

Investigative Reporting: A Comparative Analysis of Elite Urdu Press of Pakistan

A case of Daily Jang and Daily Express (January-April 2012)

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Abstract

Proper investigative reporting is very important factor in investigative journalism and is no doubt, the core element of the composition of journalism, it can help increase awareness among the masses about the ills of the society, and at the same time it can portray correct image of the nation to the outside world. Investigative reporting is given a great importance all over the world and most of the work in the field of journalism at present is related to the investigative reporting. All the major news organizations have given greater worth to this investigative reporting and in Pakistan this type of reporting, as it enhance the credibility of the news as well. The present article explores the comparative analysis of the Investigative Reporting by Elite Urdu Press of Pakistan through qualitative and quantitative research methods. Two well known and most circulated newspapers of Pakistan that are Daily Jang and Daily Express are used for the study. Content of Daily Jang and Daily Express was analyzed and structured interviews of investigative reporters from Pakistan were conducted to achieve the desired goals of the study. This is an interesting study and it reveals all the factors which have adverse effects on investigative journalism, i.e. lack of reporter's interest, security threats to the journalists, media commercialism, media corruption, media policy. This study also reveals how the work on investigative reporting is going on and how much worth is given to this type of reporting in Pakistan.

Key words: investigative reporting, investigative journalism, Urdu press.

Introduction

This article is a comparative analysis of Investigative Reporting by Elite Urdu Press of Pakistan through qualitative and quantitative research methods. Content of Daily Jang and Daily Express was analyzed and structured interviews with investigative reporters from Pakistan were conducted to achieve the desired goals of the study. Major findings of the study revealed that the Daily Jang gave more coverage to investigative news than the Daily Express. Pakistan is a poor society which results in a dearth of democracy, rule of law and justice. Access to information might be increased to bring the information revolution and reform in the society. Special legislation is required to handle this serious task. This study reveals all the factors which have adversely affect investigative journalism, i.e. lack of reporter's interest, security threats to the journalists, media commercialism, media corruption, media policy.

It is often said that journalism is the first rough draft of history; by contrast, investigative journalism provides the first rough draft of legislation (Burgh, 2005).

Investigative journalism is an undertaking with a declared mission whose fulfillment has impact on both policy makers and members of the public. By exposing budgetary waste, corruption, official scandal and institutional malfunction, it can be said to be directly linked to governance and is, therefore, relevant to reform. We may call it a journalism of advocacy which deliberately sets out to provoke public anger and outrage. This public outrage, in its turn, becomes the fuel which drives civil society's agitation for positive policy change (Kantumoya, 2004, p. 16).

According to the Fourth Estate Model of the press, the media should make the government accountable by publishing information about matters of public interest (Abdullah & Mitra 2007). From this perspective investigative journalism is one of the most important contributions the press makes to democracy. The publication of political and economic wrongdoings can lead to judicial investigations. Sometime government institutions fail to investigate matters of common interest until an investigative reporter shines a light on the issue.

Some notable examples of investigative journalism that changed the course of history are Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein's "Watergate scandal", Seymour Hirsh's stories on Vietnam War massacre.

Keeping in view the importance of investigative journalism as one tool to strengthen democracy and legislation in the society, this article shows the importance of investigative journalism in Pakistani press. The study was a comparative analysis of the investigative reporting by elite Urdu Press of Pakistan over a time period of four months (January 2012 – April 2012). The news items published within this time period by the two Urdu dailies Daily Jang and Daily Express were sufficient to evaluate the frequency and prominence of the news and the most discussed issues.

Moreover, the reason for selecting this time period is the following issues were raised in Pakistan i.e. the 18th amendment in 1973 Constitution of Pakistan, the extension of General Ashfaq Parvaiz Kiani, Swat operation, flooding, world aid for flood victims, rental power projects, nepotism, match fixing, petrol crisis, terrorism and bomb blasts, a sugar crisis and an electricity crisis in the country.

