Impact of Sensationalized Media Coverage and Perception on Current Events in Myanmar
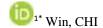
Win, CHI

Impact of Sensationalized Media Coverage and Perception on Current Events in Myanmar

1* Win, CHI

Department of Sociology Anthropology

University of Yangon, Myanmar

Corresponding Author Email: journals@iprjb.org

Abstract

Purpose: The study sought to analyze the impacts of sensationalized media coverage and perception on current events in Myanmar

Methodology: The study adopted a desktop methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

Findings: The results show that showed that sensationalist television news tends to be more negatively evaluated than non-sensationalist news. In addition, critical views on arousing content appeared to be particularly visible among young and middle-aged adults. These findings suggest that the rise of sensationalist news could be an explanation of the declining trust in news media that is witnessed in a number of countries

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The media logic theory and the agenda setting theory may be used to anchor future studies in the information sector. The study results will also benefit other stakeholders such as the policy makers as well as researchers and scholars from different parts of the world. The top management of media companies industries in the country will also use the study findings to improve social media coverage performance in all their activities and programs. The study recommends that the adoption of effective social protection development policies in the media will help to improve efficiency in their major operations and activities.

Keywords: *Sensationalized, Media Coverage, Perception, Current events.*

INTRODUCTION

Sensationalism is a tactic used in an attempt to gain an audience's attention. Media outlets resort to the use of shocking words, exaggeration and sometimes blatant lies. They do this to boost public interest or excitement, and it's becoming more common every year. Traditionally, sensationalism in the news was conceived of mainly in terms of story content. Stories about topics such as crime, violence, natural disasters, accidents, and fires were considered as sensational (Boukes,2015). In the early 1800s, newspapers and magazines were luxuries. Professionally produced news had a small audience, and its content was tailored to the rich and powerful. Benjamin Day's New York City newspaper The Sun turned all of that on its head in 1833.Recent advancements in technology allowed him to use what later became known as the "Penny Press" to print newspapers faster for less money. Others soon caught on, and suddenly the streets were flooded with affordable newspapers. Benjamin Day needed to distinguish *The Sun* from other papers and appeal to new audiences (Walters,2016). He began publishing attention-grabbing stories with violent crime headlines, city scandals, and, in one 1834 edition, a claim about life being found on the moon. Over 100 years later, the news environment experienced another major shake-up. Television became a staple of American life, and the news came with it. For a while, famous news anchors shared well-researched stories for about an hour each night. But in 1980, CNN introduced the very first 24/7 news cycle.

Suddenly, cable news had to fill time slots throughout the day and keep viewers' attention as long as possible. They did this largely because more viewers meant more money to make on advertisements. Over two-thirds of domestic news revenue comes from ads. As a result, news stations are less interested in in-depth, informative reporting and favor whatever seems flashiest to keep viewers' attention (Eagle,2018). The trend of sensationalism shows no signs of slowing down. The internet has revolutionized news into a modern-day Penny Press. Anyone with a computer or smartphone can now publish content and compete for viewers, making the news environment more crowded than ever. The rise of the internet and social media also highlights one of the central issues in modern news its very business model encourages more sensationalism (Bas,2015). News today just needs to bring as many viewers in as possible. The quality and truth of the story don't matter because as long as it generates viewers, it generates ad revenues. Clicks are the main priority, and sensationalism is the fastest way to generate them. sensationalism is used by journalists to attract readers to their articles. One of the biggest uses of sensationalism is headlines. When you are looking at a magazine or website and see those big bolded words, they attract your attention(Ge,2016). News and media outlets know that headlines attract readers, so they use this to their advantage.

