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## **Self-censorship by Pakistani YouTube Journalists and Its Difference from Mainstream Media**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The current study is to examine the practice of self-censorship by Pakistani YouTube journalists and its difference from same practice on mainstream media. It helps to know about the factors of self-censorship and their effects on journalistic practices in digital media, freedom of expression, freedom of press and the democratic practices in the country. The present study explores the practices of self-censorship in the journalists who are associated with the mainstream media and also running their own YouTube channels, and for that matter, the opinion of these journalists is taken through convenient sampling. Total 20 journalists were interviewed to have their understanding about self-censorship practices and their impact. At the same time, a survey is conducted from the journalists for their view about the factors of self-censorship. Total 400 journalists of 5 major cities of Pakistan were approached for their response. The measures included in this study are Factors Contributing towards Self-Censorship, Threats, Pressures or Interests of Media Workers, and Influence of Self-Censorship on Journalistic Practices. Qualitative technique is adopted for data analysis after the interviews, while the quantitative approach is followed for data analysis after the survey. The outcome of the interviews and survey reveal the results according to the objectives of the study. For the purpose of analyzing the variables, the Bar-Tal Model of Self-censorship is

followed. The results of the study are interpreted through SPSS and NVIVO. The study has the significant implications in order to understand about the self-censorship by the Pakistani YouTube journalists and its impact on the news content and the public perception.

**Key words:** Factors of self-censorship, impact of censorship on media content, YouTube Journalists in Pakistan, Mainstream Media of Pakistan, Social Responsibility of Media

## INTRODUCTION

Censorship is utilized to control or conquer those expressions which can threaten the safety and damage the law of any state, organization, or institute. Factually, censorship has been used mostly for negative purposes like observing community ethics, governing community attentiveness, and to quiet resistance elements. To track down the history of censorship it explores that the beginning of official censorship can be seen in 443 BC in Rome, and the first official censorship law was established in China in 300AD (Newth, 2010). Therefore, the history of censorship is quite old. Censorship is going both ways positive and negative when content that can cause any conflict or violence falls under positive censorship. At the same time, when one alters the fact to get any kind of benefits or one has to censor his content because of any pressure of any individual or group that comes under the negative censorship. So while using censorship one should be aware of its positive and negative use.

Usually, administration censors and scrutinizes the press, periodicals, books, newscast transmissions, and flicks typically before proclamation to redact problematic material (Bennett & Naim, 2015). This is the exact and proper use of censorship but censorship is also used to conquer and suppress the voices of the opposition as well, which are in the favor of the community but against the people in power, and then the negative use of censorship is started. Censorship exists in many ways one is self-censorship, it is frequently caught on in connection to censorship (Tapsell, 2012). Whereas the word 'self' highlights a

person's office, 'censorship' demonstrates the nearness of the outside that forces itself on a person or collectively. Self-censorship is troublesome to conceptualize, operationalize and capture experimentally.

Self-censorship is in this manner caught on as an individual's reaction to this remotely existing censor. However, as proposed by Klausen (2009) there is an imperative lesson of cases where individuals censor themselves within the nonattendance of an outside censor. People can engage in a handle that constitutes self-censorship within the nonappearance of an outside censor. Censorship and self-censorship appear to fit Bernard Williams's idea of thick evaluative concepts which incorporate both clear and evaluative measurements, where censorship assessed adversely as a rule.

Self-censorship is not a worthy practice for the future of journalism. This is indistinguishable and dangerous and affects negatively the trustworthiness of not only journalism but the journalists also which can create a negative impact on society (Cook & Heilmann, 2013). To censor your own work is like cutting the trees that you planted with your own hands, by doing this; journalists are putting their occupation's future in danger. Mostly self-censorship is the result of pressure that comes from state establishments, commercials, community pressure groups, and illegitimate groups on the journalist and media groups also. On the other hand, the pressure of these groups is so strong that it does not give any other way for the journalists, they have to accept their orders otherwise will abide by the magnitudes which include life threats also, so journalist changes the facts according to the command of these pressure groups. Sometimes the owners of media houses also threaten their working journalists and do not allow them to give any news, which are against their investors or advertisers, now the threat of losing the job lead the journalist towards self-censorship and changing the facts.

The history of censorship and self-censorship is as old as journalism, but this practice is damaging the journalists and even journalism as a profession. The common public and community also have a negative effect because of this censorship media do not play their role properly for the development of the public and community. Therefore, the present study explored what makes journalists in Pakistan limit themselves in expression in public affairs, and what sort of pressures lead them towards self-censorship. The present study examined why journalists practice censorship. Do they fear something if yes then why and in which areas their fear leads them to practice self-censorship and what are the possible outcomes of fear that lead them to do self-censorship? The study explores the benefits that journalists get and compromises their objectivity. What kinds of benefits did they get to what extent does self-censorship results in getting any benefits? The study further explores how professionalism leads a journalist to do self-censorship, and in which areas journalists do self-censorship for professionalism.

### **Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the present study are following

1. To explore the factors contributing to self-censorship among YouTube journalists in Pakistan.
2. To examine the difference of self-censorship on mainstream media and digital media in Pakistan

### **Research Questions**

RQ1: What are the main factors contributing to self-censorship among Pakistani YouTube journalists?

RQ2: Is there any difference in self-censorship on mainstream media and YouTube channels?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The purpose of literature review is to have an idea about the findings of other studies and researches similar to the study that is being conducted. It helps in understanding the importance of the study or comparing with other explained and understood phenomenon.

Limpitlaw (2013) pointed out that the work of journalists reflects how we human beings interact with other individuals of society. The interaction of individual depends on the interaction of big institutions of the state. One can talk about the standards of democracy or governance in a state to see its growth, but the main indicator of the development of a society is solely based on the respect of the citizens of a country and the independence of media in the same society. The importance of freedom of expression lies in the development of human civilization. The society experienced different changes but it realized the importance of freedom of expression when it came to know about the autonomy and independence of an individual.

Puddephatt (2011) stated that freedom of expression is an important component of human development. It has changed the man from social animal to political animal. The idea of free an independent society is an ideal to achieve the goal of seeking, imparting and receiving information. It gave birth to the idea of media regulation and introducing such laws that strengthen the idea of freedom of expression. The right of freedom of expression is crucial because it is a human need one needs identity, expressing the ideas, feelings and emotions; and protecting other rights by ensuring this right at first stage.

Lavarch (2012) argues that in order to flourish the democracy, there is a dire need that people should have the free access to the sources of information. It provides the platform to discuss the important social issues and to devise any solution. It is an important tool of accountability of the ruling class. The editors and owners of media houses who control the media content have their own economic, political and political interests. These interests further

influence the media power and sometimes they have to compromise either on their objectivity or on their own interests.

Morris (2017) conducted a study to explore censorship in journalism. The researcher uses the interview method for data collection for the study. The researcher conducted interviews with working journalists. The results of the study show that censorship in journalism identified that all over the world journalism encompasses the features of self-censorship that varies in every process of the journalism from selecting a piece of news to editing and then the final publishing process at every set journalist do self-censorship to his content for very obvious reasons. Likewise, Tapsell (2012) conducted a study to explore the frequency of censorship in news media. To examine the concerned problem researcher used the interview method to collect the data. The researcher conducted interviews with media experts to examine the phenomena the results of the study show that to some extent, all working journalists' run-through self-censorship from end to end the miscellany and production of news stories. And this censorship contains both positive and negative censorship both.

