

Professional Freedom and Satisfaction of Young Journalists in Kerala, India

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Abstract

In the last three decades, precisely since 1990s, media in Asia is transformed a lot with the profound impact of digitization, corporatization, monopolization, and religious and political trends, all implicating the journalistic profession, particularly professional freedom and job satisfaction enjoyed by journalists. This paper explores the professional freedom and satisfaction enjoyed by young journalists who entered the profession in the 21st century. In this study, professional freedom (PF) is conceived as a combination of external and internal freedoms which are ensured with the absence of both external (social) and internal (organizational/personal) factors that curb a journalist's professional autonomy. A journalist enjoys external professional freedom (EPF) when living in a society that guarantees the absence of physical threats, extra-constitutional interventions, economic and political pressures and threats from religious sources. Internal professional freedom (IPF) guarantees freedom from personalized pressures, freedom from organizational pressures, freedom from work level pressures, freedom from owner level pressures, and freedom from supervisor level pressures. In a similar fashion, Professional Satisfaction (PS) is also conceptualized as a mix of External Professional Satisfaction (EPS) and Internal Professional Satisfaction (IPS). The factors that contribute to internal professional satisfaction (IPS) include work itself, personal growth & advancement, individual responsibility, professional status and work-family relation. Pay and working conditions, organizational morale, organizational support, supervision and co-worker relation constitute the extrinsic factors of professional satisfaction (EPS). A survey of 201 young journalists (below 30 years) in Kerala, a state in India, reveals that young journalists enjoy moderate level of professional freedom and satisfaction. They feel that their professional freedom is curbed more by internal (organizational/personal) pressures than by external /social pressures. Also they report that they get more job satisfaction from internal (organizational/personal) factors than from external / social factors. And, these trends are consistent across many demographic and professional variables like gender, political affiliation, and religious affiliation, media education, type of media, professional experience, salary range, and field of work of journalists.

Keywords

Young Journalists, Professional Freedom, Professional Satisfaction, Media Management

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Introduction

What are the changes brought by media convergence, the advent of media conglomerates and cross-media ownership, etc. (results of globalization) in the field of journalism, the outlook of journalists and the preferences of media as a whole? Findings of earlier studies are not exciting.

Journalists who enrolled into the profession in the 21st C are part of the millennial generation. The working environment of the field witnesses a drastic change boosted by web-based journalism. The journalism field in India and across Asia and the world is not an exception when taking news processing and publishing/broadcasting technologies into account. At present, the profession is going through a transition stage of dual-platform journalism incorporating print and digital. Meanwhile, the world around us becomes corporatized, monopolized, and religiously and politically polarized. And it is reflected in the perception of professional freedom and satisfaction of 21st C journalists.

Professional freedom (PF) of journalists refers to the news decision autonomy or the degree of freedom journalists enjoy in their professional jurisdiction without being limited by internal or external influences like interference, domination, and regulation on journalistic practice. Professional freedom of a journalist presupposes the degree of freedom an individual journalist has in making news decisions without being influenced internally or externally. It is not just restricted to the news decisions taken within the newsroom but internal and external factors that affect those decisions also to be included (Beam, 2008).

Professional satisfaction (PS) is the extent to which one is feeling good and committed to his/her job. It is generally defined as the sum of the positive influence that individuals have toward their profession. In simple terms, professional satisfaction is the extent to which people like their profession.

Social leaders warn that a privatised, corporatized and commoditized information resulting from the consolidation of media ownership in the absence of cross-media restrictions and with favouring government policies, will affect the diversity of news flows adversely. Hence, the news is filtered and modified while processing and political economy of mass media redefine the role of a journalist and the notion of freedom of the press. This is actually an indication towards the way objectivity is practiced within the mass media environment encompassing all the personal, organizational and professional factors of journalistic freedom and satisfaction.