Often times headlines feature an over-exaggerated display of events. With the right wording, the most mundane thing can be blown out of proportion. Fear-mongering is the act of intentionally playing with the fears of others to arouse fear or anger another sensationalist tactic. Media outlets will prey on the fears of others in order for them to notice their content. Reports encompassing instances of self-hurt require touchy dynamic abilities for the media experts who cover constant occasions(Brown,2018). Self-destruction is an appallingly intricate issue that can be considered with mastery from well-being and sociology viewpoints. Media experts endeavor to report by making it known, regardless of whether the circumstance of the news gathering process interferes

with a family's requirement for security. Journalists should recount an exhaustive story looking at antecedents to the self-destruction and advance a comprehension of emotional wellness. Self-destructive occasions including people of note will stand out as truly newsworthy while VIP suicides will quite often empower impersonation or the self-destruction disease thought more frequently than less known casualties. Columnist should stay aware that their work can profoundly influence their crowd. Because of restrictions of customary news sources, for example, broadcast time and print space, a writer might not be able to give to the public an antecedent that might have led to the misfortune(Bacazo,2019). Around 60% of self-destruction news includes a demonstration of quick antecedent to the deadly activity, though the media tends not to do an exhaustive appraisal of long-term factors, for example, psychological wellness gives us, what might have added to the self-destruction, for example, discouragement or other long haul difficulties.

The story without sufficient inclusion basically turns into a news occasion rather than an instructive chance to help the individuals who might battle. Murder and Self-destruction stories might contain a wrongdoing of enthusiasm and it is fundamental for writers to get objectivity while giving an account of complicated and touchy issues(Ash,2021). Correspondents recognize that accounts incorporating abusive behavior at home closure in murder or self-destruction are dealt with seem to have bigger cultural ramification. sensationalism also raises concerns in the ethical conflicts it has with a journalist's code of honor. The over-exaggerated nature conflicts with a journalist's duty to be honest and fair. As a journalist, it is their duty to deliver facts to the public and not be deceptive with their stories. Sensationalism violates a lot of ethical guidelines in favor of these tactics (Diaz,2015). Instances like this are sensationalist, from misleading headlines to spreading harmful information. Today's environment, where information is constantly being sensationalized and aired in a way that benefits the speaker or broadcaster, it can be difficult to determine how much impact such coverage has on people's perception of current events. This article will explore how sensationalized media coverage has impacted people's understanding of the Rohingya refugee crisis in Myanmar and how this could have a negative effect on public opinion around the world. In the year 2012 was remarkable transition period for Myanmar (Bruten,2015). This country, which is now praised by the international community for its democratic change, was an outpost of tyrannies in foreign policy of the United States.

Because of its backwardness and prolong isolation, the international media called her a pariah state. Among the ASEAN member countries, Myanmar was treated as laughingstock for several decades. Suddenly, these perspectives have changed. There emerged many divergent views on the progress of political, social and economic reforms in this country. For those who keep watching the change process, some are positive while others are very much doubtful (Afzal,2016). In early days of election period, political oppositions. Violation of human rights was common while the corruption was rampant. Under the name of national solidarity, the Junta set national security on the top of priority although lack of human security became the real threat against society in recent days. Only after the new semi-civilian government took recognizable steps of reform, Myanmar started to receive local and international support that stopped for many decades. With cautious optimism, the international community also responded to many democratic states in the world, the government has power to manage the media as its own property. Only in communist press model,

the state owns all branches of media as their mouthpieces (Lee,2019). In those states, the profit motivation is removed and there is no competition to reach out to the audience. Moreover, propaganda even can blind public eyes. The slogan of the ministry says the state media aims, to inform, to educate and to entertain(radue,2022). However, what they do more is producing propaganda-heavy dailies although private investment flowed into broadcasting media in a form of government-private partnership in recent years, the state organs tightly control their content policy. In this transition period, the government, which initiated reforms in nearly all sectors, laid down a vision to form a public service media system. Yet, it is not clear what would be the following steps to realize this vision(Myint,2017). According to Ministry of Information, increasing liberalization is foreseeable if the current political reform continues without any reverse. Myanmar happened to be a battleground of different ethnic political courses and different political ideologies since independence. Many historians argued that ethnic tensions have strong roots in pre-colonial period. Political, economic and social changes in Myanmar are considered as rapid, complex and clumsy. Changes look even faster in Media sector. Many kinds of restrictions were removed very recently. While it is too early to predict how Myanmar media system will look like at the end of transformation, it is plausible to say current media landscape is now unevenly developing. Although it is irrevocable trend that the government has greater awareness of citizens' rights, media liberalization is taking place with gradual and calculated stages. While the print sector starts flourishing, the broadcasting media has yet moved away from the authoritarian model (Sobel,2015). Although the diversity of voices from urban-based people is allowed in digital media, community radio that could be a major engine for rural development has intentionally zero presence. The current administration admitted that free media is indispensable characteristics of democratic state

