

Effects of Covid-19 Pandemic on the Working Performance of Journalists: Perception of Swat based Journalists

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to find out the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on the working performance of Swat based journalists, as well as the difficulties during performing their social responsibility role in the society. The researcher has used the quantitative method, where the data were collected through sample random sampling from 100 Swat based journalists. For the data collection, the researcher have used questionnaire, consist of 19 closed ended question and 5 for demographic section. For data analysis Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to make sure authentic and valid results and the data was interpreted through descriptive statistics. Study find out the working performance was affected by COVID-19 in different ways, i.e. government restriction and lock down effected the working performance of journalists, the following of COVID-19 SOPs caused changed in the working style of journalist and there was a lack of support for journalists both from government and media organization. This study also finds that the journalists have faced many challenges but they have completed their role of social responsibility with a good reputation and they were from the frontline worker during COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Journalists, Covid-19, Media, Government, Effects, Social Responsibilities.

Introduction

Journalists always play a crucial role during any kind of crises, like journalists are still playing an important role during the global pandemic Covid-19 as journalists keep informed the public and educate them about how to deal with this kind of situation, what types of preventions are required to adopt for their lives safety, and the latest updates about Corona virus. Media professional have performed their duties in that time when no one was willing to go out. Media professional risked their lives to keep updated the masses from the current scenario, like what are the government's policies towards Covid-19, and what are the situations in hospitals and other health services.

Journalists also played an important role to change public perception towards Covid-19 pandemic, as many of them were not serious about that, and some of them were not adopting SOPs properly, so the

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journalists did a great job in the awareness, information and education of the masses to control over spreading of Corona virus.

Corona affected almost every aspect of life and every profession around the world, it also effected the working performance of journalists. It creates the challenges for the journalists to get authentic information on time. It was also a challenging situation for journalists to adopt the new techniques for keep educating the masses for example working online from home and keep engaged their selves with audience through different social media platforms.

After the outbreak of Corona pandemic, journalists have faced the barriers in the gathering of authentic information. The work of journalists was also influenced by the external environment. In this period of Corona journalists takes the responsibilities but are also helpless in their position in community, they fought both with pandemic and the environmental situation to get the authentic information (Perrault, 2021).

Anthony (2011) in the time of Corona pandemic crisis, journalists, especially on local level, keep informed and provide data to public which directly help citizens for their self-protection as it was previously proven.

Olsen (2020) in the first quarter of 2020, the Covid-19 was going to peak as the spread was rapidly increasing, many news organizations reported cancellation of almost half of their advertising revenues, as well as the same situation was faced by print media as publishers stop printing and delivering newspapers, which effect the professional work of journalists.

A report published by “*united nation educational, scientific and culture organization*” (2020) in which they exposed that journalists faced more pressure than normal while doing their professional work as they increase the working hours during Covid-19 as well as to give authentic and timely information to the public, during this period of time journalists also faced the fear of job losing. They also faced verbal attacks from political and governmental leaders as they were doing critical reporting and questioning governments for their mismanagements during pandemic. Journalists also help public to know about virus, the involvement of science, the prevention from infection, the development in the treatments of Covid-19. Journalists help us to monitor what we think we know and what we do not know for sure. It also helps us track the evolving science about the virus, and about prevention and treatment, and the policy responses being adopted.

The Covid-19 outbreak was very sudden and unexpected as it was spread almost all over the world within a very short period of time (about 3 months) and became a global issue. The first case of Covid-19 was confirmed in December 2019, in Wuhan china and on 30 January 2020, WHO declared international public health emergency all over the world.

Ashraf (2020) The Covid-19 sudden outbreak was a challenge for almost every government around the world and there were a list of challenges like public awareness, the health facilities, testing equipment, quarantine management, educating public, income support programs.

Journalists

Journalists mean a person who works within any news organization, which can be a print, electronic and digital platform.

In this research the journalists are those who are the member of any of five press club of Swat district.

History of Covid-19

Balkhair (2020) in the last week of December 2019, the news started about a serious respiratory virus in Wuhan, china, which started spreading among the citizens and the large number of people were infected in a very shorter period of time. This was the beginning of Covid-19 and was identified as a zoonotic disorder, it was a disease came from animal kingdom and was transformed to human, was traced back to a

met market of Wuhan, city of china but soon it was identified as a “strain of the severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)” and just about a month WHO declared it as a global pandemic and gave it the name of Covid-19.

