

Original Article

Unemployment in Pakistani News Media

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Abstract: Job security and securing opportunities to demonstrate their professional expertise are challenges faced by working professionals. The economy in Pakistan is in disarray and media outlets are no longer making as much money as they used to. As a result, a number of media outlets have turned into stressful workplaces for junior staff members who frequently receive inadequate and delayed pay. For instance there is currently job instability among a number of journalists and electronic media professionals. The closure of some of these organizations' joblessness and a high degree of insecurity among Pakistani media professionals have been the outcomes of economic downturns which have also led to fewer organizations restructuring and mergers. The purpose of this study is to determine how the topic of unemployment is covered and framed by Pakistani media outlets such as news websites television stations and social media platforms. The study will examine how often and in-depth Pakistani media outlets cover unemployment-related topics as well as the language and tone employed in news stories articles and social media posts. Additionally the study will look at how Pakistani media outlets spread information about job openings and resources for career advancement as well as how Pakistani audiences view and feel about the influence of media on unemployment and career opportunities.

Keywords: Pakistani Media, Unemployment, Media Houses, Stressful Work Environments, Electronic Media

Introduction:

After years of rapid growth Pakistans media industry is now slowing down which has led to a number of negative outcomes including news outlets closing pay reductions and layoffs. More than a dozen reporters and photographers were abruptly asked to leave by the English-language newspaper Express Tribune last month with the offer of three months pay in exchange. Notwithstanding the decisions surprise many employees accepted the offer pointing to other media companies dire financial circumstances where employees have been unpaid for extended periods of time. The Tribune is one of many news organizations experiencing financial difficulties. Some companies were forced to cut back on their primetime programming

while others were forced to shut down entire channels. Even the respectable Dawn newspaper has had to cut daily expenses due to the page count reduction. The biggest issue facing Pakistan's news media industry today is the shocking rise in unemployment which once made it a thriving hub for journalists and media professionals. Over time rapid technological advancements challenging economic times and shifting audience preferences have completely changed the landscape of traditional media. Due to declining revenues and increased competition from digital platforms the once-dominant radio stations television networks and newspapers are now struggling to make ends meet. The pressures of the economy have forced the majority of media companies to cut employees.. A large number of professionals including journalist's editors producers and technicians do not have steady employment. Because of the increased competition for jobs in this industry the recent influx of graduates exacerbates the situation. Structural issues like a lack of government funding insufficient regulatory support and a lack of resources for media organizations further exacerbate the issue. Other options include freelancing and creating digital content but these positions frequently does not offer the same financial rewards and job security as those in the media industry. The country's democratic system and media workers livelihoods are both seriously threatened by the worsening unemployment problem in Pakistani news media. Public discourse is encouraged the free flow of information is guaranteed and those in authority are held accountable by a strong independent media. Legislators media organizations and academic institutions must work together to support sustainable employment and a change to the entire media ecosystem. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) claims that the suspension of the channels license may lead to its permanent closure which would leave hundreds of journalists jobless and make it difficult for them and their families to survive the pandemic. PEMRA has been ordered by the IFJ to swiftly lift the suspension order and streamline the license type change procedure. Dawn 11 September 2020.

Background of the Study

Over the last two decades, the Pakistani news media industry has witnessed greater change. One of the most rapidly growing sectors of the economy, which offered vast opportunities for employment to journalists, editors, and technical manpower, has essentially grown more vulnerable. In contrast to the boom in the landscape of the early 2000s-through, the liberalization of private television channels and the growth of new publications currently faces difficulties in maintaining its workforce. However, the scenario has changed dramatically in recent years due to a combination of economic, technological, and social factors.

In Pakistan, print media organizations internationally are also facing difficulties. In the United States, various newspapers some daily newspapers have switched to weekly or semi-weekly schedules, while some have closed. As a result, the media sector has begun to rely on independent contractors and contract workers, and staff are being forced to work harder to make up for the organization's declining size.