Last three decades, precisely since 1990s, media in Asia is transformed a lot with the profound impact of, all implicating the journalistic profession, particularly professional freedom and job satisfaction enjoyed by journalists. As a result, journalists' satisfaction and freedom encounter a number of problems and issues in the present professional scenario. Therefore, it is worthwhile to examine the professional freedom and satisfaction of journalists as a whole.

Professional freedom and satisfaction of media persons are inseparable ingredients of 'fourth estate' in a democratic country like India. Both professional satisfaction and professional freedom are essential for the efficiency of journalists as well as the media organizations. Researcher finds that there exists a knowledge gap in the field of journalism research in Kerala, the most literate state with highest media-density in the world's largest democracy (India).

Being a cross-section of Indian media, Kerala media industry will definitely be a door to the real face of Indian media through the lives and characteristics of young Kerala

journalists. Recognizing the knowledge gap in the area in the Indian context, and imbibing cues from the research traditions in the field the present study tries to examine the professional freedom and satisfaction of young journalists in Kerala, India.

Grounding Concepts

Constructs of press freedom filters examined in Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model (1988) that indirectly pointed at the restrictive measures, Freedom of the Press Index and World Press Freedom Index and the domains of influences on news content proposed by Shoemaker and Reese (1991) and Thomas Hanitzsch et al. (2010) are taken as critiquing and measurement bases of the professional freedom in the present study.

Professional freedom (PF) is conceived to have two components: internal professional freedom (IPF) and external professional freedom (EPF) with their respective contributing factors. Factors of IPF under investigation were freedom from personalized pressures, freedom from organizational pressures, freedom from work level pressures, freedom from owner level pressures, and freedom from supervisor level pressures. EPF has measured on the factors of freedom from threats, freedom to criticize the government, freedom from economic pressures, freedom from political pressures and freedom from religious pressures.

Professional satisfaction theories have a strong overlap with theories explaining human motivation. Inspired from the Herzberg's Two-factor theory, Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model, Situational Occurrences Theory, and Self Determination Theory, the professional satisfaction of Kerala journalists is measured grounding on its intrinsic and extrinsic components. Contributing factors to intrinsic professional satisfaction (IPS) were work itself, personal growth & advancement, individual responsibility, professional status and work-family relation. Pay & working conditions, organizational morale, organizational support, supervision and co-worker relation were the factors of extrinsic professional satisfaction (EPS).

Study Objectives

The study is designed to understand the influence of various personal and professional characteristics of journalists on PF and PS along with the interrelation between PF and PS. To meet this main objective, following specific objectives were set.

- To assess the level of professional freedom and satisfaction of young journalists in Kerala.
- To determine the nature of the relation between professional freedom of young journalists in Kerala and their personal and professional characteristics.
- To find out the nature of the linkage between professional satisfaction of young journalists in Kerala and their personal and professional characteristics.
- To understand the nature of the association between professional freedom and satisfaction of young journalists in Kerala.

Methodology

The study seeks to examine the nature of professional freedom and satisfaction of young journalists - upto 30 years of age - in Kerala and the reciprocity between them by conducting a survey among the population.

Multi-stage stratified random sampling was used to ensure the representation of three regions – North, Central, and South – of Kerala and major metros in India where Kerala journalists have a visible presence. In the next stage, care was taken to ensure the proportionate representation of the type of media – Print, Radio, Television, and Online – from each region. Similarly, within each type of media, adequate representation of various possible variables including gender, age, education, and income was ensured.

Sample Profile

Sample profile of the surveyed young journalists in Kerala is detailed under the heads of personal and professional characteristics.

Personal Characteristics

Personal characteristics of the sample include gender, media education, political and religious affiliation of young journalists in Kerala.