Effects of Covid-19

Covid-19 has affected almost every aspect of life, including social life of people all over the world as well as financially and psychologically. Vaishya, et al (2020) Covid-19 pandemic affected millions of people around the world either they are affected directly by disease or have lost their relatives by Covid-19, it is also affected the world economy as it slows down the production process or the demand all over the world.

Klaiber, et al (2021) Covid-19 effected the life of everyone but the older age group related to high physical health while on the other hand, the young age group faced family and job associated issues like risk to job security, working online and attending online classes.

Types of Effects

Covid-19 has different types of effects both on collective and on individual level like socially, financially, psychologically, environmental etc.

Virtual News Room

One of the main precautions to save oneself from Covid-19 was social distancing, to stay away from each other because of the fear of infection, everyone try to shift online and to virtual world, same was the case for journalist as they started working from home and the physical news room was shifted to a virtual news room.

García-Avilés (2021) during the Covid-19 pandemic, journalists have faced problems in their professional work like work overload, online working with poor internet connectivity and the insecurity of job and many more.

Challenge of Authentic Information

In one side there was a challenge of keep informing the public from the latest update and on the other hand the challenge was to get authentic and valid information for the masses in the situation when there was a flow misinformation was faster than authentic information in the presence of social media.

Jamil (2020) Journalists play a very important role in such an emergency state by providing authentic and timely information about the Covid-19, when the conformation and gatekeeping was weak, and the dissemination of misinformation was on peak.

Effects on the Working Performance of Journalists

As we know the Covid-19 affected almost everyone and every aspect of life, as like that it is also effected the working performance of journalists. During the time of Covid-19 outbreak journalists performed their duties with so many barriers and challenges.

A report published by "UNESCO" (2020) in which they exposed that journalists faced more pressure than normal as they increase the working hours during Covid-19 as well as to give authentic and timely information to the public, during this period of time journalists also faced the fear of job losing. They also faced verbal attacks from political and governmental leaders as they doing critical reporting and questing governments for their mismanagements during pandemic. Journalists also help public to know about virus, the involving of science, the prevention from infection, the developing of treatments of Covid-19.

Research Questions

RQ1: How Covid-19 pandemic effect the working performance of journalists in district Swat?

RQ2: how journalists complete their social responsibilities during Covid-19 outbreak?

Research Objectives

- To examine the effects of Covid-19 on the working performance of journalists in district Swat
- To examine the working style of journalists during pandemic.
- To search out information's authentication in pandemic.

Hypotheses

H1: It is assumed that verification of news was difficult for journalists in pandemic due to access of information.

H2: It is assumed that Covid-19 affected the working style of working journalists.

Statement of the Problem

Journalists play the role of watchdog in the society as it informs and educate the public. Journalists played a crucial role during Covid-19 pandemic to keep aware and also educate public from the situation but they have faced so many challenges. In this study the researcher will find out the effects of Covid-19 on the working performance of journalists in district Swat during the Covid-19 outbreak, as well as that how journalists complete their social responsibilities in the Covid-19 pandemic.

Significance of the Study

This study will find out the challenges faced by journalists during their duties in pandemic like work load issues, verification of information, online working and many other issues while in such emergency they have continued their duties to inform aware and educate the people to control the spreading of Coronavirus.

This study will explore that how Covid-19 affected working performance, while performing their social responsibilities during pandemic, as well as this study will explore the role played by journalists in such a crucial time.

Literature Review

According to Jamil (2020) Covid-19 have badly effected the work of journalists, at has also create a challenge of authentic information which was not an easy task during this period of time when there was a lot of misinformation in market, it is important for the journalist's unions across the country (Pakistan) to collaborate for the guiding and training of the journalists to handle the situation of Covid-19 and to counter narrative the misinformation, as well as they need to build the ethical standers for the authentic and credible information about the Covid-19 pandemic and they also need to train the journalists in the digital area to enable them to work from home to decrease the unimportant outing as there was a fair of Covid-19 infection.

Osmann (2021) Covid-19 effected almost every form of media organization but the most effected was print media sector because many countries around the world have forced to stop the printing of newspapers and magazines as there was a fear of the infection spread through production process and its dissemination to public, in this situation print media organization was closed for almost two months around the world , on the other hand there was no support from governments for media sector so it was so difficult to save journalists jobs, some organization was closed completely during pandemic, journalists are considered as a frontline workers and they were effected psychologically as well.

Bernadas (2020) Covid-19 has change the training and business model of news coverage. On one side, the Covid-19 and the following isolation limitations have provoked news associations and journalists to adjust and exploit digital media to keep gathering and disseminating news and on the other side, the pandemic has additionally give the opportunity to journalists, public as well as to government in the same situation to identify the fake news and misinformation, this kind of situation create the threats to

journalists as well as to freedom of speech, and the journalists are not just mere journalists but they also face the same situation and challenges everyone else was facing.

