



Closing the Gap: A Comparison of Journalism Education between Pakistan and the United States of America

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Abstract

The current study is done with the objective to compare the professional values and competencies of journalism education in the USA and Pakistan. Elite interviews and content analysis were done to compare the curriculum standards defined by Accrediting Council on Education of Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) and the objectives defined in the Higher Education Commission (HEC) curriculum on mass communication. The finding of the elite interviews that were conducted from academicians and professionals from the USA and Pakistan showed that the gap between the professional values and competencies were minimal. Similarly, the findings of content analysis revealed that there are a lot of similarities in the professional values and competencies of journalism in both countries. Moreover, around half of the recommended books in the Pakistani curriculum was written by American authors. In interviews, the head of HEC curriculum committee clearly informed that they were following the American model.

Key Words: Journalism Education, Pakistan, America

Introduction & Literature Review

It is also necessary to have an independent press...to counteract false and malicious propaganda', uttered the founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah in 1937 before launching that country's most prestigious newspaper, Dawn. In today's media global landscape ripe with fake news and accusations by American president Donald Trump that the press is the enemy of the people, an era of intense press scrutiny has unfolded. And while the public and politicians muse over the role of the press, it is time to see how journalism education is doing. There has never been a more critical need for journalism education. The current study provides a brief look at global journalism education and then with a specific focus looks at American journalism accreditation standards with implications for Pakistan.

It has been witnessed that journalism education around the world has become closer in the last decade. The first World Journalism Education Congress was held in 2007 in Singapore. Around forty-five countries including the USA and Pakistan had participated with an upshot of declaration which was called the Singapore Declaration. The professional values and competencies: history, press ethics, role of media institution at the regional and global level, cultural role of media in society, and mastery of computer-based tools were considered as the bedrock of journalism education curriculum throughout the world. In the same vein, the Tartu Declaration by European Journalism Training Association was signed in 2006 and revised in 2013. It mentions ten competencies along with sub-competencies that must be imparted through journalism education in Europe. The professional competencies and values included commitment to democracy, knowledge of the legal and ethical framework, knowledge about the characteristics of different media, ability to research in journalism profession, specialized knowledge of the field, language competence and ability to evaluate one's own work. United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had suggested journalism and mass communication curricula for Pakistan and other developing countries in 2007. The competencies which UNESCO expected to develop journalism education through its curriculum could be enumerated as ability to think critically, basic understanding of research, ability to write clearly and coherently, knowledge of national and international politics and culture, and knowledge of history (p. 08). The learning outcomes of the Accrediting Council on Education

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of Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) is also not different for the rest of the world. Through its rigorous mechanism, ACEJMC confirms that the students graduating from journalism schools in the USA and some other countries should have an understanding of the application of freedom of expression. The students should have knowledge about the history of journalism, awareness of different cultures, understanding regarding gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation, a good grasp of concept and application of theories, clarity about the ethical issues related to the journalism profession, ability to think critically, dexterity to write clearly, critical eye to evaluate their own and others work, sense to apply basic mathematics, and state-of-the-art technology.

There is clear cut evidence that shows that Pakistan's journalism curriculum is under the influence of the American journalism curriculum as the 1st journalism school in South Asia was the brainchild of Prithvi Pal (P.P) Singh a journalism graduate from the University of Missouri, USA (Eapen, 1991). This department of journalism at the University of Punjab, Lahore was developed in 1941. Of interest is the fact that the convener of the curriculum committee which first made and revised journalism curriculum was a Ph.D. graduate from a university in Iowa (Ashraf & Chaudhry, 2013). In addition to this, it was found that the U.S orientation has always been the part and parcel of journalism education in South Asian countries including Pakistan (Eapen, 1991; Ullah, 2012; 2014).

Currently, the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan is controlling the decision for curriculum in the universities throughout the country. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) was established in 2002 with the power of accreditation of universities (Khan & Bhatti, 2016). The Higher Education Commission of Pakistan has a division that has devised the curriculum of all academic disciplines that are offered by universities in Pakistan. The division consists of different curriculum committees. The member of these committees is selected from every university of relevant discipline. In other words, a committee of mass communication curriculum will have at least one instructor of mass communication from all universities that are offering the undergraduate/graduate or both degrees in mass communication. The formal curriculum on mass communication (journalism) was developed in 2008 and revised in 2013. The document of the revised version was used for comparison in this study.