Cook and Heilmann (2013) conducted a study that explains self-censorship reasons and motives. The researcher conducted interviews with media professionals to explore the motives of self-censorship. The results of the study show that as a professed censor which is always done consciously and there is always a very clear reason or motive behind that censor. That motive can either be personal or professional. But self-censorship is always done through conscious efforts. The results of the study also explain that the censorship done under the tag of gatekeeping researchers explain 3 levels of gatekeeping which leads towards censorship. The researchers identified them as micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

Sturges and Paul (2015) conducted a study to examine the reason for self-censorship in media the results of the study explain that the reasons for self-censorship are very open and harmful. Government establishments complete a recognized structure necessitate preceding

regulator of at all substantial predestined aimed at media and publications. The decision of the content to publish it or not will decide by other authorities.

Skjerdal (2010) conducted a study to explore the positive aspects of self-censorship. The researcher conducted interviews with media experts to examine the concerned problem. The results of the study explain, self-censorship is frequently ethically legitimized to safeguard mainly the national security issues. The researcher also observed that self-censorship was a reaction to the threatened and actual vehemence meted out to media and other opinionated behaviors by legislatures of the revolutionary government. It was also identified that fear is a key reason for self-censorship in working journalists. It has been observed that censorship happens once journalists and media organizations are not administered by editorial apprehensions, but by fear only. And they censor content because of fear of different pressure groups and elites. Similarly, Murat conducted the study to find out the factors that lead a journalist to censor his content. The researchers use the method of interviews for data collection. The results find out that the fear of losing jobs and life threats are the major causes which force countless working journalists to do self-censorship and not report or write the facts, which they know and finds out. Most of the journalist faces the life threats while covering the mafias' news and if the news is against the interest of owners or advertiser then they will lose the job. So job security and life security are the most major factors of self-censorship in news media.

Correspondingly Nick (2015) conducted a study to explore the reasons for self-censorship in media. The results of the study find out that fear is the most common reason for self-censorship in media and if the working journalist is under any sort of fear or pressure that will ultimate lead him towards self-censorship which ultimately affects the role of media for the society. The Committee to Protect Journalists research explain that since 1992, more than twelve thousand journalists have been murdered, Iraq, Syria, the Philippines, Somalia, Algeria,

Pakistan, Russia, Colombia, India, and Brazil are the most dangerous countries for a journalist.

Correspondingly, international media observers consider Pakistan as the furthestmost unsafe country for journalists (Ricchiardi, 2012).

Hanan et al. (2016) conducted a study to examine the role of media in a democracy. The results of the study explain that media play important role in strengthening democracy but in Pakistan, the media is not free to perform its role. Pakistani journalist has to face many pressures regarding security, economic pressure and by unseen powers. Unfortunately, the media in Pakistan is always controlled by different regimes. All civilian and military bodies talk about freedom of media but they snub and censor the information for the sake of personal benefits. On the other hand, Siraj (2009) explains Authorities impose the role and regulation like the Press and Publication Ordinance (1963), Registration of Printing Presses, and Publication Ordinance (1988) at the name of National interest, religion, norm, and ethic. Media in Pakistan reborn with a new spirit and power in the time of General Pervaiz Musharraf. We can say that he is the founder of private electronic media in Pakistan. Parveen and Bhatti (2018) explain journalist in Pakistan has to face a lot of pressures from different dimensions, sometimes organization policy bound him, sometimes political pressure and nation interest restrict but some journalist censored themselves and control the information which called self-censorship. It is further explained censorship is generally used to influence and control the information against the state and counter the opposition narrative and transfer the limited information in society. The concept of censorship comes from Rome in 443BC. In 399 BC Socrates was the first victim of censorship. The concept of self-censorship drive from censorship, self-indicate the individual, and censorship relate to external power that suppresses the information and awareness. Censorship converts into self-censorship in different circumstances; it may be social, economic, and professional issues.

Gannon (2018) explains that different disciplines have different perception about the phenomenon of self-censorship, but we can define as the act of filtration and control oneself from reporting. Self-censorship relates to different socio-political-psychological factors. He further added that financial issues



that lead the journalist toward censorship and even self-censorship. The researcher explains that government does not hold a balance in giving adds other financial funding to the channel which is one of the cause of financial crisis for the journalist and media organizations and leads them toward censorship. The researcher further identifies that relying on government funding ad advertisement is not a healthy practice for freedom of speech because the government can pressure the media by using these financial threats to censor their content or even they can make the media their mouthpiece.

Adnan and Matiullah (2005) explore the condition of freedom of the press in Pakistan and researchers explores that during the era of Pervez Musharraf press freedom was damaged mostly in Pakistan. Both the mediums print as well as electronic, and there were certain cases reported for threatening and harassing the working journalists. Also, there are several cases of banning the media outlet and single journalist also. That era is very harmful to media and media workers and damages the press freedom of Pakistan very badly and the effects of that damage are very long.

Sturges (2015) explores the effects of the internet on freedom of speech and expression, researcher identify that with the availability of the internet every individual get a voice that can easily be reached to the masses, which is a good thing but it also has its negative impact because is reach and freedom affecting young generation negatively because they can easily get access to inappropriate content and harmful material. Which affects them badly and ultimately creates negative effects on society. Freedom of speech and access to information is important but it should have some limitation for the betterment of the younger generation to protect them from harmful content which can ruin their personality.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