Wake (2021) journalists are one of those professionals who faced different kind of difficulties in their professional work during Covid-19 pandemic as they providing authentic, valid and latest information about the pandemic.

Jadhav (2020) during the Covid-19 pandemic the print media face a big lose and the journalists associated with print media organization have faced trouble in their professional work, the production of newspaper were stop in many countries as a result the advertisement which is like a back bone of any sort of media have stopped as well, on the other hand where the newspaper production was not stop directly, but the lock down disturb the distribution of newspaper which effect the revenue paper sale, because of this situation the journalist were effected professionally as many of them lost their jobs.

Repucchie (2020) in some areas the role of journalists have been increased than ever as people was desperately looking for news and latest information relevant to the Covid-19, The journalists risking their own life and freedom in order to provide valid and authentic information to the public, journalists covering the pandemic are pushing back through their venturesome techniques for detailing notwithstanding the restriction in development, they are likewise more angry at whatever point limitations are applied to the press.

Yan (2020) journalists can increase individuals' information on the emerging of Covid-19 through providing latest update to public, and in this manner changing the public mentalities and practices. In any case, what the journalists mean for the advancement of Covid-19 plague is a key general medical problem, here the Pearson relationship and cross-connection investigations are led to discover the genuinely huge relationships between the quantity of new emergency clinic warnings for Covid-19 and the quantity of every day news things for twelve significant sites in China from January eleventh to February sixth 2020. To look at the ramifications for transmission elements of these connections, we proposed a clever model, which implants the capacity of individual conduct change (journalists sway) into the force of disease

Chang (2020) through the coverage of Covid-19 journalists reduce the rate of infection, which play a significant part in forestalling and controlling of Covid-19 infection. In view of Covid-19 pandemic situation in Hubei, a “SIHRS” pandemic model with media inclusion was proposed. Initially, by the essential multiplication number, the universally asymptotically stable of the sickness free harmony and the endemic balance were demonstrated. Then, at that point, in view of the announced pestilence information of “Hubei Province from January 26 to February 13”, mathematical recreations are utilized to confirm the investigation results, and the effect of busy time and the size of infection transmission were principally considered with various data execution rate and the contact rate.

Hussain (2020) journalists have capacity to convey a message of unity through media and digital media huge number audience online media may likewise give grounds to deception and segregation. Journalists can use the adaptability and inescapability of online media innovations to expand the public's adherence to the wellbeing measures recommended by world health organization to battle the spread of Covid-19. Journalists and channels for mass communication elevate versatile reactions to cultivate positive wellbeing mentalities and adherence to preventive measures. Online media can assume positive part during the Covid-19 Pandemic by advancing viable techniques for assisting people in managing social and physical removing and lessening, disgrace, bias, separation, and imbalances.

Yu (2020) it is important to train the professional journalists about the digital technology and as well as include it in the professional training of journalists about what they have learned in the educational institution. According to the perspective of both future exploration and preparing, it is now important to learn and study about the advancement of journalistic expert skills and expertise in the digital platform, to

examine the experience of distance learning by journalism students and working journalists to work and learn from home during the Covid-19 pandemic situation around the world.

Libert (2021) the Covid-19 have remind us the importance of journalists and of the news media and the focal spot it consumes in the public space during any kind of crisis. Simultaneously, it has showed the significant hardships to the journalists and to media around the world. The lockdown disturbed the way of working of professional journalists and their job security which might expose the contemporary pressures between their professional identity and working conditions clearly.

Stănescu (2020) during the pandemic for journalists, there was a high risk of infection, they start using different type of precaution measurement to save their selves from the infection, journalists start using mask while working in the field even during live interviews as well. During lock down when there was different types of restriction around the world, many journalists start working from home, journalists search for new sources for getting information to avoid going out in the field.

A report published by “*united nation education, scientific and culture organization*” in (2020) say that journalists have faced an increase in the safety issues, during the Covid-19 crisis it released has compromised the very suitability and endurance of professional journalists, because of the loss in the shape of advertisement revenue, and has established a much more unstable circumstances for professional journalists with more barriers and challenges for getting authentic information and dissemination.

Tworzydło (2020) the Covid-19 pandemic has caused significant changes in the professional work of journalists. The major one was faced by journalists who are concerned to creating and minting the strong relationship with their audience, the new digital tool they use and their inclusion in new journalistic formats, the journalists change to getting data and start using digital media. Psychological worth: the work is of an exploration nature, it contains various ends and examinations from the quantitative exploration did. They can be utilized in surveying the circumstance identified with the Covid-19 pandemic, just as for arranging further examination, particularly in regions requiring broad investigation.