The University of Missouri, the Alma Mater of Professor P. P Singh who established the first journalism school in Pakistan, was the pioneer that established the first journalism department in the USA in 1908 (Winfield & Ebrary, 2008). Although the University of Missouri was the pioneer in establishing a separate department for journalism, Cornell University and Washington College were the institutes who taught earlier courses on journalism in the 1860s (Sloan, 1990). The focus of these colleges was on the practical training of the student for the journalism field (Wingate 1970).

Journalism as a discipline prevailed very quickly in the USA. By the year 1900, universities in Illinois, Kansas, and Pennsylvania had also introduced separate courses for journalism. In 1910, New York University, University of Wisconsin-Madison and University of Washington established independent units of journalism. In 1920, Columbia University and 10 other public and private universities had developed a school of journalism (Winfield & Ebrary, 2008).

In these preliminary years, three distinct schools of thought from Missouri, Wisconsin, and Columbia emerged, and are still contributing to the journalism curriculum debates of today (Folkerts, 2014). These schools of thought used various approaches to teach journalism. Missouri, under the leadership of Walter William, emphasized the laboratory approach including journalistic skills, history, and ethics. Parallel to Missouri, the school of journalism at the University of Columbia was established by Joseph Pulitzer in 1920 with a focus on the combination of liberal arts and journalism-related courses (Boylan 2003). In Wisconsin, Willard Bleyer, the founder of the journalism school at the university steered his institute towards communication research and integrating journalism education with social science since its inception in 1910 (Bronstein & Vaughan, 1998). Hence, the laboratory model of learning by doing, the social science courses and the liberal art courses had attained the central position in journalism education from the beginning (Hyde, 1937). However, these differences led the professors and professionals of journalism to think about a unified forum for all journalism schools.

The effort to have a unified front for the journalism schools began in 1912, with the development of the American Association of Teachers in Journalism (AATJ). In 1917, five organizations joined AATJ to make a new

organization, the American Association of Schools and Department of Journalism (AASDJ) (Reinardy & Crawford, 2013). However, in contrast to AATJ, the membership in the AASDJ was not automated. Certain standards were made for admission into AASDJ. This led to its recognition as an accrediting body (Conn, 1970; Folkerts, 2014). In 1945, American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA) and the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) helped develop another body, the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism (ACEJ), with the specific goal of accreditation of journalism schools in the United States of America (Siebert, 1945). AASDJ submitted its privilege for the accreditation journalism schools to ACEJ on the inauguration of ACEJ (Reinardy & Crawford, 2013). Subsequently, ACEJ was approved as an official accrediting body by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and National Council of Accreditations (NCA) (Henderson & Christ, 2014). In 1981, ACEJ changed its name to the Accrediting Council of Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) (Folkerts, 2014). While the history of accreditation is a significant area worthy of investigation, the focus of this study is to locate the development of the curriculum as standard by ACEJMC.

At first, the schools of journalism in the country were left to make standards on their own and they were to be accredited based on what they claimed to be and how they have accomplished what they said (Conn, 1970). In 1960, the ACEJ Committee on Standards and Objectives made seven standards for the first time, but the curriculum was mentioned only partially. It was not until 1983 when curriculum was included as full-fledged standard (Reinardy & Crawford, 2013). There were eleven learning outcomes within the standard of curriculum that were developed. The knowledge about the First Amendment of the American Constitution, the history, the theories, the basic numerical skills, the ethical issues of the journalism profession, the different cultures, and the application of technologies were some of the objectives. In addition to these, the ability to think critically, write clearly and evaluate journalistic work was the remaining competencies. In 2009, ACEJMC included one more objective: Diversity; to confirm that the students demonstrate their understanding regarding gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation (Henderson & Christ, 2014). Henderson et al, 2014, have also cited that ACEJMC changed the objective of the knowledge of First Amendment to a general understanding of freedom of expression so that the learning outcomes could be used for the universities of other countries. Therefore outside of USA, Catholic University in Santiago Chile (Folkerts, 2014) and Shaikh Zayed University in Dubai (Christ, 2005) were also accredited by ACEJMC. With the emergence of digital media, the outcome related to the know-how of technology was extended to digital media (Folkerts, 2014). Studies show that these values and competencies were considered worthy and relevant by alumni as well as the administrators of US colleges and universities (Fuse & Lambiase, 2010 and Henderson & Christ, 2014). However, the question remains as to whether any country other than the USA also considers these values important without being part of the ACEJMC accreditation process.

