



EDITORS AND SCIENTISTS PERCEPTION RELATED TO THE COVERAGE OF SCIENCE IN NEWSPAPERS

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Abstract

Editor's perception plays an important role in selection and publication of science news in newspapers on the other hand this coverage also depends on the scientists and researchers who are working in different fields. In this background this study explores the perception of editors and scientists related to the coverage of science in the newspapers. It is purely exploratory research where interview method has been used for the data collection. Eight editors and 50 scientists were selected by purposive sampling to collect their views.

Keywords: Editors, Scientists, Perception, Newspaper, Science, Coverage

1.0: BACKGROUND

Journalism is taken as inseparable part of any democratic system. The press plays a vital role in democratic society. It is an institution in its own right. The press has earned the recognition of 'Fourth state'. The importance of journalism comes from the people's right to opinion and expression. Since right to opinion and expression would not be a reality without the press. People today depend greatly on the press for being informed.

Science journalism is defined as the important aspect of mass media and journalists are considered as the educators because science is deeply associated in the society. So it should be obvious to the majority of the public; science journalism should follow the rule of sciences, with the pattern of journalism (Xu, 2013).

Editors are the gatekeepers between science news and publication of science news. They try to set an agenda for different type of publications, Nelkin (1987) explained lot of things related to coverage of science and explained that Science journalism is normally used for the making the claims which are not logical, many time all of us including press reporters and media housed fell in to it. Researcher also claimed that Scientists are not very keen in going public, because of journalist's tendency to sensationalize the findings. She advocated for the well trained reporters for this specialized job of science communication. Chatterjee (2013) also stated that the selectivity theory impacts in selectivity works in adopting any technology and media plays an important role in making this selective perception.



Sometimes coverage of science seems as that it is given same importance as other areas because the primary drivers of coverage patterns are not the content areas on which stories are focused but, instead, the production infrastructure through which that content must pass (Bucchi, & Trench, 2014). There are lots of researches available of coverage of science but communication with the public and the public's understanding of science, there has been relatively little research focusing on how scientists themselves talk about their own communication with the public.

In this background this study tries to find out the perception of editors and scientists related to the coverage of science in newspapers.

2.0: OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find out the perception of editors related to the coverage of science in Newspapers.
- To find out the perception of scientists related to the coverage of science in Newspapers.

3.0: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1: Research Design & Method: This research is an exploratory study. The interviews of editors and scientists were conducted to collect the data. Quantitative and Qualitative, both methods are used for this study, so it is a mixed method study. It uses both quantitative and qualitative approaches for data analysis.

3.2: Sampling: Purposive sampling was used to select the four editors of Hindi Newspapers and four editors of English newspapers based in Dehradun and the researcher has selected **50** scientists/ researchers by purposive sampling to take their view on coverage of science in newspapers

3.3: Data Collection tool: Two self created **Schedules** containing five-five important questions related to study were used for taking the responses of the editors and scientists.

4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data has been collected and analysed as follows:

4.1: Editors perception on the coverage of science in newspapers: For analyzing the descriptive data, explanatory codes were developed which can be helpful in fulfilling the first objective of this study. So the possible codes are

- Coverage of Science is appropriate
- Impact of Editorial policies on Science Coverage
- Appropriate Space and Sequencing of Pages
- Expectation of Time given by Reader for Science News
- Language of News and News Values