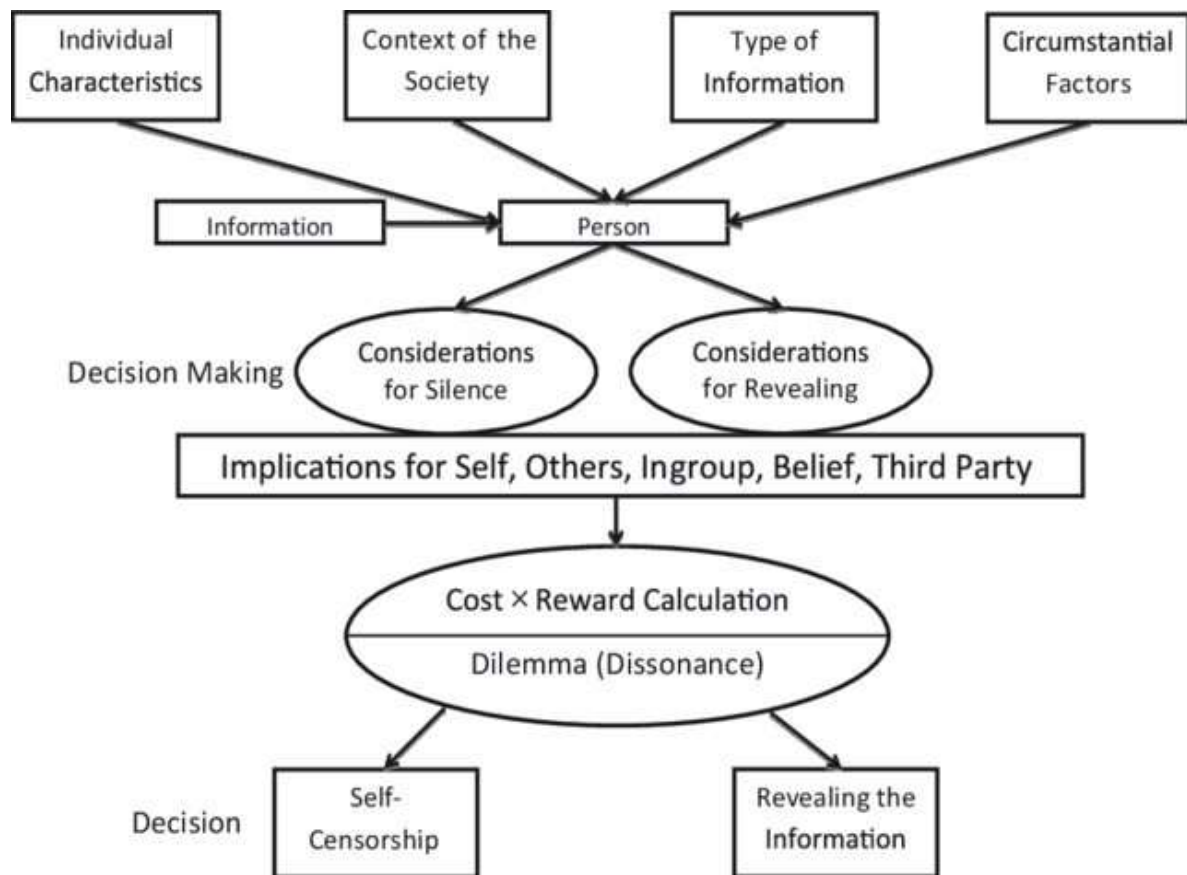
### **Social Responsibility Theory**

Social Responsibility Theory believes in the freedom of press but it suggests that the content must be observed by the journalists or a body consists of media experts. The same body must the authorized to introduce certain codes and principles to be followed by the media organizations. It should protect the interests of journalists but at the same time, the penalties should also be imposed on those media houses or media persons who violate the codes

of ethics. There are certain obligations on media towards the society. That is why, they need to apply self-censorship on certain content. The content has to be balanced and as per the norms of the society. Freedom of the press is essential but it should be regulated by its own body and the journalists must be answerable to their audience. In order to adhere to the principles of social responsibility theory, the journalists self-censor the content in order to take care of the national interests and the norms of the society.

**Bar-Tal Model for Self-Censorship**

The current study is based on a model of self-censorship proposed by Denial Bar-Tal. As per this model, an individual applies self-censorship on his content because of number of factors which can be the characteristics of the same person, context of the society and kind of available information. It is purely depends on that person either to reveal the same information as it is, amend it or hide it. The same individual has to censor the information where it is necessary (Ayoub, Muhammad, et al. 2021).



Bar-Tal-Model for self-censorship

## METHODOLOGY

This study is exploratory in nature; that is why, the mixed method approach is adopted in order to meet the objectives of the study. In depth interviews were conducted, because it is most convenient way to explore any phenomenon comprehensively. Total 20 journalists of Pakistan were interviewed who have their own YouTube channels and they are also working for mainstream news channels. After the process of interview, a questionnaire is designed to conduct the survey of journalists as well. For the survey, total 400 journalists were approached from major cities of Pakistan.

### **Thematic Analysis of Self-Censorship Factors**

The findings of the thematic analysis underscore the presence of several overarching themes and subcategories that play a role in self-censorship among Pakistan's YouTube journalists. These themes include; Fear, Pressure, Financial dependency on the source of funding, Advertiser's pressure, Political affiliation/pressure, religious pressure/requirements/ethnic affiliations, Lack of journalistic ethic, Regulatory constraint etc.

### **Qualitative Insights**

The collected qualitative data was valuable in as far as it offered detailed information concerning the views and experiences that the YouTube journalists had about self-censorship. From the interviews, there were several major issues and sub-issues identified, which points out the fact that the matter is not black and white.

### **Factors of Self-Censorship:**

**Fear:** Journalists showed a notable concern of being dismissed from their workplaces, apprehensions of being punished by the government as well as losing the audience on various social media platforms. This fear makes them restrict some news and information in order not to attract undesirable consequences.

**Pressure:** Cutting through all the reported interfaces are a variety of pressures ranging from information ministries, establishments, provincial and federal governments, and interpersonal contacts with officials. This pressure impels the journalists to follow specific stories and refrain from certain topics.

**Financial Dependence:** Advertisement revenue, certain political parties' viewership, and the property mafias have significant influences to self-censoring. Media practitioners self-censor to ensure that they attain financial stability and means of sustenance.

**Advertiser's Pressure:** The advertiser's control most of what can be aired or printed, there are otherwise no stories that are within the scope of these media. This pressure results in the journalists' giving scenes that are less likely to offend the advertisers to avoid losing them.

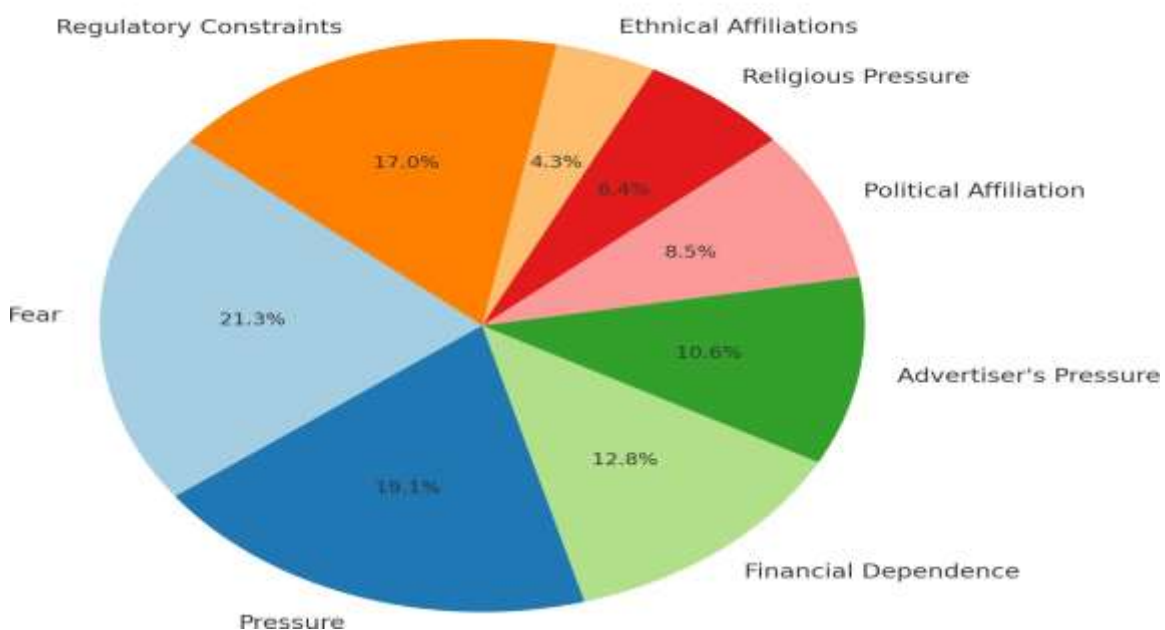
**Political and Religious Affiliation:** The authorities and religious organizations urge journalists to cooperate and stick to the agenda that is suitable for the supporters. This affiliation distorts the issues of impartiality in news reporting and the freedom of the media.

**Ethnic Affiliations:** Holding ethnic ties to the media shape the reporting system, thereby producing the biased coverage and self-censorship in order not trigger the feeling of any ethnic group.

**Lack of Journalistic Ethics:** The implication of not following the professional codes and regulation is the sharing of information that has not undergone any scrutiny and unethical practice in reporting.

**Regulatory Constraints:** Legal barriers inherent from official and unofficial rules from PEMRA, court orders, and other legal provisions limit what journalists can write making them practice self-censorship to avoid legal repercussions.

Proportion of Factors Contributing to Self-Censorship



## **Difference of Self-Censorship on YouTube and Mainstream Media**

The study exposes a key difference in self-censorship processes in the case of YouTube and mass media. These disparities depend on several factors like the legal requirements, company's guidelines, and the amount of control the editorial board has. The differences in age, gender, and ethnicity are described in the following sections, which contain a qualitative analysis of the study's findings.