Table 1: Personal Characteristics Journalists

Personal Characteristics		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	144	71.6
	Female	52	25.9
	LGBT	5	2.5
Media Education	Yes	176	87.6
	No	25	12.4
Political Affiliation	Yes	160	79.6
	No	41	20.4
Religious Affiliation	Yes	168	83.6
	No	33	16.4
Total		201	100.0

Young journalists in Kerala, taken in this study, are dominantly male (71.6%). Noticeable is that the presence of LGBT category (2.5%) after the female folk (25.9%). The number of gender minorities can be attributed to the fact that the Kerala society becomes more inclusive and it is well reflected in media sector as well.

Most of the newly inducted journalists are having media education (87.6%) as an indication of professionalization in the field in this part of the country.

It is not surprising that vast majority (79.6%) of Kerala journalists are reported to have political affiliation with one or other political parties as Kerala is one of the most politically literate state in India.

Again, young journalists tended to have religious affiliation (83.6%) which may ideologically influence their news processing practices.

In short, young Kerala journalists are dominantly male, professionally educated, and politically and religiously affiliated.

Professional Characteristics

Professional characteristics are consisted of region, type of media, professional experience, salary range and field of work.

Table 2: Professional Characteristics of Journalists

Professional Characteristics		Frequency	Percent
Region	South	43	21.4
	Central	73	36.3
	North	69	34.3
	Outside Kerala	16	8.0
Type of Media	Broadcast	72	35.8
	Print	111	55.2
	Online	18	9.0
Professional Experience	Upto 5 Years	171	85.1
	Above 5 Years	30	14.9
Salary Range	Upto Rs. 10000	58	28.9
	Rs. 10001-20000	99	49.3
	Rs. 20001-30000	37	18.4
	Above Rs. 30000	7	3.5
Field of Work	Reporting	105	52.2
	Editing	59	29.4
	News Management	9	4.5
	Photo/Videography	28	13.9
Total		201	100.0

Young journalists are more likely to be distributed in Central Kerala (36.3%) and North Kerala (34.3%) and less likely to be in South Kerala (21.4%) and outside the state (8%) in which the state and national capital are included.

Expectedly, more journalists are working in the print media (55.2%) followed by the broadcast (35.8%) and online (9%) media.

In terms of professional experience, only one seventh of young journalists are having more than five years of experience in the field (14.9%).

When comes to the salary range of journalists, more than one fourth of them (28.9%) are poorly paid. Majority of them (49.3%) receive an amount between Rs. 10001 to Rs. 20000. Only a few (3.5%), in strict sense, are adequately paid - above Rs. 30000 - in their job.

Majority of the young media persons belong to the reporting field (52. 2 %) followed by the fields of editing (29. 4%) and photo/videography (13. 9%). Young journalists are rarely entrusted with news management function (4. 5%) as they hold less experience in the profession.

Professional Freedom (PF)

To determine the range of professional freedom of journalists in Kerala is part of the first objective of the present study.

Table 3: Professional Freedom of Young Kerala Journalists

Professional Freedom (PF)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Internal PF	201	-4. 41	10. 900
External PF	201	1. 56	11. 037
Professional Freedom	201	-2. 85	17. 596

** Range of score in IPF and EPF is from -40 to 40 with three levels (-40 to -13. 01 = low; -13 to 13 = moderate; 13. 01 to 40 = high) & Range of score in PF is -80 to 80 with three levels (-80 to -26. 01 = low; -26 to 26 = moderate; 26. 01 to 80 = high).*

Data shows that the mean score of professional freedom of young media persons in Kerala is at a moderate level (M = -2. 85, SD = 17. 596) and they are partly free to take news decisions as their counterparts across the world (Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes, & Wilhoit, 2007). Moreover, young Kerala journalists enjoyed more external professional freedom (M = 1. 56, SD =11. 037) than internal professional freedom (M = -4. 41, SD = 10. 900) although both fell in the moderate range of freedom scores (-13 to 13).

Professional Freedom and Personal Characteristics

The researcher tested the significance of differences among categories of various personal and professional variables of PF to meet the second objective of the study. Personal characteristics like gender, media education, political affiliation, and religious affiliation were tested in relation to the Professional Freedom (PF) using both Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Independent sample t-Test as the case may be.