In the real world job uncertainty is considered to be a reality that can affect ones physical and mental well-being. A sudden job loss can be upsetting traumatic and stressful and research shows that job insecurity can lower commitment and productivity at work. In order to get their employees satisfaction dedication and commitment organizations need to look out for their well-being. Stress from job insecurity can have a detrimental effect on workers levels of dedication engagement and job satisfaction. Stress can also lead to acute anxiety and even clinical depression as demonstrated by the media professionals in Pakistan who suffer from physical and mental ailments as a result of job insecurity. The issue needs to be identified and dealt with in order to make things better. Dekker S. W. and Schaufeli W. B. (1996). Because of media deregulation Pakistan has seen a rise in private cable and satellite TV stations since 2002. Thus there are currently 43 foreign TV channels that land 4060 cable operators and 112 satellite TV channels. Currently employing 20000 journalists and roughly 300000 people the media sector has experienced tremendous growth. This expansion

can be attributed to improved economic conditions, increased per capita income, a rise in the consumer economy, and an expanding advertising sector. However, since the second half of 2018, the media industry has experienced a decline. This decline has led to job losses, scale-backs, and the closure of several publications and TV channels. These problems were made worse by the pandemic, and it became impossible for some media outlets to continue in business or pay employees. In this regard, the government or other regulatory agencies have not offered policy interventions on the crisis of rising unemployment in the sector. The situation is therefore threatening the independent role of journalism in promoting democracy and holding the powers accountable.

Understanding the source and implications of unemployment in Pakistani news media is crucial when strategizing means of revamping this sector that may ensure sustenance in future years.

The Electronic Media Economy in Pakistan: Issues and Challenges

After the broadcasting industry was liberalized in the early 2000s Pakistan's electronic media sector is currently seeing a healthy growth trend. The media landscape in Pakistan saw significant expansion after the launch of satellite TV private television channels and radio stations. But these dynamics of fast growth have also brought about a number of financial challenges and obstacles to the electronic media sectors sustainable growth. The reliance on ad revenue is the biggest issue facing Pakistan's electronic media economy. Most television channels and radio stations rely on advertising as their main source of funding and this sector has been particularly impacted by the economy's volatility growing inflation and the growing trend toward digital platforms. Traditional media sources revenue has decreased as a result of the removal of advertising from digital media especially social media and online video content. The repercussions have caused financial constraints for numerous electronic media companies which has led to widespread layoffs downsizing and job insecurity for numerous industry professionals. The absence of diverse revenue streams in Pakistani electronic media is another issue. There is little investigation of alternate revenue streams like subscription services digital content or international distribution as many radio and television stations mainly rely on ad sales. Due to its limited business strategy the sector is now more susceptible to changes in the market and in the economy. Along with financial instability the industry is still beset by regulatory issues. To put it briefly the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority plays a key role in regulating and censoring media operations. Its policies however appear to be restrictive which limits any kind of creative freedom while also causing frustration. Furthermore the governments meddling in media content and a lax legal framework to protect intellectual property rights have created a situation where media outlets are unable to thrive without compromising their editorial independence. A shortage of qualified workers antiquated technology and inadequate infrastructure further hinder Pakistan's electronic media economy. Many outlets struggle with inadequate facilities which affects both the caliber of content produced and their capacity to compete with global players even though some have embraced new technologies. The industry's dependence on antiquated business models and the speed at which technology is developing in addition to this only make matters more difficult. Finally many media institutions editors independence is also impacted by the pressures of censorship and political meddling. Journalists and media professionals are unable to report objectively due to the ongoing fear of potential retaliation from political action groups or a government agency. This further suppresses critical voices and investigative reporting which is again harmful to journalism's overall quality. The electronic media industry in Pakistan has experienced significant expansion but it still faces numerous operational and financial obstacles. For long-term success revenue model diversification regulation technological advancement and media independence protection are all beneficial. These initiatives will benefit the media sector as well as the medias function in Pakistan's democratic processes.