Statement of the Problem

Sensationalism may be entertaining, but it is not informing and people are noticing. When you see a "Breaking News" headline or a notification, maybe wait on jumping right into the story. Be critical of whether or not the content has substantial evidence and research behind it and is not just trying to grab your attention. There are various ongoing issues in the present media. Some are instilled from the days of yore of journalism while others showed up with the new mediums that media has spread. It is not difficult to see the bringing together purposes for them. Advertisement revenue is generated regardless of how you feel about the content. It only matters if you view and engage with it. Ultimately, sensationalism isn't going away anytime soon. As long as it's profitable news will be ridden with flashy and sometimes completely fictitious stories. But by being a conscious and intentional consumer, you can focus on the many high-quality stories from reputable journalists that keep you well-informed and put content over clicks. Individuals are normally drawn towards bold and daring; consequently, writers want to speak to this. Scurry, messiness, rating concerns, drama to plague the present media, causing hatred in traditional media. It is difficult to escape from them too. Nonetheless, it is incredibly troubling to see that the absence of significant steps making these missteps become organized and imbued, which thus prompts us seeing various mistakes in a solitary article. These missteps feed one another, permitting them to acquire considerably even more attraction notwithstanding endeavors to stop them. Attempting to

handle them individually becomes powerful as the leftover issues permits the issue to remain alive. Sensationalism is characterized as a manner by which news associations can make the news

Whenever you are checking out a magazine or site and see those large bolded words, they stand out for you. Panic based manipulation is the demonstration of deliberately playing with the feelings of trepidation of others to stir dread or outrage - another sensationalist strategy. News sources will go after the feelings of trepidation of others for them to see their content. Sensationalism has profound roots in political issues and is a typical strategy utilized by legislators and media sources to push their plan. This should be visible in the earliest days of our nation's political issues. The

article expounded on the psychological part of misleading content and how individuals are attracted to it. The guarantee of something convincing actuates a specific dopamine pathway. Once delivered it makes a tingle that is scratched by acquiring the data that was guaranteed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

This Study will benefit from the media logic theory which was proposed by David Altheide and Robert Snow (1979), the agenda setting theory by Walter Lippmann (1920)

Media Logic Theory

The media logic theory states that common media formats and styles serve as a means of perceiving the world. Today, the deep rooting of media in the cultural consciousness means that media consumers need engage for only a few moments with a particular television program to understand that it is a news show, a comedy, or a reality show(Van,2013). The pervasiveness of these formats means that our culture uses the style and content of these shows as ways to interpret reality. For example, think about a TV news program that frequently shows heated debates between opposing sides on public policy issues. This style of debate has become a template for handling disagreement to those who consistently watch this type of program. Media logic affects institutions as well as individuals (Altheide,2015). The modern televangelist has evolved from the adoption of television-style promotion by religious figures, while the utilization of television in political campaigns has led candidates to consider their physical image as an important part of a campaign The production processes of media raw materials normally imply a certain extent of standardization, reflecting the goals, traditions and routines of a given media organizations and an adaptation to the demands of the audiences.

Media organizations maintain a set of specifications, which may be economic, technological and cultural, to assure that content produced and distributed responds to efficiency criteria. The mass media institutions either public or private, have their own specific nature that distinguishes them from other institutions that produce culture (Welbers,2019). Public media outlets implement a logic that reflects the statutes of these institutions that cater to the general interest. Private-run media respond chiefly to industrial and commercial imperatives and implement logics that reflect corporate goals and audience tastes and expectations. From this stems a mixed approach by media organizations to political events. For example, public service broadcast media are more likely to give space to a plurality of voices and to represent a plurality of views. However, at the same time, they cannot avoid packaging political news in appealing formats or yielding to a certain degree of

sensationalism, amplifying certain personal traits of political leaders, or making some editorial inroads into the political arena (Wilddie,2019). Infotainment programs run by public broadcasting organizations around the world are just one example of this response to media logics.

