

# PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT AND JOB SECURITY LEVEL OF SINDH JOURNALISTS IN PAKISTAN

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## Abstract

*Both professional commitment and job security are considered among the significant factors for the success of any profession. In this way this article reports the original findings about the professional commitment and job security level of the media workers in Sindh province, Pakistan. In its essence, this paper examines that at what level and what type of journalists are more committed with journalism profession in Sindh province. Moreover, the professional commitment and job security level of the Sindh journalists have been analyzed in the context of their job experience, job satisfaction, language of the media organization, and age category variables. For this study the preliminary empirical data were collected by conducting a cross-sectional survey of 576 working journalists in the Sindh province, Pakistan. The Sindh journalists on average were found professionally committed; however it is pathetic that they had insecure job conditions.*

**Key Words:** journalists; professional commitment; job security

## 1 Introduction

The findings of this study present and discuss the professional commitment and job security levels of the Sindh Journalists. Therefore, regarding professional commitment Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman (1976) state that most professionals consider their work as more than a “job”. And in this regard they (Johnstone et al., 1976) referred to Freidson (1970, p.70) that work for a professional becomes part of his “identity”. In this way, ‘This type of commitment, when present, should be manifested in an individual’s reluctance to leave his profession for increased monetary reward’(Johnstone et al., 1976, p. 109). Moreover, Lowrey and Becker (2004) add that commitment to an occupation conceptually differs from commitment to the organization and the committed journalist is supposed to have a sense of calling to the field and recognition that the social consequences of work outweigh economic gain. However, they (Lowrey & Becker, 2004) found that commitment to journalism has been decreasing during the past twenty to thirty years. Moreover, about job security Weaver and Wilhoit(1986, p. 93) in their study of U.S. journalists found a dramatic change in the increased importance of job security, which was almost as salient as public-service job values. Later Weaver and Wilhoit(1996, p. 89) said that ‘for job security, journalists in the U.S. were more likely to consider this very important (61 percent)’.

## 2 Method and sampling

The data collection was conducted with a self-completed questionnaire that was distributed to all accessible media organizations in the Sindh province, Pakistan, and in all district-level press clubs. However, the sampling technique was purposive and opportunistic, with the purpose to include as many journalists as possible. The survey was inclusive only of those journalists who were regularly employed to work for newspapers, magazines, news agencies, television channels and radio stations with the job positions as reporters, sub-editors or editors. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher who was available to answer the queries over questions and that to collect securely the filled questionnaires. The questionnaire had a wide variety of topics related to journalists' careers, training and work experience, the organizations they worked for, their political affiliation, their attitudes to and use of technologies, their press club membership, their education level and their salary and working conditions. In this way a total of 576 working journalists filled questionnaires. In this way the majority (59.0%) of the sampled journalists was accessed at press clubs, 38.0% of workplaces and 3.0% in their homes.

## 3 Findings

### 3.1 Demographic Profile

See table 1 the typical Sindh journalist is dominantly male (98.1%), speaks the Sindhi language (70.9%) and follows Islam as a religion (96.7%). Academically the majority (63.8%) of the Sindh journalists is a university graduate, whereas the remaining earned their final degree from colleges (28.5%) and schools (7.7%). Further, about their education it was found that the majority (63.7%) had sought education as a regular student and the remaining proportion (36.3%) as a private student. In the context of the academic institute, the sampled Sindh journalists who had sought their final degree from university (365), among them the simple majority (54.4%) had studied from University of Sindh, Jamshoro and the remaining from Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur (27.2%), University of Karachi (13.2%) and other various universities (5.2%). Moreover, the first highest proportion (42.1%) of the surveyed Sindh journalists is young - up to 30 years old - and the second highest proportion (37.5%) is between 31 to 40 years old. Finally, in the salary context the highest proportion (37.7%) of the Sindh journalists earns monthly less than 10,000 (ten thousand) PK rupees.