While a comparison between countries in journalism profession, media consumption and production are often made, few studies compare journalism education standards. Of those that do, no study compare Pakistan and the USA. In one study, the European and the USA media systems have been compared (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). In another study, the media systems of Brazil, China, Israel, Poland, Russia, South Africa, and the Baltic countries were equated (Pfetsch, 2013). Esser et al (2012) conducted a study that put thirteen television systems all across Europe into premise. Nielson, Esser, & Levy (2013) edited a book in which a comparison of macro media developments between Central and Eastern Europe was conducted. Also the same book compared the online media outlets across different liberal democracies. Hanitzsch and his colleagues (2011) attempted to map journalism culture across eighteen countries covering almost every region between Australia and the USA. Splichal & Sparks (1994) compared the level of professionalism among students of 22 countries. Quite recently, a study was done to compare journalism education and students in the USA and India (Bockino, 2015). Irrespective of the results of these studies, one can assume that there are certainly some grounds that allow such a vast comparison. However, no study has been found which has included Pakistan in comparison with other countries.

In an effort to fill the gap in the literature, this paper compared professional values and competencies of journalism education in Pakistan with the professional values and competencies of journalism education in the USA and explored the extent of the relationship between the journalism curriculum of Pakistan and USA.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the similarities and differences in the professional values and competencies of journalism education in the USA and Pakistan?

RQ2: Is there any evidence that Pakistan adopted the journalism educational practice of the USA?

RQ3: Other than the USA, which countries have an influence on journalism education in Pakistan?

Methods

The primary method of the current study was content analysis. However, elite interviews of the executives of the accrediting bodies of both countries were also conducted to ground the previous body of knowledge with the primary data. Purposive sampling was done for the interview. The high officials of ACEJMC and HEC curriculum committee were contacted. In addition to this, an additional criterion was defined for the respondents of Pakistan. The professors who had a degree from a country other than Pakistan were contacted. Three professors responded. They were graduated from the United States of America, France and England. Afterward, the content analysis was done to verify what was explored in the interviews.

In content analysis, the objectives and the list of topics of the curriculum developed by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan were compared to the professional values and competencies suggested in the curriculum standard of Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC). To address RQ2 and RQ3, researcher looked into the countries to which the authors and publishers of the recommended books of HEC curriculum belong.

For comparison, the latent approach was adopted. The content of the professional values and competencies of ACEJMC and the objectives of the course in the curriculum of HEC that directly converge with one another have been put in the premise. The curriculum standard of ACEJMC has 12 professional values and competencies. Whereas, the HEC curriculum has around 56 courses with objectives clearly mentioned. Higher Education Commission has written the detail of four-year undergraduate program only. Therefore, only undergraduate program offered in Pakistani universities has been considered. The parallel comparison of professional values & competencies of ACEJMC and the objectives of the course of HEC curriculum was done in Excel.

For instance, in a teaching subject 'Writing and Presentation Skills', the HEC curriculum articulates the objective, "The course will meet specific needs of the students of communication studies to equip them with modern and presentation capabilities in order to meet the diverse market demands". Related to this, the verbatim of ACEJMC's expected professional value or competency goes, "Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purpose they serve". Further, the courses which were related to the two or more professional values of ACEJMC professional values and competencies were also included in the comparison. There were also indeed some courses in HEC which did not converge with the professional values and competencies of ACEJMC standard of curriculum. Those were also included. This study goes a little further than a mere description of the analysis in numbers. Along with quantifying the results, the names and elaboration have also been made so that the numbers make sense and could be related without looking for the original draft of HEC curriculum on mass communication.