Agenda Setting Theory

Agenda-setting theory suggests that media institutions shape political debates by determining what issues are most important and featuring them in news broadcasts. It describes the media as the main entity that selects what news stories to report and prioritizes based on what they think people might care about (Mccombs,2014). Since the media filters and shapes what the audience sees, this can impact how they perceive cultural, social and political news stories. The media provides access to information that they consider the most relevant to society and that'll have the most influence over them. The agenda-setting by media is driven by the media's bias on things such as politics, economy and culture. The evolution of agenda-setting and laissez-faire components of communication research encouraged a fast pace growth and expansion of these perspectives. Agenda-setting has phases that need to be in a specific order in order for it to succeed. Some media outlets that engage in agenda-setting include newspapers, magazines, social media channels, television programs and radio stations(Kim,2017). An example of agenda-setting theory is a news programme that runs a story with the title 'breaking news.' This asserts that the story is of high importance and encourages more people to listen in. This also means that individuals are more likely to remember the story and successfully recall it at a later date, even if the issue doesn't affect them or register with them. The theory suggests that the media has the ability to shape public opinion by determining what issues are given the most attention, and has been widely studied and applied to various forms of media(Zain,2014). The more a story is publicized in the mass media, the more it becomes prominently stored in individuals' memories when they're asked to recall it, even if it doesn't specifically affect them or register as a prominent issue in their minds.

Empirical Review

Hassan (2022), conducted a study to establish effects of mass media advocacy, mass media reporting and media lobbying on civil rights agenda setting in Somalia. The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional design where both qualitative data and quantitative data were collected. The semi-structured questionnaires and interview schedules were used in collection of data. Qualitative data was arranged thematically and presented in narrative forms, while quantitative data analyzed through descriptive statistics infrequencies and percentages and then presented in tables and graphs. The findings showed that majority of the respondents hardly witnessed civil rights issues being mobilized in the social media. It also revealed that mass media reporting on civil rights issues reportage as very poor while, calling for the need to mobilize mass media actors around civil rights issues. It was also noted that majority of responses observed that lobbying activities of civil rights in Mogadishu greatly influenced the administration of civil rights' activities in Mogadishu.

Nancy (2021), conducted a study to explore role of media convergence in intrusion of online privacy based on the experiences of regular Internet users in Nairobi City County in Kenya. FGD discussion and Interview guides were used in data collection. Findings depicted a proliferation of unrestricted user-generated information where online players, who are not journalists, were

constantly creating and distributing information of private nature, news of shock, acts of violence, crime, sexual assault, and messages of bereavement and grief. Infringement issues isolated by the key expert respondents included harvesting of personal data, disclosure of information, data breach, identity theft, impersonation, and fake news. Susceptibility of social sites to cyber-attacks, the proliferation of unregulated social sites, user vulnerability, Internet tracking tools, Internet penetration, search ability, and online anonymity were deemed to challenge regulation of the IP. The study concluded that: Internet users were divulging vast amounts of private information on the IP; privacy violations were being witnessed and; an array of mitigation strategies was adopted including legislation and policy-making, enforcement of compliance, incidents response, capacity building, consumer education and outreach programs.

Ndirangu (2015), conducted a study to explore the rise o to examine the rise of tabloidization of newspaper media which has led to the marketing and 'shaping of news' to cater to the tastes of audiences and advertisers in Kenya. The study uses descriptive research design as a process of collecting data in order to answer research questions concerning the status of the subjects in the

study. The study concludes that tabloidization has been on the rise in Kenya, as the newspaper under this study, The Nairobian. It uses persuasion as a deliberate attempt to modify the attitude, beliefs, or behaviors of its consumers through the transmission of some message, achieved by how they frame their eye-catching headlines.

Madakha (2015), conducted a study to explore the challenges that adult audiences face in their perception of sexuality issues, the appropriate and relevant disclosure of the same and programming of content that suits their needs. Based on the problems stated, the purpose of this study is to fill this gap by investigating the extent to which the Obutwakani program has met its objectives and also determine its limitations and how it can be improved. The study was fashioned along a descriptive design, and entailed the sampling of 50 adult listeners of Obutwakani program in Mulembe FM who were selected using purposive and convenient sampling. Data was collected from the adult listeners using telephone interviews, while key informants were interviewed face-to-face using questionnaires. The findings show that listeners are only those with little education and knowledge on sexual matters. It suggests that program managers and presenters need advanced information and training to update themselves with the current trends in sexual information programs. By considering that the adults are tuned in and are seeking content on sexuality, it can benefit our government, advertisers and media to provide credible channels for the audiences to access the right information on sensitive issues such as sexuality.