### **YouTube**

#### **No Regulations**

The journalistic practitioners on YouTube work with little or no legal framework to guide them. They enjoy some flexibility in their operations since there are no laid down laws on what they are allowed to or not allowed to broadcast. However, there are drawbacks in this absence of regulation: various practices become irregular and can entail misleading information.

#### **Freedom of Reporting**

Lack of heavy rules and policies helps voracious journalists on YouTube to have as much freedom as they wish. They are free to discuss almost all the issues that they want without the danger of facing legal consequences or bans from the official organizations. In this freedom, though, lies the problem regarding the spreading of false or politically colored news.

#### **Personal Tilt or Bias**

Usually, when there are no stringent standard operating procedures that engage the channel editors, then the YouTube journalism practitioners present their biased presumption. This can lead to a violation of the concept of Media bias free because what a journalist produces may be tainted with their opinion or association.

#### **No Censorship**

While other media source face some or heavy restrictions, YouTubers remain relatively free from censorship. This makes them to open up debates on issues they consider contentious. However, it also implies that there is limited accountability of the content's veracity and distribution equity.

### **No Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)**

Since there are no standard operating procedures regarding the reporting practices, the reports turn out to be inconsistent. The covering journalists can have their own guidelines, thus there may be biases and difficulties in verifying the received information.

### **No Check & Balance**

Unlike traditional television, there is little censorship on what is posted on YouTube, thus this finding. This implies that there is no check and balance system, and this lead to increase spread age of fake news or rumors going round since there are little or no methods of checking the reliability of the reports.

### **No Fact-Checking**

Verification is many times either cramped or lacking in most of the YouTube journalism. This can cause distortion of facts since the journalists do not always have the time, money and or the jurisdiction to crosscheck on the details that they intend to air or publish.

### **No Monitoring**

A lack of oversight structures implies that there is no one to answer to whenever the content being produced is out of order. Hence, there are deviations in the quality of material that is produced mainly due to the fact that the Journalists are not as restricted as journalists in mainstream media.

### **No Regulatory Authority**

You tube journalists have no unique regulator such as PEMRA which is short for Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority. This increases the freedom of content production but also decreases the level of responsibility.

### **Too Careless**

Lack of regulation and Gore's freedom on YouTube Page results in careless reporting. Being concentered in delivering the news to the people, journalists sometimes give preference to the speed and provocation of the news rather than the quality of the work done.

### **Exaggerated Facts**

The freedom granted leads to fabrication or sensationalism since there is no follow-through to verify the content released. This could confuse the audiences and play the role of spreading the wrong information.

## **Mainstream Media**

### **Regulations**

Mainstream media consists of the desks that are regulated by the authorities such as PEMRA. Such regulations help to maintain legal and ethical standards of the publications in the journalism field.

### **Bound by the Policies**

Working in mainstream media journalists have certain policies that guide their operations. Some of these policies aim at giving direction on ethical reporting while others aim at maintaining the uniformity of the journalists.

### **Objectivity & Sensitivity**

Mainstream media organizations accustom professionals to the problem of objectivity and discretion. That is a smart move because journalists are professionals who are supposed to present facts in a rather neutral tone thus keeping the public's trust.

### **Censorship**

The information shared in formal news media can automatically go through censorship from such authorities or the editorial staff. However, this can sometimes restrict the freedom of the journalists, and at the same time, guarantee that the content is not unlawful or unethical.

### **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)**

Reporting processes in mainstream media has checked standard operating procedures which assist the reporters to report according to the set procedural measures. These procedures put measures that should be observed by journalists when carrying out their news gathering, Verification and reporting processes.

### **Check & Balance**

Various levels of supervision as well as editorial control and verification contribute to the high quality and reliable information to users. They also reduce the possibility of spreading wrong information since the power of making the final decision is well spread between the three arms of the government.

### **Fact-Checking**

Another thing that is evident is that, while sensationalism is present, rigorous fact-checking can be regarded as a norm in mainstream media. There are dedicated teams who ensure the accuracy of the information to be published; thus, increasing the credibility of the reports.

### **Monitoring**

Regular checks by the regional bodies and internal groups guarantee adherence to the relevant legislation and ethical norms. This monitoring assists in the prevention of unprofessionalism and/or corruption in journalism as everyone's actions are recorded and can always be reviewed.

### **Regulated by the Authority**

The main print and electronic media are controlled and supervised by authorities such as PEMRA, whereby media organizations are compelled to adhere to stipulated broadcasting codes. This regulation assists in keeping the public trust of the media.

### **Too Careful**

The principles and rules themselves allow the maintainers of mainstream media to be too wary, which could result in censorship. Newspapers may avoid provocative issues owing to possible regulatory or disciplinary action against the practitioners.

### **Strict to the Facts**

Most mainstream media houses are always accurate and reliable in their presentation of information. Journalist are expected to report information as they find it without omissions or misrepresentation, this is because the work of a journalist is to report the news.

## **Quantitative Data Analysis**

The quantitative study carried out to determine the factors that lead to self-censorship Pakistani YouTube journalists. The findings of the analysis relate to the main research questions and objectives of the study. In analyzing the quantitative data, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences- SPSS was used. The sample consisted of 400 journalists from five major cities in Pakistan: Well known cities of Pakistan are Lahore, Islamabad, Karachi, Quetta and Peshawar. These journalists are of different gender, different ages, different experiences in the traditional and the new journalism where YouTube plays a big role.



**Self-censorship Practices Scale**

**I consciously avoid to cover any topic due to fear of consequences.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	65	16.3	16.3	16.3
	Disagree	87	21.8	21.8	38.0
	Neutral	50	12.5	12.5	50.5
	Strongly Agree	103	25.8	25.8	76.3
	Strongly Disagree	95	23.8	23.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The survey shows that out of the 400 journalists, everyone has different views and perceptions towards the effects that fear has on their working editorial. First, the survey presents the participants' views on how fear influences their editorial decisions. An even quarter, roughly 25.8% very much agree to the statement that they deliberately avoid certain topics because of the consequences.. Conversely, 23.8% do not agree or somewhat disagree with the statement while 21.8% completely disagree with this implication showing that only half of the respondents allow the aspect of fear to dictate the topics they select. A smaller group, 12.5% are indifferent to this matter.

**I am afraid of government retaliation while covering any news story.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	67	16.8	16.8	16.8
	Disagree	97	24.3	24.3	41.0
	Neutral	49	12.3	12.3	53.3

Strongly Agree	97	24.3	24.3	77.5
Strongly Disagree	90	22.5	22.5	100.0
Total	400	100.	100.0	
		0		

When the 400 surveyed journalists were answering the statement “I am afraid of government retaliation while covering any news story” the press was divided in several opinions. About 24.3% of the respondents have marked the respectively corresponding option, while 16.8% agreed showing a high level of fear in reacting to the government’s actions. On the other side, 24.3% strongly disagree; 22. 5% said no to the statement which could infer that a proportion does not hold such a fear. A smaller segment, 12. 3%, remains neutral. This distribution presents a binomial view of journalists with many expressing a worry on state retribution in comparison to many who do not consider it as a threat to their practice.

**I avoid religious topics because of threats**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	85	21.3	21.3	21.3
	Disagree	65	16.3	16.3	37.5
	Neutral	65	16.3	16.3	53.8
	Strongly Agree	145	36.3	36.3	90.0
	Strongly Disagree	40	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.	100.0	
			0		

The information showing that journalists limit themselves from producing stories with religious themes because of threats indicates the level of risk viewed by 400 respondents. A

considerable portion, 36. 3% somewhat agree that they avoid religious topics because of threats, while 21. 3% agreeing. On the other hand, 16. 3% of the journalists are of the contrary opinion and an equal percentage of the journalist think that it is on the average.. A further 16. 3% are in the middle ground on this aspect. This distribution further emphasizes the fact that over fifty percent of the journalists who participated in the study reported practicing a certain level of fear which makes them avoid such vital aspects of news reporting as religion, thus underlining the sensitivity of such reporting in given contexts given threats.