Research Questions

1. How has the transition from traditional media to digital platforms affected job opportunities for media professionals in Pakistan?
2. What role does declining advertising revenue play in increasing unemployment in the Pakistani news media sector?
3. How do government policies and regulatory frameworks impact employment trends in the news media industry?
4. What are the issues for entry-level media professionals and newly graduated journalism professionals in getting a job in Pakistan?
5. How can news media organizations address unemployment and develop long-term job opportunities in Pakistan?

Objectives of the Study:

1. Identify critical issues of causation influencing unemployment in the Pakistani news media industry; these include economic, technological, or organizational contexts.
2. To examine the consequences of the possible transition from traditional media to a digital platform on media employment opportunities for the media professional in Pakistan.
3. To investigate the declining advertising revenues along with economic shocks as a contributor to unemployment within the news media sector.
4. To assess the challenges that acquitted journalists have to face when looking for jobs as fresh graduates and entry-level professionals in the Pakistani media industry.
5. To understand how unemployment, in turn, adversely affects the quality, diversity, and independence of journalism in Pakistan.
6. To advance realistic strategies and recommendations to address unemployment and the creation of sustainable job opportunities in the Pakistani news media industry.
7. To look into the patterns of employment in the sector as shaped by government regulations and practices of media organizations.

Literature Review

Two viewpoints have been expressed in the literature regarding the idea of job insecurity. According to the global viewpoint job insecurity is the inability to maintain a career and the uncertainty surrounding future employment. According to the multifaceted perspective job insecurity is the possible loss of control over the job and its important components. Employee attitudes behavior and emotions may all suffer as a result of job insecurity according to both viewpoints. These consequences may result in issues with ones physical and mental health as well as decreased job satisfaction and performance. In addition job insecurity can lead to less organizational commitment more time pressure and task uncertainty. According to studies job insecurity has a long-term consistent negative correlation with employee well-being and job satisfaction. Additionally job insecurity can lower organizational commitment which can result in mental and physical health issues. It is more difficult to manage job insecurity and its consequences when there are several layoffs. For those who survived downsizing issues with stress and job security may still exist five years later. Ekdale Brian. Harmsen S. Singer J. Tully M. B. (2015). News outlets are now a vital source of information for people all over the world. However because of the quick changes in consumer preferences and the rapid advancements in technology this industry has seen a great deal of instability and uncertainty. As a result news channel employees might feel insecure about their jobs which could affect their performance and attitudes at work.

Studies have indicated that job insecurity among news channel staff can result in higher levels of perceived stress lower organizational commitment decreased work engagement and lower job satisfaction. Consequently in order to reduce the negative effects of job insecurity and establish a productive workplace for news channel employees it is critical to comprehend the connection between job insecurity and these work-related outcomes. One of the most well-known newspapers in Pakistan examined the effects of downsizing on individuals who had survived one. The quantitative analysis contained an open-ended question. According to the researcher's conclusion, employees experienced psychological and physical issues because they were afraid to quit their jobs. It was determined that job instability decreased employee happiness and organizational commitment. Managing issues, stress, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job insecurity take on different dimensions when multiple layoffs take place. Moore et al. (2006) looked at the long-term impact on survivors. They claimed that even five years later, survivors still had significant issues with stress and job stability.

The truth is that companies depend on people with professional competence for their success and longevity, not just for the benefit of employees or working professionals. The management is aware that their organization's sustainability and success are mostly derived from its people. Hence, a company's employee satisfaction, job engagement, commitment, and real loyalty to its organization are very important. According to studies, senior management must ensure that they have taken care of their employees' well-being if they want to receive satisfaction, commitment, and dedication from them. Stress brought on by job uncertainty will have a detrimental impact on employees' levels of dedication, engagement, and job satisfaction, which won't be as high as desired by firms. In certain cases, this stress can also result in clinical depression and/or extremely acute anxiety. This is seen in the situation of Pakistani media workers, who suffer from both mental and physical illnesses as a result of their precarious employment. In order to address the situation, the problem must be brought to light.