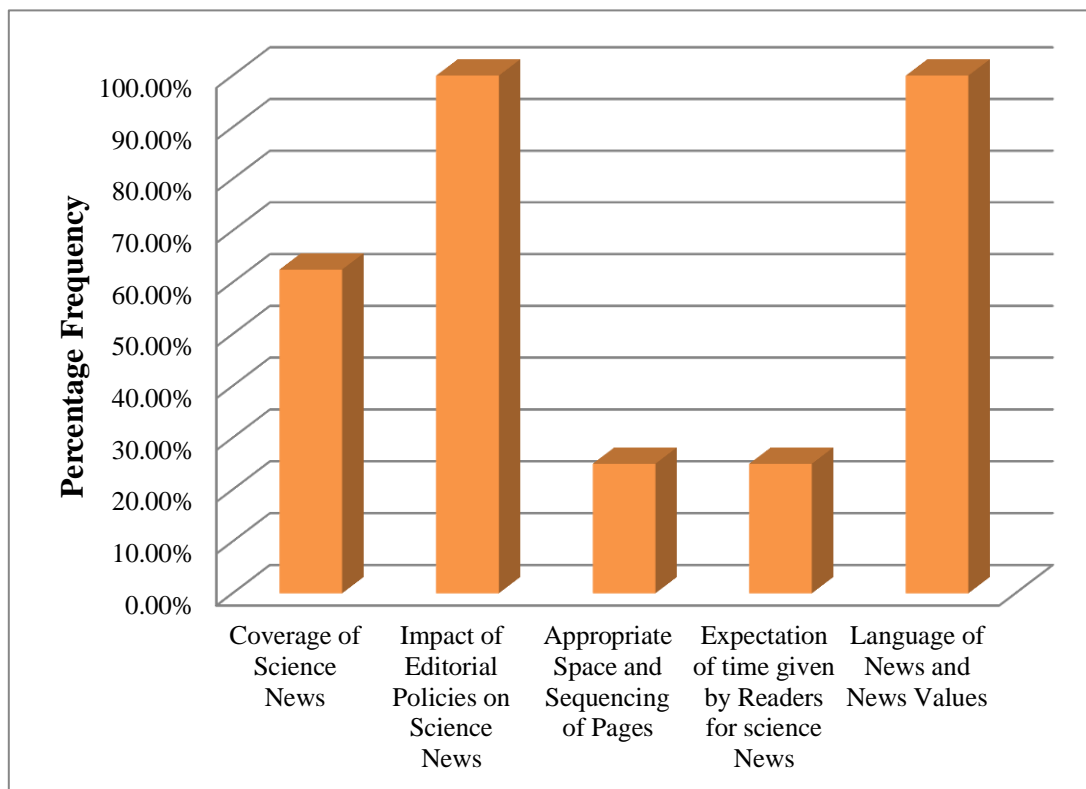


After performing above steps and all data converted in to frequency form (quantitative form); where (1) denotes positive or yes and (0) denotes absent or negative. Below table shows quantification of qualitative data which is the extract of interview between researcher and editors of all eight newspapers which are selected for study. It was primary in the form of text and later for analysis; it is converted into a form of numbers with the help of narrative analysis.

Table 4.1: Analysis of the Qualitative data of Editors Interview

Newspaper of the Editor	Coverage of Science is appropriate	Impact of Editorial Policies on Science Coverage	Appropriate Space and Sequencing of Pages	Expectation of time given by Readers for science News	Language of News and News Values
Amar Ujala	1	1	0	0	1
Dainik Jagran	0	1	0	0	1
Dainik Hindutan	1	1	0	0	1
Rashtriya Sahara	1	1	0	0	1
The Indian Express	1	1	1	1	1
Hindustan Times	0	1	0	0	1
The Hindu	1	1	1	1	1
Times of India	0	1	0	0	1
Total	5	8	2	2	8
%	62.50%	100%	25%	25%	100%

After making the frequency table, percentage of each code was calculated and represented in the form of graph as given below:



Graph 4.1: Frequency Graph of Explanatory codes of Editors View

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graph 4.1 display

ys the editor’s perception about the science coverage in media which shows that Editors think that the coverage of science is appropriate because 62.50% Editors have given positive response to this question. All the editors accepted that there is impact of editorial policies on science coverage. The third code about appropriate space and sequencing of pages, only 25% editors accepted that there is appropriate space and sequencing of pages given to the science coverage. It means editors also feel that there is inappropriate space and sequencing of pages. The fourth code talks about the expected time given by readers for science news reading, again only 25% editors accepted that the readers are giving proper time to read the science news. It indicates that editors think that readers are not devoting much time to read the science news. On the last code, all editors agreed that the language and news value in science coverage is strictly followed so that a common reader can understand the typical science.

4.2: Scientists perception on the coverage of science in newspapers: Science coverage in different media platforms broadly depends on the scientists and researchers who are working in different fields. They work as bridge between science news and reporter to newspapers. They provide them the crispy data and information related to different discoveries and a reporter tries to put them into simple language so that the public can understand the complex issues of science. In this research opinion of scientist and researchers regarding coverage of science in the newspapers has also analysed. For this study, the researcher has asked five prominent questions



to scientists and researchers who are working in different fields of science. The comment of 50 scientists and researchers were collected through a schedule. They have given following opinions regarding the coverage of science news in the newspapers:

- **Level of Awareness:** Scientist suggested that the media must try to increase the level of awareness regarding the information related to science because science is not a field which can be covered by creating any hype.
- **Focus on Coverage:** Scientists and researchers think that media should focus more on the coverage of science because it will help to make public aware about issues related to science.
- **Communication Gap:** Scientists and researchers raised the question about the communication gap between science experts and media and suggested this gap must be filled with regular interactions.
- **Regular Supplement:** The researchers and scientists also suggested to introduce a regular weekly supplement newspaper for the coverage of weekly science news, it will fill the gap of lower coverage as they are publishing other supplements and the expert write up must be included on different issues related to science.
- **Appointment of Science Reporter:** The researchers and scientists strongly recommended for the appointment of person who is having knowledge of science and technology. It will help the organization to create and develop good relationship with the science research institutions.

5.0: CONCLUSION

Editors Perception plays an important role in selection and publication of news, so the on the basis of above interpretation it can be concluded that editors think that readers are not devoting much time to read the science news it is the main reason behind the lesser publication of science news but it is appropriate according to them. However they also agreed that editorial policies also have an impact on coverage of science on the other hand scientists/ researchers think that media must try to focus on coverage of science news by removing the communication gaps and by publication of regular supplements. They also suggested that appointment of science reporter can fulfil this gap.



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