Casero-Ripollés (2020) the effects of Covid-19 has influenced different social spaces, including the journalists and the field of journalism. Since the start of Covid-19 pandemic, the news especially related to health has become more important for the masses than ever. Considering the elements of data utilization is exceptionally pertinent both for its capacity to change the journalism framework.

Prosser (2021) the emergency situation during covid-19 pandemic will caused the change in the future of journalism, not just exclusively will journalism significance dramatically increment as worldwide dangers and perils become more pervasive, yet how journalists draw in with their calling will likewise change. Journalism is a versatile calling, ready to adjust to the continually developing media scene. The social and political issues that charge news coverage at last assist it with bettering the necessities of its crowd, an idea known as the “trial of limit.” Historical patterns demonstrate that major waves in history

Nguyen (2021) a calling that isn't as it were “*susceptible to numbers*” (as would be natural for Duncan) yet in addition has seen numerous expert science, wellbeing and information revealing jobs sliced under tremendous monetary pressing factors in the previous many years – was tossed into the profound end. Jane Kirby recalled very well the beginning of managing confounding information and “struggling about, attempting to work out what the information implied and what in the world to do with them”. The increased significance of information based stories exacerbates the situation by forcing generous tension on columnists to manage information and their sources as fast as could really be expected. For evening papers like the Evening Standard, the strain to “get the morning news on the road immediately” was lasting, once in a while with as it were “minutes to work out what the information implies”, said Ross Lydall, its Health Editor, who referred to its duplicate cutoff time is 10 am. “How would you settle on the right decision when you don't have a lot of time?” is the steady inquiry that his group would mull over, particularly when there was such vulnerability in the information.

Journalism in the Age of Covid-19 Perspectives from Pakistan by Afia Salam (2020) during the Covid-19 pandemic journalists faced many challenges but the most important one was their credibility, at the point when the information became doubtful, as like around the world, in Pakistan as well, the traditional press, particularly print, was at that point thinking that it's hard to keep its head above water because of the impact and reach of mainstream media, most of the newspapers and news magazines, which had developed a standing of validity because of their top to bottom insightful stories and reports had left print during or not long before the pandemic hit, which also create a vacuum of trustworthiness.

Olsen (2020) It is broadly held that news coverage, journalists and news organization all play very important role in any democratic system as well as informing and educating masses, every media organization have journalists in their organization, thus usually which are considered as an important institutions of knowledge in the society, regularly completing epistemic practices that endeavor towards creating confirmed and solid news about open undertakings. The Covid-19 pandemic has strongly reminded us about this indispensable data capacity of the news media, with a flood in rush hour gridlock to portable applications and news destinations all throughout the planet. Sadly, the Covid-19 pandemic is at the same time pulverizing the publicizing business that assumes a particularly indispensable part in subsidizing news creation. This analysis contends that numerous editorial organizations - especially on the nearby level - as of now face an existential emergency, one that calls for prompt and group activity. With a regulating want of saving reporting, we set forward that society ought to participate in what we allude to as mutual news function as an endeavor to monetarily support reporting

Perreault (2021) as usual during the pandemic of Covid-19 journalists try to get and distribute valid and authentic information to masses. The issue with the emergency of Covid-19 is that it kills the capacity to section emergency experience from crafted by providing details regarding an emergency situation, due to restriction journalists was not able to interview local authorities about their polices and manage to stop the spread of infection, which was more important because the people are more concern about the local news and information in crisis situation.

Osmann (2021) journalists are also effected emotionally during the coverage of Covid-19 pandemic, as they were playing an important role in society in such a crucial time, regarding their role all over the world, as they keep informing public from such a situation which has an impact directly on their live, journalists must need to be mentally strong and as well as they must be healthy physically and psychologically.

A report by *UNESCO* (2021) "Supporting journalism around the world in times of Covid-19" explore that, the mind-boggling streams of data and disinformation about Covid-19 put journalists under extraordinary pressing factor compelling them to continually confirm the news they get, to demystify fantasies, lies and bogus "cures", which for the most part spread on the web. This exposing work is tedious, and numerous writers need skill in the point and the information about truth checking assets, among different impediments. In any case, they are arranging themselves, here and there by means of online gatherings and different organizations, to help each other in their check exercises.

