristics of the Journalists

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Organization Type</i>		
Electronic Media	50	(20.0)
Print Media	133	(53.2)
Multiple Media	67	(26.8)
<i>Organization Language</i>		
Sindhi	153	(61.2)
Urdu	58	(23.2)
English	12	(4.8)
Multiple	27	(10.8)
<i>Journalistic experience</i>		
Up to 10 years	122	(48.8)
11 to 20 years	76	(30.4)
Above 20	52	(20.8)

According to Table 2, regarding professional characteristics, in terms of organization type, the simple majority of the journalists worked for print media. In regard to language, the majority of the journalists worked for Sindhi-language media organizations. In connection with journalistic experience, the highest proportion, accounting for almost fifty percent of the journalists, were up to 10 years experienced. Conclusively, the typical respondent is trademarked as a print journalist and works for a Sindhi media organization, claiming ten years of journalistic experience.

### **Perceived Commercial Influence (PCI)**

**Table 3:** Descriptive Statistics for PCI (N=250)

Perceived Commercial Influence	
--------------------------------	--

No.	PCI items	Minimum	Maximum	Mode	Mean	SD
01	Advertisers	1	6	4	3.34	1.55
02	Economic considerations	1	6	3	3.27	1.52
03	Business people	1	6	3	3.14	1.43
04	Public relations sections/agencies	1	6	3	3.18	1.35

Scale ranges from 1=irrelevant to one's work to 6=greatly influential

In this study, the journalists questioned four different statements related to the construct of "perceived commercial influence." Those four statements were measured on a six-point ordinal scale ranging from irrelevant to one's work = 1 to greatly influential = 6. The perceived commercial influence-related statements asked from the In this study, the journalists questioned four different statements related to the construct of "perceived commercial influence." Those four statements were measured on a six-point ordinal scale ranging from irrelevant to one's work = 1 to greatly influential = 6. The perceived commercial influence-related statements asked from the journalists are: (a) advertisers; (b) economic considerations; (c) business people; and (d) public relations sections or agencies. The reliability of the construct was tested by Cronbach's alpha, which accounted for (.75). The inter-item correlation among the four items ranged from .55 to .45.

Table 3, presenting statistics for the above-mentioned construct reported that it scored a mean value of 3.23 for all 4 items. As the mean of all four items is greater than the average of the 6-point ordinal scale, it reflects that the construct has some influence. Moreover, the mean and the standard deviation of each item are also shown in Table 3. Hence, it seemed that the mean values of the four items ranged from a maximum 3.34 to a minimum 3.14. Additionally, the item "advertisers" stood first with the highest mean (M = 3.34), which was followed by the item "economic considerations" with a mean (M = 3.27). In contrast further, it surfaced that the lowest mean (M = 3.14) was assigned to the item "business people." Thus, it deduced that among the four items related to the construct "perceived commercial influence," the highest source of perceived commercial influence among journalists was "advertisers," whereas the lowest source was "business people." Summarily, it was known that all four sources of perceived commercial influence were having some influence on journalists to varying extents. However, among those, advertising was found at the top, followed by, respectively, economic considerations, public relations sections and agencies, and business people. In other words, advertisers were found to be the most influential factor, while business people stood as the least influential factor among news workers in Sindh province.



In order to observe the existence of any significant differences between demographic groups, profession-related groups, and perceived commercial influence, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was run. The selection for this statistical test was made because the data was collected on an ordinal scale. So for data collected on an ordinal scale, the Mann-Whitney U test suits better. In this way, the results follow:

### **Perceived Commercial Influence (PIC) and Demographic Characteristics**

#### **Educational Differences:**

**Table 4:** Perceived Commercial Influence and Education

		Education			
01	Advertisers	125.53	125.43	6557.50	.99
02	Economic considerations	128.74	117.93	5995.00	.27
03	Business people	120.81	136.44	5742.00	.11
04	Public relations sections/agencies	125.13	126.35	6498.50	.90

(N = 250) Scale ranges from 1 = irrelevant to one's work to 6 = greatly influential.