**I often avoid controversial topics because of societal pressure.**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	91	22.8	22.8	22.8
	Disagree	63	15.8	15.8	38.5
	Neutral	55	13.8	13.8	52.3
	Strongly Agree	140	35.0	35.0	87.3
	Strongly Disagree	51	12.8	12.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The survey results regarding the avoidance of controversial topics due to societal pressure indicate a significant influence on the journalists' editorial choices. Among the 400 respondents, 35.0% strongly agree and 22.8% agree that they often avoid controversial topics because of societal pressure. Conversely, 15.8% disagree, and 12.8% strongly disagree, suggesting that a notable portion does not feel compelled to avoid such topics. Additionally, 13.8% remain neutral. This distribution proves that more than 50% of the journalists feel social

pressure that forces them to avoid sensitive issues The pressure of society and its norms is evidently seen to have a significant influence on the practices of journalists.

**I occasionally avoid covering sensitive issues to avoid backlash.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	90	22.5	22.5	22.5
	Disagree	69	17.3	17.3	39.8
	Neutral	34	8.5	8.5	48.3
	Strongly Agree	150	37.5	37.5	85.8
	Strongly Disagree	57	14.2	14.2	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	
			0		

The data on journalists' avoidance of sensitive issues to prevent backlash reveals notable trends among the 400 respondents. A significant portion, 37.5%, strongly agree that they occasionally avoid covering sensitive issues to avoid backlash, with an additional 22.5% agreeing. On the other hand, 17.3% disagree, and 14.2% strongly disagree with the statement, indicating that a notable minority does not let potential backlash deter them from covering sensitive issues. A smaller segment, 8.5%, remain neutral. This distribution shows that a greater proportion of the journalists feel the worry of backlash that leads them to shy away from certain themes which forces a subject of consideration of how external factors affect the editorial choices of the media workers.

**Social and cultural factors have influence on my content.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Valid	Agree	115	28.7	28.7	28.7
			7		
	Disagree	60	15.0	15.0	43.8
			0		
	Neutral	33	8.3	8.3	52.0
	Strongly Agree	107	26.8	26.8	78.8
			8		
Strongly Disagree	85	21.3	21.3	100.0	
		3			
Total	400	100.0	100.0		
			.0		

The survey results show that social and cultural factors significantly influence the content produced by journalists. Among the 400 respondents, 26.8% strongly agree and 28.7% agree that these factors affect their content. Conversely, 15.0% disagree, and 21.3% strongly disagree, indicating that a substantial minority does not feel influenced by social and cultural factors. A smaller portion, 8.3%, remain neutral on this issue. This distribution further emphasizes the fact that over 50 percent of the journalists admit social/cultural influences into their operation, which is not surprising given that their work lies within the context of the society.

**I prioritize freedom of expression over social pressure.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	85	21.3	21.3	21.3
			3		
	Disagree	81	20.3	20.3	41.5
			3		
	Neutral	37	9.3	9.3	50.7

Strongly Agree	102	25.5	25.5	76.3
Disagree	95	23.8	23.8	100.0
Total	400	100	100.0	

The responses to the statement "I prioritize freedom of expression over social pressure" show a diverse range of opinions among the 400 journalists surveyed. About 25.5% of the respondents strongly agree that they prioritize freedom of expression over social pressure, with an additional 21.3% agreeing. On the other hand, 23.8% strongly disagree, and 20.3% disagree, suggesting that a significant portion of the journalists feel that social pressure outweighs their commitment to freedom of expression. A smaller group, 9.3%, remains neutral. This distribution shows some duality of the respondents' views as to the influence of the external factors in their work: half of the respondents highlight the significant role of the freedom of expression, whereas the other half admit the impact of the social pressure on the work.

**Government regulations affect the content creation process.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	114	28.5	28.5	28.5
	Disagree	57	14.2	14.2	42.8
	Neutral	70	17.5	17.5	60.3
	Strongly Agree	124	31.0	31.0	91.3

Strongly Disagree	35	8.8	8.8	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The survey results indicate that government regulations have a significant impact on the content creation process among the 400 journalists surveyed. A substantial portion, 31.0%, strongly agree that government regulations affect their content creation, with an additional 28.5% agreeing. Conversely, 14.2% of the respondents disagree, and 8.8% strongly disagree with this statement, suggesting that a minority do not feel significantly impacted by government regulations. Additionally, 17.5% of the respondents remain neutral. This distribution indicates that the regulatory environment of the government impacts almost 60 percent of the 362 journalist in the sense that they admit that they have to consider government regulations in the way that they operate through the content that they produce.

**Social norms impact the content creation decisions**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	155	38.8	38.8	38.8
	Disagree	37	9.3	9.3	48.0
	Neutral	15	3.8	3.8	51.7
	Strongly Agree	138	34.5	34.5	86.3
	Strongly Disagree	55	13.8	13.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The survey results on the impact of social norms on content creation decisions among the 400 journalists reveal that these norms play a significant role. A large portion, 34.5%,

strongly agree that social norms influence their content creation decisions, with an additional 38.8% agreeing. Conversely, 9.3% of the respondents disagree, and 13.8% strongly disagree with this statement, indicating that a smaller minority do not feel affected by social norms. A smaller segment, 3.8%, remains neutral. From this distribution, it can be noted that practically more than 70% of the journalists admit the impact of social norms on the decisions made regarding their produced content, pointing to the central idea of how cultural influence tends to define journalism..

### Cultural sensitivities impact the content creation decisions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	161	40.3	40.3	40.3
	Disagree	39	9.8	9.8	50.0
	Neutral	17	4.3	4.3	54.3
	Strongly Agree	129	32.3	32.3	86.5
	Strongly Disagree	54	13.5	13.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The survey results on the impact of cultural sensitivities on content creation decisions among the 400 journalists show that these sensitivities have a considerable influence. A significant portion, 32.3%, strongly agree that cultural sensitivities impact their content creation decisions, with an additional 40.3% agreeing. On the other hand, 9.8% of the respondents disagree, and 13.5% strongly disagree with this statement, indicating that a smaller



minority do not feel influenced by cultural sensitivities. A small segment, 4. 3%, remains neutral. This distribution shows that more than two thirds i.e 70% of the journalist interviewed are aware of the effect of culture on their selection of content to produce, which underlines the relevance of the culture consideration and respect in the act of journalism.

### Fear of losing advertising revenue push me to self-censor the content

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	61	15.3	15.3	15.3
	Disagree	71	17.8	17.8	33.0
	Neutral	90	22.5	22.5	55.5
	Strongly Agree	95	23.8	23.8	79.3
	Strongly Disagree	83	20.8	20.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The survey results regarding the fear of losing advertising revenue and its influence on self-censorship among the 400 journalists indicate a significant concern. Approximately 23.8% of respondents strongly agree that the fear of losing advertising revenue pushes them to self-censor their content, with an additional 15.3% agreeing. Conversely, 17.8% disagree, and 20.8% strongly disagree with this statement, suggesting that a notable portion of journalists do not feel compelled to self-censor due to advertising concerns. A substantial segment, 22.5%, remains neutral. Using this distribution we can make the generalization that close to 40% of the journalists reported that they are likely to censor themselves owing to the desire to preserve the ad revenues, which clearly shows financial vulnerability in the media sector.