Table 3: Mean Scores of PF by Personal Characteristics

Group Statistics						One-Way ANOVA Results				
Personal Characteristics		N	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	Between/ Within Groups	Sum of Squares	DF	F	Sig.
Gender	Male	144	-4. 17	17. 240	1. 437	Between Groups	897. 755	2	1. 456	. 236
	Female	52	. 62	17. 606	2. 441					
	LGBT	5	-. 80	26. 061	11. 655	Within Groups	61025. 767	198		
Group Statistics						T-Test Results				
Personal Characteristics		N	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	DF	T	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Media Education	Educated	176	-2. 34	17. 974	1. 355	199	1. 103	. 271		
	Not educated	25	-6. 48	14. 451	2. 890					
Political Affiliation	Affiliated	160	-3. 25	17. 718	1. 401	199	-. 635	. 526		
	Not Affiliated	41	-1. 29	17. 235	2. 692					
Religious Affiliation	Affiliated	168	-3. 02	17. 750	1. 369	199	. 793	. 429		
	Not Affiliated	33	-2. 00	17. 029	2. 964					

Data shows that female journalists had highest PF score ($M = .62, SD = 17.606$) among genders though the difference was not statistically significant ($F(2, 198) = 1.456, p = .236$).

Professionally educated journalists ($M = -2.34, SD = 17.974$) had higher PF score than that of the journalists without professional education ($M = -6.48, SD = 14.451$). Yet the difference was not significant ($t(199) = 1.103, p = .271$). Media education provides journalists with a realistic understanding of professional freedom and they may foresee the freedom-curbing situations while processing news.

Remarkably, journalists who are not affiliated to political ideologies had better PF score ($M = -1.29, SD = 17.235$) than their counterparts ($M = -3.25, SD = 17.718$) though not statistically significant ($t(199) = -.635, p = .526$).

Similarly, religiously not affiliated journalists reported more PF score ($M = -2, SD = 17.029$) than that of their counterparts ($M = -3.02, SD = 17.750$) although the difference was not statistically significant ($t(199) = .793, p = .429$).

The increasing chances of politically and religiously affiliated journalists' disagreement with the policy of their organizations can be the reason behind such a difference.

Professional Freedom and Professional Characteristics

After analyzing PF in terms of personal characteristics, professional freedom (PF) of young journalists in Kerala was tested to decide the nature of differences among categories of professional characteristics like region, type of media, professional experience, salary range and field of work using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and independent sample t-Test as the case may be.

Table 4: Mean Scores of PF by Professional Characteristics

Group Statistics					ANOVA Results					
Professional Characteristics		N	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	Between/ Within Groups	Sum of Squares	DF	F	Sig.
Region	South	43	1.37	16.501	2.516	Between Groups	1394.724	3	1.513	.212
	Central	73	-4.10	17.351	2.031					
	North	69	-4.99	17.260	2.078	Within Groups	60528.798	197		
	Outside Kerala	16	.69	21.847	5.462					
Type of Media	Broadcast	72	-.68	16.883	1.990	Between Groups	785.818	2	2.578	.078
	Print	111	-5.21	18.164	1.724	Within Groups	304.808	198		
	Online	18	3.00	14.994	3.534					
Salary Range	Upto Rs. 10000	58	-4.10	16.216	2.129	Between Groups	2544.682	3	2.814	.040
	Rs. 10001-20000	99	-5.01	19.014	1.911					
	Rs. 20001-30000	37	2.92	14.701	2.417	Within Groups	59378.840	197		
	Above Rs. 30000	7	7.57	14.022	5.300					
Field of Work	Reporting	105	-3.39	18.743	1.829	Between Groups	317.898	3	.339	.797
	Editing	59	-1.02	16.414	2.137					
	News Mgt.	9	-5.44	18.001	6.000	Within Groups	61605.624	197		
	Photo/ Videography	28	-3.86	15.930	3.010					
	Total	201	-2.85	17.596	1.241					
Group Statistics					T-Test Results					
Professional Characteristics		N	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	DF	T	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Professional Experience	Upto 5 Years	171	-3.52	17.411	1.331	199	-1.290	.198		
	Above 5 Years	30	.97	18.455	3.369					