According to Table 4 regarding the perceived commercial influence and the education level differences regarding the first item, it was found that those who were educated up to bachelor level (M = 3.00; mean rank = 125.53) got more influence from the "advertisers" than those who had education above bachelor level (M = 4.00; mean rank = 125.43). Regarding the second item, it was mentioned that those having education at the bachelor level also got more influence from "economic considerations" (M = 3.00; mean rank = 128.74) than those whose education level was higher than the bachelor level (M = 3.00; mean rank = 117.93). In the context of the third item, it was observed that the influence of "business people" was greater for those whose education level was higher than bachelor (M = 3.00; mean rank = 136.44) than for those who were educated just up to bachelor level (M = 3.00; mean rank = 120.81). Finally, about the fourth item, it showed that the influence of "public relations sections and agencies" was also felt more by those who had education above the bachelor level (M = 3.00; mean rank = 126.35) than by those whose education was just up to the bachelor level (M = 3.00; mean rank = 125.13). Summarily, in connection with education, it was known that journalists with less than a bachelor degree got more influence from advertisers and economic considerations as compared to those who had a bachelor degree. On the contrary, the influence of business people and public relations sections or agencies was more felt by those who had a bachelor's degree or higher.

#### **Age Differences:**

**Table 5:** Perceived Commercial Influence and Age

No.	PCI items	Age		MW-U	P-value
		Till 30 year	Above 30 year		
01	Advertisers	131.75	122.77	6137.00	.36
02	Economic considerations	133.17	122.15	6029.00	.26
03	Business people	129.92	123.57	6276.00	.51
04	Public relations sections/agencies	130.32	123.39	6245.50	.47

(N = 250) Scale ranges from 1 = irrelevant to one's work to 6 = greatly influential.

The data in table 5, regarding perceived commercial influence and age differences mentions, for the first item, that those who were up to 30-year-old ( $M = 4.00$ ; mean rank = 131.75) got more influence from the “advertisers” than those journalists who were above 30-year-old ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 122.77). Regarding the second item, it was mentioned that those who were up to 30 years old also got more influence from “economic considerations” ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 133.17) than those whose age was higher than 30 years ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 133.17). Of the third item, it was observed that the influence of “business people” was felt more by those who belonged to the age category of up to 30-year-old ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 129.92) than by those who were older than 30-year-old ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 123.57). Finally, in connection with the fourth item, it showed that the influence of “public relations sections and agencies” was also felt more by those who were younger than 30- years -old ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 130.32) than those whose age was older than 30 years old ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 123.39). Summarily, having analyzed the construct regarding “perceived commercial influence” in connection with age, it was known that journalists up to thirty years old got more influence from advertisers, economic considerations, business people, and public relations sections or agencies than those who were older than thirty.

### Monthly Income Differences:

**Table 6:** Perceived Commercial Influence and Monthly Income

No.	PCI items	Monthly income		MW-U	P-value
		Till 20000 PK Rupees	Above 20000 PK Rupees		
01	Advertisers	69.83	70.51	1802.00	.93
02	Economic considerations	71.11	66.70	1704.50	.57
03	Business people	68.44	74.63	1658.00	.42
04	Public relations sections/agencies	68.27	75.13	1640.50	.37

(N = 139) Scale ranges from 1 = irrelevant to one's work to 6 = greatly influential.

Table 6 reveals that individuals with a monthly income exceeding 20,000 PK (M = 4.00; mean rank = 70.51) experienced greater influence from "advertisers" compared to those with a monthly income of up to 20,000 PK (M = 3.00; mean rank = 69.83). Regarding the second point, those who earned monthly just up to 20000 PK Rs. accepted more influence of "economic considerations" (M = 3.00; mean rank = 71.11) than those who earned monthly more than 20000 PK Rs. (M = 3.00; mean rank = 66.70). In the context of the third item, it stood that the influence of "business people" was accepted more by those whose monthly income was greater than 20,000 PKR (M = 3.00; mean rank = 74.63) than by those whose monthly income was just up to 20,000 PKR (M = 3.00; mean rank = 68.44). In regard to the fourth item, it showed that the influence of "public relations sections or agencies" was also accepted more by those who had a monthly income greater than 20,000 PK (M = (M=3.00; mean rank = 75.13) than those who earned a monthly just up to 20,000 PK (M = 3.00; mean rank = 68.27). Conclusively, after analysis of perceived commercial influence in connection with monthly income, it was known that journalists receiving more than PKR 20,000 in monthly income had more influence from advertisers, business people, and public relations agencies. On the other hand, journalists receiving up to \$20,000 in monthly income were more receptive to the influence of economic considerations.