Objectives of the study:

The study has following objectives: (1) To evaluate to what degree the Urdu press of Pakistan gives importance to investigative reporting, (2) To know whether more investigative reporting resulted in a reduction of corruption, malfunctioning of state officials, and lawlessness in the society, (3) To recognize what type of resources the investigative journalists utilize to accomplish this dangerous occupation, (4) To give recommendations to enhance investigative journalism in Pakistani media.

Statement of the Problem:

The purpose of the study is to investigate the extent of coverage and the treatment given to the investigative news the Daily Jang and the Daily Express from January 1, 2012 to April 30, 2012 by assessing the relevant investigative news, sieved by purposive method of Sampling, through the Content Analysis methodology. The difference between the extent of coverage and treatment to the investigative news will also be measured between the selected newspapers. The resultant data will be presented in tables, charts and graphs to be interpreted as accordingly.

Literature Review

Different studies have been conducted on the watch dog role of media in the society to explore hidden biases and collective or individual wrongdoings i.e. media and public interest, media and social responsibility, media and government, media and access to information.

Denton & Thorson (2003) in online article *Civic Journalism: Does It Work?* state that the heart of American journalism, and the source of its First Amendment protection, is its role in democratic processes, particularly in politics, campaigns and elections. The dominant social responsibility theory of the press holds that news media enjoys freedom and some privilege in the United States so that they can carry out essential functions in our society.

Pilger (2005) in *Tell Me No Lies* relates that there are two types of the watch dogs, the real and the so-called. The latter are those who play into the hands of the government. The real journalists face the cumbersome circumstances as a result of the tasks they perform.

According to Forbes (2005) the term investigative journalism is usually used to cover reporting activities at vast level i.e. from simple news-based enquiries to secret operations. He says that to define the investigative journalism or investigative reporting, a distinction is occasionally made between the general investigations in different areas like consumer issues. It is also considered that investigative journalism involves in depth reporting in the public interest, while rest of the people regard the concept of investigative journalism as a myth that is an extension of what good journalism should be in reality.

Forbes (2005) comments that investigative journalism requires more than asking questions, recording, and seeking out sources. The organization is involved in this particular job through money, time effort. The newspaper has to show patience for weeks or months in order to get a story filed by the investigative journalist.

Smith (1988) carefully analyzes libertarian press theory and practice in the context of republican ideology and Enlightenment thought--paying particular attention to the cases of Benjamin Franklin and his relatives and associates in the printing business--and concludes that the generation that produced the First Amendment believed that government should not be trusted and that the press needed the broadest possible protection in order to serve as a check on the misuse of power.

Forbes (2005) cites the executive director of the World Press Institute, John Ullmann gives two historic examples of investigative reporting and differentiates. The Pentagon papers published by the New York Times, reveal the disturbing papers of the American government during the Vietnam War. The publishing of the papers

lead to a battle with the Supreme Court when the US government tried to ban their publication. The other example is the Water gate scandal that forced President Richard Nixon to leave the White House.

James Madison in his Bill of Rights to the Continental Congress in 1791 argued that, “The people shall not be deprived or abridged of their right to speak, to write, or to publish their sentiments; and the freedom of the press, as one of the greatest bulwarks of liberty, shall be inviolable” (Madison 1999, p.442).

Smith in her article *Investigative Journalism: A History*, writes that investigative journalists investigate and expose unethical, immoral and illegal behavior by individuals, business men and government agencies. This work can be complicated, time-consuming and expensive. As a skill it can strip away of a deceptive leader and expose flaws in conventional wisdom. If investigative journalism is done right, it can pose a huge threat to any powerful figure who seeks to manipulate a population.

Studies have shown that the press’ adherence to these functions has often correlated with public opinion about the press’ performance (Good, 1989). During the era of “yellow journalism,” for example, when many press organizations focused on sensationalism and exploitation and therefore did not strive to accurately inform the public and serve as a forum for free exchange of ideas, public faith in the press dramatically decreased (Good, 1989). In the early 1980s, public confidence in the press once a gain plummeted that the press strayed from its original functions. Problems with inaccuracy, a decrease in media outlets, and a thirst for sensationalism impaired the press’ ability to provide correct information and provide public forum for exchange of ideas (McKenna 1982, Good 1989, West 2001). Since the 1980s, studies have shown that press credibility has been at an all time low (Urban, 1999). Representations of journalists and the press in popular culture have generally followed this historical pattern of public confidence in the press.