**TABLE 1**  
**Composition of journalists by demographic variables**

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

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

### 3.2 Professional commitment and job security level of the Sindh Journalists

#### *Professional Commitment:*

To assess the commitment of journalists in Sindh to their profession when the question was asked as ‘Would you continue in journalism if other, or better employment was available?’, according to the table 2 the majority proportion (60.2%) of the journalists reported ‘yes’ they would continue. However, in contrast a proportion of over one fifth (22.5%) flatly said ‘no’ they would not continue. Whereas, the remaining 17.4% journalists mentioned that they were yet ‘not sure’ about taking such decision. Thus according to the findings, the level of professional commitment of the majority (60.2%) of Sindh journalists resembles that of their colleagues in some other parts of the world. For example, in the U.S. according to Weaver and Wilhoit (1986) Johnstone found in his 1971 study that most practitioners intended to remain in the field; and twelve years later, the proportion of those who planned to remain in the field was almost the same as in 1971. In a Chinese study of newswriters according to Chen, Zhu and Wu, (1998, p. 28) 57% of the journalists in the sample said they would stay in journalism, when asked the question, if you were given a second chance what would you choose to do?

**TABLE 2****Composition of journalists by professional commitment and job security level**

<i>Job-Related variables</i>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<b>Would you continue in journalism, if other better employment was available?</b>		
Yes	343	(60.2)
No	128	(22.5)
Not sure	99	(17.4)
<b>Job security</b>		
Very secure	55	(9.7)
Secure	153	(26.9)
Neutral	97	(17.0)
Not secure	192	(33.7)
Not very secure	72	(12.7)

Moreover, the percentage of those Sindh journalists (22.5%) who said that they would not continue if a better job was available was almost equal to that of their U.S. colleagues; in the 1990s, 21% of the American journalists studied said that they planned to leave the field during the next five years (D. H. Weaver, 1998). This was higher than the percentage of their colleagues in Taiwan, where 12% planned to leave the field of journalism in five years (Lo, 1998). In addition, the proportion of 17.4% Sindh journalists who were 'not yet sure' in deciding whether to continue journalism or not was almost the same as the proportion of their colleagues in Taiwan; 17.0% of Taiwanese journalists were undecided about whether they would leave the field of journalism in five years or not (Lo, 1998, p. 82).

Moreover, regarding professional commitment, firstly, with regard to job seniority (See table 3) among cub journalists the proportion of those who were undecided whether to continue in journalism or not if a better job was available (25.3%) compared with those journalists who wanted to continue (20.7%) and those who did not want to continue (15.6%) was bigger. In contrast, however, among juniors the proportion of those who wanted to quit journalism (20.3%) compared with those who were undecided (12.1%) and those who were committed (8.5%) was higher. However, among senior journalists the proportion of those who were committed (70.8%) compared with those who wanted to quit (64.1%) and those who were undecided (62.6%) was larger. In summary, the findings demonstrated that on average the professionally committed journalists were to be found more among seniors who have above than five years professional experience and the un-committed were found more among juniors who have about five years job experience; whereas, the cubs who had been since about 3 years in journalism were still undecided to leave or stay in the journalism profession.

Secondly, in the perspective of media language, among English-language and Urdu-language media journalists the proportions of committed journalists (13.2% and 30.5% respectively) compared with those who wanted-to-quit journalism (3.9% and 25.0% respectively) and those who were undecided whether to continue or not (7.1% and 26.3% respectively) were larger. In contrast, however, it was observed that among Sindhi-language media journalists the proportion of those who wanted to quit journalism if other lucrative jobs were available (71.1%) was bigger than those who were committed (56.3%) and those who were undecided (66.7%).

Thus the findings indicate that English-language and Urdu-language media journalists are comparatively more committed than Sindhi-language media journalists. In other words from the findings it can also be deduced that English-language and Urdu-language media journalists are financially satisfied with their jobs,

in contrast to their Sindhi-language counterparts, who seem financially weaker, and therefore are relatively more determined to leave the field of journalism if a better paid job was available to them.