**Fear of losing job push me to self-censor the content**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	69	17.3	17.3	17.3
	Disagree	72	18.0	18.0	35.3
	Neutral	81	20.3	20.3	55.5
	Strongly Agree	93	23.3	23.3	78.8
	Strongly Disagree	85	21.3	21.3	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The survey results on the fear of losing their job and its impact on self-censorship among the 400 journalists reveal a considerable concern. About 23.3% of respondents strongly agree that the fear of losing their job pushes them to self-censor their content, with an additional 17.3% agreeing. On the other hand, 18.0% disagree, and 21.3% strongly disagree with this statement, indicating that a significant portion of journalists do not feel this pressure. A notable segment, 20.3%, remains neutral. This distribution also shows that close to four in every ten of the respondents admitted that they engage in self-censorship because of job insecurity, which underlines the effects of employment security/instability on the core principles of the journalist profession.

**Editorial policy of the organization plays the role in self-censoring the media content.**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	112	28.0	28.0	28.0
	Disagree	26	6.5	6.5	34.5
	Neutral	12	3.0	3.0	37.5
	Strongly Agree	217	54.3	54.3	91.8
	Strongly Disagree	33	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The survey results regarding the influence of organizational editorial policy on self-censorship among the 400 journalists indicate a significant impact. A majority, 54.3%, strongly agree that the editorial policy of their organization plays a role in self-censoring media content, with an additional 28.0% agreeing. Conversely, 6.5% of the respondents disagree, and 8.3% strongly disagree, suggesting that a small minority do not feel influenced by editorial policies. A smaller segment, 3.0%, remains neutral. This distribution shows that more than four out of five interviewed journalists indicated that their organizations' editorial policies significantly affect their work, proving that organizational policies indeed play a crucial part in defining the nature of journalistic work.

**Personal biases and beliefs play their role in self-censorship**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	81	20.3	20.3	20.3

Disagree	79	19.8	19.8	40.0
Neutral	55	13.8	13.8	53.8
Strongly Agree	130	32.5	32.5	86.3
Strongly Disagree	55	13.8	13.8	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The survey results on the influence of personal biases and beliefs on self-censorship among the 400 journalists reveal a significant impact. About 32.5% of respondents strongly agree that their personal biases and beliefs play a role in self-censorship, with an additional 20.3% agreeing. Conversely, 19.8% disagree, and 13.8% strongly disagree with this statement, indicating that a notable portion of journalists do not feel that personal biases and beliefs influence their self-censorship practices. A smaller segment, 13.8%, remains neutral. This distribution shows that more than half of the journalists with connections to their outlet acknowledge that they allow their prejudices and presuppositions to influence self-censorship, pointing to the multiplicity of the factors that determine media production.

**Political affiliation affects the media content.**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	111	27.8	27.8	27.8
	Disagree	49	12.3	12.3	40.0
	Neutral	73	18.3	18.3	58.3

Strongly Agree	106	26.5	26.5	84.8
Strongly Disagree	61	15.3	15.3	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The survey results on the impact of political affiliation on media content among the 400 journalists show a significant influence. About 26.5% of respondents strongly agree that political affiliation affects media content, with an additional 27.8% agreeing. Conversely, 12.3% disagree, and 15.3% strongly disagree with this statement, indicating that a notable portion of journalists do not feel their political affiliations significantly influence their content. Another 18.3% remain neutral. This distribution shows that more than half of the journalists agree that the content of their articles is influenced by political affiliation proving that political bias plays an important role in defining journalistic processes and media products.

**Difference of Self-censorship on Mainstream Media & YouTube Channels Scale**

**One should consume news content from mainstream media sources.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	113	28.2	28.2	28.2
	Disagree	51	12.8	12.8	41.0
	Neutral	34	8.5	8.5	49.5
	Strongly Agree	159	39.8	39.8	89.3
	Strongly Disagree	43	10.8	10.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The survey results on the preference for consuming news content from mainstream media sources show a diverse range of opinions among the 400 journalists surveyed. A significant portion, 39.8%, strongly agree that one should consume news from mainstream media sources, with an additional 28.2% agreeing. On the other hand, 12.8% disagree and 10.8% strongly disagree, indicating that a notable minority of journalists do not favor mainstream media as the primary source of news. Another 8.5% remain neutral on this issue. This distribution therefore implies that despite the nod women journalists have given mainstream media, there is a large population who either have something to gain from the other forms of media or who have qualms about the typical mainstream media in reporting news. Such diversity proves that there is no single approach to consuming news; one should use media sources with different beliefs to receive diverse information.

**One should consume news content from YouTube Channels**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	87	21.8	21.8	21.8
	Disagree	71	17.8	17.8	39.5
	Neutral	65	16.3	16.3	55.8
	Strongly Agree	104	26.0	26.0	81.8
	Strongly Disagree	73	18.3	18.3	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The survey results regarding the consumption of news content from YouTube channels reveal a wide range of opinions among the 400 journalists surveyed. A significant portion, 26.0%, strongly agree that one should consume news from YouTube channels, with an additional 21.8% agreeing. Conversely, 17.8% disagree and 18.3% strongly disagree, indicating that a substantial minority of journalists do not favor YouTube channels as a primary news source. Another 16.3% take the middle ground on this matter. From this distribution it can be deduced that there is population who endorses the use of YouTube as a news platform but there is also a population that does not. The opinion diversification is also a continuation of the discussion concerning the trustworthiness and usefulness of the information shared through the YouTube channel as compared to the traditional TV channel.

**There is censorship in mainstream media.**

		Freq	Per	Valid	Cumulati
		uency	cent	Percent	ve Percent
Valid	Agree	92	23.0	23.0	23.0
	Disagree	69	17.3	17.3	40.3
	Neutral	41	10.3	10.3	50.5
	Strongly Agree	137	34.3	34.3	84.8
	Strongly Disagree	61	15.3	15.3	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The survey results on the perception of censorship in mainstream media indicate varied opinions among the 400 journalists surveyed. A significant portion, 34.3%, strongly agree that there is censorship in mainstream media, with an additional 23.0% agreeing. Conversely,

17.3% disagree and 15.3% strongly disagree, suggesting that a notable minority of journalists do not perceive censorship as a significant issue in mainstream media. Another 10.3% remain neutral. This distribution shows that despite the recognized fact by the majority of journalists about censorship in mainstream media, a significant portion is either in the negative or in the category of those who do not know whether there is censorship or not. These opinions can be considered as mixed, which points to the multifaceted and controversial nature of censorship and its degree in mainstream media.

### There is censorship in YouTube Channels

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	25	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Disagree	65	16.3	16.3	22.5
	Neutral	12	3.0	3.0	25.5
	Strongly Agree	34	8.5	8.5	34.0
	Strongly Disagree	264	66.0	66.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	
			0		

The survey results on the perception of censorship in YouTube channels reveal a strong consensus among the 400 journalists surveyed. A large majority, 66.0%, strongly disagree that there is censorship on YouTube channels, with an additional 16.3% disagreeing. This indicates that over 80% of the respondents do not believe censorship is a significant issue on YouTube channels. Conversely, 8.5% strongly agree and 6.3% agree that there is censorship, while 3.0% remain neutral. Distribution also depicts that most of the journalists believe that YouTube channels are less censored than Main media probably due to the freedom the site has in posting content.