Results

Elite Interviews

Elite interviews were conducted from the former executive director and ex-vice president of the committee of ACEJMC, former advisor to Carnegie-Knight foundation of USA, and former Convener of HEC Mass Communication Curriculum Revision Committee of 2013. The discussion included in this research paper is related to the viewpoint of the professors regarding two questions: whether there is any linkage in the professional values and competencies around the world? In what way the professional values and competencies are similar or different? The purpose of these interviews was to complement the literature and develop a case for RQ1 to move forward towards the content analysis between the professional values and competencies of ACEJMC and curriculum of HEC Pakistan.

Dr. Mughees Uddin, former convener of HEC curriculum revision committee (2013) on mass communication, was the most prominent media academician in Pakistan. He has done his Ph.D. from America. The questions asked from him were slightly different from the questions asked from the other Pakistani professors. Talking about the evolution of journalism education in Pakistan, he informed that Professor Prithvi Singh who had done his graduation from Missouri was the one who established the journalism school in the University of Punjab. Dr. Mughees Uddin had also worked as a dean in that department. He played central role to upgrade the department and elevated its position to institute. When asked about the curriculum in Pakistan, he clearly replied that his school, in which he is working as a dean, is following 'the curriculum model of University of Iowa, USA'. He ascertained that the model allowed to have two tracks for masters: professional track and research track. He further discussed the details about the model of University of Iowa. He introduced the same model at the University of the Punjab, Lahore.

In the United States, Professor Douglas Anderson, who was the vice president of the ACEJMC committee in the year 2015-16, was also interviewed with the question if he saw any similarities in the professional values and competencies in the world. He asserted that ACEJMC has accredited many institutions outside of America like Catholic University in Santiago and a university in Port Rico and a couple of universities in the Middle East. Referring to the ACEJMC professional values and competencies, he stated, 'knowledge of history, role of professional competency, understanding of gender and race, diversity of people could be translatable' for any country around the world. However, the value related to the understanding of freedom of expression could not fit in some authoritarian countries, according to him.

Former advisor of the President of Carnegie-Knight Foundation Professor Eric Newton's shared the same views. He believes that professional values and competencies are consistent across different countries. For instance, writing will be important for journalism profession irrespective of any country. If the technology evolves in a certain country, the knowledge of current technologies will become important. He believes that journalism is important and its practice is pretty much similar across the world. 'What constitutes great journalism are same in all free countries', according to Professor Newton. Consistent with the concern of Professor Douglas Anderson, Professor Newton also thought that the freedom of expression as a professional value is problematic to authoritarian countries.

The former executive director of ACEJMC, Susanne Shaw added that universities of many countries were contacting them for the accreditation. ACEJMC was contacted by the universities from New Zealand (Messay University), Spain, the Middle East, and Latin America. These requests clearly show that there exists a narrative of consensus that journalism profession and education share values across the countries.

All those who have been interviewed agreed upon the fact that professional values and competencies of journalism education have common values across the globe. With these findings, which complement the literature, now we have a ground to move towards the central method of this study; content analysis.

Content Analysis

Research Question 01

Out of 56 courses offered by the curriculum of Higher Education Commission, 45 were directly related to the professional values and competencies articulated by ACEJMC. In the curriculum of HEC, the objectives of some elective subjects that are of social science/ liberal arts have not been mentioned but some conclusions could be drawn and those could be related to a competency of ACEJMC that covers critical thinking (Young & Giltrow, 2015).