Palmerton & Wilkins (2002) state that according to Thomas Patterson and Lee Wilkins in *Media Ethics* 2002, media organizations have become so powerful; they constitute their own ruling class within a democratic society. According to Protess (1991) investigative journalists are reformers not revolutionaries. They seek to improve the American system by pointing out its shortcomings rather than advocating its oust. By spotlighting specific abuses of particular policies or programs, the investigative reporter provides policy makers with an opportunity to take remedial measures without altering the division of power.

Baker (2002) remarks that this trend of investigative journalism as corporate media interests are tied with government affairs. The journalists also become closer to government officials in order to guarantee inside sources.

Good (1989) says that studies show that during the era of yellow journalism when many press organizations focused on sensationalisms and exploitation the public faith in the press decreased dramatically. By serving as a forum for public opinion, the press plays an important role in maintaining democracy (McKenna 1982).

Skjerdal (2001) intended to study the Normative Theories of the press in post apartheid South Africa in his research regarding the ‘press as watchdogs’ by applying the method of discourse analysis to analyze 102

newspaper articles from 1996-99. He stated that the press and the government have colliding interests in a democratic society.

The same was said by Ben Bradlee, editor of the Washington Post at the time of the Watergate scandal that the press and government will never be at good terms with each other (Cited in Streek, 1996, p. 6). Sehroo (2009) states that the social responsibility theory is an outgrowth of the libertarian theory. However, social responsibility goes beyond "objective" reporting to "interpretive" reporting.

In this same light, Siebert, Peterson and Schramm warn: the power and near monopoly position of the media impose on them an obligation to be socially responsible, to see that all sides are fairly presented and that the public has enough information to decide; and that if the media do not take on themselves such responsibility it may be necessary for some other agency of the public to enforce it (cited in Sehroo, 2009).

Research Questions:

Q.1) Which of the newspapers published more investigative reports Daily Jang or Daily Express?

Q.2) Which newspaper gave more prominence to the investigative reports Daily Jang or Daily Express?

Q. 3) Which of the issues (A, B, C or D) was most discussed by Daily Jang or Daily Express in the selected period of time January-April 2012?

Hypotheses:

H₁ The Daily Jang gives more coverage to the investigative news items than the Daily Express.

H₂ Most of the investigative news published by the selected newspapers (The Daily Jang and The Daily Express) is related to politics.

Theoretical Framework

The research topic revolves around the following theoretical framework:

Social Responsibility Theory

The social responsibility theory is an outgrowth of the libertarian theory. However, social responsibility goes beyond "objective" reporting to "interpretive" reporting. A truthful, complete account of the news is not necessarily enough today, notes the Commission on the Freedom of the Press: "It is no longer enough to report the *fact* truthfully. It is now necessary to report *the truth about the fact.*" Today's complex world often necessitates analysis, explanation, and interpretation.

As the Commission stated in 1940: The emerging theory does not deny the rationality of man, although it puts far less confidence in it than the libertarian theory, but it does seem to deny that man is innately motivated to search for truth and to accept it as his guide. Under the social responsibility theory, man is viewed not so much irrational as lethargic. He is capable of using his reason but he is loath to do so.

If man is to remain free, he must live by reason instead of passively accepting what he sees, hears, and feels. Therefore, the more alert elements of the community must goad him into the exercise of his reason. Without such goading man is not likely to be moved to seek truth. The languor which keeps him from using his gift of reason extends to all public discussion. Man's aim is not to find truth but to satisfy his immediate needs and desires.

It is the press, therefore, that must be the "more alert element" and keep the public informed, for an informed populace is the cornerstone of democracy. Today's large media conglomerates, however, may not function naturally as a public forum, where all ideas are shared and available. "The owners and managers of the press determine which persons, which facts, which versions of these facts, shall reach the public," writes the Commission.