Journalists from South Kerala ($M = 1.37$, $SD = 16.501$) had a greater mean score of PF than their counterparts in Kerala followed by journalists from outside Kerala ($M = .69$, $SD = 21.847$). Media persons from North Kerala ($M = -4.99$, $SD = 17.260$) reported least degree of freedom which is close to that of freedom enjoyed by journalists in Central Kerala ($M = -4.10$, $SD = 17.351$). Although the result is not statistically significant ($f(3, 197) = 1.513$, $p = .212$), greater PF score reported by journalists from South Kerala and outside Kerala can be attributed to their higher level of autonomy over the content.

Journalists in online media ($M = 3$, $SD = 14.994$) reported to have higher PF score than journalists in Broadcast ($M = -.68$, $SD = 16.883$) and print ($M = -5.21$, $SD = 18.164$). Yet the difference in mean scores of professional freedom is not statistically significant in the type of media ($F(2, 198) = 2.578$, $p = .078$). Interestingly, the newer the media the higher was the perceived professional freedom of younger journalists in Kerala.

Though the journalists belonging to the higher professional experience group had a greater mean score of PF ($M = .97$, $SD = 16.85$) than their counterparts ($M = -.352$, $SD = 17.411$). As per the ANOVA result, the difference between experience and perception of professional freedom was not statistically significant ($t(199) = -1.290$, $p = .198$).

Meanwhile, higher salary range groups of above Rs. 30000 ($M = 7.57$, $SD = 14.022$), Rs. 20001-30000 group ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 14.701$), had proportionately greater mean score of PF than lower salary range groups of Rs. 10001-20000 group ($M = -5.01$, $SD = 19.014$) and below Rs. 10000 group ($M = -4.10$, $SD = 16.216$) had. And the result is statistically significant ($F(3, 197) = 2.814$, $p = .040$) pointing at the close association between the range of salary and level of professional freedom.

Considering the field of work, journalists in the editing field reported to have the highest PF score ($M = -.102$, $SD = 16.414$) and those in the news management perceived to have the least PF score ($M = -.544$, $SD = 18.001$). It can be attributed to the nature of work and the pressure journalists belonging to different fields experience. However, the difference is not statistically significant ($F(3, 197) = .339$, $p = .797$).

Understanding the nature of the influence of personal and professional variables of professional freedom (PF) young journalists in Kerala is one of the objectives of the present study. The analysis deduced that personal characteristics had no significant bearing on their PF score whereas salary range among professional characteristics is significant.

In short, diverse personal and professional variables of young Kerala journalists including gender, media education, political affiliation and religious affiliation along with region, type of media, professional experience and field of work have no influence on their professional freedom except in the case of salary range.

Professional Satisfaction (PS)

To meet the second part of the first objective of the study, after finding the level of professional freedom of young journalists in Kerala, the researcher examined their professional satisfaction.

Table 8: Professional Satisfaction of Young Kerala Journalists

Professional Satisfaction (PS)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Intrinsic PS	201	5.35	13.040
Extrinsic PS	201	4.55	11.779
Professional Satisfaction	201	9.91	23.950

*Range of score in IPS and EPS is -40 to 40 with three levels (-40 to -13.01 = low; -13 to 13 = moderate; 13.01 to 40 = high) & Range of score in PS is -80 to 80 with three levels (-80 to -26.01 = low; -26 to 26 = moderate; 26.01 to 80 = high).