Professional Values and Competencies of (ACEJMC) and the Number of Related Subjects of HEC

Professional Values and Competencies (ACEJMC)	Number of Related Subjects (HEC)
Freedom of Speech Laws	01
History	02
Diversity (Gender, Race, Ethnicity, sexual orientation & others)	02

Diversity (peoples, culture, mass communication, global society)	05
Theories (use & presentation of image and Information)	02
Professional Ethical Principles	03
Critical, Creative & Independent Thinking	02 plus 04
Research Methods for Communication Profession	02
Writing Correctly & Clearly in forms and Styles appropriate of Communication Professions & Audiences	12
Evaluating own & others work for clarity, fairness & grammatical correctness	04
Application of Basic Numerical & Statistical Concepts	02
Applying the current tools and technologies, and the understanding of the digital world	09

The first value of the ACEJMC curriculum which talked about the understanding of principles and laws of freedom was only partially related to one course of HEC: Media Ethics and Law. In the content of Media Laws and ethics, the provision on the fundamental rights of speech was discussed as tangent. Whereas, the core focus of the objective and topics were on norms, ethics and libel laws.

The second value of the ACEJMC curriculum which sought the knowledge of press history and the professionals' role and organizations in mass communication was related to two courses; Introduction to Mass Communication and Mass Media in Pakistan. In the objectives and topics of these courses, history of mass communication in the world, role of Muslim Press and eminent journalists were discussed along with an aim to guide students about the development of electronic and media in the world and Pakistan.

The third value of the ACEJMC curriculum dealt with the understanding of sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, and gender and the diversity in indigenous society. There was only two courses which were discussing these aspects: Development Communication and Development Support Communication. In the content of these subjects urban and rural sociology, different social system, caste system, religious classes in Pakistan was discussed. However, the emphasis on gender and sexual orientation was missing in the objective and suggested topics.

The fourth value of the ACEJMC curriculum talked about the understanding of diversity in terms of cultures and human beings and mass communication in global society. There were five courses in which the track of these values could be found: Pakistan Studies, National and International Affairs, Development Support Communication and International Communication. In the objectives and contents of these courses the topic like cultural diversities, gender, social change, media sociology, structure of communication within an international context, cultural hybridity, globalization, cultural imperialism, folk arts, folk heroes, folk festivals, and national identity and image could be found.

The fifth professional value and competency of ACEJMC applying the mass communication theories to develop media content could be tracked in two of the courses in the HEC curriculum: Communication Theories 1 and Communication Theories 2. The aims of these courses showed the development of understanding in the students regarding the history and foundations of different schools of thought with an additional expectation to improve the critical and analytical ability in the students. Therefore one of the courses could also be included in the seventh value which is related to analytical thinking. Some of the contents were uses and gratification theory, framing and framing analysis, cultivation theory, and spiral of silence.

The sixth value mentioned having an 'understanding of professional ethical principles'. There were three courses in the HEC curriculum that had mention of this: Media Ethics & Laws, Advanced Reporting, and Radio News Reporting and Production. Some of the topics if these subjects ran: press ethics, international code of ethics, Pakistani codes of ethics, question of law and ethics in reporting. It was interesting that all the suggested books for the course Media Law and Ethics were written by Pakistani writers.

The seventh value called the ability to ‘think critically, creatively and independently’. There were two courses in which this element have been discussed: Communication Theories two, Advertising 1 and Public Relations 1. Along with these courses, there was some course related to social sciences: Psychology, Political Science, Sociology, and Economics which could be considered as the courses that impart critical thinking as shown in the work of Young and Giltrow (2015).

The eighth value discussed the how-know of conducting research methods in communications. There were two courses Research Methods 1 and 2 that committed to sensitizing the students with the research methods and techniques.

The ninth value expected that after graduation the students would be able to write eloquently and accurately to appropriate the forms of media types such as documentaries, reports, or other kinds of scripts. There were twelve courses in the HEC curriculum which were completely or partially dedicated to this value in the HEC curriculum: Functional English 1 & 2, Fundamental of New Reporting, Technical Report Writing, Functional Urdu, Communication Skills (English), Journalistic Language (English & Urdu), Feature, Column & Editorial Writings, Advanced Reporting, Radio News Reporting and Production, Magazine Production/ Book Production. The emphasis of Radio News Reporting and Production, Magazine Production and Radio Program Production was on the writing because the journalism schools across Pakistan did not have the access to the technical resources for these subjects (Ashraf & Chaudhry, 2013).