Siebert, Peterson and Schramm also note that "freedom of expression under the social responsibility theory is not an absolute right, as under pure libertarian theory....One's right to free expression must be balanced against the private rights of others and against vital social interests." For example, it likely would not be socially responsible to report how the terrorist, using some new method, evaded security measures and smuggled a bomb onto a commercial airline.

Methodology and Data Analysis

The employed methodology for this paper is content analysis. Sarantakos (1998) describe content analysis "As a method of the social research, content analysis is a documentary method that aims at both qualitative and quantitative analysis of the content".

Universe: The universe includes all the editorials of the selected Urdu newspapers i.e. The Daily Jang and the Daily Express. The editorials which are related to the above mentioned A, B, C and D categories with reference Investigative Reporting during the selected time period.

Sampling: In this research the entire universe (The editorials of The Daily Jang and the Daily Express) is considered as sample as the editorials of the selected newspapers are to be analysed from January to April 2012.

Unit of Analysis: The unit of analysis in this study is considered to be the words, sentences, paragraphs or even an entire editorial, which indicate the presence of one of the categories, published in the selected Urdu newspapers.

Time Period: All the editorials of the two newspapers The Daily Jang and the Daily Express from January to April 2012 are included for content analysis in this study.

Categories of Analysis: The categories are considered as the heart of the content analysis. In content analysis collection of the data becomes possible and easy through the construction of the categories. A category in content analysis is a set of criteria or a measure, which are integrated round a theme or a value (Sarantakos, 1998: 281).

Categorization:

Four categories are designed for the content analysis of this study. The categories A, B, C and D represent the issues as follows;

- A. The investigative news covering anything about politics.
- B. The investigative news involving economics.
- C. The investigative news involving any social issue.
- D. Others

Urdu Press:

The national language of Pakistan is Urdu and mostly people speak, read and write in this language in Pakistan so the two leading Urdu Newspapers Daily Jang and the Daily Express are selected for this study.

Daily Jang

The Daily Jang is an oldest Urdu newspaper in Pakistan with the publications since 1939. The Daily Jang has a circulation of over 800,000 copies per day.

The Daily Express

The Daily Express is also one of the most circulated Urdu newspaper in Pakistan. It was founded in 1998.

Research Findings

Table No. 1

TOTAL NUMBER OF INVESTIGATIVE NEWS PUBLISHED IN THE DAILY JANG AND THE DAILY EXPRESS FROM JANUARY TO APRIL 2012.

Name of newspaper	No. of news items published	Percentage
Daily Jang	244	66.84%
Daily Express	121	33.15%
Total	365	100%

Interpretation

The above Table indicates that a total of 365 news items were published in both newspapers during the months of January-April 2012. The Daily Jang published 244 investigative news items from January to April 2012 and thus its percentage of publishing investigative news stories is 66.84%. The Daily Express published 121 investigative news items and thus has percentage of 33.15%.

Table No.2

CATEGORY DISTRIBUTION OF THE INVESTIGATIVE NEWS ITEMS PUBLISHED IN THE DAILY JANG FROM JANUARY TO APRIL 2012

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
A	93	38.11%
B	59	24.18%
C	60	24.54%
D	32	13.11%
TOTAL	244	100%

Interpretation

The Table 2 shows that the Daily Jang has published 38.11% investigative news items regarding politics, 24.18% regarding economics, 24.54% regarding other social issues and 13.11% other investigative news items were from January to April 2012.

Table No.2 a

CATEGORY DISTRIBUTION OF THE INVESTIGATIVE NEWS ITEMS PUBLISHED IN THE DAILY EXPRESS FROM JANUARY TO APRIL 2012

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
A	5	4.13%
B	49	40.49%
C	49	40.49%
D	18	14.87%
TOTAL	121	100%

Interpretation

The Table 2a shows that the Daily Express has published 4.13% investigative news items regarding politics, 40.49% regarding economics, 40.49% regarding other social issues and 14.87% other investigative stories from January to April 2012.

Table No.3

MONTHLY COMPARATIVE TABLE OF FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE OF CATEGORIES A, B, C, D PUBLISHED IN DAILY JANG (January to April 2012).