**While consuming the content of mainstream media one feels the need to change own opinions.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	95	23.8	23.8	23.8
	Disagree	72	18.0	18.0	41.8
	Neutral	34	8.5	8.5	50.2
	Strongly Agree	153	38.3	38.3	88.5
	Strongly Disagree	46	11.5	11.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The survey results on whether consuming mainstream media content makes individuals feel the need to change their own opinions show diverse responses among the 400 journalists surveyed. A significant portion, 38.3%, strongly agree that mainstream media content influences them to reconsider their opinions, with an additional 23.8% agreeing. Conversely, 18.0% disagree and 11.5% strongly disagree, indicating that a notable minority do not feel this influence. Another 8.5% remain neutral. This distribution means that although the majority of the journalists' samples accept the influence of the mainstream media on their opinions, the rest are still in disagree or the unsure category. These mixed attitudes are an allegory to the different levels of control that the external media can play on the community's perception.

**While consuming the content of YouTube Channels one feels the need to change own opinions.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	77	19.3	19.3	19.3
	Disagree	87	21.8	21.8	41.0

Neutral	55	13.8	13.8	54.8
Strongly Agree	86	21.5	21.5	76.3
Disagree	95	23.8	23.8	100.0
Total	400	100.	100.0	0

The survey results on whether consuming YouTube channel content influences individuals to change their opinions show a varied response among the 400 journalists surveyed. A significant portion, 21.5%, strongly agree that YouTube content makes them reconsider their opinions, with an additional 19.3% agreeing. Conversely, 21.8% disagree and 23.8% strongly disagree, indicating that a considerable number of journalists do not feel this influence. Another 13.8% remain neutral. This distribution indicates that though a considerable number of journalists keenly feels the opinions influenced by YouTube channels, there is an equally substantial population that does not, thus underlining the relative heterogeneity of the contents and their persuasiveness among the target audience.

**You enjoy more freedom to express your opinions on mainstream media platforms**

		Freq uency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulati ve Percent
Valid	Agree	45	11. 3	11.3	11.3
	Disagree	77	19. 3	19.3	30.5
	Neutral	70	17. 5	17.5	48.0

Strongly Agree	65	16.3	16.3	64.3
Disagree	143	35.8	35.8	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The survey results on the perceived freedom to express opinions on mainstream media platforms reveal varied perspectives among the 400 journalists surveyed. A significant portion, 35.8%, strongly disagree that they enjoy more freedom to express their opinions on mainstream media platforms, with an additional 19.3% disagreeing. Conversely, 16.3% strongly agree and 11.3% agree, suggesting that a smaller segment of journalists feel they do enjoy greater freedom on these platforms. Another 17.5% remain neutral. This distribution reveals the fact that, although a considerable number of journalists perceive the extent of freedom of expression at mainstream media, the majority of them do not concur with such opinion and are concerned with editorial control and possible censorship with mainstream media.

#### **You enjoy more freedom to express your opinions on YouTube Channels.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	87	21.8	21.8	21.8
Disagree	65	16.3	16.3	38.0
Neutral	55	13.8	13.8	51.7
Strongly Agree	118	29.5	29.5	81.3

Strongly Disagree	75	18.8	18.8	100.0
Total	400	100	100.0	.0

The survey results on the perceived freedom to express opinions on YouTube channels show diverse perspectives among the 400 journalists surveyed. A significant portion, 29.5%, strongly agree that they enjoy more freedom to express their opinions on YouTube channels, with an additional 21.8% agreeing. Conversely, 16.3% disagree and 18.8% strongly disagree, indicating that a notable minority do not feel they have more freedom on YouTube. Another 13.8% remain neutral. This distribution depicts that though the majority of the journalists affirm that YouTube channels provide more freedom than other media platforms, a substantial proportion of the journalists do not share a similar opinion which indicates the perceived and actual experience and impression of the editorial independence on Internet media as against traditional media.

**You trust mainstream media for accurate and unbiased information.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	73	18.3	18.3	18.3
	Disagree	56	14.0	14.0	32.3
	Neutral	60	15.0	15.0	47.3
	Strongly Agree	178	44.5	44.5	91.8
	Strongly Disagree	33	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	0

The survey results regarding trust in mainstream media for accurate and unbiased information reveal varied opinions among the 400 journalists surveyed. A substantial portion,

44.5%, strongly agree that they trust mainstream media for accurate and unbiased information, with an additional 18.3% agreeing. Conversely, 14.0% disagree and 8.3% strongly disagree, indicating that a significant minority do not trust mainstream media in this regard. Another 15.0% remain neutral. Such distribution indicates that despite the fact there remains a greater number of journalists who have faith in the Mainstream media credibility and balance, there is still room for doubt prevailing among the press population. Such mixed views portray the existing controversies and skepticism of bias and credibility in the mainstream media platforms.

**You trust YouTube channels for accurate and unbiased information.**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Agree	61	15.3	15.3	15.3
	Disagree	93	23.3	23.3	38.5
	Neutral	58	14.5	14.5	53.0
	Strongly Agree	76	19.0	19.0	72.0
	Strongly Disagree	112	28.0	28.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The survey results on trust in YouTube channels for accurate and unbiased information reveal diverse opinions among the 400 journalists surveyed. A notable portion, 19.0%, strongly agree that they trust YouTube channels for accurate and unbiased information, with an additional 15.3% agreeing. Conversely, 23.3% disagree and 28.0% strongly disagree, indicating that a significant portion of journalists do not trust YouTube channels for reliable information. Another 14.5% remain neutral. This distribution indicates that although there is a group of journalists that has trust in the credibility and fairness of the YouTube channels, there is much larger group that does not share such a trust due to the inconsistencies in quality of the content and effects of the biases inherent in the digital media.

**There should be censorship policies for mainstream media.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	89	22.3	22.3	22.3
	Disagree	51	12.8	12.8	35.0
	Neutral	74	18.5	18.5	53.5
	Strongly Agree	162	40.5	40.5	94.0
	Strongly Disagree	24	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The survey results on the necessity of censorship policies for mainstream media show diverse opinions among the 400 journalists surveyed. A significant portion, 40.5%, strongly agree that there should be censorship policies for mainstream media, with an additional 22.3% agreeing. Conversely, 12.8% disagree and 6.0% strongly disagree, indicating that a notable minority are against censorship policies. Another 18.5% remain neutral. Hence, this distribution demonstrates that although the majority of the journalists agree with the idea of censorship policies to the extent of Mainstream media, there is also a significant number of the non-agreeing or the non-committing segment of the journalists, which shows that there is peculiarity of opinion or rather a variation in the views regarding the regulation of media freedom.

**There should be censorship policies for YouTube Channels.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Valid		11	2.8	2.8
		8		
	Agree	78	19.5	22.3
	Disagree	43	10.8	33.0
	Neutral	58	14.5	47.5
	Strongly Agree	192	48.0	95.5
	Strongly Disagree	18	4.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	

The survey results on the necessity of censorship policies for YouTube channels reveal a strong consensus among the 400 journalists surveyed. A significant portion, 48.0%, strongly agree that there should be censorship policies for YouTube channels, with an additional 19.5% agreeing. Conversely, 10.8% disagree and 4.5% strongly disagree, indicating that a smaller minority are against censorship policies. Another 14.5% remain neutral. This distribution indicates that a majority of journalists do approve of the main government and its affiliated organizations' censorship policies on the outgoing YouTube channels for the need to uphold on quality content and curb on fake news and unconfirmed content and information, but there is more that comes with disagreeing or being indifferent as it shows the divergent views and stances on the principle of regulation of freedom of speech within the social media front.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The method of analyzing self-censored themes among Pakistani YouTube journalists discussed in thematic analysis. The findings illuminate that self-censorship is affected by a set of factors consistent with previous research in the areas of media censorship and journalism.