The tenth professional value and competency were slightly an extension of the 9th value which stated about the students must be able to evaluate their own scripts. There were four courses in the HEC curriculum which dealt with this value and some of these courses were also overlapping with the courses shown and discussed in the ninth value: Magazine Production/ Book, Communication Skills (English) and Functional Urdu. Based on the following distinctive topics or phrases: ‘to develop critical thinking’, ‘grammar component’, ‘theme editing’, ‘review and criticism’, these courses were selected in this category.

The Eleventh value of the ACEJMC standard of curriculum referred to applying ‘basic mathematical and statistical operations. The courses Mathematics (Calculus) and Statistics were serving the purpose in the HEC curriculum.

The twelfth principle of the ACEJMC curriculum standard was related to the understanding to apply current technologies related to mass communication. There were nine courses which came under this category: Computer Skills for Mass Communication, Introduction to Broadcast Media, Sub-Editing & Page Designing, Introduction to Social Media, Online Journalism, Newspaper Management and Production, TV News Reporting and Production, Sub Editing and Page Designing 2, TV Program Production. There is an interesting insight that the claims were made in all these courses to make students updated to current technology.

There were some courses which did not fit in any category of the values defined by ACEJMC: Islamic Studies and four courses on Advertising and Public Relation (two for each) and Media Seminar.

Research Questions 2 & 3

After the comparison in the content, RQ1 leads to RQ2 & RQ3 that is to see the background or country of the authors of recommended books in the HEC curriculum.

The Authors’ Nationality of Recommended Books

Semester	USA	Pakistan	England	India	Other
1	20	05	06	04	01
2	17	29	05	05	01
3	11	10	12	01	0
4	06	0	0	0	0
5	18	03	06	02	03
6	19	04	02	02	0
7	35	07	19	13	05
8	34	11	25	18	04
Total	160	69	75	45	14

It is clearly shown in the above table that out of 363 recommended books for the whole undergraduate degree program, 160 were written by the American authors. The second most frequent authors were from the UK. The authors from the UK were 75. The books of Pakistani and Indian authors were 69 and 45 respectively. The authors of other countries were 14.

Conclusion

This research leads to interesting outcomes. The first conclusion indicates that there exists a strong relation between journalism education of Pakistan and the USA. Even the convener of 2013 curriculum committee of HEC informed that he was adopting the model of University of Iowa for his school. This was also evident in the HEC curriculum. Along with these similarities, there were some differences too. These differences could be explained in terms of socio-religious context of Pakistan. In the second conclusion, it is found that Pakistan curriculum of journalism is under the direct/strong influence of USA.

According to the first conclusion that there is a clear cut relation between journalism education in Pakistan and in the USA. Even the credit hours of undergraduate courses between the two countries are very close. The required credit hours for USA journalism schools suggested by ACJEMC were 120 to 128 and the credit hour directed by HEC to Pakistani journalism schools was 130-136. Both countries are following the 72-46 formula. Seventy-two courses to be offered from social sciences and the rest, of course, must be related to journalistic profession. In addition to similarities, there was indeed some difference: The Pakistani curriculum was not putting a lot of emphasis on freedom of expression, instead it was underscoring the importance of the learning related to media laws. In contrast, the value of freedom of expression is considered to be the most important value of all because it is the first value written in the document of ACEJMC. Another difference was associated with the diversity of religion. The values of journalism education in the USA seeks student to have understanding of all religions. However, in the curriculum of HEC Pakistan, there was one course on Islamic studies. No other religious course was mentioned in the document by HEC.

The second conclusion is related to the evidence of American influence. Nearly a half book 160 out of 363 recommended books were written by American authors. It shows how robust is the American influence on the courses. The third RQ leads us to see the influence of other countries. The UK and India stand in this queue. The authors from the UK were 75 in number slightly more than the recommended books from Pakistan: 69. About 45 books were written by the Indian authors. One of the reasons for American influence on education might be that America is the developed nation and it publishes 15 percent books of the world every year (Dietrich, 2013). That's why we have presence of number of books written by Americans in recommended list of HEC curriculum on Mass Communication.

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