From the data, it is evident that professional satisfaction of journalists in Kerala (PS) which is conceived as a combination of IPS and EPS, is at a moderate level (M = 9.91, SD = 23.950) of -26 to 26. When compared to EPS (M = 4.55, SD = 11.779) IPS (M = 5.35, SD = 13.00) contributes slightly more to PS.

Professional Satisfaction and Personal Characteristics

In this study, Professional Satisfaction of journalists was conceived as a combination of Internal Professional Satisfaction (IPS) and External Professional Satisfaction (EPS). Given below is the table showing the results of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Independent sample t-Test employed to test the nature of differences among categories of various personal characteristics like gender, media education, political affiliation, and religious affiliation in terms of professional satisfaction (PS).

Table 5: Mean Scores of PS by Personal Characteristics

Group Statistics						One-Way ANOVA Results				
Personal Characteristics		N	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	Between/ Within Groups	Sum of Squares	DF	F	Sig.
Gender	Male	144	9.65	25.282	2.107	Between Groups	213.246	2	.184	.832
	Female	52	11.10	20.281	2.812					
	LGBT	5	4.80	23.059	10.312	Within Groups	114505.958	198		
Group Statistics						T-Test Results				
Personal Characteristics		N	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	DF	T	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Media Education	Educated	176	10.64	24.287	1.831	199	1.149	.252		
	Not educated	25	4.76	21.153	4.231					
Political Affiliation	Affiliated	160	8.93	23.598	1.866	199	-1.147	.253		
	Not Affiliated	41	13.73	25.210	3.937					
Religious Affiliation	Affiliated	168	10.50	24.103	1.860	199	.793	.429		
	Not Affiliated	33	6.88	23.279	4.052					

Female journalists reported to have higher PS score (M = 11.10, SD = 20.281) trailed by male journalists (M = 9.65, SD = 25.282) while their LGBT counterparts professed the lowest mean score of PS (M = 4.80, SD = 23.059). But the difference in PS scores among genders of journalists in Kerala yielded no statistical significance (F (2, 198)

= .184, p = .832). The result shows that discrimination against LGBT exists in this part of the world including media sector.

Expectedly, journalists having media education had a higher score of PS (M = 10.64, SD = 24.287) than those without professional education (M = 4.76, SD = 21.153). Realistic expectations of professionally educated journalists on the career and the professional environment might be a reason for this result. However, the difference between those who were professionally educated and those who were not professionally educated was not statistically significant (t (199) = 1.149, p = .252) in similar with the finding of Semary (2012).

As in PF, political affiliation of journalists in Kerala had no significant influence on their PS score (t (199) = -1.147, p = .253). As expected, journalists without political affiliation had higher PS score (M = 13.73, SD = 25.210) than that of their politically affiliated counterparts (M = 8.93, SD = 23.598). The conflict between newsroom/editorial policy - often driven by the organization’s political leaning - and individual journalist’s ideological inclination can be a reason for this difference.

In contrast to this, Journalists having religious affiliation reported higher PS score (M = 10.50, SD = 24.103) than that of those without religious affiliation (M = 6.88, SD = 23.279). This may be due to the religious-sensitive approach of media organizations in this part of the world though the religious affiliation had no significant bearing on PS score of young journalists in Kerala (t (199) = .793, p = .429).

Professional Satisfaction and Professional Characteristics

Yet another important objective of this study was to analyse the nature of influence professional characteristics had on the PS of journalists in Kerala. Using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-Test, professional satisfaction (PS) was tested to decide the significance of differences among categories of professional characteristics of journalists in Kerala like region, type of media, professional experience, salary range, and field of work.