Categories	January	February	March	April	Categories	Total	Percentage
A	23	28	24	18	A	93	38.11%
B	8	22	19	10	B	59	24.18%
C	11	18	19	12	C	60	24.59%
D	6	13	7	6	D	32	13.11%
Total	48	81	69	46	Total	244	100%

Interpretation

Table No. 3 represents that Daily Jang published 244 news items on all the categories A, B, C and D in the selected months (January to April 2012). Category A remained on top with 38.11%. Category C and B got second and third positions with 24.59% and 24.18% coverage respectively.

Table No.3 a

MONTHLY COMPARATIVE TABLE OF FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE OF CATEGORIES A, B, C, D PUBLISHED IN DAILY EXPRESS (January to April 2012).

Categories	January	February	March	April	Total	Percentage
A	2	2	0	1	5	4.13%
B	17	12	7	13	49	40.49%
C	23	8	11	7	49	40.49%
D	6	3	5	4	18	14.87%
Total	48	25	23	25	121	100%

Interpretation

Table No. 3a illustrates that Daily Express published 121 news items on all the categories A.B.C.D in the selected months (January-April, 2012). Category B and C remained on top with 40.49% coverage. Category A was given 4.13% coverage only.

Discussion and Analysis

The findings of this research clearly show that the Daily Jang published more investigative news items than that of the Daily Express. So the first hypothesis of this research holds well after seeing the findings and frequency of the news items. The Daily Jang published 244 investigative stories in its editions while the Daily Express published 121 investigative stories.

Similarly, the finding of the study shows that the Daily Jang published most of the investigative stories related to politics 38.11%. So the second hypothesis holds well when we talk about the Daily Jang. But the Daily Express published few political investigative stories. The Daily Express published more investigative stories related to Social issues and economics and its percentage is 40.49% each.

The analysis of the current study clearly marks that the Pakistani print media has given total 365 investigative news items in the time span of four months.

All the respondents were of the view that the access to the information is very limited in Pakistan. Pakistan is an information poor society and faces a dearth of democracy, rule of law and justice. Special legislation is required to handle this task. Moreover, the respondents highlighted all the factors which have adverse effects on investigative journalism.

The findings based answers to the research questions are given below:

Q No. (1) Which of the newspapers published more investigative reports Daily Jang or Daily Express?

The results show that Daily Jang published more investigative news items than the Daily Express in the selected months (January-April) of 2012. The data show that Daily Jang published 244 investigative news items on all the issues (A, B, C, & D). While, the Express published 121 investigative news items on all the selected issues (A, B, C, & D).

Q No. (2) Which newspaper gave more prominence to the investigative reports Daily Jang or Daily Express?

The results show that Daily Jang gave more prominence to the investigative reports than Daily Express. The data show that out of 365 news items published on front and back of both newspapers in the selected months (January-April) of 2012, the Daily Jang published 244 investigative news items on all the issues (A, B, C, & D). Whereas, Daily Express published 121 investigative news items on all the selected issues (A, B, C, & D).

Q No. (3) Which of the issues (A, B, C or D) was most discussed by Daily Jang or Daily Express in the selected period of time January-April 2012?

The results show that Daily Jang published more news items on category A (political investigative news) than Daily Express in the selected months (January-April 2012). The data show Category (A) was most discussed by Daily Jang in the said period of time as The Daily Jang published 93 (38.11%) out of total 244 investigative news items on category (A) whereas, Daily Express gave more coverage to categories B and C by publishing 49 news items (40.49%) each while category A is least discussed .There are only 5 news items (4.13%) on category (A).

Hypotheses:

H₁ The Daily Jang gives more coverage to the investigative news items than that of the Daily Express.

Findings prove that Daily Jang published more investigative reports (244 news items) than Daily Express (121 news items).

H₂ Most of the investigative news published by the Daily Jang is related to politics.

The data obtained by the researcher show that Category (A) was most discussed by Daily Jang in the said period of time as Daily Jang published 93 (38.11%) out of total 244 investigative news items on category (A).

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