Posetti (2020) journalists consider governments and worldwide associations responsible for their administration of the pandemic while limitations on freedom of press. During the Covid-19 pandemic many professional journalists were battling to adapt to the psychological, physical, individual and expert effects of the emergency during the primary influx of Covid-19. During the coverage of pandemic journalists was exposed to huge dangers and chilling limitations, as assaults on press opportunity raised during the pandemic. One in each 10 respondents said they'd been openly manhandled by a legislator or chose official throughout their work during the period.

A report published by "*international federation of journalists*" (2020) says that, during the Covid-19 coverage number of journalists around the world have complained about attacks on the freedom of press. Just about 25 percent journalists said that they had confronted developing troubles getting to latest information from government or official sources. Many revealed being obnoxiously assaulted by

legislators. Others whined of limitations on posing inquiries at public interviews and limitations being forced on the development of columnists during the emergency, including the withdrawal of acknowledgment of press cards. Some stressed that the absolute spotlight on Covid-19 related stories implied other significant issues were being overlooked.

Theoretical Framework

Social responsibility theory is one of the “four theories of press” which are also known as “normative theories” presented by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm in 1956 in their book. According to this theory the press should be free but the media will follow the roles and regulation and the boundaries of society.

According to Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm “Freedom of expression under the social responsibility theory is not an absolute right, as under pure libertarian theory, one’s right to free expression must be balanced against the private rights of others and against vital society interests”

According to Shraddha Bajracharya (2018) the basic concept of social responsibility theory is that, the press should work on the favor of masses and society, press need to make a set of principles and follow it, for the betterment of journalism field, to ensure the protection of journalists and to have punishments if any journalists violate the rules and regulation of journalism, this theory also allow the audience to interpret the contents of media and journalists as they want which caused a problem of misinterpretation, which might be not based on reality and thus it effected the social order in the society. This kind of situation gives the opportunity to the investigative and interpretative journalism to expose the reality and truth behind any case.

Ineji & Okoi (2020) the key idea of the social responsibility theory is that freedom is connected to the responsibilities, same in the case of press, which carries some special privileges under the shadow government, is also answerable to the as well as to the society for having some important function in society because of mass communication, the theory of social responsibility is comparatively new.

McQuail (2005) one of the most well-known communication scholars have summarized the basic assumption of social responsibility theory as follows:

- i. Journalists must admit and accomplish some responsibilities in society.
- ii. The responsibilities and the obligation will be in the sense of setting the performance standers in journalism, like objectivity, accuracy, balance and authentication of information.
- iii. When media and press accept and try to apply this obligation, than there must be self-regulating system within the organization (ethical boundaries) and the following of rules and regulation of the country.
- iv. Media and journalists will avoid aggressive contents which indirectly promote violence, crimes in society and disturb the social order of society.
- v. Society and the masses have the right of the high standards of performance from media, and interference of masses can be justified as to protect the society interests.
- vi. This theory assumed that the media professional and the journalists should be answerable to the public and society.

According to Bilal M Miraza (2017) the strengths of social responsibility theory is following:

1. Social responsibility allows everyone to express and give an opinion freely about the media and the contents shown by media.
2. Social responsibility allows the community to give an opinion and bound media to standardize the professional ethics.
3. This theory recognized the rights of public and the important shared interest.
4. This theory brought the concept of private media ownership, which might provide the batter service to public as compared to governments own media.

5. Social responsibility theory allows governments and some organization to take action against any media/ journalists which violate or ignore the social responsibilities while doing their professional duties.

Social Responsibility Theory and Journalists

Bajracharya (2018) journalists play an important role in the society as they give a voice to the voiceless and also develop public opinions in society where everyone has the right to express their selves and give their opinions freely, media as consider a tool of social development where journalists highlights the issues and problems as performing their social responsibilities in society, that is why the responsibilities of journalists in society is to use the different medium of mass communication for keep informing public, analyzing, documenting and interpreting the contents of public interest and finding the possible solutions of problems.

Asaad (2016) journalist plays an important role in any political system, but the importance of media and journalists are most in a democratic system, media and democracy are interdependent on each other, if a country have a strong democratic system, there will be more freedom of press and journalists will enjoy their duties as compare to the country where the democratic system and norms are not well established, media will face more challenges and will play its role very carefully.

Social Responsibility Theory and COVID-19

Bajracharya (2018) during the COVID-19 pandemic journalists perform their duties very well as it was their social responsibilities to keep inform public from pandemic relevant news, journalists not just informing public but also providing awareness on the basic of COVID-19 and the prevention measurements to avoid infection, media and journalists educate public and give them authentic and valid information hence they act very responsibly but nor spreading false information.