This study's respondent is based in Karachi. The headquarters of such channels, including Geo, ARY News, and Saama News, are all in Karachi. The respondents are thus employees of Karachi. The study excludes mean responders from other cities. The study's tiny sample size is its second drawback. The study's sample is not evenly split by gender. According to media logic reports, the study's focus is on working journalists at the top 14 news channels, therefore the accessible respondents are chosen. The third drawback is that just a small portion of the effects of job insecurity are known; many more remain, with media content being the most significant. Javed, U. (2018, November 19)

Theoretical Framework:

Employees now face stress anxiety and job insecurity as a result of the rise in organizational changes over the last ten years including downsizing restructuring and mergers. The purpose of this study is to investigate how job insecurity may contribute to negative sentiments like a decline in engagement satisfaction and intention to quit. The psychological contract theory developed by Mishra and Spreitzer (1998) serves as a framework for understanding how workers react to layoffs and their emotional bond with the company. According to Lazarus theory of stress which forms the basis of the study survivors reactions to downsizing can be divided into active/passive and constructive/destructive spectrums. Hotels telecom firms and news outlets have all used Mishra and Spreitzers framework in the past. Using this framework Ekdale Tully Harmsen and Singer (2015) investigated news employees in an American media company and discovered that employees performance suffered due to job insecurity.

Pakistani media:

The news industry in Pakistan is facing an economic crisis due to the government's decision to stop giving advertisements following a Supreme Court order. This has led to concerns about government control of the media, as there are several ways in which the government can exert control, such as through laws, stopping ads, halting newspaper printing, and directing journalists. Journalism is considered one of the most stressful jobs, but there have been few studies on burnout among journalists. Lam, C.F., Liang, J., Ashford, S.J., & Lee, C. (2015). The main cause of the media crisis, however, is the rise of social media, which has changed the way news is produced, revenue is generated, and audiences consume news. This has resulted in job uncertainty and concerns about the future of the media industry among media workers and organizations. Therefore, there is a need for organizational and industrial change to adapt to the changing media landscape.

Material and Method:

This study aims to investigate job insecurity among media professionals working in TV news channels in Pakistan. The researchers selected a sample of 305 media professionals from the top 14 news channels, with the top 10 channels chosen based on their ratings according to media logic. The survey was conducted using a Likert scale questionnaire distributed to various TV employees, including directors, producers, editors, anchors, reporters, and technical staff. The respondents included 190 males and 115 females, with an average age of 32.24 and an average work experience of 9 years. The majority of respondents (57.4%) held an MA degree, while 20% held a BA degree, 7.2% held an M.Phil degree, and 15.1% held a BS (Hons) degree. The selected news channels for the study included.

GEO, ARY, Dunya, Samaa, 92 News, Express, Aaj News, Dawn News, Bol News, News One, GNN, Hum News, 24 News, and NEO News, based on their reported ratings by media logic.

For this study, the researcher used a stratified sampling technique mentioned below Table 1.

Sr. No	Channel	Karachi	%	% Strata
1	GEO	36	0.036	3.13
2	ARY	48	0.048	48.5
3	Dunya	17	0.107	32.52
4	Samaa	90	0.019	5.85
5	92 News	40	0.040	4001
6	Express	120	0.120	29.26
7	Aaj news	56	0.056	4.88
8	Dawn News	20	0.020	6.5
9	Bol News	90	0.090	5.85
10	News one	15	0.015	4.88
11	GNN	150	0.150	48.77
12	Hum News	79	0.079	7.15
13	24 News	250	0.250	81.29
14	NEO News	115	0.123	37.39
Total Employees		938	Total Sample	305

Table 1: Stratified Sampling Technique

For this study, the researcher used a stratified sampling technique mentioned above in Table 1.