Table 6: Mean Scores of PS by Professional Characteristics

Group Statistics					ANOVA Results					
Professional Characteristics		N	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	Between/ Within Groups	Sum of Squares	DF	F	Sig.
Region	South	43	13.30	24.882	3.794	Between Groups	782.616	3	.451	.717
	Central	73	10.00	22.880	2.678					
	North	69	8.28	23.596	2.841	Within Groups	113936.588	197		
	Outside Kerala	16	7.38	28.731	7.183					
Type of Media	Broadcast	72	9.44	22.784	2.685	Between Groups	670.392	2	.582	.560
	Print	111	9.26	24.744	2.349	Within Groups	114048.812	198		
	Online	18	15.72	24.066	5.672					
Salary Range	Upto Rs. 10000	58	5.83	23.021	3.023	Between Groups	3605.827	3	2.131	.098
	Rs. 10001-20000	99	9.41	23.885	2.400					
	Rs. 20001-30000	37	14.57	24.831	4.082	Within Groups	111113.377	197		

	Above Rs. 30000	7	26.00	21.610	8.168					
Field of Work	Reporting	105	10.98	23.857	2.328	Between Groups	1830.247	3	1.065	.365
	Editing	59	8.24	23.956	3.119					
	News Mgt.	9	20.89	26.512	8.837	Within Groups	112888.957	197		
	Photo/Videography	28	5.86	23.406	4.423					
Total		201	9.91	23.950	1.689	Total	114719.204	200		
Group Statistics						T-Test Results				
Professional Characteristics		N	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	DF		T	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Professional Experience	Upto 5 Years	171	8.68	24.100	1.843	199		-1.735	.084	
	Above 5 Years	30	16.87	22.187	4.051					

Data shows (Table 6) that young journalists working in different regions in and outside Kerala had no significant difference in their mean scores of PS ($F(3, 197) = .451, p = .717$). However, journalists from South Kerala ($M = 13.30, SD = 24.882$) and journalists from Central Kerala ($M = 10.00, SD = 22.880$) had higher PS score than their counterparts from North Kerala ($M = 8.28, SD = 23.596$) and who worked outside Kerala ($M = 7.38, SD = 28.731$). Staying away from family and the native place might have resulted in this perception. And in the case of Kerala, a kind of regionalism is possibly in operation and news stories of equal magnitudes from dominant regions are covered more vigorously than news stories from other regions.

Online journalists perceived to have a higher mean score ($M = 15.72, SD = 24.066$) than that of their counterparts in other media. Young professionals in print media reported the lowest PS score ($M = 9.26, SD = 24.744$) while broadcast journalists had a slightly higher PS mean score ($M = 9.44, SD = 22.784$). Younger journalists, in this way, working in newer media seems to have higher PS than their counterparts. Whatsoever, difference on PS across type of media was not statistically significant ($F(2, 198) = .582, p = .560$).

In a similar fashion, the difference among categories of journalists' professional experience has no significant influence on their mean score of PS ($t(199) = -1.735, p = .084$). Apparently, the higher the professional experience journalists had the higher was their professional satisfaction and so the journalists having experience of more than 5 years reported to have the higher PS score ($M = 16.87, SD = 22.187$) than young professionals having upto 5 years of experience ($M = 8.68, SD = 24.100$). This can be attributed to the fact that longevity of a journalists' professional career itself is an evidence of their content in what they do.

Similarly, professional satisfaction (PS) of young journalists in Kerala, has no significant relationship with their range of salary ($F(3, 197) = 2.131, p = .098$). Hence journalists in the highest salary range of above Rs. 30000 have the highest PS score ($M = 26.00, SD = 21.610$) and the journalists of the lowest salary range group of below Rs. 10000 scored the least PS score ($M = 5.83, SD = 23.021$). In short, the higher the salary range of journalists in Kerala the higher was their professional satisfaction (PS). Economic freedom will enable the journalists to manage his/her duty as a family head/member and such economic relations more efficiently.