Reporting a crisis "*The responsibility of journalists during COVID-19*" (2020) after the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, which spread all over the world in a short period of time, the coverage of Covid-19 become a priority for journalists around the world, on the other hand the increasing health risks and decrease in advertisement, which is consider as a back bone of media, journalists faced new challenges in their professional work caused by the pandemic, from the first day of pandemic the information and data related to health become most demanding and get more attention of public than anything, during this kind of situation on the one hand the verification of information become most important for journalists, on the other hand, journalists also faced the ripped increase in the misinformation, but the worse situation was when some countries start crackdown against independent journalists as they criticizing the governments for mismanagement.

Research Methodology

Research methodology is that how a researcher will design systematically a study to achieve the desired result or justify the objectives of a study. Kerry Warren (2020) *research methodology is basically* about the way of designing a study systematically, for achieving a reliable and valid result which supports the aim and objectives of the research.

The aim of this research is to evaluate the "Effects of Covid-19 Pandemic on journalists working performance" in district Swat. In this research, the research have used the quantitative methodology was used for getting the better outcome of the research.

Research Design/ Method

Durrheim (2006) a research design is basically the framework for a research, which play the role of bridge between the question of a research and the implementation of the research, research design is a plan which guide the researcher that how to collect and analyze the data in order to get maximum result with minimum expenditure.

Types of Method

There are different types of research methods for quantitative research which are survey, content, analysis and interviews etc. in this study the Survey method have been used where the data was collected from the Swat based journalists through questionnaire, in which the effects of Covid-19 on the working performance of journalists surveyed.

Universe of the Study/ Population

According to Dr. Mahesh (2020) Universe is entire set “things, objects and units or human” selected by a researcher for study/ research. For example, in a study of working journalists in Swat, the journalists working within the territory of Swat is the universe of the study. It is not possible for the researcher to study the entire universe and the researcher has to think about the accessible portion of the universe which is called population of the study.

Population or universe of the study in research is refers to the group or set have some specific characteristics, and which the researcher want to study.

In this study the population was the journalists working in district Swat with different media organizations.

Sampling

According to Bhardwaj (2019) Sampling is a process to selecting a specific portion of sub-set from a large numbers of things or from the whole population for the purpose of research. The main reason for sampling is that it is too expensive and as well as time consuming to study the whole population in a research.

In this research “Simple random sampling” technique is used for sampling which is the type of probability sampling. Easton, et al, (1997) simple random sampling is one of the basic sampling technique in which the researcher select a specific portion or group from the whole population for study, where each and every participant or subject is selected entirely by chance, because every individual from the population has an equal chance of selection.

Data Collecting Tool

According to Martin (2006) mostly researcher used questionnaires in sample surveys to evoke reports of realities, perspectives, and other abstract states. Questionnaires might be taken through face to face interviews, telephones, internet or they might act naturally managed on paper or another medium, for example, sound tape or the web. Respondents might be gotten some information about themselves, others in their family, or different elements, like organizations etc.

In this study the researcher have used questionnaire for data collection in both soft form (Google form) and hard form (printed form). 25 responses were collected online and the reaming 75 response were collected on a printed form.

Questionnaire

Lavrakas (2008) questionnaire is one of the most used data collection tool used for data collection in different form of survey research. Questionnaire consists of series of question relevant to the objectives of research. These questions have a proper order about specific objectives of research.

In this research, the researcher has used a survey method of data collection where the questionnaire consists of 19 questions with 5 demographic questions.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis allows the researcher to solve the problem and interpret the data. In this research, researcher used SPSS (statistical package for social science) for data analysis.

Data Analysis

Questions	Responses	F	%
Gender	Female	1	1.0
	Male	99	99.0
	Total	100	100.0
Age Group	18-23	20	20.0
	24-29	24	24.0
	30-35	14	14.0
	36-41	23	23.0
	42-47	15	15.0
	48-53	4	4.0
	Total	100	100.0
Press Club Membership	Yes	68	68.0
	No	32	32.0
	Total	100	100.0
Type of Media	Digital media	12	12.0
	Print	41	41.0
	Radio	9	9.0
	More than one	20	20.0
	Television	18	18.0
	Total	100	100.0
Working in field during Covid-19	Yes	100	100.0
	No	0	0
	Total	100	100.0
Working Time duration	8 Hours	22	22.0
	Less than 8 Hours	33	33.0
	Up to 10 Hours	25	25.0
	Up to 12 Hours	20	20.0
	Total	100	100.0
Working Compression With Normal Situation	Not at all	2	2.0
	Only a little	10	10.0
	Rather much	37	37.0
	To some extent	24	24.0
	Very much	27	27.0
	Total	100	100.0
COVID-19 Effects on Working Performance	Not at all	5	5.0
	Only a little	11	11.0
	Rather much	30	30.0
	To some extent	31	31.0
	Very much	23	23.0
	Total	100	100.0
Journalists Facilitated by Their Organization During COVID-19	Not at all	44	44.0
	Only a little	25	25.0
	Rather much	7	7.0
	To some extent	16	16.0
	Very much	8	8.0
	Total	100	100.0
SOPs Following	Not at all	2	2.0
	Only a little	4	4.0
	Rather much	44	44.0