Kathulima (2014), conducted a study to identify the contribution of international media in enhancing positive impact during conflict and not escalating or worsening the state of conflict in Darfur. Descriptive research design was used, to enable clarity. The target population was 88 respondents from the top level management, middle level management and the support staffs of CCN. The researcher made use of simple stratified random sampling procedure to select a sample size of 44 respondents. Questionnaires were used for collecting data which was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Finding show that today's politics and society at large, international media is essential to the safeguarding transparency of democratic processes. This is often called it "watchdog" role. Transparency is required on many levels including for access to

information; accountability and legitimacy of individuals, institutions and processes themselves; and for rightful participation and public debate regarding conflict resolution worldwide. For international media to report accurately and hold election administrators to account, they should also become familiarized with the electoral system employed in conflict resolution

Research Gaps

Geographical Gap

A geographical gap is the missing piece or pieces in the research literature, is the area that has not yet been explored or is under-explored. Hassan (2022), who conducted a study to establish effects of mass media advocacy, mass media reporting and media lobbying on civil rights agenda setting in Somalia. Nancy (2021), who conducted a study to explore role of media convergence in intrusion of online privacy based on the experiences of regular Internet users in Nairobi City County in Kenya. This two studies presented a geographical gap since our study was conducted in Myanmar.

Methodological Gap

Methodological gap is the missing gap of knowledge on a more appropriate underlying method(s) which can be used in research instead of the previously one. Ndirangu (2015), who conducted a study to explore the rise o to examine the rise of tabloidization of newspaper media which has led to the marketing and 'shaping of news' to cater to the tastes of audiences and advertisers in Kenya. The study uses descriptive research design as a process of collecting data in order to answer research questions concerning the status of the subjects in the study The data collected was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Kathulima (2014), conducted a study to identify the contribution of international media in enhancing positive impact during conflict and not escalating or worsening the state of conflict in Darfur. Descriptive research design was used, to enable clarity. The target population was 88 respondents from the top level management, middle level management and the support staffs of CCN. The researcher made use of simple stratified random sampling procedure to select a sample size of 44 respondents. Questionnaires were used for collecting data which was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. This two studies presented a methodological gap since our study will utilize a desktop research methodology.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a desktop literature review method (desk study). This involved an in-depth review of studies related to impact of industrial revolution on the family structure Three sorting stages were implemented on the subject under study in order to determine the viability of the subject for research. This is the first stage that comprised the initial identification of all articles that were based on impact of industrial revolution on the family structure. The search was done generally by searching the articles in the article title, abstract, keywords. A second search involved fully available publications on the subject on impact of sensationalized media coverage and perception on current events. The third step involved the selection of fully accessible publications. Reduction of the literature to only fully accessible publications yielded specificity and allowed the researcher to focus on the articles that related to impact of sensationalized media coverage and

perception on current events which was split into top key words. After an in- depth search into the top key words (impact, sensationalized, media coverage, perception, current news), the researcher arrived at 5 articles that were suitable for analysis. The results are from analysis of research papers done by:

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SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The study found out that the truism about sensationalism as a guarantee for success appears to be largely true. Sensationalism indeed has the power to boost viewing time and that this is particularly true for the presence of negative content, which has a large effect on the time spent on news video. This study argued Myanmar transformation is a process of evolution rather than a revolution.

Changes are in the air but these changes do not appear overnight out of a sudden. Rather, it is a slow moving process that took more than a decade. Now, easier access of journalists to government bodies for asking information is no longer privilege only for a few. Pre-publication censorship, which lasted for more than five decades, was abolished. Participation of journalists and other stakeholders is called for drafting the final bill of print media law.

Recommendations

Since the media logic theory, agenda setting theory and conflict theory were useful on giving insights on industrialization and family structure the researcher recommends that the theories can be used in the future for future studies in the information sector.

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