



Dear Journalists,

Many thanks for your interest in the wellbeing study for Pakistani media professionals. This information brief will tell you about the aims of the study, intended participants and content of the survey. We will also inform you about the procedure, protection of your privacy and how to get more information on this study or your participation.

Aim

Pakistani media professionals face a myriad of challenges, as you are of course well aware. Many of these, such as threats and traumatic events that they cover, have received attention from publishers and media watchdogs. But there has been little consideration for the psychological effects of these challenges, such as feelings of distress. Such feelings are normal responses to abnormal situations, like having to fear threats very often. These feelings can affect your wellbeing as well as how you function. Some of these effects are easily recognizable, such as difficulties falling asleep. Others may be harder to notice, such as feelings of emotional numbness, especially if they have been felt for a long time.

Media professionals cannot always avoid threats or having to report on traumatic events. They simply come with the job. But these experiences do make them more likely to feel psychological distress compared to the general population, previous research has shown. However, working circumstances, such as how you get along with your colleagues, editor or subordinates, may again alleviate some of the distress. Unfortunately, there is no reliable information on the situation of Pakistani media professionals yet.

This study therefore aims to find out: 1) How many Pakistani media professionals face threats and potentially traumatic events, 2) how these affect their psychological wellbeing, and 3) which conditions may help them to alleviate (some of) the associated psychological distress.

Expected results

This study will result in an understanding of the exposure to threats and potentially traumatic events that Pakistani media professionals experience. It will also show to what extent associated psychological distress and lowered wellbeing affect them. And it will highlight which conditions may help them to deal with these.

The findings of this study may raise awareness about their situation in health care professionals, employers, and others responsible for their situation. They may also point to measures that employers or managers can take to improve their working conditions, which in



turn may advance their psychological wellbeing. This could for instance be training, job rotation, shared responsibilities or team support.

We will share the results through reports in the general media and scientific journals. Also, if in the survey you indicate that you want to receive the results and you have given your email address, we will email you a report. Once published, you may also download the report from the website of the National Institute of Psychology in Islamabad, <http://nip.edu.pk>.

We could also write reports based on the combined results of media professionals from one particular organization. Employers or the management of that organization may then receive specific knowledge of the needs of their employees. This is only possible if at least two thirds of the media professionals of that organization participate in the survey. And of course we need the name of the organization they work for. If you believe, like us, you may benefit from a report on the level of your organization, you can indicate this in the survey.

There is one last thing: Previous international studies on media professionals have largely focussed on foreign war correspondents and journalists facing threats from one corner. This is the first study that is being carried out amongst media professionals that face threats from multiple corners and enduring stress due to continuous uncertainty. The findings may therefore also benefit media professionals in other countries facing similar situations.

Participants

This survey is for media professionals who collect, record or present stories or parts of stories, either in print or electronically, through media such as TV, radio or internet. This includes, but is not limited to, journalists, editors, anchors and camera(wo)men. This questionnaire is not geared towards supporting professionals, such as media van drivers and technical staff, although we of course do recognize that they too may experience heightened risks.

Procedure and privacy

The procedure is simple. We aim to reach out to all Pakistani media professionals in Pakistan either through email or by having our research assistants visit press clubs, newsrooms and media houses. We can draw sturdier conclusions if more media professionals participate. We can then also make stronger recommendations aimed at improving their working situation.



Media professionals can participate online. The questionnaire is made compatible for mobile phones. You need an invitation email with a link to the survey. If you haven't received an invitation, but would like to, please contact Altaf Khan at mediaprofessionalsstudy@gmail.com. He will then send an invitation to you.

Before you participate we will ask for your consent indicating that you agree to take part in this study. You may click on the button 'Yes, I want to participate'.

Please fill in the questionnaire to the best of your knowledge and without taking the advice of others. Your answers in the online questionnaire will be saved automatically, so you can take a break at any time. All information will be stored securely, anonymously and with appropriate privacy protection. No single bit of information on or from participants will be shared with any other individual or organization. You may also withdraw at any point. The survey will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Content

This survey comprises of three sections. They contain open and closed questions, as well as statements that you can rate. An example of such a statement is: 'I love my job'. The rating options are: very untrue, a little bit untrue, neutral, a little bit true or very true.

The first section covers your demographic and professional background with questions such as 'What is your designation?'. We also ask for your opinion on for instance work-related factors that help you to function well as a media person. In addition, we would like to know more about your reporting experiences. We ask, for instance, if you have ever covered criminal or illegal activities. We are furthermore interested in the working relationship with your editor, or if you are an editor, with your management. This section concludes with questions about threats you may have experienced. An example of such question is: 'Have you ever experienced verbal face-to-face aggression?'

In the second section we ask you to rate psychological and physical symptoms that media professionals sometimes experience when they have stressful on the job experiences. One of the symptoms you may rate is: 'I found it difficult to relax'.

The final section looks at how you may feel about being a media professional. One of the statements we ask you to rate is: 'I feel excited when I work on my stories.' This section also contains questions on your medical background. And we ask if you are interested in psychological support or training, such as hostile environment training.

Approval



Researchers from the National Institute of Psychology in Islamabad and the Competence and Trauma Centre for Journalists in Peshawar are undertaking this study. Researchers from the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam (Netherlands) are supporting them. They obtained the consent of the research committee of the National Institute of Psychology.

Further information

If you have any questions about this study or your participation in this survey, please contact Dr. Jamil Malik, Assistant Professor of National Institute of Psychology 03009688087 or Suzanna Koster at +31620239978 or email at mediaprofessionalsstudy@gmail.com.

Again, many thanks for your interest in this study.

Regards,

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