	To some extent	18	18.0
	Very much	32	32.0
	Total	100	100.0
Safety measure provide by governments	Not at all	78	78.0
	Only a little	15	15.0
	Rather much	3	3.0
	To some extent	2	2.0
	Very much	2	2.0
	Total	100	100.0
Change Caused by COVID-19 in the Working Style of Journalists	Agree	65	65.0
	Disagree	6	6.0
	Neutral	11	11.0
	Strongly agree	15	15.0
	Strongly disagree	3	3.0
	Total	100	100.0
Effects on Working Style of Journalist	Not at all	3	3.0
	Only a little	7	7.0
	Rather much	34	34.0
	To some extent	45	45.0
	Very much	11	11.0
	Total	100	100.0
Difference in Newsroom During Covid-19 as Compared to Normal Days	Not at all	4	4.0
	Only a little	18	18.0
	Rather much	33	33.0
	To some extent	32	32.0
	Very much	13	13.0
	Total	100	100.0
Effects of Lockdown on Working Performance	Agree	66	66.0
	Disagree	4	4.0
	Neutral	12	12.0
	Strongly agree	15	15.0
	Strongly disagree	3	3.0
	Total	100	100.0
Difficulties during Working Online	Not at all	36	36.0
	Only a little	27	27.0
	Rather much	9	9.0
	To some extent	23	23.0
	Very much	5	5.0
	Total	100	100.0
Governments Restriction effects on Working Performance	Not at all	3	3.0
	Only a little	16	16.0
	Rather much	32	32.0
	To some extent	28	28.0
	Very much	21	21.0
	Total	100	100.0
Arrangement of Online Training Sessions for Journalists during Covid-19 Pandemic by Governments	No	96	96.0
	Yes	04	4.0
	Total	100	100.0
Difficulties during Performing Social Responsibilities	Agree	63	63.0
	Disagree	2	2.0

	Neutral	6	6.0
	Strongly agree	27	27.0
	Strongly disagree	2	2.0
	Total	100	100.0
Difficulties during News Confirmation	Agree	68	68.0
	Disagree	7	7.0
	Neutral	10	10.0
	Strongly agree	12	12.0
	Strongly disagree	3	3.0
	Total	100	100.0
Satisfaction to Journalists from their Role of Social Responsibilities in Society	Not at all	1	1.0
	Only a little	5	5.0
	Rather much	27	27.0
	To some extent	34	34.0
	Very much	33	33.0
	Total	100	100.0
Overall Effects of Covid-19 on Journalists	Not at all	8	8.0
	Only a little	24	24.0
	Rather much	24	24.0
	To some extent	26	26.0
	Very much	42	42.0
	Total	100	100.0

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effects of Covid-19 on the working performance of journalists in district Swat as well as to explore the difficulties faced by journalists during the period of Covid-19 while performing their professional duties. This study also focused on the support for journalists from government and their organization while doing their duties. It was also focused on difficulties faced by journalists during Covid-19 while performing their social responsibilities in the society.

The study was conducted from Swat based journalists who have worked during the Covid-19 pandemic, where the sample of 100 respondents were chosen through a sampling method "sample random sampling" SRS from the total population.

Results of this study explore that journalist in Swat have faced difficulties during Covid-19 pandemic. The data shows that 37% journalists faced a lot of difficulties as compared to normal situation while working in the field during Covid-19, similarly 27% faced very many difficulties due to unsuitable circumstances, different types of restrictions and many other reasons

This study also found that 60% of the respondents working performance were highly affected by Covid-19 which can elaborate the situation and the effects of Covid-19 easily on the working performance of journalists in Swat district, journalists have faced many issues like psychological pressure, financial problems and the different types of restriction from government which affect their working performance.