### Perceived Commercial Influence (PIC) and Profession-Related Characteristics

#### Media Type Differences:

**Table 7:** Perceived Commercial Influence and Media Type

No.	PCI items	Media type			P-value
		Electronic	Print	MW-U	
01	Advertisers	88.14	93.45	3132.00	.54
02	Economic considerations	86.15	94.20	3032.50	.35
03	Business people	90.45	92.58	3247.50	.80
04	Public relations sections/agencies	83.93	95.03	2921.50	.20

(N = 183) Scale ranges from 1 = irrelevant to one's work to 6 = greatly influential.

Table 7, shows the perceived commercial influence and media type differences among the surveyed journalists. Subject to the first item, it was seen that those who

showed themselves working for print media organizations ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 93.45) got more influence from the “advertisers” than those who worked for electronic media organizations ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 88.14). Regarding the second item, the descriptive statistics showed that those who worked for print media organizations also got more influence from “economic considerations” ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 94.20) than those who worked for electronic media organizations ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 86.15). Of the third item, it was found that the influence of “business people” was accepted more by those who belonged to print media organizations ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 92.58) than by those who mentioned themselves working for electronic media organizations ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 90.45). Finally, in regard to the fourth item, it showed that the influence of “public relations sections or agencies” was also accepted more by those who had affiliation with print media organizations ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 95.03) than those who showed themselves related to electronic media organizations ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 83.93). Finally, in terms of media type differences, it was known that journalists who worked for print media organizations got more influence from advertisers, economic considerations, business people, and public relations sections or agencies than their colleagues affiliated with electronic media.

### Media Organization Language Differences

**Table 8:** Perceived Commercial Influence and Media Organization Language

No.	PCI items	Media organization language			
		Sindhi	Urdu	MW-U	P-value
01	Advertisers	107.79	101.28	4163.50	.48
02	Economic considerations	110.01	95.42	3823.50	.11
03		107.05	103.24	4277.00	.68
04	Public relations sections/agencies	106.93	103.54	4294.50	.71

( $N = 211$ ) Scale ranges from 1 = irrelevant to one’s work to 6 = greatly influential.

As per Table 8, regarding the perceived commercial influence and media organization language differences of respondents, in terms of the first item, those who worked for Sindhi language media organizations ( $M = 4.00$ ; mean rank = 107.79) got more influence from the “advertisers” than those who worked for Urdu language media organizations ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 101.28). Regarding the second item, it stood that

those who were working for Sindhi language media organizations also got more influence from “economic considerations” ( $M = 4.00$ ; mean rank = 110.01) than those who worked for Urdu language media organizations ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 95.42). In the context of the third item, it was found that the influence of “business people” was accepted more by those who belonged to Sindhi language media organizations ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 107.05) than by those who worked for Urdu language media organizations ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 103.24). Finally, in regard to the fourth item, it showed that the influence of “public relations sections or agencies” was also accepted more by those who had affiliation with Sindhi language media organizations ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 106.93) than by those who were related to Urdu language media organizations ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 103.54). Summarily, the surveyed journalists’ responses were analyzed in connection with their media organization language. The analysis indicated that those who worked for Sindhi language media organizations had more influence from advertisers, economic considerations, business people, and public relations sections or agencies than their counterparts who were affiliated with Urdu language media organizations.

### Journalistic Experience Differences:

**Table 9:** Perceived Commercial Influence and Journalistic Experience

No.	PCI items	Journalistic experience			
		Till 10 year	Above 10 year	MW-U	P-value
01	Advertisers	122.36	128.49	7425.50	.49
02	Economic considerations	122.38	128.48	7427.00	.49
03	Business people	123.44	127.46	7557.00	.65
04	Public relations sections/agencies	116.21	134.35	6675.00	.04

(N = 250) Scale ranges from 1 = irrelevant to one’s work to 6 = greatly influential.