**TABLE 3**  
**Distribution of journalists by professional commitment level and selected variables**

<i>Selected variables</i>	<b>Would you continue in journalism?</b>			<b>Total (%)</b>
	<b>Yes/committed (%)</b>	<b>No/noncommitted (%)</b>	<b>Notsure/undecided (%)</b>	
<b>Job seniority*</b>				
About 3 years(cub)	71(20.7)	20(15.6)	25(25.3)	116(20.4)
About 5 years (junior)	29(8.5)	26(20.3)	12(12.1)	67(11.8)
Above 5 years (senior)	243(70.8)	82(64.1)	62(62.6)	387(67.9)
<b>Total</b>	<b>343(100)</b>	<b>128(100)</b>	<b>99(100)</b>	<b>570(100)</b>
<b>Media language</b>				
English	45(13.2)	5(3.9)	7(7.1)	57(10.0)
Sindhi	192(56.3)	91(71.1)	66(66.7)	349(61.4)
Urdu	104(30.5)	32(25.0)	26(26.3)	162(28.5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>341(100)</b>	<b>128(100)</b>	<b>99(100)</b>	<b>568(100)</b>
<b>Job satisfaction<sup>†</sup></b>				
Satisfied	262(76.8)	83(64.8)	60(60.6)	405(71.3)
Neutral	35(10.3)	17(13.3)	23(23.2)	75(13.2)
Dissatisfied	44(12.9)	28(21.9)	16(16.2)	88(15.5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>341(100)</b>	<b>128(100)</b>	<b>99(100)</b>	<b>568(100)</b>
<b>Age categories</b>				
Till 30 years (Young)	131(38.9)	57(44.5)	50(51.5)	238(42.3)
31-40 years (Mature)	121(35.9)	54(42.2)	34(35.1)	209(37.2)
Above 40 years (old)	85(25.2)	17(13.3)	13(13.4)	115(20.5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>337(100)</b>	<b>128(100)</b>	<b>97(100)</b>	<b>562(100)</b>

\* $\chi^2 = 14.87, p=0.005, df = 4$ ;  $\chi^2 = 18.44, p=0.001, df = 4$ .

Thirdly, in regard to job satisfaction, among those who were satisfied with their jobs the proportion of committed journalists (76.8%) compared with those who wanted-to-quit (64.8%) and those who were undecided (60.6%) was higher. In contrast, however, among those who were dissatisfied with their jobs the proportion of those who wanted-to-quit (21.9%) was larger than those who were professionally committed (12.9%) and those who were undecided (16.2%); whereas, among those who chose to become neutral instead of showing their satisfaction level the proportion of those journalists who were undecided about whether to quit journalism or not (23.2%) was bigger than those who were professionally committed (10.3%) and who were not-committed (13.3%). In this way it was found that those who were satisfied with their jobs were professionally more committed than those who were not satisfied and those who chose to be neutral. These findings support the idea of Weaver and Wilhoit(1986, p. 99) that job satisfaction is a

significant factor in predicting commitment to the profession. Further, they (David H. Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986) add that journalists who say they are very satisfied with their jobs are considerably more likely to say they plan to remain in the field than those who are less satisfied. Or in China according to Chen et al. (1998, p. 28) to stay in journalism, 'the most important factor is the level of job satisfaction, for example, of those who are "very satisfied" with the current job, 79% said they would stay.' Finally, in terms of age categories, among young category like cub journalists as stated earlier the proportion of those who were undecided about professional commitment (51.5%) compared with the committed (38.9%) and non-committed (64.8%) was bigger. Conversely, among mature journalists the proportion of non-committed journalists (42.2%) compared with the committed (35.9%) and undecided journalists (35.1%) was bigger; whereas among the older age category of journalists like senior journalists as put earlier the proportion of professionally committed journalists (25.2%) was higher than those who were non-committed (13.3%) and undecided (13.4%). In conclusion it was found that older age category of those journalists who were above 40 years old seem to be professionally more committed than the journalists of the mature and young category.

#### **Job security level:**

In regards to the job security of the journalists in Sindh, it was found that (See table 2) out of a total of 569 one third (33.7%) said that their job was 'not secure'; whereas the other proportion of over one tenth (12.7%) mentioned that they work in a 'not very secure' job condition. On the contrary, the proportion of slightly more than a quarter (26.9%) said that their job was 'secure' and almost one tenth (9.7%) reported their jobs were 'very secure'; whereas the remaining 17.0% journalists were 'neutral' in regard to their job security. Thus overall the findings mention that the highest proportion (46.4%) of the sampled Sindh journalists worked under insecure job conditions, and that finding supports the idea of McNair (1998, pp. 10-11) that 'the majority of journalists work..... in conditions of low job security'.