Measures

Perceived stress scale

Perceived stress was the subject of the questionnaire's second section. Cohen, Kamarch, and Murlmelstein's 10-item perceived stress scale was used by researchers to gauge how much stress media professionals felt themselves to be under (1983). The results of the study's use of Cronbach's alpha were good (0.861 for the full scale). ". *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 33(4), 449-464

Job Insecurity Measurement

Five items made up the third component, which was used to gauge employment insecurity. The researcher used this scale, which Francis and Barling first created (2005). The whole scale's Cronbach's alpha value was found to be satisfactory by the researcher (0.805).

Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)

Nine items made up the fourth section of the questionnaire. The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale Schaufeli, et al. was used by the researcher to gauge work engagement (2006). It was condensed from the original 17-item scale. The study team discovered an acceptable Cronbach's alpha value (0.893 for the 9-item scale).

Organizational Commitment Measurement

Allen & Meyer created a questionnaire with 18 items (1990). It was condensed from the original 24-item scale. The Gumus (2016) adaptation of a six-item, short version organizational commitment scale with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.743 was employed by the researcher.

Job Satisfaction Measurement

The respondents were questioned about their level of job satisfaction in the sixth section of the survey. It has ten items in total. This scale was adopted by researchers from Macdonald and MacIntyre (1997). The study team discovered an acceptable Cronbach's alpha value (0.773 for the 10-item scale). *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100(2), 499-510.

Data Collection

The study began with a section on demographic information, including gender, age, education, experience, and designation. The researcher followed the official consent policy of the university department and obtained permission letters from the top 14 news channels, informing respondents of the study's purpose and topic. However, some respondents were hesitant to participate, fearing that their organization might use the questionnaire to monitor their opinions. To ensure anonymity, the researcher did not collect respondents' names but required them to provide their age, education, experience, and designation.

Data collection was challenging due to the low number of people working in the media industry. To address this, the researcher collected data from both morning and evening shift employees, taking into account all moral concerns. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 25, employing Examining the connections between job insecurity and felt stress, organizational commitment, work engagement, and job satisfaction using descriptive analysis, correlation, and hierarchical multiple regression.

The questionnaire's validity and reliability were established, with a Cronbach's alpha score ranging from 0.7 to 0.90, indicating a very good strength of association between the questionnaire items. The results of the descriptive analysis showed that 37.7% of the respondents were female, while 62.3% were male. Most respondents had a Master's degree (57.4%), followed by a Bachelor's degree (20%). The majority of respondents held positions such as copy editor (23.3%), producer (21.3%), and associate producer (20.3%). The detailed demographic information is presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	190	62.3
Female	115	37.7
Education		
B. A	61	20.0
Bs (Hons)	46	15.1
M.A	175	57.4
M.Phil.	22	7.2
Designation		
Anchor	30	9.8
Associate Producer	62	20.3
Copy Editor	71	23.3
Other Staff	31	10.2
Producer	65	21.3

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis

Discussion

This study sought to determine how job insecurity affected the professional attitudes of journalists or TV workers as well as job-related concerns such as work engagement organizational commitment perceived stress and job satisfaction. Downsizing has impacted employees working behavior and psychological well-being in addition to how they behave toward their company according to the study. One of the main causes of stress was the fear of losing ones job and job insecurity was found to be linked to perceived stress. Another major source of stress at work is this insecurity. Additionally it was discovered that there was a significant inverse relationship between job insecurity and work engagement with lower work engagement being linked to higher perceived job insecurity. As a result there were attitudinal reactions that lowered the degree of work engagement. Additionally a negative correlation was found between job insecurity and organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

Conclusion

These results were in line with earlier research which has also indicated. that lower levels of organizational commitment job satisfaction and work engagement are caused by job insecurity. The economic crisis fewer government advertisements and the rise of digital media have all contributed to the downsizing of Pakistan's media news sector which has decreased newspaper circulation. Journalists and media professionals are thus the main victims of this crisis.

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