The data in Table 9 mentioned that about the first item those who had journalistic experience higher than 10 years ( $M = 3.50$ ; mean rank = 128.49) got more influence of the “advertisers” than those who claimed journalistic experience till 10 years ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 122.36). Regarding the second item, it showed that those having journalistic experience higher than 10 years also got more influence of “economic considerations” ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 128.48) than those whose journalistic experience was till 10 years ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 122.38). In the context of the third item, it stood that the influence

of “business people” was got more by those who belonged to journalistic experience category of higher than 10 years ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 127.46) than those who mentioned themselves as journalistically experienced just till 10 years ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 123.44). Finally, in regard with fourth item it surfaced that the influence of “public relations sections/agencies” was also got more by those who had journalistic experience more than 10 years ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 134.35) than those whose journalistic experience was just up to 10 years ( $M = 3.00$ ; mean rank = 116.21). Overall, the results showed that journalists having more than ten-year experience were on average more receptive toward advertisers, economic considerations, business people and public relations sections/agencies as compared to their colleagues with experience of ten or less than ten years.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

To sum up, this study aimed to assess the perceived commercial influence on journalists in Sindh Province, Pakistan. Thus, from the perspective of the construct “perceived commercial influence,” the key objective of this academic endeavor was to measure the influence of advertisers, economic considerations, business people, and public relations sections and agencies on the journalists in Sindh. For that purpose, a cross-sectional quantitative survey was conducted on the purposefully sampled 250 journalists who belonged to nine various district press clubs of Hyderabad Division in Sindh province.

The construct used for data collection and measuring the perceived commercial influence in the survey had a total four items on a scale that ranged from 1 (irrelevant to one’s work) to 6 (greatly influential). In this way, the analyzed data showed that overall, all four factors of the construct had an influence on the journalists to varying degrees. However, the maximum level of influence put upon the journalists was the item “advertisers,” with a mean value of 3.34. Whereas, the second highest influencing factor was “economic considerations,” with a mean score of 3.27. Added out of the remaining two factors, the third highest influencing factor was “public relations sections/agencies” ( $M = 3.18$ ), and the least influencing one was “business people” ( $M = 3.14$ ).

Moreover, when analyzed subject to demographic characteristics, it was observed that advertisers had greater influence on those journalists who were comparatively less educated, younger, and earned more. The influence of “economic considerations” was accepted more by those who were comparatively less educated; younger people, however, earned less. As far as the influence of “business people” is concerned, it was found more among those who were

comparatively more educated and earned more but were younger in age. Similarly, the influence of “public relations sections and agencies” was also embraced more by those who were comparatively more educated, earned more, and were, however, younger. Whereas, in reference to profession-related specifics, the influence of all four factors—“advertisers, economic considerations,” “business people,” and “public relations sections/agencies”—felt more felt by those who worked for Sindhi print media organizations having professional experience above 10 years.

## CONCLUSION

It revealed that comparatively young, more-earning, but less educated journalists were influenced more by the advertisers. Moreover, comparatively young, less educated, and lower-earning journalists are influenced more by “economic considerations.” Whereas, relatively more educated and more earning, younger people are greatly influenced by “business people” and “public relations sections/agencies.” Finally, in context to professional specifics, the journalists who worked for Sindhi-language print media organizations, having professional experience spanning more than 10 years, relatively accepted more of the of the impact of perceived commercial influence than Urdu-language media journalists.

## References

- Artemas, K., Vos, T. P., & Duffy, M. (2018). Journalism hits a wall: Rhetorical construction of newspapers’ editorial and advertising relationship. *Journalism Studies*, 19(7), 1004-1020.
- Babbie, E. (2013). *The basics of social research*: Cengage Learning. Stamford, CT.
- Coddington, M. (2015). The Wall Becomes a Curtain. In *Boundaries of Journalism: Professionalism, Practices and Participation*, edited by Matt Carlson and Seth C. Lewis, 67–82. London: Routledge.
- Cohen, N. S. (2015). Entrepreneurial journalism and the precarious state of media work. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 114(3), 513-533.
- Ferrucci, P. (2015). Primary differences: How market orientation can influence content. *Journal of Media Practice*, 16(3), 195-210.
- Hanusch, F., Banjac, S., & Maares, P. (2020). The power of commercial influences: How lifestyle journalists experience pressure from advertising and public relations. *Journalism Practice*, 14(9), 1029-1046.
- Gunter, B. (1999). *Media research methods*. SAGE Publications Ltd.