**TABLE 4**  
**Distribution of journalists by job security level and selected variables**

<i>Selected variables</i>	<b>Job security</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>*Job seniority</b>			
About 3 years (cubs)	115	3.16	1.136
About 5 years (juniors)	67	2.75	1.146
Above 5 years (seniors)	387	2.81	1.245
<b>Total</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>2.87</b>	<b>1.219</b>
<b>*Media language</b>			
English	58	3.26	.983
Sindhi	348	2.81	1.238
Urdu	162	2.86	1.234
<b>Total</b>	<b>568</b>	<b>2.87</b>	<b>1.219</b>
<b>*Monthly income</b>			
Unpaid	111	2.63	1.355
Underpaid	282	2.89	1.168
Better-paid	60	3.13	1.127
Lucratively paid	42	3.21	1.240
No answer	74	2.76	1.191
<b>Total</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>2.87</b>	<b>1.219</b>

**\*Age category**

Till 30 years (Young)	238	3.03	1.171
31-40 years (Mature)	209	2.74	1.197
Above 40 years (old)	114	2.80	1.318
<b>Total</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>2.88</b>	<b>1.217</b>

\*. The mean differences are significant at the  $< .05$  level.

Note: For the means, higher scores equal greater security. Scale ranges from 5 = *very secure* to 1 = *not very secure*.

Additionally, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was conducted to explore the impact of job seniority, media organization language, monthly income and age on the rating level of job security. As a result the following statistically significant differences were found that in the perspective of job seniority (See table 4), it was found contrary to expectations that the cub journalists ( $M=3.16$ ) compared with their junior ( $M=2.75$ ) and senior colleagues ( $M=2.81$ ) felt their jobs more secure ( $F=4.05$ ;  $p=.018$ ). In regard to the media language it was observed that the English-language media journalists ( $M=3.26$ ) compared with Sindhi-language ( $M=2.81$ ) and Urdu-language ( $M=2.86$ ) media journalists felt their jobs more secure (Welch's  $F=4.86$ ;  $p=.009$ ). Whereas, in the context of monthly income those journalists who were lucratively-paid ( $M=3.21$ ) and better-paid ( $M=3.13$ ) compared with those who were un-paid ( $M=2.63$ ), under-paid ( $M=2.89$ ) and did not answer to monthly income question ( $M=2.76$ ) felt their jobs more secure (Welch's  $F=2.62$ ;  $p=.037$ ). Finally, in regard to age compared with the category of old ( $M=2.80$ ) and mature journalists ( $M=2.74$ ) the young journalists ( $M=3.03$ ) felt their jobs more secure ( $F=3.42$ ;  $p=.033$ ).

#### 4 Discussion and conclusion

It was found that most professionals consider to their work as more than a job (See Johnstone, et al., 1976). And for job security U.S. journalists were more likely to consider this very important (61 percent), stated Weaver and Wilhoit (1996). So in this paper the professional commitment level and job security situation of the Sindh journalists in Pakistan was assessed and analyzed. In result it was known that the majority (60.2%) of the Sindh journalists was found with showing a professional commitment; as they expressed would not leave the journalism profession even other better job was available for them. And it was similar like U.S and Chinese journalists who also planned to remain in the field. Moreover, among Sindh journalists on average those who were seniors and worked for English and Urdu media were comparatively more committed to their profession. Similarly, those who had job satisfaction in journalism professional also had comparatively more professional commitment. So in journalism or news media profession job satisfaction is a significant factor for developing professional commitment among journalists. Additionally, the highest proportion (46.4%) of the sampled Sindh journalists had insecure jobs; so this was same as found by McNair (1998) that the majority of newswriters are in conditions of low job security. However, those who felt their jobs secure among them on average those who were most juniors and worked for English-language media felt comparatively more job security. Similarly those who were better-paid and lucratively paid also on average had more job security.

#### NOTES

1. To have facilitation, the values of job experience variable have been changed in the data description and analysis as follow: about 3 years experience as (cub), about 5 years experience as (junior), and above 5 years experience as (senior).

2. To have facilitation, the age variable values have been changed in the data description and analysis as follows: till 30 years old as (young journalist), 31-40 year old as (mature journalist), and above 40 years old as (old age journalist).

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