Two fascinating indicators – threat, political reprisal and loss of the audience drastically contribute to self-censorship. This supports within Shoemaker and Reese’s argument that the outside factors such as government and other institutions play a significant role in determining media messages (Shoemaker & Reese, 2013). Likewise, Waisbord found that many journalists self-censor preventive self-censorship because of the fear of governmental punishment for covering risky issues of storylines (Waisbord, 2000). The experiences of fear and pressure also exist in the study by George (2016) on political and societal influence on the media business.

Advertisement revenue dependence, which is a crucial source of funding for a media house, and political support pressures contribute greatly to self-censorship. This is backed by the Propaganda Model taught by Herman in conjunction with Chomsky This Paradigm holds that, due to financial concerns, media outlets will suppress ideas that may be threatening to financial interests (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Such advertisers’ interference is in line with Bagdikian’s arguments that media ownership and, especially, advertising revenues distort the journalistic process; thus, the journalists censor themselves to avoid offending their sources of income (Bagdikian, 2004). Also, in the media, McChesney (2008) explains that it is easy for commerce to influence the media production and content despite the repercussions on journalists’ freedom.

Thus, the influence exerted by different political and religious groups on journalistic neutrality is a well-known phenomenon. Norris also points out the effect of political biases on the media output (Norris, 2004), whereas Fox and Sahin describe the influence of religious censorship upon the journalists (Fox & Sahin, 2007). Censorship of reports as well as banning of stories and articles by official authorities also correspond to McQuail’s observation on how legal systems influence the practice of media (McQuail, 2010). These constraints result in what is known as auto purging as journalists work to steer clear of the grey area of the law. The observation on ethnic ties and failure to adhere to journalistic ethics on self-censorship is equally based on Altschull who observes that social relations and ethical failures are likely to breed bias and unverified reports (Altschull, 1995). More recently, Raza (2012) stress ethnocentric prejudice in media, which play a part in selective self-censoring procedures.

The paper reveals that working for YouTube, journalists do not have many rules throughout which personal interests and assumptions can influence the results and ethnic or



spectacular news are shared. This freedom however enables the media to cover issues that the traditional media does not report on. This comes as Pew Research Center has noted on the elements of liberty and risk of the digital journalism in regards to the claim and fake news, lack of verification. Further, applying what Deuze (2008) explained about the impact of digital media in journalism, there is less regulation and higher probability of misreporting. This is because mainstream media follows a set of legal rules and has to uphold some sort of journalistic standards making their reports more credible and factual though limited at times by censorship. This coincides with Cook's analysis on the legal frame work of the traditional media and its implications to the profession (Cook, 1998).

The study highlights the significance of the principles of journalistic professionalism, namely objectivity, factuality, fairness, and responsibility. These problems relate to Kovach and Rosenstiel's examination of the principles of journalism, as well as the ethical questions that journalists and editors face daily (Kovach, & Rosenstiel, 2014). The need to decide whether to promote one value over another or stick to editorial policies corresponds Plaisance's approach to media ethics and the impossibility of compromising decisions in journalism (Plaisance, 2009). There are some new ethical issues that appear in the context of digital journalism: the problem of Fake News and citizen journalism. This is further echoed by Singer et al., who speak on the ethical question relating to the new media especially digital and citizen journalism such as the authenticity of the information being posted as well as upholding of ethical standards (Singer et al., 2011). In addition, regarding ethics in digital media, Ward (2018) considers the ethical dilemmas in the field and stresses the necessity of a new ethical map for tackling the new unethical situations appearing in the online world.

Self-censorship stands to have severe consequences on the quality and accuracy of information relayed since some contents are excluded, Facts are either disguised or misrepresented, and the public is left with inadequate information. This corresponds with Schudson's examination of consequences of media practices on quality of information as demanding reliability and ethical standards of journalism (Schudson, 2001). These restrictions depict how different official regulations, unwanted pressure from different quarters other than PEMRA, the organization directives, or court orders have dissolved into self-censorship. This tally with the information given by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm regarding the authoritarian and regulatory press that bounds the freedom of journalistic profession. Based on the literature

review it is argued that a better understanding of the space occupied by media has to take into account both micro and macro factors, the latest being regulation and commercial pressure to be a more 'free and responsible press' (McQuail, 2010; Herman & Chomsky, 1988).

With help of analyzing the case of Pakistani You tube journalists and their self-censorship behaviors the further strength of the integration of the Social Responsibility Theory and the Bar-Tal Model can be distinguished. The stated theoretical perspectives are in support of the study findings revealing social, economic and personal concatenated interactions on self-censorship. In both theories, the concept of press freedom and professionalism is upheld as the news people should work freely while being responsible to society. This balance is evidenced by the study's findings that journalists engage in self-censorship to avoid legal consequences, conform to social expectations of professionalism, and preserve economic order. The changes and pressures done to journalists result in a reciprocal way between their duty performance together with self- preservation as well as that of their employers.

The research also highlights how the subject's actions are related to the economic and political situation, financial needs, affiliations, or perceived threats to their safety or social status. These findings are consistent with the proffered complexity of self-censorship in the Bar-Tal Model due to the numerous contextual influences that inform people's decisions. Self-censorship is a process that the Bar-Tal Model presents systematically controlled and a deliberately made choice, and this study supports this view. The practice indicates that journalists consciously decide what should be hidden or deleted in the course of their work since this decision is based on threats and pressure, it is not arbitrary.

One can conclude that the analysis of Pakistani YouTube journalists' self-censorship through the lenses of Social Responsibility Theory and the Bar-Tal Model assists in the understanding of this phenomenon. In this respect, the study's results indicate that offsetting regulation is required to adequately safeguard journalistic freedom and guarantee compliance with fundamental norms of acceptable behavior. To tackle the causes of self-censorship it should be noted that combating this issue, requires a multi-faceted analysis of journalist's economic, political and social realities, orienting toward a more enlightened audience.

This research also compares the degree to which the users of YouTube engage in self-censorship with the traditional mainstream media outlets. Nevertheless, this freedom helps

them report matters that may not be reported by traditional media organizations because of the regulatory climates. On the one hand, main stream media is restricted by regulations and policies and/or editorial policies which provide more of a factual and less sensational coverage; however, this comes at the cost of censorship. The comparison of these two-news media shows the freedom of media expression when one is not tightly regulated as compared to the other; while loose regulation from YouTube allows it to have more freedom in its media its information is not always accurate as that posted on CNN.

Another feature of the research is the distinction in the concepts of journalistic professional standards and the fundamentals of its ethical code stressing the characteristics of truthfulness, accuracy, independence, and accountability. The commercial pressures, political influence, technological advancement and social media are key conducive with the points discussed on the principles of journalism by Kovach and Rosenstiel. It is therefore required that ethical decisions be made as other challenges indicated by Plaisance and Ward. Every profession has its code of ethics and in light of the crucial role that media plays in society, it is evident that ethical standards as far as journalism is concerned are paramount importance if the public is to continue putting its trust on media institutions. This is the assumption of responsibilities and commitment to the principles of open environment, accountability and, above all, the commitment to search for the truth that takes into account even the pressure that may be applied outside the organization and the potential risks that may occur.

This study's finding is informative regarding the phenomenon of self-censorship among Pakistani YouTube journalists. This is why there is need to encourage and protect journalistic independence, integrity and professionalism. The implication of all the studies explored in this research is detrimental for media policy since it shows the lack of legal human rights reforms and coverage in using political measures for independent and impartial news outlets. With proper approach to the findings of the causes of self-censoring it is possible to work towards the improvement of the quality and accuracy of contents placed in the media hence improving the state of democracy. The prospects of journalism in Pakistan rest in the recognition of these challenges so that the journalists are able to report without prejudice and pressure.

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