Journalists worked in the field of news management reported to have highest PS mean score (M = 20. 89, SD = 26. 512) followed by journalists in the fields of work like reporting (M = 10. 98, SD = 23. 857) and reporting (M = 11. 98, SD = 27. 42). Expectedly, journalists in the photo/videography field have the lowest score in PS (M = 5. 86, SD = 23. 406). But this difference among the journalists belonging to various fields yielded no statistical significance (F (3, 197) = 1. 065, p = . 365). Certainly, journalists working in a field where more news decision autonomy is vested with will be more satisfied.

In this way, differences across categories of various personal characteristics including gender, media education, political affiliation and religious affiliation along with the professional characteristics like region, type of media, salary range, professional experience and field of work yielded no statistical significance on professional satisfaction of young journalists in Kerala.

Professional Freedom and Professional Satisfaction

The study further looks into the nature of relation between professional freedom and professional satisfaction of young journalists in Kerala.

Table 9: PF and PS of Journalists

Descriptive Statistics			
Component	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Professional Satisfaction	9. 91	17. 596	201
Professional Freedom	-2. 85	23. 950	201
Correlation			
		Professional Freedom	
Professional Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	. 607**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	. 000	
	N	201	

***. Correlation is significant at the 0. 01 level (2-tailed).*

The descriptive statistics show that the mean scores of PF (M= -2. 85, SD=17. 596) and PS (M =9. 91, SD= 23. 950) are in the moderate range of -26 to 26. Further, a Pearson Correlation Coefficient was assessed and the result is reported in the table 9. As per the data there is a significant positive correlation between the two variables – PS and PF (r = . 607, n = 201, p = . 000). In other words, the more the professional freedom of a journalist the more will be his/her professional satisfaction.

Discussion and Conclusion

Journalists’ freedom is more curtailed, as they perceive, internally than externally pointing at the organizational motives that betray the very concept of press freedom. Immediate constraints on PF of journalists are imposed by the organization and by the immediate authorities as perceived by the journalists. On the other hand, journalists – except those in the news management position - may not feel the stress from external factors like governmental, economic, political and religious pressures.

In contrast to this, PS of journalists is more intrinsic than extrinsic indicating the importance of the personal/profession status over organizational/working environment factors. Although the working environment including insufficient salary leads the journalists

to lesser professional satisfaction, it is the status and passion holds the young Kerala journalists back to continue in the profession.

Differences across categories of various personal and professional characteristics like gender, media education, political affiliation and religious affiliation, region, type of media, salary range, professional experience and field of work yielded no statistical significance on PS of young journalists in Kerala while salary range was the lone characteristics that influenced PF of young journalists in Kerala. The higher the level of salary range the higher was the journalists' perceived professional freedom. Economic autonomy may enable the journalists to stay away from paid news and all that may negatively affect the objectivity of news under processing.

Positive correlation between professional freedom and satisfaction can be traced from the very notion of press freedom, a prerequisite for the democratization of information. Further, journalists may enter the profession with great expectations especially that of freedom of the press which enables them to exercise their journalistic commitment to transform the society into an informed citizenry. The studies of Weaver and Wilhoit (1986), Demers (1994), Sachsman, Simon and Valenti (2008), Chang and Massey (2010), Reinardy and Crawford (2011), Deprez and Raeymaeckers (2012), Semary (2012), El-Nawawy and Strong (2012), Willnatand Weaver (2014), Thomas and Nellyullathil (2013), and Reinardy (2014) supported the finding of the present study that holds that there exists a positive correlation between professional freedom and professional satisfaction of young journalists, at least in the case of Kerala.

In a wider perspective, the status of professional freedom and satisfaction of journalists in Kerala is not exciting when all the positive aspects of intellectual and physical indices that the state claims in the name of the well acclaimed Kerala model are taken into account.

The present study is not devoid of limitations. One of the important limitations of the study is that the self-reporting strategy used in the survey. A multi-approach/method can extract better results in the study. Again, an in-depth factor wise analysis of PF and PS and their associations with journalists' personal and professional characteristics could be done which is restricted to PF and PS in the present study.

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