This study also exposed the supports and facilitation of media organization for their working staff, 44% of the journalists said that they were not supported by their organization as their response, those were mostly regional reporters and associated with small media organization, however 15% were supported very much by their organizations during Covid-19 pandemic and those work the journalists who are working with a well-established and well known organization like Geo news, ARY news and Jung group etc.

On the other hand the support of government was also not up to the mark as the result shows that 78% of the respondents said that the government even doesn't provide safety measures to them during Covid-19,

as the Pakistan is not a developed country and doesn't have the resource to support the journalists all around the country. Similarly 96% of the total sample size says no when they were asked about the online training sessions arrangement by government regarding Covid-19, which also shows the government doesn't support journalists, and journalists were one of the frontline workers during COVID-19 pandemic, they faced threat to their lives as most of them were not familiar with these types of crisis situations and they were needed to be trained properly.

Results of the study also found that the Covid-19 has changed the working style of journalists in many ways, the research data shows us that 80% of the total respondents were agreed that their working style was disturbed due to Covid-19 pandemic i.e. Covid-19 has changed the working style of journalists as they had to follow SOPs during duties, different kind of restrictions have forced them to search alternative ways to get information from sources etc., few of the respondents disagreed and stated that the pandemic had brought no changes to their working style as shown in the data that 9% of the respondents showed disagreement with researcher question. Similarly that Covid-19 pandemic has effected the working style of journalists as well, the data shows us that 79% of the respondents stated that their style of working was effected by Covid-19 pandemic, which clearly explains that Covid-19 effected and caused change in journalists' practices.

Results of the study also find out that the government restrictions also affected the working performance of journalists in district Swat, the result shows us that 80% of the respondents have been affected by government restrictions on the other hand only 3% were disagreed with the question. The lockdown also effected the working performance of the journalists as the results show that 81% of the respondents agreed that their working performance was effected by lockdown during Covid-19 pandemic. These statistics show that the government restrictions and lockdown affected the working performance of the journalists in district Swat.

Results of the study also explore the difficulties faced by journalists during performing their social responsibilities in society, the data shows that 90% of the respondents agreed that they have faced difficulties, however only 4% of the respondents disagree with that they have not faced any difficulties while performing their social responsibilities in the time of Covid-19. The results show that most of the journalists have faced different kinds of difficulties but with all those difficulties and barriers journalists still have performed their social responsibilities. The data shows that 77% of all the respondents were satisfied from their role of social responsibilities in the society during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Results of the study also disclosed that the journalists also faced difficulties in the confirmation of information and news items during Covid-19, results show us that 68% of the respondents agreed that they have faced difficulties and 12% strongly agreed with the question which shows that majority of them have faced difficulties in news confirmation because of overloading of information, the spreading of false or fake information on social media and the slow process of news confirmation.

This study also found that the journalists were personally also effected by Covid-19 as the results show that more than 50% of the total respondents believed that journalists were effected by Covid-19 pandemic, which means that journalists have been effected by Covid-19 as many of them have infected by Covid-19 and number of journalists have lost their lives.

Hypotheses Testing

H1: "It is assumed that verification of news was difficult for journalists in pandemic due to access of information".

The results have confirmed the first hypothesis that "It is assumed that verification of news was difficult for journalists in pandemic due to access of information" as 80% of the total respondents believed that the confirmation of the news was difficult due to slow access to information and overloading of misinformation.

H2: It is assumed that Covid-19 affected the working style of working journalists.

The second hypothesis of the research which was "It is assumed that Covid-19 effected the working style of working journalists" also confirmed as the result shows that respondents were asked that the Covid-19 have changed the working style of journalists, as 90% of the respondents were agreed which shows the majority of the journalists opinion is that the Covid-19 have changed their working style.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to find out the effects of Covid-19 pandemic on the working performance of journalists: perception of Swat based journalists.

On the basis of the finding, it is concluded that the working performance of the journalists were affected by Covid-19 pandemic. It is also concluded that the government and media organization doesn't support the journalists, instead of support the restriction of government have affected their working performance.

Similarly it is also concluded that journalists have faced many problems, challenges and barriers during their professional duties as they were one of the front line workers, but still they have performed their role of social responsibilities in society and they tried their best to keep inform and educate the public in these crisis situation when the majority of the professional were not willing to perform their duties.

Recommendations

- It is recommended that journalists should be supported by the government as they were frontline worker during the pandemic.
- It is also recommended that that media organizations need to support their professionals in crisis situation.
- It is also recommended that journalists should be facilitated according to their role in society by government and media organization.
- It is also recommended that the journalists also need to be well skilled and prepare for any kind of crisis situation in the future.

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Conflict of Interest

Authors have no conflict of interest.

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