- Hanitzsch, T., & Mellado, C. (2011). What shapes the news around the world? How journalists in eighteen countries perceive influences on their work. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 16(3), 404-426.
- Hanusch, F. (2012). Travel journalists' attitudes toward public relations: Findings from a representative survey. *Public Relations Review*, 38(1), 69-75.
- Hanusch, F., Hanitzsch, T., & Lauerer, C. (2017). 'How much love are you going to give this brand?' Lifestyle journalists on commercial influences in their work. *Journalism*, 18(2), 141-158.
- Jackson, D., & Moloney, K. (2016). Inside churnalism: PR, journalism and power relationships in flux. *Journalism Studies*, 17(6), 763-780.
- Kristensen, N. N. (2014). Lifestyle journalism: Blurring boundaries. In *Lifestyle Journalism* (pp. 25-40). Routledge.
- Lee, F. L., Cui, D., & Zhang, Z. (2015). Ethical orientation and judgments of Chinese press journalists in times of change. *Journal of Media Ethics*, 30(3), 203-221.
- Lee-Wright, P. (2011). The return of Hephaestus: Journalists' work recrafted. In *changing journalism* (pp. 21-40). Routledge.
- Lewis, J., Williams, A., & Franklin, B. (2008). A compromised fourth estate? UK news journalism, public relations and news sources. *Journalism studies*, 9(1), 1-20.
- Li, S. (2012). A new generation of lifestyle magazine journalism in China: The professional approach. *Journalism Practice*, 6(1), 122-137.
- Mahmood, F. (2019). Corporate Influence on Pakistani News Media: Journalists' Perception. *Journal of Media Studies*, 33(1).
- Moholi, F. (2015). The Influence of Government Advertising on Print Media Content in Lesotho [ Master Thesis, Witwatersrand University] University of Witwatersrand Johannesburg <https://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/server/api/core/bitstreams/b816f91a-2d88-41f8-87da-c09b9b4ec7f2/content>
- Örnebring, H., & Conill, R. F. (2016). Outsourcing newswork. *The Sage handbook of digital journalism*, 207-221.
- Picard, R. G. (2005). Money, Media, and the Public Interest. In *The Press*, edited by G. Overholser and K. Hall Jamieson, 337–350. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Pirolli, B. (2017). Travel journalists and professional identity: Ideology and evolution in an online era. *Journalism Practice*, 11(6), 740-759.



- Power Thesaurus. (n.d) Internet edition retrieved January 29, 2024, from [https://www.powerthesaurus.org/commercial\\_influence/definition](https://www.powerthesaurus.org/commercial_influence/definition)
- Rosenkranz, T. (2016). Becoming entrepreneurial: Crisis, ethics and marketization in the field of travel journalism. *Poetics*, 54, 54-65.
- Salamon, E. (2016). E-lancer resistance: Precarious freelance journalists use digital communications to refuse rights-grabbing contracts. *Digital Journalism*, 4(8), 980-1000.
- Tomaz, T., Fidalgo, J., Grönvall, J., & Trappel, J. (2022). Commercial influence in newsrooms: Comparing strategies to resist pressure from owners and advertisers. In J. Trappel, & T. Tomaz (Eds.), *Success and failure in news media performance: Comparative analysis in the Media for Democracy Monitor 2021* (pp. 165-186). Nordicom. <https://doi.org/10.48335/9789188855589-8>
- Wimmer, R. D., & Dominick, J. R. (2013). *Mass media research*: Cengage learning.
- Yellowbrick (2023, November 21). The impact of advertising on news: Navigating influence. <https://www.yellowbrick.co/blog/journalism/the-impact-of-advertising-on-news-navigating-influence>